

Matt Brown

From: Jennifer Johnson
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 9:00 AM
To: Matt Brown
Subject: FW: Budget Committee Comments: Youth Librarian

From: Jana Mann <JanaManna@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 8:55 AM
To: Jennifer Johnson <jjohnson@sthelensoregon.gov>
Subject: [External] Budget Committee Comments: Youth Librarian

Good morning,

My name is Jana Mann. I serve on the Library Board and have been a regular patron of our local library since 1988.

The loss of the Youth Librarian position is shocking in light of how important this position is to the overall functionality and impact of the library. Many families, of all income levels, depend on the Youth Librarian to provide engaging programs for their young learners and emerging readers. Library impact studies demonstrate over and over again that children benefit greatly from tailored reading programs, access to information, and hands-on learning opportunities.

Cutting this position is extremely short-sighted and will have significant impacts, not the least of which is the potential to lose grant funding. The loss of the Youth Librarian is the beginning of a slippery slope to the demise of robust and vital library services.

Considering this budget item, it would appear that due diligence has not been done - at the very least, the city councilman over the library should have been consulted. Where is the research that supports such a decision?

Funding streams can be adjusted, so cutting this position is not about saving money. It's about being indifferent. Has the city become indifferent when it comes to families, learning, information, and educational investment?

Please do the right thing. Invest in our community. Do not cut the Youth Librarian from the budget.

Thank you,
Jana Mann
124 Wonderly Drive
St. Helens, OR

Matt Brown

From: Jennifer Johnson
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 9:14 AM
To: Matt Brown
Subject: FW: [External] St. Helens Budget concerns

From: Gail Engler <englergail32@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 9:11 AM
To: Jennifer Johnson <jjohnson@sthelensoregon.gov>
Subject: [External] St. Helens Budget concerns

Hello,
I am writing to express my serious concern about the proposed budget cuts with the Youth Librarian position at the St. Helens library.

I heard this position is being cut while at the same time your Finance department is giving themselves an 8% pay raise. This makes no sense whatsoever, not to mention it is very selfish and greedy of the Finance department to give themselves a raise while recommending a fellow employee's position be axed. And the library itself takes a 20% cut while the parks and recreation department takes a 1% cut. Have you heard of the concept of equity or fairness? Why not make equal cuts across these departments instead of such lopsided cuts for one department?

I also heard that by cutting the Youth librarian position the library will no longer qualify for certain grants, thereby increasing the suffering and making the proposed budget slashing cuts even more painful for the employees and for the many customers it serves. Why are you doing this?

I think the city needs to go back to the drawing board on its budget and seriously rethink the consequences of the proposed cuts.

I have participated in the genealogy program and benefitted from it both in-person and online. I hope this isn't one of the cuts the library has to suffer.

Thank you for listening.

A Very Concerned Citizen,
Gail Engler

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Sent from Gmail Mobile

Matt Brown

From: Jennifer Johnson
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 10:12 AM
To: Matt Brown
Subject: FW: [External] Concerns About Library Budget

From: Gina Wilson <mattandginawilson@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 9:45 AM
To: Jennifer Johnson <jjohnson@sthelensoregon.gov>
Subject: [External] Concerns About Library Budget

Hi Jennifer,

I am writing to express my concerns about the cuts proposed to the library budget. As a mother to an 18 month old, the library and specifically Nature Buddies have been a lifeline. Several of my friends with older children have shared this sentiment as well- the library is a vital source for fun, learning, exercise, new experiences, and connection in our small communities. I would be remiss if I didn't share that I felt Gretchen was the heart of this, but the importance of the position itself (and retention of quality staff) cannot be understated. If you aren't the parent of a child born during the pandemic, I think the importance of the library and its programs for young families is difficult to express as strongly as is needed in this situation. This was literally the only thing that felt safe to do for the last year and it enabled me to connect with other young parents in our community. We will be moving out of state in the coming weeks and it is exactly for reasons like this- this community offers little support to young families and I cannot let my daughter grow up without opportunity and without diversity. Although numbers in an accounting program (and attendance numbers too) can often be viewed in black and white, I would urge the committee to consider the much bigger costs of financial cuts such as these to the very few resources young families in our community like mine have.

Sincerely,

Gina Wilson
720-936-4462
Columbia City

Matt Brown

From: Jennifer Johnson
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 10:14 AM
To: Matt Brown
Subject: FW: [External] Youth Librarian Position

From: Jamie Booth <jamielynnjordan@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 9:54 AM
To: Jennifer Johnson <jjohnson@sthelensoregon.gov>
Subject: [External] Youth Librarian Position

To whom it may concern,

I was just made aware that it is the towns plan to get rid of the youth librarian position! COVID times have been so hard on our kids' socialization and I am so concerned that this is the city's plan. The free story times and activities through the library were my older kids first social interactions. My youngest has not been able to experience these things and it breaks my heart that these free services will no longer be available, especially when they are needed the most. Please reconsider and let us know how we can fund raise to keep this position open for our kids

Thank you for your time,
Jamie Booth

Matt Brown

From: Jennifer Johnson
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 10:19 AM
To: Matt Brown
Subject: FW: [External] Library budget

From: Kahrman, Ariel <arielk@sthelens.k12.or.us>
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 10:05 AM
To: Jennifer Johnson <jjohnson@sthelensoregon.gov>
Subject: [External] Library budget

Shutting the children's librarian post would be a great loss for our county, particularly for our lower income families who rely in the library to meet needs.

As a single mom of two, I used the library as a sanctuary when my kids were little. If I had a parenting question, I found resources, if I didn't have internet I found pay my bills. If my girls wanted a movie night, we could rent a movie at no cost. A huge part of that involves a children librarian to provide group, recommend books and resources, etc. Please do not get rid of this vital resource for our families in town.

Ariel Kahrman
Infant Teacher, SHEL
Saint Helens High School

Matt Brown

From: Jennifer Johnson
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 10:19 AM
To: Matt Brown
Subject: FW: [External] DO NOT CUT CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN

From: Rebekah Mathers <rebekah.mathers@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 10:16 AM
To: Jennifer Johnson <jjohnson@sthelensoregon.gov>
Subject: [External] DO NOT CUT CHILDREN'S LIBRARIAN

Children's Librarian

- Empower and motivate young people;
- Promote and nurture the habit of reading;
- Introduce students to the latest electronic resources;
- Collaborate with other educators;
- Build programs to link the library to community groups;
- Choose resources to enhance the library collection;
- Aid in grant proposals and qualify libraries for children's programs specifically.

Sent from my iPhone

Matt Brown

From: Jennifer Johnson
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 10:49 AM
To: Matt Brown
Subject: FW: [External] Cutting the Youth Librarian Position

-----Original Message-----

From: Katrina Bennion <katrina.bennion@icloud.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 10:48 AM
To: Jennifer Johnson <jjohnson@sthelensoregon.gov>
Subject: [External] Cutting the Youth Librarian Position

I just found out about the plan to cut funding for the youth librarian position at the St. Helens library and I am very disappointed in anyone who thinks this is a good idea. As a nanny to a young child this would significantly impact my job. There are not many places to take young children in the St. Helens area and almost all of those are parks. While the parks are great, this is Oregon and its cold and rainy most of the year, not an appropriate place to take little kids to during those months.

In addition to books the children's library also provides learning toys for children. The library provides a safe, plus warm and dry, place to bring children to help foster a love of learning and reading during the majority of the year.

Unless the city plans on building free indoor play places, I find it irresponsible and disrespectful to it's citizens to cut the libraries funding in any way.

Matt Brown

From: Jennifer Johnson
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 11:22 AM
To: Matt Brown
Subject: FW: [External] Written Comments for the 5/12 Budget Committee Meeting

Importance: High

From: Suzanne Bishop <sbishop2008@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 11:06 AM
To: Jennifer Johnson <jjohnson@sthelensoregon.gov>
Cc: Dan Davis URI <dandavis@upriverindian.com>; Brenda Herren-Kenaga <bherrenkenaga@sthelensoregon.gov>; John Walsh <jwalsh@sthelensoregon.gov>
Subject: [External] Written Comments for the 5/12 Budget Committee Meeting

Hello Ms. Johnson, below are my comments for the 5/12 budget committee meeting. Please let me know if there is anything I need to alter or add. Thank you, Suzanne Bishop, Library Director, St. Helens Public Library

To: St. Helens Budget Committee

My name is Suzanne Bishop and I am the incoming St. Helens Public Library Director. My first day at the library will be June 15. I am writing about the possible loss of the Youth Librarian position at the library.

A youth librarian (who has a master's in library science) is an essential position in every public library. The position provides essential services to our community that reach beyond simply presenting story times and helping kids find books.

(1) Youth librarians do more outreach than other librarians, which is of great benefit to the community and the library.

(2) Having a full-time youth librarian in the library means being able to offer children, teen and family programming, and working with patrons in the MakerSpace (which serves adults and young people).

(3) Programs are not simply entertainment. Youth librarians teach important life skills, i.e., teach early literacy, how to identify reliable information, how to organize and use information, and even how to maintain one's physical and emotional safety.

(4) Without this position, there would be only two librarians which would stretch staffing and damage our ability to be as effective as we need to be.

We know from a preponderance of evidence that as our families return to the library from COVID restrictions, the programs we offer and the library are more important than ever.

I urge you to continue to fund this essential position.

Thank you,

Suzanne Bishop, MSLIS

Comments regarding the proposed Library budget.

Submitted by Lynne Pettit, President Friends of St Helens Public Library

May 12, 2022

Dear members of the Budget Committee,

Under the St Helens proposed budget our library services would be drastically cut by 21%, including the elimination of our Youth Librarian position. We are fortunate here in St Helens to have a Library that offers so much to our community. It serves as the center for many activities that enrich the lives of our local citizens. I'd like to start with just a few of the projects that were maintained by our former Youth Librarian. To start, I will mention Makerspace first, as it's a place for kids, teens, and adults to conduct hands-on projects using problem solving, and creativity at the library's initiative, to bring science, technology, engineering, art, and math (STEAM) to the community. The Lab contains a 3-D printer, laser cutter, computers, tablets, and other tools, for all ages.

Additionally, other projects, but not all, were 'Nature Buddies', Summer Library Challenge, Winter Reading, Toddler/Preschool Storytime, and "Library of Things" where you can learn how to make pasta from a machine, learn about rain clouds through a telescope, learn navigation constellations, and play with math and coding. The library provides many learning opportunities for families in our area that would otherwise be unaffordable. The library provides the internet for students and adults, and a safe place to study.

Please let our St Helens City Council know that the proposed cuts to the library would drastically impact the many services the library provides that enrich our community.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Matt Brown

From: Jennifer Johnson
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 11:26 AM
To: Matt Brown
Subject: FW: [External] Library budget comments

From: Candace Miville <candacemiville@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 11:23 AM
To: Jennifer Johnson <jjohnson@sthelensoregon.gov>
Subject: [External] Library budget comments

Hello Jennifer,

I'm a concerned mother seeing as the city is looking to cut the youth librarian to save money. The local youth librarian has been a huge outreach for both of my children to access activities with peers and use the library.

My oldest has special needs and has been encouraged to attend. He has never felt left out during any program put on by the youth librarian. He has felt included anytime he steps foot in the library, even with higher literacy than his age group. The youth librarian has always encouraged and chatted about his interests to find the right books for him.

My youngest son used to tag along with his brother for library events and now actively looks for events he wants to go to. Even reminds me of the activity so he can attend. We plan a day to go to the library every week. Our local youth librarian and library has helped instill a love of reading in my children. I will forever be grateful to them for that love and support.

I'm discouraged that the city is looking to cut back on a resource that many families in our community access and enjoy greatly. I hope you reconsider and try to find a way to keep the youth librarian. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Candace Miville

Matt Brown

From: Jennifer Johnson
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 11:56 AM
To: Matt Brown
Subject: FW: [External] Budget Committee-restore youth library position

From: alan Ling <knoahthysself@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 11:56 AM
To: Jennifer Johnson <jjohnson@sthelensoregon.gov>
Subject: [External] Budget Committee-restore youth library position

Dear budget committee members

It is essential to restore the youth librarian position to the proposed city budget.

The Library is one of the few activities available to families and children without cost. While parks and recreation has some good programs, they usually involve a fee. With inflation, especially in food and gasoline, many struggling families can not afford activities with a fee.

The library provides no cost resources that are both educational and recreational to all citizens. The youth librarian is an essential part of this community service.

Alan King
174 N. 8th St.
Saint Helens OR 97051

Matt Brown

From: Jennifer Johnson
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:07 PM
To: Matt Brown
Subject: FW: Budget Committee Comment

From: nicole woodruff <nbruce44@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 11:59 AM
To: Jennifer Johnson <jjohnson@sthelensoregon.gov>
Subject: [External] Budget Committee Comment

Dear Budget Committee,

I am writing today with concerns about the proposed 2022-2023 budget. Some of my concerns are really requests for clarification, and others are directly related to cuts to the Library Department. I also have grave concerns with how data is presented in the Budget Presentation. In the interest of brevity, I have listed my questions below. I follow with a list of concerns about the Budget Presentation and end with my thoughts about the detrimental effects the cuts to the Library budget have on the department specifically and as well as the City as a whole.

Points of clarification:

Page 7 of the Budget Documents itemizes the resources and expenditures for the soon to be defunct Technology Fund. Code 702-000-52019 Professional Services shows \$200,000. Is that the money the City pays for the outside IT technicians? If yes, is that amount actually being reduced by \$105,000 or is the City going to pay for that service from a different fund, because I don't see it in the General Fund Summary. Is it included in Department 715 General Services (page 34)? This ties into later points of clarifications about cuts to different departments.

On pages 35 and 36, line items 702-701-052011 (Administration Department) and 702-702-052011 (City Recorder Department) Public Information has been eliminated. I am curious about what was funded out of those line items and if that service will be funded elsewhere.

In the Budget presentation, page 5 lists the positions NOT included in the 2022-2023 Budget. Of the positions listed, only 3 have been part of past budgets: Youth Librarian, Part-Time Shelves (funded but not filled) and Parks Utility Worker. The other positions are ones that the City needs but has never funded. This is an important distinction because the information is presented in a way that implies ALL department are losing positions, when in fact that is true only for two departments. There are other positions that are currently being funded through ARPA and other grants, and I strongly encourage the City to find a way to continue funding those positions, however they are not the subject of this year's budget concerns. (They should be on the budget committee's radar however because losing those positions will be a huge blow to the Library and Rec Departments.)

Page 17 of the Budget Presentation shows a snapshot of department expenses and shows the percent increase or decrease each department will see in the 2022-2023 fiscal year. Most of the departments that show a decrease in budget only show a decrease because the IT Fund is no longer part of each department's budget. If that line item is not included in figures, then the only departments with decreased budgets are: Administration (-3%), Planning (-5%), Library

(-8%), and Technology (which has not existed as a department in the general fund so it's difficult to say that there is a decrease). The increases to budgets in other departments get bigger: Municipal Court (+10%), Finance (+6%), City Recorder (+6%), Police (+7%), Parks (3% - this number doesn't change), Building (+6%), City Council (+5%), and Recreation (+6%).

There are wage increases that are higher than the 3.5% COLA that we were told to expect this year.

City Council - 7.3% wage increase.

Municipal Courts – 5.3% wage increase

Police – 8% wage increase

Finance – 6.5% wage increase

Building – 6.2% wage increase

Technology – 29.2% wage increase

Some of these increases are likely the result of employees moving to the next Step in the wage scale in addition to COLA. That information is not clear in the budget as presented.

There are also significant increases to Professional Services and Professional Development in some departments while others are seeing cuts. The Planning Department loses all funding for Projects and Programs. (Jenny Dimsho is an amazing asset and is able to get grants left and right, but this is still a huge cut and puts a heavy workload on her on top of her regular responsibilities.)

The Library loses 42.9% of its programs budget. Coupled with the loss of the Youth Librarian, it becomes much less possible to provide programs to the youth in our community. Without youth programming, the Library will lose its qualification as a public library which then makes it impossible to receive LSTA funds, Ready to Read grants, and other grants from the Federal Government or the State. Others can and will speak at length about the value of youth services. I can say that without a youth librarian the library will have to be open fewer hours during the week because there won't be enough staff to be open more. This means that fewer community members will be able to access any library services.

Cutting the youth librarian does not only negatively impact youth, it hurts everyone.

Nicole Woodruff

Matt Brown

From: Jennifer Johnson
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:08 PM
To: Matt Brown
Subject: FW: [External] Proposed budget

Importance: High

-----Original Message-----

From: Audrey Webster <abw1@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 12:04 PM
To: Jennifer Johnson <jjohnson@sthelensoregon.gov>
Subject: [External] Proposed budget

I have to tried to get a copy of the proposed budget that is to be presented tonight. It is not available online or in person when I went to city hall. How is obtainable before today's meeting? What's being hidden?

Secondly, the youth librarian is a must have. By removing this important part of the library program, the committee is robbing families and children the chance to experience, share, and discover the joys of reading. This joy is learned at an early age.

I think the budget committee needed to go watch for a day what goes on at the library when there is story time and little ones select there books to take home. Follow this with a couple of days assisting teachers by working with students that are having difficulty reading.

I have taken my children to story hour, had them regularly check out books, assisted teachers with struggling readers, and many, many years ago was library board president fighting to increase the library budget.

Think twice before you eliminate this position. Children who can read get a better education thus a better life.

Audre Webster

Sent from my iPad

Matt Brown

From: Jennifer Johnson
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 2:08 PM
To: Matt Brown
Subject: FW: [External] Children's librarian

Thank You,

Jenn

From: Megan Dame <megan.n.dame@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, May 12, 2022 9:45 AM
To: Jennifer Johnson <jjohnson@sthelensoregon.gov>
Subject: [External] Children's librarian

I am opposed to cutting the children's librarian position. Our children (our future) need a safe space that can empower and motivate them. With literacy rates dropping at an alarming rate due to the Corona virus, we cannot afford to take away another resource from our future. The children's librarian promotes and nurtures the habit of reading by paying attention and recommending other things that may be of interest.

If children grow up without that extra attention and encouragement they will be less likely to be literate. Literacy is a major factor in whether youths graduate from high school. One in 6 high school students — or about 1.2 million teens — drop out each year, according to ProLiteracy. When people learn how to read, write, do basic math, and use computers, they have the power to lift themselves out of poverty, lower health care costs, find and keep sustainable employment, and ultimately change their lives (all of which can be fostered by a children's librarian).

We desperately need to keep our children's librarian for the future of our town and nation.

Thank you,
Megan Dame