



City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall
400 La Crosse Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Meeting Agenda - Final

Board of Estimates

Tuesday, October 8, 2024

2:00 PM

Council Chambers

Discussion / Review / Finalize Recommended Operating Budget (If needed.)

This meeting is open for in-person attendance and will also be available through video conferencing. The meeting can be viewed (no participation) by visiting the Legislative Information Center Meetings calendar (<https://cityoflacrosse.legistar.com/Calendar.aspx>) - find the scheduled meeting and click on the "In Progress" video link to the far right in the meeting list.

Call to Order

Roll Call

Board Members: Mayor Mitch Reynolds, Council President Kahlow, and Council Members Mindel, Janssen, Slezniow, Schwarz, Happel, Neumann, Goggin

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of October 7, 2024.

Agenda Items:

[24-0826](#) 2025 Operating Budget Discussion.

Adjournment

Notice is further given that members of other governmental bodies may be present at the above scheduled meeting to gather information about a subject over which they have decision-making responsibility.

NOTICE TO PERSONS WITH A DISABILITY

Requests from persons with a disability who need assistance to participate in this meeting should call the City Clerk's office at (608) 789-7510 or send an email to ADAcityclerk@cityoflacrosse.org, with as much advance notice as possible.



City of La Crosse, Wisconsin

City Hall
400 La Crosse Street
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Text File

File Number: 24-0826

Agenda Date: 10/7/2024

Version: 1

Status: Agenda Ready

In Control: Board of Estimates

File Type: Budget

Agenda Number:

City of La Crosse

2025 Preliminary Operating Budget

Board of Estimates Meeting

September 5, 2024; 4:30 pm

- Budget Highlights
- 2025 Projected Revenues
- 2025 Projected Expenses
- New Position Requests
- ERP & Levy Limit
- Mill Rate

Budget Highlights and Assumptions

➤ Revenues

- \$1.528 Million of ARPA Lost Revenue Funds utilized
- Increased food & beverage sales at ticketed events/concerts, room tax, and facility rental fees for La Crosse Center
- Qualification of State Expenditure Restraint Program (ERP) aid of approximately \$1.15 Million

➤ Expenses

- A 3% Cost of Living Adjustment for Non-Represented Employees effective 1/1/25 is built into the budget
- A step increase for employees has been included effective 7/1/25
- A 1% Vacancy allowance for all positions based on historical experience
- A proposed 12% increase in Active & Retiree Health Insurance Rates
- Collective bargaining agreement salary increases for the Police and Fire unions
- Any requests of adjustments to the Authorized FTE List have not been included in the budget

➤ Operating Budget Constraints

- A net new construction figure of \$370,197 (0.94%), the amount the City is allowed to increase the levy by and is proposing to utilize the full amount
- 3.1% was used for the allowable percentage increase for expenditures based on Consumer Price Index. This allows for an increase of expenditures of \$1.97 Million to participate in the Expenditure Restraint Program for 2025, an increase of \$3.41 Million is being proposed

2025 Proposed Revenue Sources

	2024 ADOPTED BUDGET	2025 PROPOSED BUDGET	2025 VS 2024 VARIANCE INC (DEC)		EXPLANATION OF VARIANCE
			\$	%	
1 GENERAL GOVERNMENT					
2 CLERK	\$ 538,012	\$ 517,546	\$ (20,466)	-3.80%	
3 POLICE	230,883	241,161	10,278	4.45%	
4 FIRE	1,358,115	1,192,915	(165,200)	-12.16%	Reduced number of permits issued
5 PLANNING/ASSESSOR	28,375	28,600	225	0.79%	
6 ENGINEERING	420,812	420,812	-	0.00%	
7 HIGHWAY & REFUSE/RECYCLING	281,000	281,000	-	0.00%	
8 LIBRARY	192,801	216,336	23,535	12.21%	Increased contributions from the County
9 LA CROSSE CENTER	3,494,667	4,128,651	633,984	18.14%	Increased liquor sales at ticketed events/concerts, room tax, and facility rental fees
10 PARKS, REC, FORESTRY/FACILITIES	456,000	496,000	40,000	8.77%	Increased rental fee revenue
11 NON DEPARTMENTAL:					
12 GENERAL REVENUES	5,119,359	5,040,473	(78,886)	-1.54%	
13 TAXES & SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS	2,195,000	2,240,000	45,000	2.05%	
14 STATE SHARED REVENUE	18,671,499	18,671,498	(1)	0.00%	
15					
16 OPERATING REVENUES (ROWS 2-14)	32,986,523	33,474,992	488,469	1.48%	
17					
18 TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	63,719,148	67,623,268	3,904,120	6.13%	
19 <i>(from Expense worksheet)</i>					
20 OPERATING BUDGET TAX LEVY*	\$ 30,732,625	\$ 34,148,276	\$ 3,415,651	11.11%	
21					
22 DEBT SERVICE LEVY	\$ 8,650,000	\$ 8,650,000	\$ -	0.00%	
23					
24 TOTAL CITY LEVY W/O TIF LEVY	39,382,625	42,798,276	3,415,651	8.67%	

Notes:

*Row 20 is the difference between operating expenses and projected operating revenues and is the amount placed on the tax rolls for city operations.

2025 Operating Proposed Expenses

		2025 VS 2024 VARIANCE			
		INC (DEC)			
	2024 ADOPTED BUDGET	2025 PROPOSED BUDGET	\$	%	EXPLANATION OF VARIANCE
1 GENERAL GOVERNMENT:					
NOTE: Variance for all departments listed below include salary & benefit increases					
2 CLERK	\$ 683,927	\$ 595,116	(\$88,811)	-12.99%	Reduced LTE wages, postage, and supplies expense due to 2 fewer elections in 2025.
3 COUNCIL	177,745	177,745	0	0.00%	
4 ENGINEERING	1,813,504	1,901,494	87,990	4.85%	
5 FINANCE	1,537,215	1,631,166	93,951	6.11%	
6 HUMAN RESOURCES	529,255	561,218	31,963	6.04%	other contracted services, and memberships & subscriptions increased
7 FIRE/COMMUNITY RISK	13,496,509	14,509,085	1,012,576	7.50%	Communication repair & maintenance (radio service plan) increased
8 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY	2,612,031	2,636,419	24,388	0.93%	
9 LA CROSSE CENTER	3,494,667	4,128,651	633,984	18.14%	Other contracted services, storm utility, memberships/subscriptions, contracted security and marketing increased
10 LEGAL	786,787	829,172	42,385	5.39%	
11 LIBRARY	4,829,179	5,172,810	343,631	7.12%	
12 MAYOR	310,397	328,480	18,083	5.83%	
13 MUNICIPAL COURT	240,334	252,240	11,906	4.95%	
14 PARKS/REC/FORESTRY/FACILITIES	4,723,914	4,969,174	245,260	5.19%	Snow removal service and storm utilities increased
15 PLANNING/ASSESSOR	1,121,372	1,314,765	193,393	17.25%	Postage, memberships/subscriptions, and other contracted services increased
16 POLICE DEPARTMENT	13,376,050	14,102,395	726,345	5.43%	Communication repair & maintenance (radio service plan) increased
17 HIGHWAY & REFUSE/RECYCLING	7,954,543	8,320,188	365,645	4.60%	Includes \$70,000 increase for speed signs
18					

2025 Operating Proposed Expenses

		2025 VS 2024 VARIANCE			
		INC (DEC)			
		2024 ADOPTED BUDGET	2025 PROPOSED BUDGET	\$	%
				EXPLANATION OF VARIANCE	
19	NON DEPARTMENTAL:				
20	CONTINGENCY	300,000	300,000	-	0.00%
	RETIREE HEALTH INSURANCE	2,288,246	2,239,530	(48,716)	-2.13%
21					Health insurance premiums increased 12% with 138 retirees on the City Health Insurance plan, 20 fewer than last year
22	INSURANCE	793,126	845,713	52,587	6.63%
23	TRANSIT SUBSIDY	745,925	745,925	0	0.00%
24	GENERAL EXPENSE	1,904,422	2,061,982	157,560	8.27%
25					
26	TOTAL OPERATING EXPENSES	\$ 63,719,148	\$ 67,623,268	\$ 3,904,120	6.13%
27					Personel costs account for \$2,994,008 of the \$3,758,715 increase which is 75%
28	DEBT SERVICE EXPENSES	\$ 8,650,000	\$ 8,650,000	\$ -	0.00%
29					Increased debt service expenses due to increased borrowing in recent years
30	TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 72,369,148	\$ 76,273,268	\$ 3,904,120	5.39%
31					
32	NEW POSITION REQUESTS NOT INCLUDED IN ABOVE NUMBERS:				
33	General Government			46,334	
34	Special Revenue Fund			0	
35	Enterprise Funds			22,661	
36	Total new position costs			\$ 68,995	

City of La Crosse, Wisconsin
Proposed Adjustment to Authorized FTE List - 2025 Operating Budget

January 1 Hires							
General Fund							
<u>Department</u>	<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Request Type</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Salary Expense</u>	<u>Benefits Expense</u>	<u>Total Expense</u>	<u>Net Position Cost</u>
Human Resources	Employee Safety and Risk Specialist*	New Position	10	\$ 48,452	\$ 19,530	\$ 67,982	\$ 67,982
<i>* NOTE: Position is funded 25% enterprise fund departments and 75% by General Fund Departments</i>						Subtotal Human Resources	\$ 67,982
Information Technology	Senior Support Technician**	New Position	9	\$ 60,364	\$ 25,396	\$ 85,760	\$ 85,760
Information Technology	IT Enterprise Services Manager	Release Position	13	\$ (79,156)	\$ (28,252)	\$ (107,408)	\$ (107,408)
<i>**New Senior Support Technician position is being funded by the elimination of the IT Enterprise Manager position</i>						Total Informaiton Technology	\$ (21,648)
Net New Position Cost to General Fund							\$ 46,334
Special Revenue Fund							
<u>Department</u>	<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Request Type</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Salary Expense</u>	<u>Benefits Expense</u>	<u>Total Expense</u>	<u>Net Position Cost</u>
La Crosse Center	Banquet Cook	New Position+	3	\$ 40,257	\$ 22,339	\$ 62,596	\$ -
La Crosse Center	LTE	Reduce		\$ (62,596)		\$ (62,596)	
<i>+The Banquet Cook position cost is funded by reductions in LTE labor.</i>						Total La Crosse Center	\$ -
Enterprise Fund							
<u>Department</u>	<u>Position Title</u>	<u>Request Type</u>	<u>Grade</u>	<u>Salary Expense</u>	<u>Benefits Expense</u>	<u>Total Expense</u>	<u>Net Position Cost</u>
Human Resources	Employee Safety and Risk Specialist*	New Position	10	\$ 16,151	\$ 6,510	\$ 22,661	\$ 22,661
						Subtotal Human Resources	\$ 22,661
Total Enterprise Funds Cost							\$ 22,661

Expenditure Restraint Program

1	2024 Adjusted Operating Budget	\$ 63,598,617
2	Allowable increase Percent provided DOR (CPI)	3.10% <i>Projected</i>
3	Allowable increase Amount	<u>1,971,557</u>
4	2025 Allowable Operating Budget	<u>\$ 65,570,174</u>
5		
6	2025 Adjusted Proposed Operating Budget	<u>\$ 67,500,268</u>
7	2025 Over/(Under) Expenditure Restraint	<u>\$ 1,930,094</u>

Levy Limits

1	2023 Payable, 2024 Actual Levy after Adjustments	\$ 36,247,494
2	Net New Construction Adjustment (0.94%)	<u>370,197</u>
3	2025 Allowable Levy Limit	<u>36,617,691</u>
4		
5	2025 Proposed Levy w/o TID Levy	<u>42,798,276</u>
6		
7	Amount Proposed Levy Over/(Under) Levy Limit	<u>6,180,585 *</u>

*There is available capacity to increase the levy due to unused Debt Levy Limits

Mill Rate Comparison

		Budget Year		Year over Year Tax \$ Impact	Year over Year % change
		2025	2024		
		2024 Tax Yr	2023 Tax Yr		
1	Operating Levy excl. TID	\$ 34,148,276	\$ 30,732,625	\$ 3,415,651	11.11%
2	Capital Debt Levy	8,650,000	8,650,000	0	0.00%
3	City Assessed Value	4,867,431,500	4,841,745,600	25,685,900	0.53%
4	Mill Rate for Operating & Debt Levy	0.0087927844	0.0081339724	0.000658812	8.10%
5					
6	Total Levy calculation for Operations, TIDs and Capital Debt:				
7	Operating Levy incl. TID	\$ 40,258,945	\$ 36,839,709	\$ 3,419,236	9.28%
8	Capital Debt Levy	8,650,000	8,650,000	0	0.00%
9	City Assessed Value	4,867,431,500	4,841,745,600	25,685,900	0.53%
10	Mill Rate for Total City Levy Amount	0.0100482041	0.0093953117	0.000652892	6.95%
11					
12	Real Estate Residential Tax Estimate	2024 Tax Yr	2023 Tax Yr	Year over Year Tax \$ Impact	Year over Year % change
13	Property Taxes on \$150,000 Home	\$ 1,507.23	\$ 1,409.30	\$ 97.93	6.95%

Mill Rate Comparison

	Budget Year						
	2024			2023			
Total Levy calculation for Operations, TIDs and Capital Debt:							
Total City Levy Amount	\$	45,731,035	\$	45,489,709	\$	241,326	0.53%
City Assessed Value		4,867,431,500		4,841,745,600		25,685,900	0.53%
Mill Rate for Total City Levy Amount		0.0093953115		0.0093953117		(0.000000000)	(0.00%)

		2024 Tax Year		2023 Tax Year		Year over Year Tax \$ Impact	Year over Year % change
5	Real Estate Residential Tax Estimate						
6	Property Taxes on \$150,000 Home	\$	1,409.30	\$	1,409.30	\$ (0.00)	(0.00%)

Scenario #1

11	Proposed City Levy Amount	\$	48,908,945
12	Total City Levy Amount with NO MILL RATE INCREASE	\$	45,731,035
13	Amount needed to Decrease Levy by to Hold Mill Rate	\$	3,177,910

Scenario #2

17	Total City Assessed Value Required for Proposed Levy and no mill rate increase	\$	5,205,675,741
18	Actual Assessed Value Increase from 2022 TY to 2023 TY	\$	25,685,900
19	Additional Assessed Value Increase needed to hold Mill Rate with proposed levy	\$	338,244,241

City of La Crosse
2025 Operating Budget Preliminary Estimate
6/25/2024

1	2024 Adopted Operating Expenses:	\$	72,369,148	2024 Operating Budget-Pg 5
2	Estimated Expense Adjustments for 2025:			
3	Projected Salary & Benefit Increase for Non-represented Employees		208,065	Annual merit (step) increases & related benefits
4	Across the Board pay adjustments		591,280	Possible 3% cost of living adjustment if budget allows
5	Projected Salary & Benefit Increase for Union Employees		566,284	Fire 3% (2% increase Jan 1, 1% increase July 4), Police CBA 4% 1/1/25
6	Health Insurance Premium Increase		803,000	10% Health Insurance rate Increase for Active & Retiree Health Insurance
7	Waste & Recycling Contract CPI Adjustment		92,000	4-5% CPI increase on recycling and waste contracts
8	Wisconsin Retirement System Rate Adjustment		242,675	Estimated Non-Rep/Elected Officials 0.1% Increase, PD 1.0% increase, and FD 1.0% increase
9	Fuel		64,462	Increase in Prices. Gas up 3%. Quantity contracted up 5%.
10	Electricity		35,000	Estimated 3% increase in rates for 2025
11	Natural Gas		9,000	Estimated 3% increase for 2025
12	Water		23,546	Estimated 30% rate increase subject to PSC approval
13	Sanitary Sewer		-	No expected increase in rates for 2025
14	Storm Water		37,347	Estimated 100% rate increase
15	Property & Liability Insurance Premium Increases		55,859	2025 Premium estimates provided by WMMIC on 5/20/24
16	Additional Debt Service Expenses		750,000	
17	Elections		(50,000)	Decreased for 2 fewer elections in 2025
18	Subtotal Estimated 2025 Expense Adjustments Increase/(Decrease)		3,428,517	4.74% Increase in Expenditures from 2024 budgeted (Row 1) to 2025 Estimated (Row 21)
19	Total 2025 Estimated General Fund Budget Expenses		75,797,665	Operating Expenses & Debt Service Expenses
20				
21	2024 Adopted <u>Non-levy</u> Operating Revenues:		32,986,523	2024 Operating Budget-Pg 4
22	Estimated Revenue Adjustments for 2025:			
23	Increased Shared Revenue		200,000	Estimated increase of shared revenue
24	One Time Revenues			One time revenues used to balance the Operating Budget
25	Fund Balance		1,520,000	Expected decrease of ARPA funds used in the Operating Budget from \$2.25M (2024) to \$1.52M (2025)
26	ARPA Funds		(2,250,000)	Expected decrease of ARPA funds used in the Operating Budget from \$2.25M (2024) to \$1.52M (2025)
27	Subtotal Estimated 2025 Revenue Adjustments Increase/(Decrease)		(530,000)	
28	Total 2025 Estimated General Fund Budget Revenues		32,456,523	
29	Estimated 2025 General Fund Net Levy	\$	43,341,142	Levy for Operating Expenses & Debt Service Payments
30	2024 Adopted City General Fund Levy (Excluding TID)	\$	39,382,625	
31	Net City Levy Excluding TID Increase/(Decrease) 2025 vs 2024		3,958,517	Difference Row 29 vs. Row 30
32	Estimated Allowable Net New Construction (NNC) Increase		254,983	Placeholder using 2024 NNC amount
33	Net City Levy Excluding TID Increase/(Decrease) 2025 vs 2024 including NNC	\$	3,703,534	Increase would represent 11.41% of 2025 Estimated Operating Revenues



CITY OF LA CROSSE

2025 OPERATING BUDGET

BOARD OF ESTIMATES & COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE

Common Council Chambers

Board of Estimates Work Sessions:

Department Budget Overview and Discussion of Budget Changes:

5:00pm - Thursday, September 5, 2024

2:00pm - Friday, September 6, 2024 (if necessary)

Board of Estimates:

Discussion/Review/Finalization of Recommended Operating Budget:

2:00 p.m. Monday, October 7, 2024 – work session/adopt Board of Estimates recommended budget

2:00 p.m. Tuesday, October 8, 2024 (if necessary) – work session/adopt Board of Estimates recommended budget

Saturday, October 26, 2024 – publish proposed budget (Tribune requires copy by noon on October 25, 2024)

Common Council Operating Budget Discussion and Adoption:

City Hall - Council Chambers

6:00 P.M. Monday, November 18, 2024 – Public Hearing – Special Common Council Meeting to adopt budget

6:00 P.M. Tuesday, November 19, 2024 (if necessary) – Public Hearing – Special Common Council Meeting to adopt budget

The Board of Estimates may convene in closed session pursuant to Sec. 19.85 (1) (c) and (e), Wis. Stats., if compensation and bargaining sessions require a closed session. Following any closed session, the Board may reconvene in open session. The Board reserves the right to make minor adjustments to the above schedule.

From: Julie Hatfield <jhatfiel@lacrossesd.org>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 8:14 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Public Library programming

Some people who received this message don't often get email from jhatfiel@lacrossesd.org. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello Council Members-

I am a 2nd grade teacher at Emerson Elementary and wanted to take a minute to reiterate how important the partnership between the school district and the public library has been. We have been blessed to be able to showcase the wonderful resource right in our community to students who may not have otherwise been interested in entering the library. The Library Star Program for second graders has really increased the interest in the library. It has allowed students to have common conversations, meeting spots outside of the school day, resources to share with their families and of course unlimited books to have in their hands. We are forever grateful for this partnership and strongly hope that you will consider keeping this gem of a program when doing your budgets in the future. Thanks!

--

Julie Hatfield
Emerson Elementary
2nd Grade

From: Mary E Stolder <mestolder@viterbo.edu>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 7:30 AM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Funding for La Crosse Public Library

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Dear Mayor and City Council Members:

The Friends of the La Crosse Public Library (FLPL) is a nonprofit organization with a mission of making funds available for special needs beyond the library budget. As board members, we are concerned that the annual library operating budget cannot already support the level of library programming offered, which is instead funded through the Friends and other donated monies.

Friends have expanded financial support to include furnishings, professional development, and other costs no longer supported through the operating budget. While we are committed to supporting special projects and programs, much of the work of the library revolves around programming and services and we believe that the community deserves a library that is consistently and fairly supported by their tax dollars. Our organization is unable to expand to fund staffing costs, which is the greatest expenditure of the library's operating budget.

More than ever, libraries are more than books, more than google, more than what is available for free online. The La Crosse Public Library provides job help, a connection to community, a "third space," and the only daytime option for the unhoused. Library patrons rely on the library for accurate and authoritative information and to help navigate the new reality of technology.

Please consider the value of the La Crosse Public Library in your budgetary decisions.

Mary Ellen Stolder, PhD, RN, ANP-BC, PMHNP-C
President :The Friends of the La Crosse Public Library (FLPL)
Viterbo University
College of Nursing and Health
Dean Emerita (retired)
mestolder@viterbo.edu

Craig, Sondra

From: Brian Merkey <brian.merkey@mac.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 6:06 AM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: What the Library Means to Us

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Dear Mr. Mayor and Council Members,

I am writing to ask you to ensure strong funding for the La Crosse Public Library as you work on the upcoming budget.

In today's world there remain few places that are truly open to all, and the library is foremost among these. The La Crosse Public Library in particular lives this mission deeply, and the library staff do the hard work to connect community members in all sorts of ways, including offering books and engaging programming for people of all ages, offering shared community spaces such as the Creation Space, and offering shared resources such as the Tool Library and, once again, the books. The library and its programs bring people together in a way that few other places are able to do, and it brings people together in service of a higher ideal: growth, and learning, and humanity. It would be easy for library staff to focus on the library's traditional role as a book lender, but we are blessed that our library staff choose to put their energy into something larger, something with true civic impact. All of us in La Crosse are better for this.

Speaking personally, it is hard to overstate the impact that this library system has had on our family. When our boys were young the story times were a chance to connect with other families, and as they grew they could start giving back by working as volunteers. From this they learned that a library (and other institutions) won't run automatically, and that it takes real energy and real time by real people to make something that matters to the community. What a lesson to learn at a young age! We now have two sons participating in the Teen Advisory Council, where once again they see the role that commitment, energy, and community play in their lives. These critical lessons in civics are made real to them by these opportunities.

As budget discussions proceed we ask that you ensure robust funding for library staff, programs, and facilities. Our own personal lives are richer, and our community stronger, for having a vibrant library in La Crosse, and so much depends on keeping it strong going forward.

Thank you.

Brian Merkey

Craig, Sondra

From: The Motherhood Collective La Crosse <themothhoodcollectivelax@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 11:29 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Support for La Crosse Public Library

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Hello Mayor Reynolds and City Council Members,

I am humbled to be one of the La Crosse Public library's many community partners. I am the owner of [The Motherhood Collective](#) a local, small business, dedicated to supporting mothers and families. We are proud to offer family and children's yoga classes at the library free of cost to participants thanks to the funding provided to the library. It's always a privilege to be able to bring programming to the La Crosse public library, as it removes barriers and allows families who may not be able to attend classes at the studio to be able to attend valuable and supportive classes at the library for free. It truly takes a village to raise children and the library provides much needed classes, events, and community resources to families of every walk of life in La Crosse.

The La Crosse Public Library serves the needs of so many families in our area. Their budget simply cannot continue to get cut as they are a life-line for many. I ask you to reconsider your plans to cut the operating budget of the library this year and instead consider other areas that are not so valuable to the community.

Our children are our future, please continue to invest in the future of La Crosse and the La Crosse Public Library.

Thank you for your consideration.

With gratitude,
Emily Sustar

--

Emily Sustar
RYT 500 / RPYT
Founder / teacher
[The Motherhood Collective](#)

on IG: @themothhoodcollectivelax
[The Motherhood Collective](#)

Craig, Sondra

From: Alivia Miller <aliviajmiller@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 11:00 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Public Library

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Hello La Crosse Council,

I am writing this email as a last-ditch effort in hopes of delaying any budget cuts that will impact our community's libraries. Growing up in the La Crosse area; the library was a monumental part of my childhood. It was not only a safe place, but truly a magical place during those developmental years. I remember taking cooking classes, partaking in summer reading activities and of course reading! As I got older the library became a place to study while in College. Upon graduating, I use it to continue my passion for reading. It positively impacts people in every stage of life. I'm sure my memories of the library is much like others in the community, or even your own. As it is a vital part of the La Crosse community and especially important to our youth. I understand budget cuts are necessary, but this is obviously not the place they should be made.

Kind Regards,
Alivia Miller

Craig, Sondra

From: Kyle Willoughby <willough.kyle@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 7:59 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Public Library Funding

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Hello,

I wanted to put in writing my support for the La Crosse Puic Library and all of the services they currently offer and provide.

I currently attend the public library events when my schedule allows and frequently recommend them to others in conversation.

Additionally, I use the library for research into local history, digital collections, and tool rental resources. This is a free resource that not only benefits me but literally everyone I know.

I respectfully request that you continue providing funding for the library in its current compacity. I was very disappointed that the South Side Library had to close its doors, I don't want that to happen to the Main Library.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Kyle Willoughby

From: Alysa Remsburg <aremsburg@uwlax.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 10:35 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Support for public library

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Dear Mary Reynolds and the La Crosse City Council,

I respect that you have very difficult decisions to make about the city budget. I'd like to voice my support for maintaining strong budgetary support of our public library.

I know of no other place where all types of people are welcomed: a place where we can share resources, knowledge, skills, safety, and community. This space promotes inclusion and support for all ages. The staff provide outstanding, reliable services. I learn from many diverse events at the library and had my adolescent son volunteer there for his first independent volunteer "job."

The Regional Reads events were important opportunities to bridge new connections in the community because the library has such a wide audience of followers. I was honored to volunteer with excellent library staff in planning some of the events. I send UWL students to community events at the library, and I've had UWL students partner with library staff in service-learning opportunities.

UWL's Students for Sustainability club recently celebrated the Tool Library and Maker's Space opportunities, and I will begin to promote these resource in my courses. The library's work in pooling our resources and knowledge contributes a great deal to community resilience and sustainability. I believe this is a cost-effective investment in a strong community.

I know of friends who moved away to larger cities who greatly miss the La Crosse Public Library. I know of others who live outside of our city so they can pay lower taxes. One of the reasons I choose to live in the city is because I value easy access to the place, materials, and events at our exceptional public library.

With much pride in our city,
Alysa Remsburg

Dr. Alysa Remsburg (she, her)

Teaching Professor, Sustainability & Environmental Studies Program
University of Wisconsin- La Crosse
Office: 4106 Centennial Hall (enter through 4102)
608-785-5250 aremsburg@uwlax.edu

Craig, Sondra

From: HARPER ANNABELLE SOLVERSON <hsolv609@lacrossesd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 9:49 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Public Library

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Dear City Council Members,

I am a student at Central High School and the La Crosse Public Library has always been a very safe and inclusive space for my friends, family and I to go and work, read, or just to check out books. I have been involved in many teen programs at the library since I started 7th grade. The library has always been a great place for the community to get together and to really feel involved in something. The library provides important educational and social opportunities to our community. One of my concerns with cutting the budget is that many aspects of the library that bring our community together would be limited and cut down. Please keep our library the safe and welcoming place it is for everyone and don't cut the budget.

Sincerely,
Harper Solverson

Craig, Sondra

From: Ellen Rozek <ellen.rozek@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 9:31 PM
To: ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch
Subject: Public Library Funding

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To whom it may concern:

The Public Library is one of the community institutions that I value the most as a resident of the city of La Crosse. I am a professional working as faculty in Higher Education as well as a divorced mother of two school aged children. It is a privilege to have a library with so many resources. My children and I access library materials, services, and events on a weekly basis throughout the year, with more frequent use over the summer.

It is a joy that my children know the staff and the staff KNOW them. My kids are building skills about literacy/self-advocacy (asking a librarian for help finding books)/creativity/tolerance/joy, feeling safe, and learning so much. I regularly bring my guests and visitors to the library as part of their stay in La Crosse - they are often impressed. It would be devastating to lose library funding.

The library is a civic institution that supports every person of every ability. It is a truly communal space and I have witnessed so much joy, compassion, and collaboration at our public library. Please consider the value of this space and the people who serve there!

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with questions.

Sincerely,
Ellen Rozek
erozek@uwlax.edu
414-588-3330

From: Kali Brokaw <kali.brokaw@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 9:11 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: What Matters Most, Budget 2025

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Hello. My name is Kali Brokaw. I have the privilege of working at the La Crosse Public Library. Every day that I show up to work, I feel like a lucky human because I make money taking care of books.

Well, that's not true. It's much more than books. A huge part of what Library Staff do on a daily basis is care for people. Whether it be by remembering a regular patron's favorite author or by providing socks and a snack to a friend whose toes are cold and belly is empty, Library Staff go out of our way to make sure people feel seen and heard.

The Library provides knowledge, resources, and communal space not only for La Crosse residents, but for folks passing through town. It's rare to find a place to merely exist. Libraries are special in that you can just. be. there. for FREE, courtesy of taxpayers, donors, grants, and the grit of volunteers.

One time, I happened to be stuck in Anoka, MN and didn't have data access. What I did have, though, was access to their public library, complete with WiFi (and a bathroom!) Having a place to sit and collect my bearings made all the difference for me that day. If LPL's 2025 budget is cut, it's likely open hours will shorten, leaving folks without similar sanctuary.

Last year the Library sacrificed an entire branch to keep its employees safe. It's unlikely the Library Board could make the same choice a second time. And if they did? Many of us would lose sleep knowing it was the North Branch or us.

I am who I am as an adult because I spent so much time as a kid visiting the South Branch with my Mom. Us Library Kids, we look up at the world, engage with the people around us, and ask questions. We're curious. We're eager. We're excited to be here. Library Staff (who we know by name, and they know us by name too!) lovingly and deliberately craft programs for us. These programs offer enrichment and education for everyone. The future depends on kids observing and responding to the environment around them in a thoughtful, intentional way. What better place to learn those skills than a public library? I hope for a future where there is even more La Crosse Public Library can offer to the kids of tomorrow.

I know money is tight. I know budgets have to be cut. I know when faced with a lineup of Police - Fire - Water - Library, it would be easy to write off the Library as "just books." In 2024, though, Libraries are as vital to the overall health of a community as any other City Department. Libraries aren't made of books; Libraries are made of people. Everybody benefits from a common space where people can be people, together. In making your budgetary decisions, please consider that police officers, firefighters, and wastewater treatment workers are, by simple virtue of being people, part of the Library too. Funding the Library is essential to continuing forward as a united community, and THAT is what matters most to me.

Thank you for your time. I appreciate the careful guidance you provide this city and the humans who live here.

-Kali Brokaw
Library Assistant

P.S. And, yes, there's also books. And movies. And computers. And art supplies. And tools you can rent. Did you know the Library has a pressure washer you can borrow? Yeah, we do. Come check it out sometime!

Craig, Sondra

From: Courtney Daniels <courtliil@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 8:01 PM
To: ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch
Subject: Harrison Burke (8yrs old) - Library support

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The library is my happy place. It has so many good books for people to read. The librarians are kind and help me find things that are interesting to me.

I want to say "thank you" for all the kindness that they give to me.

I would feel very sad if the library didn't have what it needs to do things like Pokemon club and the creation space. We do fun stuff as a family and the library means a lot to me.

Please support the library.

Harrison Burke

- Courtney Daniels Burke
La Crosse resident

From: Audrey B <audreyb316@icloud.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 7:59 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Public Library

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Hello, thank you for taking the time to read this email. I would like to address the plan to cut part of the La Crosse public library's budget. I have been going to the library since I was four years old, and it is how I got my love of reading. It has not only affected my life positively, but it has also made many adults and kids lives easier and more enjoyable. Along with books the library has events that kids and adults of all ages can enjoy. With a budget cut there is a high chance a lot of these events will disappear as well. The library provides a safe place for people who might not have one. Recently they have been working to upgrade the teen section and providing more necessities for those who can't get them at home. If a budget cut were to occur they would have to stick to the bare minimum for books, events, and materials for kids and adults alike. I believe cutting the budget would impact the library negatively, and it should be reconsidered.

Thank you again for taking the time to read my opinion about this situation.

Sincerely,
Audrey.B

From: SAMUEL VICTOR ROSENSTEIN <srose319@lacrossesd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 7:15 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library Budget Cuts

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Dear City of La Crosse,

I am a sophomore at Logan High School who is a part of the Teen Council at the La Crosse Public Library. Recently, I became informed of the impending budgets cuts that are likely facing the library and could result in staff getting laid off. I'm writing this e-mail to try to convince you to consider the impact that the library has on the community. My family and I, along with many others, have spent a lot of time at the establishment and find it an important part of La Crosse. I realize that some budget cuts need to happen, but I hope you attempt to keep the cuts to the library at a minimum. Thank you!

Sincerely,

Samuel Rosenstein

Craig, Sondra

From: Tony Flottmeyer <flottmeyeranthony1@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 6:52 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library funding

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Dear Sirs:

As a civilized society, there are basic necessities, and there are priorities within the governing systems. One of the most essential ideas of early philosophers was the education of the populace, this is accomplished by many essential services, but a key is the funding of libraries. Libraries in La Crosse have increased both their functions and their services, but have never required the increase of funding for these services, the libraries have survived the cuts but they have also increased their services. Funding for these services have become thus a win win for monies put there.

Sincerely,

Anthony R. Flottmeyer
1 6085187084

Craig, Sondra

From: Beth Marie Hall <hallbethmarie@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 5:51 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: City Budget

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As the budget for the city is expected to be established for the coming year, I wanted to share those services that the city provides that our family loves and uses regularly.

First of all, we cherish our public library! I'm saddened that we no longer have the South side Library, however we are fortunate to have such robust library services at our main branch in addition to high quality media. My children regularly attend the teen events such as D & D and nerf battles. My youngest daughter loves spending time in the creation space. I've always enjoyed the story times for children and would visit weekly with my daycare children. Please continue to fully fund our library!

Additionally, we wouldn't know what to do without our public pools. Our family missed Erickson pool so much this past season! It's close to our home and provides many fun pool features for children. I enjoy Memorial pool for adult lap swimming. Having pools in neighborhoods with different focuses for patrons makes so much sense! Please continue to fund (and keep open) our city's three pools.

Lastly, our city's extensive park and trail system make La Crosse such a wonderful place to live and raise a family. I grew up in the country but feel that living in the city of La Crosse allows for so many opportunities to enjoy outdoor spaces that I never long for green space! When I need to feel like I'm in the woods, I'll grab my dog and go explore one of our many trails, such as one at Hixon Forest or on top of Easter Rd. I love that there are so many parks sprinkled in my neighborhood, too! We enjoy small parks like Verchota Park (affectionately called little park by us), the ball fields at Erickson park with their huge Eastern white pines to climb, and Chad Erickson park with its fishing pond.

Please consider these beautiful things that make La Crosse special in your next budget!

Beth Marie Hall

Call/Text (608) 738-2311

From: Shannon Columb <shannon.columb@outlook.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 5:43 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Public Library Strengthens Our Community

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Dear Mayor Reynolds and City Council members,

Libraries have played an integral role throughout my life, and I am reaching out to share my support for the La Crosse Public Library.

I've lived in several cities across Wisconsin, and La Crosse's library has been one of the most active libraries I've seen in the community. Libraries are more than a space to borrow books. They foster community, promote lifelong learning, and sustain and provide resources and programs that are essential for people of all ages to enhance their skills and knowledge.

The libraries throughout La Crosse offer a third space for our community. These spaces, that are free, and open to the public, are hard to come by in any community. Third spaces are critical for a community's well-being, especially now – when there are higher rates of loneliness and self-isolation.

The array of programs that the La Crosse Public Library provides cater to every age. From toddlers to seniors, the schedule of events are consistent, and evolving. One unique thing I've noticed about the La Crosse Library events, that I haven't seen in other communities, is the outreach of programs. La Crosse's presence throughout the community is incredible, with programs being hosted in a variety of businesses – from breweries, to art galleries, to parks. Holding these events throughout the community, strengthens our community. It's a symbiotic relationship – where everyone benefits from these programs – the participants, library, and businesses.

Libraries are the backbone of a community, offering so many resources and programs for free. They are spaces where children grow, neighbors gather, and seniors thrive. The library is a place for everybody in the community, and ours in La Crosse – is truly one of a kind, and continues to evolve with our evolving community needs. The library makes La Crosse a better place to live.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Warm regards,

Shannon

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Craig, Sondra

From: Jess Witkins <jwitkins@selco.info>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 5:37 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse city budget

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Hello Mayor Reynolds and City Council Members,

My name is Jess Witkins and I am a resident of the city of La Crosse and have been for over 15 years. While I currently act as the library director for La Crescent Public Library, I began my library career at La Crosse Public Library 8 years ago and still use its collection and services.

I've seen firsthand while employed there how the city budget cuts to the library have impacted our public library over these recent years, resulting in the termination of 15 jobs and the closing of the South branch library. I've seen the budget reports and what a whopping increase the police department received in the past 2 years.

Given how closely I work with the La Crescent city council, and our city departments, I know how difficult balancing the budget can be. My hope is that as La Crosse continues to grow, with lots of young families as well as transient individuals, the financial resources provided by the city don't **ONLY** go to our police department, but to the public services that these individuals use weekly, if not daily, in many cases.

Despite their ongoing budget cuts, La Crosse Library has survived and thrived in an ever-adapting world. They've added their makerspace and brought in so many community members to share their skillsets in crafts and mending. They added a tool library, which alleviates so much cost and unnecessary waste.

They pro-actively work to build relationships with minority groups and those in lower economic status through hiring social workers, promoting diverse programs and collections, and having a diverse team themselves that represents the community we live in.

I was able to gain far more experience in my three years at LPL than any other professional job I've had. They are fantastic at working with their staff and the public. But if you want to maintain the level of programming and intentional services they offer, you've got to fund them!

It is my hope that you show them an increase in funding if at all possible, or at the very least do not further cut from our basest of public services where all are welcome. They should be a partner and a place to promote. It's more than time other departments are asked to fund all they do with a Friends group or a bake sale or they should hunt for grants. If you wouldn't tell them to do that, then it's not equitable to tell the library they must operate this way.

Please know the La Crosse Public Library is a valued place by many in this community.

Thank you for your time,
Jess Witkins

--

Jess Witkins
Library Director
La Crescent Public Library
(507)895-4047
jwitkins@selco.info

From: Levi Bray <levireedbray@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 5:36 PM
To: ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch
Subject: La Crosse Public Library budget cuts

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Hello all, I am reaching out in hopes to help push you all to the decision of NOT cutting the libraries funding for 2025. Libraries everywhere are such an incredible safe haven and place of learning for so many people. Many resources and tools unavailable to individuals can be found at the library. A friend of mine put it in a great way, a library is one of the last places in the US where you can go and not be expected to purchase a single thing, you can just be and learn whatever you would like at your own pace. Learning new things and new skills is such an incredible part of life and libraries are some peoples only way of expanding their knowledge on any topic in a productive way. The library system is already hurting after the south branch was stripped away from the area, making multiple lives harder in the process. I don't know why budget cuts get made to such a valuable place within the community but it's incredibly sad and I hope that you all can understand why the library is so important and that it needs to keep the funding it has or add more funding, because there really isn't any negative outcome when you provide a safe place to learn and grow as people. Thank you.

Yours truly, a man of the community

From: Kate Olsen <kate.e.blakeley@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 5:26 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Please Fund Public Libraries

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Mayor Reynolds and Members of Council,

I am writing to encourage you to increase (or at the very least, maintain) funding for the public library as you determine the budget for the coming year. While I am no longer a resident of the city of La Crosse, we still visit the city several times every week, and those visits are almost always initiated because of a library event. Their extensive programming is a huge draw for us, and even when there isn't a special event, the services the library offers on a regular basis are tremendously valuable to my entire family. Why should the opinion of a non-resident matter to you? Because every time we come into town to visit the library, we spend money in La Crosse that would otherwise have gone to neighboring cities. While in La Crosse we eat at restaurants, do our grocery shopping, get gas and snacks, and explore all the fun downtown has to offer. Without the library, I can guarantee we would do those things just 10 minutes from home in Sparta rather than making the 40 minute drive to La Crosse and our favorite library. Please maintain or increase funding for the library to guarantee that the thousands of dollars we currently spend continue going to La Crosse businesses.

I appreciate your consideration.

Regards,
Kate Olsen

From: Henry Merkey <henry.merkey@icloud.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 5:24 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Support the Library!

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Dear Mayor Reynolds and City Council members,

My name is Henry Merkey, and I am in Eighth grade at Longfellow Middle School. I have heard that there are going to be budget cuts to city departments, and I am asking you to try to make them light for the library. I really enjoy going to the library, and I know many of my peers enjoy it too. I believe it is an important part of the La Crosse community, and it has always felt important to me. Since I was 8 I have been able to volunteer there, with the exception of during the big wave of Covid-19. I have found it very fun and also find it as a good way to help my community out. I also feel that the staff there are some of the best humans I have ever met. They are always willing to help out whether I am trying to find a book, or telling me what to work on next. Again, I really hope that you do your best to make the budget cuts light for the library, as it is an important place in the community.

Sincerely,

Henry Merkey

From: Amy Merkey <amy.merkey@mac.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 5:23 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library Funding

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Dear Mr. Mayor and City Council Members,

Our family moved to La Crosse 13 years ago. We had two young children, and no immediate family in the La Crosse area. One of the first places we went to meet other families with kids and make parent connections was the library. For us, the library was a place of comfort in our new city, and a place for our boys to meet and play with other children. We found what we were looking for there and so much more.

As we put our roots down in La Crosse, and our family of four grew to a family of five, we took weekly, sometimes twice-weekly, trips to the library. We attended family story times and story times for littles. We took part in the summer reading program, and we still proudly display our Library Super Reader sticker on our front door. We have checked out SO many books to keep our boys busy at home. The Librarians, especially those in the Children's Department, have become our friends. They know our boys and know what they are interested in, and we've stayed in touch with those that have moved out of town.

Fast forward 13 years, and our family still visits the library as frequently as when the boys were little. Our oldest two participate in the Teen Advisory Council, and help out as library volunteers. This past summer they worked at many summer program events. They participate in Teen programs as well, from Nerf battles to D&D sessions. They feel like they belong at the library, and 100% it's the library staff that make them feel that way. For a Mom, there's not much more I could ask for than to know my kids feel welcome and loved at the library.

In our time in La Crosse we've seen the library change and adapt to meet the different needs of the community. In addition to the obvious role of providing books and media for the community to consume for free, we see that they also provide daytime shelter for the unhoused, and a safe place for kids to hang out after school. They provide snacks and toiletry items for those in need. As the demand for non-traditional library services grows in La Crosse, our hope is that the funding allotted the library to meet these new demands will grow as well. The essential needs of our community are not decreasing, and neither should the funding of the library system that does its best to meet all folks where they are.

For our family, the library has meant a safe place to play, a place to meet up with friends, a place to grow early literacy skills at story time, and a place to just hang out and be together. It's a place where we'll run into friends and neighbors. It's a place to find books of all types to meet ever-changing interests. It's a place where our boys can give back to an essential Third Place for our family, to ensure that it remains a Third Place for families for years to come.

Please consider the significance of the La Crosse Public Library to all in our community when working through city budgets, and continue funding this important institution as it should be funded.

Thank you for your consideration,

Amy Merkey
La Crosse Mom of 3

From: Ashley Schultz <aschultz@lacrossesd.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 4:19 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse School District and Public Library Partnership

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Dear City Council Members,

My name is Ashley Schultz and I am a Kindergarten teacher at Spence Elementary School. I am writing to you regarding the possible cuts with the operating budget which will in turn impact our partnership with the library.

I have been in the district for 12 years. Each year in January, we take our kindergarten students to the public library. Our students have always looked forward to this trip. Honestly, I look forward to it as well. Each year the library provides a wonderfully planned experience for our students. Many of our students have never been to the public library before and it is a brand new experience for them. The students are involved with listening to stories, singing songs, learning about the many activities the library offers, and they get a tour. In the spring, the library staff visits our school and the students learn about the summer reading program that is offered. I am impressed and very satisfied each and every year with both of these connections with the library and their staff. Their dedication and passion for the library shows. They instill an excitement and joy for reading and for the other library activities, which are fun to witness. I was devastated to hear that the community connection with the library and our district could end. I believe more than ever, now is the time to keep programs like this. Community connections with our schools and important public places in our city are crucial. Each year I learn things about the library as well. I hope that you consider what a loss this will be for our students and for the library if the elimination of this partnership happens. Thank you in advance for your consideration to keep this important community connection.

Ashley Schultz

From: Alice Benson <abenson59@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 4:16 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library services

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Dear Mayor Reynolds and City Council Members,

I'm writing to share with you that I believe public library services are crucial to our community. The services provided by our amazing public library are also very important to me, personally. I use the main branch library on a regular basis. I can request books through their website, the helpful staff then find those books in other branches, and let me know when the books are ready for me to pick up and read. I'm able to read whatever I want, because I have access to the library, many more books than I would ever be able to afford to buy.

I've attended many programs at the library and I've attended many valuable community meetings held at the library.

I'm very grateful to live in a city that values the services of our public library.

Sincerely,

Alice Benson
768 Hillview Avenue
La Crosse, WI 54601
608-792-8414

From: vick petrashek <vickchick1@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 4:02 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Budget

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Dear Mayor Reynolds and Council Members,

I am just writing to give a shout out to the La Crosse Public Library. We moved here five years ago and everything about La Crosse is truly wonderful but our favorite thing about La Crosse is the public library. The staff are kind, the events are creative and the atmosphere is welcoming. I encourage you to continue to support the library financially and maintain this incredible service.

Thank you for your time and for the work you do.

Sincerely, Vickie Petrashek

Craig, Sondra

From: Jennifer Sorenson <jen00pac@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 3:51 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Don't defund the library

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Please, please, please maintain current funding levels for the La Crosse Public library!!!! This library is such a valuable community resource and serves so many people in our community with not only books but space and resources to come together for community and educational programs and other events. It should be a priority to maintain and even increase funding for the library!

Jen Sorenson
333 22nd St S, La Crosse, WI

From: Elizabeth Bahr <elizabethperegrine@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 3:33 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Libraries - Why it matters to me.

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Hello!

I am Liz Bahr, a resident of La Crosse. I moved here 6 years ago and since have married my husband, bought a house and decided to raise our family in La Crosse.

We love the public library. I have been a lifelong library user and reader. Here are some things I have benefited from using the library.

- When I was doing my graduate degree, I was able to locate books through interlibrary loan for my research. I was doing my degree online, so I didn't have access to a campus library.
- We use the children's section multiple times a month with our toddler. We love that there is an indoor space where our child can explore and have positive and safe social interactions. We are especially thankful that the library is open later in the evenings and on the weekends, since both parents work full time.
- I have used the lunch for children during the summer for son.
- We regularly use the tool library for household projects.
- We attend children's programs as much as possible.
-

Please keep in mind when you are deciding funding for our community that the library plays a major role in the vitality of our community. It is a gathering place, a place for children to learn and for us adults to continue our learning. Part of why I love Lacrosse so much is the vibrant library that we have, their programming and their amazing staff.

--

Liz Bahr

Elizabethperegrine@gmail.com
(815)-757-2394

Craig, Sondra

From: Clay, Jared <jared.clay@redcross.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 3:32 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: American Red Cross Library Partnership

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Good afternoon,

My name is Jared Clay and I'm the local account manager for the American Red Cross in the La Crosse area.

This summer we have been partnering with the La Crosse Public library to host a series of Community Blood drives at the Library, I wanted to reach out because I was told about some budget cuts that will be hitting the library pretty hard for this next year and I wanted to let you know that our blood drives at the library have been making a difference in the lives of patients in need of Blood nationwide. Thanks to the generosity of the community and the library, we have been able to help over 100 patients in need just over the summer. With the support of the library as well as the City of La Crosse, I believe we can have a massive impact for patients in need.

I hope you will consider the impact we have had and will continue to have in your budget considerations. I also hope that we can continue to host blood drives at the La Crosse Public Library for years to come.

Thank you

Jared Clay
Account Manager I – Donor Recruitment
American Red Cross Blood Services
2927 Losey Blvd S, La Crosse, WI 54601
(608) 864-0826 (cell) jared.clay@redcross.org


From: Shanneon Grant <sgrant@lacrosselibrary.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 3:18 PM
To: Kahlow, Chris; ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch
Cc: ZZ Library Department Heads
Subject: Re: Why the letters supporting library funding?

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Thank you, Council President Kahlow and other members of Council that have reached out. To dispel any further rumors, I'm also sharing the library's social media post that simply restates our Mayor's video request to make priorities known to city leaders. I truly appreciate your time and support! - Shanneon

If you're a library lover, please consider reaching out to Mayor Reynolds and our La Crosse City Council and let them know that libraries are your priority! Time is short. Considerations about funding for 2025 and beyond will begin at the Board of Estimates meeting next week on September 5.

Email:
reynoldsm@cityoflacrosse.org and
zzcouncilmembers@cityoflacrosse.org

 **City of La Crosse,
Wisconsin is at Chad
Erickson Veterans
Memorial Park.**
4d · 🌐

Check out the latest update from

 Write a comm...   

Shanneon Grant [she/her] | Library Director
La Crosse Public Library | 800 Main Street | La Crosse, WI 54601
sgrant@lacrosselibrary.org | 608-789-7123
lacrosselibrary.org



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From: Kahlow, Chris <kahlowc@cityoflacrosse.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 10:19 AM
To: Shanneon Grant <sgrant@lacrosselibrary.org>; ZZ Council Members <ZZCouncilMembers@cityoflacrosse.org>; Mitch

Reynolds <reynoldsm@cityoflacrosse.org>

Cc: ZZ Department Heads <ZZDepartmentHeads@lacrosselibrary.org>

Subject: Re: Why the letters supporting library funding?

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Shanneon,

I have been getting questions as to why we're cutting the library! I understand the rumors now.

I appreciate the clarification and I'm hoping that the rumors are being dispelled that "we" are cutting library funding. I truly appreciate the library and the work it does for our community and the region. On a personal note, I use its resources weekly.

Best

Chris

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Shanneon Grant <sgrant@lacrosselibrary.org>

Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 10:16:00 AM

To: ZZ Council Members <ZZCouncilMembers@cityoflacrosse.org>; Reynolds, Mitch <reynoldsm@cityoflacrosse.org>

Cc: ZZ Library Department Heads <ZZDepartmentHeads@lacrosselibrary.org>

Subject: Why the letters supporting library funding?

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Council Members,

I understand there's been some enthusiastic communication from library supporters around the 2025 budget which has left a few of our city leaders wondering what that's all about. This is a response to the Mayor's request for feedback on budget priorities mentioned in his latest video message around minute mark 3:20.

The library shared the video on our social media platforms, along with a post letting library lovers know of this opportunity to express how they use and value library services. We are appreciative of the passion citizens have for our services and are grateful to be reminded of the library's impact in our city.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXVfKAJNZHw>



Mayor Mitch Reynolds Update 8 30 24

Happy Labor Day weekend to everyone. Your work is appreciated. Updates include: Progress for new housing in the city, bike laws and survey, budget choices and more.

www.youtube.com

Hope this sheds some light on the situation. We thought we understood the assignment to get the word out!

Thank you,
Shanneon

Shanneon Grant [she/her] | Library Director
La Crosse Public Library | 800 Main Street | La Crosse, WI 54601
sgrant@lacrosselibrary.org | 608-789-7123
lacrosselibrary.org



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From: Barmore, Frank <barmore.fran@eagle.uwlax.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 3:12 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Public Library

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Dear Mayor Reynolds,

The La Crosse Public Library is of enormous benefit to our community. It has already taken severe budget cuts to staff & operating budget, culminating in the loss of the South branch library. The Friends of the Library has provided many extras, but we still need the basics.

The Archives is very valuable and already has limited staff time. The Winding Rivers system is a wonderful connection but still needs local support. The library provides services essential to many. The computer access, creation space, tool lending library all help those citizens who are stretched thin. The adult & children's programming act as a centrally located community center.

We know the city budget is tight. But a cut in funding for the library would mean cuts in library services. Please don't cut its funding any further.

Thank you.
Concerned citizens,
Frank & Irene Barmore

Craig, Sondra

From: Jean Skemp <jeanmskemp@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 2:56 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library Support

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Please be generous to our LaCrosse public library as you relegate the funds that are so important to maintain its valuable functions in our community. I have enjoyed very frequent use of the library's wonderful resources during my 60 years of marriage and now my grandchildren are continuing to enjoy it, too!

Thank you for your anticipated support!

Jean Skemp --and Sam

From: Lindy Messerly <lindymesserly@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 2:40 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Public Library an invaluable gift

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Spend a day at the library and notice the transection of population. This is a public service for everyone. EVERYONE!
Library staff help me choose an eclectic selection from Feng Shui to the Viet Nam War (Healing Wounds) to The Life of a Geisha, and murder mysteries, Poetry, Science Fiction and Fantasy..
My life would be impoverished without access to fresh new and wonderful or old and classic BOOKS!

Stand apart close at heart.

From: Cindy Anderson <andercj58@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 2:27 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Public Library

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To Whom It May Concern,

My understanding is that the city council will be reviewing budget very soon. As a tax payer of many years, I realize that there are times when budget cuts are inevitable. I'm not sure what possible budget cuts you will be possibly making but I ask that you do not cut public library funding or its programs. We attend preschool story time regularly as well as many other family events.

Again, please do not cut public library funding or it's programs

Thank you
Cindy Anderson

Sent from my iPad

From: Dawn Hays <dawnhays68@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 1:51 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Public Library/Budget

Some people who received this message don't often get email from dawnhays68@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Greetings Mayor Reynolds and La Crosse City Council members. As you prepare to make difficult decisions regarding the upcoming budget, I encourage you to keep in mind the number of people who utilize the public libraries for a variety of reasons.

As a former early childhood educator in the City of La Crosse, I know firsthand the value of reading to young children in their early formative years. The libraries in La Crosse provide great services to families of young children to help them establish a firm foundation for years to come. Many families do not have financial resources to purchase their own books and games and they rely on the public library.

Additionally, I am avid reader, having read 100 books already this calendar year. At least 95% of the books I have read have been borrowed from the public library.

I have also attended several free events offered by the library, including enjoying storytimes with my grandson. Many of these events I would not have attended had there been a financial obligation for me.

To me and many other community members, these services are an incredibly important part of our lives, and one of the reasons we continue to call the Coulee Region our home. Please fund the library at a level that allows them to keep these services and the staffing required to operate them.

Sincerely,

Dawn Hays

From: Heidi Blanke <hblanke@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 12:08 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Public Library

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Dear Council Member,

I want to let you know how much I value all the services offered by our public library and am saddened by proposed cuts. Today's library is so much more than a place to get a book. I've checked out items from the Tool Library, assisted new sewers in the Creation Space and witnessed their delight in learning that skill, converted old slides and video to digital format using library resources, used the meeting rooms, and counted on Libby, the digital library, for audio books and many magazines.

Rarely a week goes by when I do not visit the library in person or online.

When I talk to people in other towns our size, they rarely have all the opportunities offered by our library.

Please take into consideration the vast ways our library serves the community when determining the budget.

Thank you,

Heidi Blanke

--
Heidi Griminger Blanke, Ph.D.
608-790-2138
525 S. 28th
La Crosse WI 54601

From: Hayley McMullen <rice.hayl@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 12:06 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Public Library Funding

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Mayor Reynolds and City Council,

I am writing to you as both an educator and a parent in regard to the funding cuts facing the public library here in La Crosse. The La Crosse Public Library has been a staple in my weekly routine with my three children for the past few summers (they are still pretty little). The amount of joy they get completing the monthly scavenger hunts, playing with the toys, finding new books, and interacting with the incredible librarians is always a bright spot in our week. I'm so grateful for all that my children have learned and gained from these experiences.

As an educator, the services and collaborations provided by the La Crosse Public Library provide students with unique opportunities to learn, grow, and interact with technology as they identify what they want to do beyond their high school career.

Please consider all the positive things the La Crosse Public Library employees bring to our community as you determine and allocate adequate funds. They are in need of funding to support their current staff who, in turn, support all of us.

Thank you,
Hayley McMullen
(952) 240-1095

Craig, Sondra

From: Becca Rickert <becca.rickert@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 12:04 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Public Library matters to me!

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To Whom this may concern,

I wanted to let you know how important the La Crosse Public library is to my family and to our community. I recognize there are many needs in our community that need resources. But I can't think of one that meets more needs than the public library. It is a place for exploration, growing, and fun! It is also a shelter for those who need resources, warmth, AC, or a place to sit for a few hours, or internet to communicate with loved ones. If you cut finances from the public library you impact every single pocket of our community and that would be such a detriment to our community at large.

Thank you.

Becca Rickert

From: Anthony, Anna M., R.N., I.B.C.L.C. <Anthony.Anna@mayo.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 12:02 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Support Library Programming and Budget

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Please consider maintaining the library budget and personnel to help support valuable programs offered by this organization. As a nurse at Mayo Clinic, I run a Mom Baby support group weekly. I have library staff as guest speakers to help highlight the valuable programs offered. I frequently have families attend library events where they help form their "village" and find much needed support during their baby's first year of life (and beyond!). To help continue this partnership and allow our community to thrive, please consider maintaining staff and current programming.

Thanks,

Anna Anthony RN BSN IBCLC | Lactation Consultant- SWWI | 608-392-9789 | Anthony.anna@mayo.edu
Mayo Clinic Health System | 700 West Ave So. | La Crosse, WI 54601 | mayoclinichealthsystem.org

From: Site Supervisor Allison <AllisonZ@headstartcr.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 11:40 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Public Libraries

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City Council Members of La Crosse,

I am reaching out to you today to advocate on behalf of the La Crosse Public Libraries.

It has come to my attention that the public libraries of La Crosse are facing the possibility of decreased funding. This decrease in funding could result in the library reducing staff and ultimately not having the staff necessary to continue with their community outreach work.

I am a supervisor for two of the Head Start programs in La Crosse. As you may already be aware, Head Start Child and Family Development Centers is committed to offering high quality pre school education to families living in poverty. For several years, our program has partnered with La Crosse Public Libraries to supply our classrooms with new books each month. The La Crosse Public Library has been transparent in communicating with their community partners that without the funding to properly staff these programs, they may not be able to continue this collaboration with us. I cannot begin to describe how important this service is to our teachers, students, and families. Children begin their relationship with learning and literature well before school age, because of the work the library does they are helping us to inspire students to have a love of reading early on. Our students have many barriers they will need to overcome as they grow, I am desperately hoping that access to literature does not have to be another one of these barriers. Literature provides us with so much; education, increased imagination, exposure to new cultures, ideas, and world views, even a temporary escape from our day to day lives. These are all things I want for our students to as they grow. I urge you to take our students and families into consideration when determining funding for La Crosse Public Libraries.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Respectfully,

Allison Zimmerman

Site Supervisor – Margaret Annett & Westby Centers
Head Start Child and Family Development Centers

Craig, Sondra

From: Nguyen, Linh <NguyenL@westerntc.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 10:46 AM
Subject: In support of the La Crosse Public Library

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To Mayor Reynolds and City Council Members,

My name is Linh Nguyen (she/her) and I serve as the Manager of Student Equity Initiatives at Western Technical College. I am writing to express my strong support for the continued and vigorous funding of our public library in light of the proposed budget cuts. Our La Crosse Public Library is a vital cornerstone of the community, providing invaluable resources, educational opportunities, and a welcoming space for all residents of varying identities and experiences.

Public libraries are more than just buildings filled with books; they are dynamic hubs that foster lifelong learning, support literacy and education, and provide essential services that strengthen our community. From early childhood literacy programs and after-school tutoring to job search assistance and access to technology, our library plays a crucial role in empowering individuals and families to achieve their goals.

For many in our community, the library is the only place where they can access the internet, borrow books, receive help with research and homework, or escape the heat/cold. It serves as a safe haven for children and teens after school, offers programs that connect people with similar interests, and helps bridge the digital divide for those who might otherwise be left behind in an increasingly digital world.

The La Crosse Public Library has been a prominent community partner to Western. We can always rely on the Library to talk about their services and programs at our annual Resource Block Party and our Family Night Out at the Children's Museum, and The Library has provided experiential learning opportunities for our Digital Media Productions Computer Support Specialist programs. As community members, my partner and I have been involved in several Library programs including History Club and serving as a regular reader at the Storytime for Adults series.

The proposed budget cuts would have a devastating impact on these services and, by extension, on the community as a whole. Reducing funding would not only diminish the resources available but would also send a message that education, literacy, and community engagement are not priorities. This would be a profound disservice to our community, particularly to those who rely most on the library's services.

I urge you to reconsider the proposed budget cuts and to recognize the immense value that our public library brings to the community. By investing in our library, we are investing in the future of our children, our economy, and the overall well-being of our community.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter. I hope that you will take into account the many benefits that our library provides and the long-term consequences that budget cuts would have.

Sincerely,



Linh Nguyen (Pronounced “Lin Win”)

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers [*What does this mean?*](#)

Manager of Student Equity Initiatives

The SPACE, Student Success Center, Room 222
Western Technical College
Phone : 608-789-6270

Individualization | Positivity | Achiever | Harmony | Arranger

From: Victor Macias-Gonzalez <vmacias-gonzalez@uwlax.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 10:42 AM
To: Reynolds, Mitch
Cc: ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Library Budget

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Dear Mayor Reynolds and City Council:

I am concerned about the state of the budget for the Public Library system. The library system's budget was cut in 2020 by 5%. That cannot happen again. I think that it is important to stress the great value and service that the libraries perform for our community as guardians of public memory and community heritage. The public library system—and particularly the Archives Department at the main library branch—are a valuable classroom for hundreds of young scholars in area middle and high schools, for college students, for faculty, and for community historians.

Every day, in addition to the many children who visit the library to work on homework and prepare book, science, and social studies reports for their classes, many of our students and faculty from UWL depend on the library's general collections—but particularly its Archives and Digital collections to advance our research and teaching. I regularly access the city directories, police records, and collections of old community group newsletters and mainstream newspapers to prepare my publications as well as to design community heritage tours. So do my students and colleagues. Faculty and students in our HIS 200, HIS 490, and HIS 320 courses, which focus on teaching research skills, writing, and local history projects, use it year-round.

The UWL Department of History regularly hosts National History Day—a regional competition with students from six school districts from middle and high schools—who work on local or regional history projects drawing on the wealth of materials at the Public Library and Archives. They need to access materials in the evenings, after school, when their teachers—and sometimes my faculty and students—make themselves available to help the young scholars to identify materials because no other regional libraries have the rich materials available there.

For faculty, community historians, genealogists, and hundreds of local school children and college students, the public libraries are a necessary service. For many people in the community, it is their source of recreational or up-lifting, edifying reading, music, and films—I can see why some would see this as merely a quality-of-life issue. But it is much, much more.

I urge you to see the library as a vital source of the raw materials through which we make sense of our past, understand it, reflect on it, and build a better future by uncovering untold or ignored stories, and studying topics, communities, and individuals otherwise deemed unworthy of study. Working in the archives helps our students to conduct important professional development activities—we fund an internship, for example, that allows an undergraduate to determine whether they would like to pursue a career in library and archival science—but also to reflect on their civic duty and to develop historical perspective.

Consider also how the library's collections and activities build our community's sense of belonging. It is a place where different ethnic communities feel welcome, where many types of enriching activities are organized that help newcomers and visitors learn about who we are and what we stand for. Consider, for example, the Archives' *Footsteps of La Crosse* walking tours about neighborhood architecture or the popular *Dark La Crosse* a podcast—which earned an important award just recently—that makes local history accessible. They organize lectures and film screenings that help the community observe heritage months like Hispanic Heritage Month or LGBTQ+ Pride. The Archives also help families

trace their history and help property owners research and restore their homes by placing them on the historic registry. You cannot do that anywhere else in town.

The library is a rich classroom and laboratory that allows us to encourage students to exercise historical thinking skills, to understand continuity and change, historical significance, causation, historical context, chronological reasoning, historical argumentation, synthesis, and to analyze different types of primary sources to enrich their interpretations of the past with different perspectives. This is what having access to the archives does for students; they cannot do it in the small libraries at the public schools, and they certainly cannot do it at home. Without access to the library, these students' parents would need to drive students to Madison or Saint Paul. If anything, we need to expand the hours that the Library is open, particularly its Archives Department, and increase the resources it has to increase the amount of materials accessible online. That is how unique and rich the archives and general collections at the La Crosse Public Libraries are.

The La Crosse Public Library enriches our community and provides the source material through which we can also market and attract tourism—and grow our economy. Look at all the work that *Hear, Here*, for example, does and the thousands of people that engage with it annually. None of that would be possible without the library. Rather than cut the library's resources, we need to expand its budget—and encourage better and more intentional collection of sources from our own present so that in the future the community can learn about the challenges we face and how we solve them. I urge you to advocate on behalf of the La Crosse Public Library and to consider the importance of its mission as an educational and cultural institution. If you have any questions, please let me know via e-mail: vmacias-gonzalez@uwlax.edu.

Sincerely,

VMMG



Víctor M. Macías-González,

Professor, History and Race, Gender, and Sexuality

Chair, Department of History | [UW-La Crosse](#)

vmacias-gonzalez@uwlax.edu | [608.785.8349](tel:608.785.8349) | 401A Wimberly

Hall



403J Wimberly Hall

1725 State Street

La Crosse, WI 54601

(608) 785-8349 vmacias-gonzalez@uwlax.edu

Chair, U.S. and Canada Organizing Committee, XVII Reunión Internacional de Historiadores de México, Veracruz, 2026

<https://xvireunion.utexas.edu/comite-organizador/>

Member, Committee on LGBT History <http://clgbthistory.org/>

Pronouns: He, Him, His

Website: <https://www.uwlax.edu/profile/vmacias-gonzalez/>



Craig, Sondra

From: Corinne Kenny <corinneqken@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 10:27 AM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: La crosse library important

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Good afternoon, my name is Corinne Dillman and I have been a community member of La Crosse since 2017. Through the years I have been at student at UWL, a substitute teacher in the La crosse school district, an instructor at UWL, and now a mom. The La crosse library has been essential to me during every single phase of my life. As a student, I utilized the space and the resources. As an instructor I encouraged my students to use the public library. Now, as a mom, the programming offered by the library system has shaped my weeks and how my daughter has grown, learned and socialized. These programs are so important and I beg that you continue to fund the library for the budget to continue to help those, in every stage of life.

Corinne Dillman

From: Kahlow, Chris
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 10:19 AM
To: Shanneon Grant; ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch
Cc: ZZ Library Department Heads
Subject: Re: Why the letters supporting library funding?

Shanneon,

I have been getting questions as to why we're cutting the library! I understand the rumors now. I appreciate the clarification and I'm hoping that the rumors are being dispelled that "we" are cutting library funding. I truly appreciate the library and the work it does for our community and the region. On a personal note, I use its resources weekly.

Best
Chris

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Shanneon Grant <sgrant@lacrosselibrary.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 10:16:00 AM
To: ZZ Council Members <ZZCouncilMembers@cityoflacrosse.org>; Reynolds, Mitch <reynoldsm@cityoflacrosse.org>
Cc: ZZ Library Department Heads <ZZDepartmentHeads@lacrosselibrary.org>
Subject: Why the letters supporting library funding?

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Council Members,

I understand there's been some enthusiastic communication from library supporters around the 2025 budget which has left a few of our city leaders wondering what that's all about. This is a response to the Mayor's request for feedback on budget priorities mentioned in his latest video message around minute mark 3:20.

The library shared the video on our social media platforms, along with a post letting library lovers know of this opportunity to express how they use and value library services. We are appreciative of the passion citizens have for our services and are grateful to be reminded of the library's impact in our city.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXVfKAJNZHw>



Mayor Mitch Reynolds Update 8 30 24

Happy Labor Day weekend to everyone. Your work is appreciated. Updates include: Progress for new housing in the city, bike laws and survey, budget choices and more.

www.youtube.com

Hope this sheds some light on the situation. We thought we understood the assignment to get the word out!

Thank you,
Shanneon

Shanneon Grant [she/her] | Library Director
La Crosse Public Library | 800 Main Street | La Crosse, WI 54601
sgrant@lacrosselibrary.org | 608-789-7123
lacrosselibrary.org



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From: Shanneon Grant <sgrant@lacrosselibrary.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 10:16 AM
To: ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch
Cc: ZZ Library Department Heads
Subject: Why the letters supporting library funding?

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www.youtube.com

Hope this sheds some light on the situation. We thought we understood the assignment to get the word out!

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Shanneon

Shanneon Grant [she/her] | Library Director
La Crosse Public Library | 800 Main Street | La Crosse, WI 54601
sgrant@lacrosselibrary.org | 608-789-7123
lacrosselibrary.org



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From: Thompson, Carrie <ThompsonC@westerntc.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 9:41 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Supporting the La Crosse Public Library

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Dear City Council –

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing on behalf of the Sustainability Institute to highlight the significant impact our local library has on our community and to advocate for continued funding and support.

Our library is much more than a place to borrow books; it is a vital community hub that strengthens resilience through robust partnerships and inclusive programs. The library's support and partnership to our initiatives like the [Green Goose Chase](#) and [Earth Fair](#)—demonstrate their commitment to fostering environmental stewardship and community engagement. We hear feedback every year from our participants of all ages that the Library mission for the Green Goose Chase is one of their favorites.

The library's role extends beyond individual events. It serves as a cornerstone of community resilience, offering resources and programs that address diverse needs. From educational workshops to collaborative projects with local organizations, the library plays a crucial role in building a more interconnected and supportive community.

Given these invaluable contributions, it is essential that we continue to invest in and support our local public library. Funding and support ensure that it can maintain its vital services, foster community connections, and drive positive change for a brighter and more sustainable future.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

SUSTAINABILITY  INSTITUTE

Carrie Thompson, Executive Director

sustaininstitute.com

Craig, Sondra

From: Ariel Beaujot <abeaujot@uwlax.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 9:26 AM
To: Reynolds, Mitch
Cc: ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Library Archives: A service that I use extensively and recomend funding

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Dear Mayor Reynolds,

I hope you are well. I wanted to send you a note about the importance of the La Crosse Public Library Archives for the *Hear, Here* project and most of my classes at UWL. I hope you and the city council members will take this into account as you decide on the 2025 budget.

The La Crosse Public Library Archives (LPLA) is a unique and important resource in our City that should be celebrated and continue to be funded. They put out programing that is so important for our citizens' knowledge of local history, some examples include: Footsteps of La Crosse (a series of walking tours about neighborhood architecture), Dark La Crosse (a podcast about La Crosse history), they also help people research their houses so that they can be on the historic registry and to research their ancestors.

Firstly, as a professor, at UW La Crosse, all of my classes at the 200, 300 and 400 levels use the LPLA. For example, This semester, in a single class, we will be spending 6 classes at the LPLA so that students to do research on our unique La Crosse history. The LPLA staff is so accommodating, they don't have space for the 20 students but have reserved other library space so that the class can use the archival resources. Secondly, *Hear, Here*, the audio documentary project that began in La Crosse and has had international spread and recognition, would not exist without the research the students and I were able to do at the LPLA. Thirdly, a public historian, one of my most frequent partners is the La Crosse Public Library in general and the La Crosse Public Library Archives in particular. My students and I have created exhibits, I have organized speaker series and given my own talks all in partnership with the La Crosse Public Library. This is a key resource in La Crosse that serves a broad spectrum of folks in the community and is very much valued and important to the university community, history professors, and history students. I hope that you will consider giving extra funding to this important institution, and certainly not cutting from their budget because it would be detrimental to the extensive and important programing that they provide for UWL and other citizens of La Crosse.

Thank you for your time reading this and for your consideration of my words.

All the best,
Ariel Beaujot
History Professor
Hear, Here Director
La Crosse Citizen

Hi Víctor & Ariel,

I am wondering if each of you (and any other member of the History Department) would consider writing a short paragraph to the City of La Crosse saying why the La Crosse Public Library (or even the Archives specifically) are important services to you as educators and/or community members.

Beginning this Thursday, 9/5, The City will begin considering the 2025 budget. The Library is often one of the first departments cut. Last week, Mayor Reynolds [put out a video inviting citizens to let the city leadership know the services they value as the city faces continued budget challenge](#) (budget reference near the end ~3:35).

I know it is the first week of classes, and this is not great timing, so I understand if you do not have time. I only ask if you do, please consider writing an email about how the Library's services and resources impact students and professors.

Contact at:

Email:

reynoldsm@cityoflacrosse.org

and

zzcouncilmembers@cityoflacrosse.org

<https://www.cityoflacrosse.org/your-government/city-council>

Thank you so much.

Best,

Jenny



Ariel Beaujot 

Professor, History | [UW-La Crosse](#)

abeaujot@uwlax.edu | [608.785.6798](tel:608.785.6798) | 403D Wimberly Hall



From: Ellen Frantz <Ellen@johnsflaherty.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 9:21 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: library

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Dear City Council Members:

I am writing to support our city library in the next budget cycle. I lost my neighborhood library when the south side closed a few years ago. I now regularly use the Main St. library and would guess I am there at least every other week. I don't have to tell you how the library supports many folks in our area in a variety of ways. I am an avid reader and love being able to access books easily and meet my personal addiction! Please keep funding at the current level as you make decisions for the next budget cycle. Thank you for considering my position of support.



JOHNS, FLAHERTY
& COLLINS, SC

*Good neighbors.
Great lawyers.*

Ellen M Frantz

ATTORNEY

205 5th Avenue S, Suite 600

La Crosse, WI 54601

P: [608-784-5678](tel:608-784-5678)

E: ellen@johnsflaherty.com

W: johnsflaherty.com



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Craig, Sondra

From: Courtney Daniels <courtllil@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 9:03 AM
To: ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch
Subject: Support Public Libraries

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I value the access and resources made available through our public libraries. The staff go above and beyond every day for every member of our community and their access to the funds that are needed to remain a resource for all should not be limited.

Respectfully,

- Courtney Daniels-Burke
La Crosse resident

Craig, Sondra

From: Ashley Wilhelm <awilhelm453@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 9:01 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: LaCrosse Public Library

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To whom it may concern—

I wanted to express my desire for our main public library (as well of North branch) to stay as is. We utilize the children's center several times a week as well as playgroup at North Branch during its very limited hours. I have witnessed the amount of families and kids that love and look forward to their time at the library.

The fact that the Main Library is open 7 days a week is truly a blessing and we all would benefit from it remaining that way!!

I also recently learned we can check out tools and checked out a carpet cleaner as we were moving.

Hope this finds you well and you can take this into account for the decision

Ashley Wilhelm
Local Mom of LaCrosse

From: Nancyann Doerre <sassyone1944@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 8:54 AM
To: Reynolds, Mitch
Cc: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library budget

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Dear Mayor Reynolds

I am a frequent user of the Main St library and it is distressing that library programs are facing potential cutbacks.

I also don't have a computer and the computer lab at the library makes it possible for me to access apps and a printer to use by keeping the library open daily.

Thank you and the councils'

consideration for the public's request

Nancy Doerre

801 Main St

La Crosse

From: Matthew Cashion <mcashion@uwlax.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 8:52 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: The Cultural Health of our Public Library

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Dear La Crosse City Council members,

I'm writing as an advocate for our public library, which I'm told is facing the potential for significant budget cuts.

As an educator in La Crosse since 2006, I've worked closely with many library staff members to participate in numerous education-related workshops, and I've seen first-hand the value these programs have had for our community. The health of our library, I'd argue, is in direct proportion with the health of our community. As so many families increasingly experience budget problems of their own, they depend on the library for resources they wouldn't otherwise be able to access—the benefits of such intellectual and social engagement nourishes lives. I'd love for us all to continue persuading our children (and their parents) that opportunities to access educational and creative content should not be restricted or reserved only for those born into wealthy families.

In the age of A.I. and Google and biased algorithms, I see every day that *more* human-power is needed, not less. We need help navigating the potholes and the rubble on the information highway. I still (as I have for years) hear people saying, why do I need a library when I have a smart phone? I even hear it, on occasion, in my college classrooms, which I'm grateful for. It's a conversation starter and a teaching/learning moment. Libraries, and the people who work in them, are the heart of a culture and our collective health depends on them. Well-trained librarians curate collections, offer expertise in putting someone's hand on a reliable resource, and offer programs that unite diverse groups of people to engage in conversations that deepen our understands of ourselves and the culture we both want to make better.

Budget cuts to a library is, in my mind, equivalent to banning books—it's restricting/reducing access to valuable materials and a safe space that can keep people hopeful, alive, curious, engaged, and connected. The impact on children and young adults is most egregious. But adults need it too. I've seen this countless times in programs I've facilitated and attended. I've seen it frequently in the "Storytime for Adults" program regularly sponsored by the library, where impressively-large groups of people come together in a public setting to share a wide range of stories about a diverse group of ideas that make us all better humans by the mere act of listening and empathizing with others' points of views.

There's a vast collection of books about the cultural and economic value of libraries, but for starters, I'd recommend [this list of five books](#). My favorite, [The Library Book](#), by Susan Orlean, is a nonfiction account of the 1986 fire that gutted the Los Angeles public library and the devastating effect that fire had on the city, available now at our library. Cutting library budgets is, in my mind, like a quiet fire, a polite burning that spreads too rapidly for too long, which consequences we can't know until our history is written.

Thanks for engaging in the civic work you're doing for the health of our community.
And thanks for listening.

Best wishes,
Matt Cashion

Matt Cashion

Professor, English | [UW-La Crosse](#)

mcashion@uwlax.edu | [608.785.8297](tel:608.785.8297) | 425X Wimberly Hall

[my website](#)

[UW-L Creative Writing Minor](#)

[Steam Ticket Literary Journal](#)



Craig, Sondra

From: Kathryn Davis <kateedavis94@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 8:48 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Library funding

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Hello,

I am a volunteer at the La Crosse Library for the senior book delivery program. It has been brought to my attention that the library's finding is up for a potential decrease. As a social worker in this community and a volunteer, I can vouch for the value that our library brings to the members of our town. I have delivered books to homebound seniors who are otherwise unable to get their books and who are lonely and looking for some conversation and a friendly face.

This is not to mention the other important programs at the library like the craft corner, the lending closet, and the tool library. I have seen the use at our library and know it is important for especially the most vulnerable people in our community.

As a member of this community I have also greatly enjoyed the library as a place to meet, to discuss books, do crafts, meet people, and of course learn something new from a book.

I would ask that you consider this important role when deciding the budget for our library.

Thank you,

From: Serena B. <smbfrogs@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 8:41 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: My tax money

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Hello council members!

The community is hearing that the services that our money should be funding is dwindling. This started with not able to pay salaries and upkeep the library on south side. Why is the library still going to be cut? This is a service that supports greater communities and families. Don't you want families to stay in this community? Myself and my family along with many others utilized the south side library and now we go to the main library regularly. Cutting the library sure tells the community that they are not supported and services will not be provided to the tax payer and families.

Please allocate our tax payer money to support families so this city keeps its future bright!

Best,
Serena Burke
13th st. South

From: Meg Torgerud <mtorgerud@eaglecrestlife.org>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 8:29 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library Funding

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Dear City Council Member,

I am a life enrichment professional with Eagle Crest Communities at Cass Street Assisted Living. I understand that funding cuts to our library system may be forthcoming. The services provided by the library to our facility are paramount in ensuring residents' quality of life. The library provides a rotation of books for our residents to choose as well as books and audio tapes they have specifically requested. This service is critical to the residents who have physical, mobility and transportation limitations. We also utilize the educational sessions (Monday Mornings at Main). These sessions are taped and we can play them anytime when it's convenient. I strongly urge you and the council to provide adequate funds for the library to continue to provide much needed and valued services and programs to our community. Thank you for your consideration.

Meg Torgerud
Life Enrichment Assistant
Cass Street Assisted Living
1315 Cass St., La Crosse, WI 54601
608.796.1094 | office
608.784.1006 | fax
mtorgerud@eaglecrestlife.org | www.eaglecrestlife.org

Eagle Crest Communities is a tradename of Bethany Lutheran Homes, Inc.

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Craig, Sondra

From: Megan Pierce <pierce.megan44@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 8:14 AM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Support La Crosse Public Library

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Hello,

I write this email to **support La Crosse Public Library and highly discourage any budget cuts**. The library has provided over 1,500 events for community members to engage, learn, grow, and have fun together. Personally, the library has been pivotal in finding peace, enjoyment and fun. As an avid reader its how I got connected to the library, but have gotten involved in a number of adult programs like a murder mystery night, bingo, and history tours.

I am 6 months pregnant and look at all of the free programs for kids and can not wait to bring our little to the library because I know it's safe, inclusive, and fun!

Thank you,

Megan Pierce

Craig, Sondra

From: J Potter <jmpotte2@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 7:50 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Public Library potential cuts

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The La Crosse Public Library provides such an incredible service to the La Crosse community. Their many programs: book clubs, lectures, senior stretch classes, Mondays at Main, books, CDs, providing a place for RSVP to do taxes for seniors and others and scheduling appointments, providing a place for voting, the tool library, Music on a Sunday afternoon, bus trips, movies and popcorn, and others give people a good, safe place to learn and grow and have fun. Whenever I've moved in the past, the first thing I do is to join the public library - it's an instant connection to the community.

I lived in La Crosse for 42 years and the library was a huge part of why I loved the city so much. I moved to Maple Grove Mn just last year and joined their library, which is fine, but in no way does it compare to the La Crosse Public Library.

Please protect the La Crosse Public Library

From: joan wolf <joanwolf56@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 7:04 AM
To: ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch
Subject: Library funding

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To: Mayor Reynolds
City Council members
From: Joan Wolf, library patron
Date: 9/2/2024

I read that you are considering significant cuts to library funding. While I understand the need to balance the budget and appreciate your dilemma, please consider that our library provides a centrally located hub for our community. It is a chance for everyone, regardless of income, race, education or health status to be welcomed, learn something new, meet new people and relax. The staff are friendly, it feels safe, and the beautiful quilts hanging on the walls create a homey atmosphere. For me, it is a place a of sanity in a crazy, sometimes scary world.

In spite of living out of town, I prioritize going to the library about twice a month to checkout books. I especially appreciate being able to read books from area libraries. I am 68 years old and my husband has multiple health concerns, so books are my primary escape from care taking. When my grand daughter visits, she and her mom often buy books from the library book sales. And when winter arrives, it provides a comforting place for unsheltered members of our community.

The library is vital to the well being of so many people in our community.

While it seems fair to ask for small cuts in funding to encourage efficiency, please do your best to support this treasure.

Thank you.
Joan Wolf

Craig, Sondra

From: Ashley Freeman <av.freeman@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 6:49 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Public Library

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The library plays an important role in my life. It has and continues to supply me with the 2,000+ books I have read in my lifetime. Books I could never have afforded on my own. It's even taken technology down a notch in our home and my husband's life and he has started reading for the 1st time since high school. Please consider the impact when discussing the budget.

Regards,

Ashley Freeman

From: Carrie Melin <c2melin@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 6:02 AM
To: Reynolds, Mitch
Cc: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library

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Dear Mayor Reynolds and council members,

I am writing to urge you to allocate decent funding for our libraries as you consider the next budget. It is vital to have a library with adequate staffing to run the wonderful programs that we love such as interlibrary loan, Hmong cultural events, the Creation Lab, the Archives, as well as just having a good selection of books, magazines, and movies to borrow.

Thank you for your careful consideration.

Sincerely,
Carrie

From: Megan Ask <purplepennymegan@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 10:27 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch
Cc: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Why I Love My Library

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Hello esteemed City Council Members and Mayor,

My young family and I have recently moved to La Crosse. I am a stay at home mother who is also taken on the task of homeschooling. We absolutely adore the libraries here! It's the first place we look for when relocating. Libraries offer so much for many and our family is certainly one of those who've benefited from the library. The sheer amount of libraries that are easily accessible in the region is phenomenal. La Crosse Main Library is the one that we live closest too. The staff are absolutely darling. The volume of resources is helpful and amazing, the ability to suggest to purchase good, clean, beautiful books is wonderful, and being able to print 10 pages for free when using the computers is outstanding. Having the library app (currently being updated) is a huge lifeline and saver for this mama. It makes teaching my kids possible. We also enjoy visiting the library as often as we can. The hours and days open are fantastic and accommodating. The play options and story time, activities and crafts offered are stupendous!! The library is a beautiful balance for our community!!!

Megan

From: Maryl Napierala <marylnapierala@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 10:07 PM
To: renoldsm@cityoflacrosse.org; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library importance

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Dear Council Members,

I cannot express the importance the library is to my family. As a stay at home mom I rely heavily on the library for enrichment for my children. It has been an extremely valuable place of learning. From story time to bluey activity's to fairy hunts, we love attending the library.

Our library is amazing. I've visited a lot of libraries and honestly La Crosse's is 10/10. We are greeted by name every time we enter. The librarians sit down with my kids and ask them how they are doing. Last time we were there my bag was heavy and 3 different library employees offered to carry it.

I believe that the library funding should increase not decrease. Without a question the library is a place of sanctuary for many people, my family included. Why take that away? With rising costs all over the place people need a place where there is absolutely no expectation to purchase anything. Let's encourage our library to thrive even more.

Thank you for your consideration,

Maryl Napierala

Craig, Sondra

From: Emily Luhtala <emily.luhtala@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 9:03 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Public Library Matters

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Dear City Council Members of La Crosse,

The La Crosse Public Library is integral to our community. It's a portal to different places, stories, and perspectives. It's a trove of knowledge and a welcoming place of community and friendly faces. As a young professional in this community, La Crosse is my home. Reading makes a huge positive difference in my life, and our public library makes this outlet accessible to me. I urge you to continue and bolster your support for the La Crosse public library.

Sincerely,
Emily Luhtala

Craig, Sonda

From: Kristy Ellen <kristyellen23@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 8:20 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Fund Our Libraries!

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Dear City Council Members,

I am writing to express my strong support for the continued funding of our public library, a cornerstone of our community that serves as a vital resource for residents of all ages and backgrounds. As someone who deeply values the importance of education, access to information, and community engagement, I believe that the public library is an essential institution that deserves our unwavering support.

Access to resources, tools, and community is crucial in promoting literacy, lifelong learning, and the pursuit of knowledge.

Our libraries also offer a safe and welcoming space for children, families, and individuals who seek to explore, discover, and grow.

Moreover, in today's digital age, the role of the library extends beyond just books. Our public library offers essential services, such as internet access, technology training, and assistance with job searches. These services are invaluable to those who may not have the means to access them elsewhere. For many in our community, the library is the only place where they can connect to the internet, apply for jobs, or seek help with homework.

Additionally, the library is a hub for community activities, offering programs and events that bring people together, foster a sense of community, and enrich our cultural lives. From children's story hours to adult education classes, the library provides opportunities for all members of our community to learn, socialize, and contribute to our shared well-being.

As the owner of a small business, Hona Goods, which focuses on sourdough classes and gardening tips, I have personally benefited from the resources and connections the library has provided. The library's support for local businesses and its role in promoting community engagement has been invaluable to my growth and success.

I urge you to continue funding our public library at its current or increased level to ensure that it can continue to provide these essential services. The library is more than just a building with books; it is a lifeline for our community, offering access to education, technology, and a sense of belonging. Your support for the library is a direct investment in the well-being and future of our city. Thank you for considering my request. I hope you will recognize the immense value that the public library brings to our community and continue to support it through your funding decisions.

Sincerely,

Craig, Sondra

From: Elizabeth Leighton <elizabethleighton1@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 8:33 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Regarding the budget

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Good evening,

I recently became aware of the anticipated budget shortfall unless cuts were made or taxes raised. This is based on the Agenda Packet for the Board of Estimates.

As someone who lives close to the former South Branch of the La Crosse library, I ask that the library be spared any further cuts and reduction in services. The closure of the South Branch was a loss. Given how recent that closure happened, it seems that cuts to the library do not lead to sustainable financial stability for the city.

The La Crosse libraries are a gem and enrich the lives of everyone in our community. It is a place that brings out and celebrates the best in all of us. Please protect this important piece and resource in La Crosse.

Please know that I am writing only for myself and not on behalf of any organization.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Regards,
Elizabeth Leighton

Craig, Sondra

From: Rachel <rmacfar510@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 8:05 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Concerning the La Crosse Public Library budget

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For everyone:

There's rumor that the annual budget for the public library will again take a significant cut, as happened not so long ago, during the early days of the pandemic.

I don't envy you your position of budgeting for everything this city needs. But I have never visited a city that wasn't made demonstrably better by the fact that it had a library. The condition and resources that the library offers are a measure of the city and the city's values. I grew up three blocks from the southside community library, and as you know, we recently lost that library, which is a real shame for that neighborhood. I used to walk there all the time, and I would sit for hours, curled into a corner, letting my wild little heart go free. But again, I understand: the city has a lot of needs.

Librarians are some of the most wonderful people you will ever know, and libraries are some of the most wonderful spaces you will ever occupy. Please, find a way around cutting their budget. We as a city need to gain some perspective on what kind of city we want to be, and I'm throwing my weight behind a robust and healthy library system for all.

Thank you,

Rachel MacFarland

Craig, Sonda

From: kalla kalloway <kkcecilia@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 7:31 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library funding

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It has come to my attention that you are considering cutting the library budget. I am a retired librarian, having started my 40 year career at LPL/WRLS and working there for eleven years before moving to the Twin Cities and working as a library manager in the Dakota County Library System until my retirement in 2016. I moved back to La Crosse and got my library card there the first week I moved back. I go there once a week as a patron and have also volunteered there. I've come to realize that LPL is every bit as good, if not better, than the various metropolitan branch libraries I worked at in the Cities.

The services and programs offered to the community are amazing. The Maker's Space is fantastic and the Archives is one of the best I've seen. The fact that there is a Community Resource Librarian is just plain amazing. The staff, to a person, has always been helpful, knowledgeable, professional and pleasant. Their dedication is apparent.

Libraries are specials because they are for everyone. The little kids who develop a love of reading by coming to story time, the teens who have a space of their own with books and materials that challenge them, adults who continue their lifelong learning by attending programs, job hunters trying to better themselves, the group of older guys I see sitting together almost every time I stop talking about their lives and problems, the unhoused people in our community who find a safe, warm place where they are respected and have the same opportunities as anyone else. A year ago I was asked to teach a class on abstract art in the Maker's Space. One of the attendees, a woman, carried all of her belongings with her and obviously lived on the streets. She was amazingly creative and it was emotional to me to think that she has this wonderful experience to unburden herself for awhile and have a chance to make some art.

When I worked in Dakota County the County Commissioners never failed to fully and generously fund our 9 library branches. And the library was ALWAYS the top of the list of best county services is citizen surveys.

The library is the heart and soul of our community. Of every community. Anyone can go there are learn, be entertained, improve their lives, change their lives, promote literacy, find shelter, and so much more.

Libraries level the playing field. They are the greatest democratic institution and they serve people of every age, income level, location, ethnicity, and physical ability.

If you cut funding for the library you are hurting the whole community.

Kalla Kalloway
La Crosse, WI

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPad](#)

From: Kelly <kellysueleibold@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 7:24 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Avoid Cutting Funding to the Library

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Good afternoon Mayor Reynolds and Council members,

As you consider next year's budget and potential cuts in funding to various departments, I am writing to express my strong support of libraries, especially our public library here in La Crosse. We have some lovely staff and programming we should continue to support to the fullest extent.

In 2023 the La Crosse Public Library offered more than 1,500 programs for all ages, over double that of comparable libraries like Eau Claire and Appleton. As the City of La Crosse grapples with the urgent issue of our affordable housing supply, I also wanted to highlight the (well received and attended) collaboration with Habitat to present a "Then and Now" program earlier this spring. Participants explored how histories of racism and inequity have shaped current housing disparities (like redlining), and presenters shared clear action items that community members can take to improve housing access and affordability in La Crosse (like zoning reform). It's also my understanding that the library is the closest the city has to a daytime shelter for our unsheltered neighbors, an essential resource we need to maintain until the Pathways Home plan can further develop and be implemented.

The library works to preserve education, a third space, early literacy, democratic ideals, and community for people from all walks of life. Again, during the discussions of where to cut and reallocate, consider prioritizing support for the library.

Hope you're doing well and staying safe! Thanks for all you do.

Kelly Leibold
507-272-5408

From: Ruth Adams <wradams2@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 7:18 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library funding

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I am writing in support of continued funding so the La Crosse Public Library is able to provide services to this community; services to include access to technology; books, Creation Space, tool library, Monday Mornings on Main. These are valuable services to the people of La Crosse. It seems as though so much is being taken away from the taxpayers and every year our taxes go up and less services are provided.

It is my hope that there will be continued funding to the library so services are not affected and cut.

Thank you.

Ruth Adams

From: JENNIFER LUCEY <jennifersl15@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 7:14 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Public Library

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Hi, I'm a day care teacher at Red Balloon Early Learning Center! I work with children that are 3 years old, but in our whole center we have ages from a few weeks old - 5 years old. There's not much infants and toddlers have in common with the older kids, except books. Every kid in our center loves books!

We've been working with the La Crosse Public Library for years now, first we had a librarian/ children outreach program visit our center once a month for story time. Our kids enjoyed story time so much. We sang, danced, read, practiced sign language and did felt stories together. They looked forward to it every month, we still dance to one of our favorite songs that Librarian Liz introduced to us.

Another program we have used through the library is their Books2Go Program. Reading is so important for children, there is multiple studies to back that up. In my classroom we read at least 2 books a day, more than 40 books a month. Without the library's Books2Go Program we wouldn't have so many books to read through. Books in our center get used so frequently they don't last forever, it is essential that we have rotating books for our shelves but also for teacher-lead story time.

Without the library dropping off books we wouldn't have the opportunity to have story time every day for our students. I personally don't have the time to get to the library each week and check out 10 books just to do it all again in a few days. We've already lost our monthly story time due to budget cuts, I'm really hoping we don't have to lose our Books2Go Program.

Please consider helping the library keep their funding so they can continue to help the community and enrich the lives of our students, our future leaders.

Jennifer Lucey
Red Balloon Early Learning Center
2910 Gillette St. La Crosse

Craig, Sondra

From: Lauren Eiselt <leiselt13@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 7:07 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Public Library Funding

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To whom it may concern,

Hello, my name is Lauren Eiselt and I am a proud user of the La Crosse Public Library. I wanted to express to you how much I appreciate using the public library. I enjoy being able to read books without any sort of financial expense. I hope you consider this heavily when thinking about the funding of our area.

Thank you!!

Lauren Eiselt

Craig, Sondra

From: Amanda Jackson <amhjackson@outlook.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 6:42 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: The value of our libraries!

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Dear City of La Crosse Leaders:

It feels overwhelming to try to put into words the value that libraries bring to our community. Simply because it seems impossible to capture the enormous value they have in mere words. I have been a member of a library for over 30+ years, it's one of the few memberships that I made sure that I had as I moved for college and law school and then worked my way back to the La Crosse area where I grew up. Libraries really are for everyone. I have fond memories of participating in the library summer reading program as a child locally and now my three children participate each summer in the La Crosse Public Library summer reading program. When I was a younger mom and my children were babies, the library provided me with a safe space to catch my breath, attend storytime, meet other new moms and feel connected to my community in what is an overwhelming season of life. If you come to the children's area on Main St. on any weekend, you'll see many parents still doing just that. All of our children participated in a 1,000 books before kindergarten, and now we have three avid readers from 2nd grade to 9th grade who will still happily visit the library with me on any given night of the week. Kids who loved when the library offered an after hours hide and seek last year so they could explore this mystical building after hours in the dark.

Many of the librarians know our faces and many know our names, Ms. Medora who is often there when we go on the weeknights asked my youngest to teach her some karate when he showed up fully dressed in his karate gear. He showed her a few moves such a short interaction made his entire night, he was still talking about teaching Ms. Medora karate a few days later. Interactions like these do wonders for kid's confidence. Always there to help find a book, a graphic novel, recommend a program, offer support and safe places for tweens/teens, the library is so much of the village that raises our community's children. And if you have been to the library lately, you know that they are a safe place for many who have no where else go to, providing necessities through their little free pantries, easy and affordable internet access and a phone line, making sure that the unsheltered have shelter during the day just by being the library, a safe place for everyone. Our community cannot afford to lose another library and it cannot afford for our library to lose more staff or more services, too many people depend on it. Sometimes what the community needs is more compassion and more libraries, as a tax payer I would support additional funding for the library over many other needs at this time. It's important to reinvest in the core of our village.

Amanda Halderson Jackson
1616 State Street
La Crosse WI 54601

Sent from my iPad

From: Timothy Sprain <tsprain@lacrossesd.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 6:13 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Support of the La Crosse Public Library

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RE: Support of the La Crosse Public Library

Dear City Council,

Please share this letter with your team as you consider the importance and value of our Public Libraries to the students of our community. The La Crosse public library has been a partner in education with me and many teachers throughout the region for many years.

Most notably, our Library supports our students for National History Day (NHD). Students learn how to use the archives and special collections to develop high quality projects. Library staff have opened early and stayed late to make sure students were able to get a full experience. Traditionally, our regional students go to the State and National competitions due to their foundational partnership and dedication.

Most recently, we have expanded our civics lessons to teach students how to use our city bus system to navigate to and from our schools, neighborhoods and most important, our public libraries. Not only does this add value for our students' NHD experience, this partnership also highlights the importance of our civic institutions and teaches students how to participate in all that our community has to offer. We hope that we see an increase in ridership over the years AND an increased use of our public libraries.

Thank you for all your work and consideration.

Sincerely,
Tim Sprain
7th Grade Teacher
Logan Middle School

Timothy T. Sprain
7th Grade Teacher
6-12 Science Coordinator
Logan Middle School 1450 Avon Street La Crosse Wisconsin 54603
Work Phone: 608-789-5832 Work Email: tsprain@lacrossesd.org

From: Annette Larson <couleedirectorccc@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 6:11 PM
To: ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch
Subject: Library services

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To Whom it may concern,

I am writing to you about the concern of not having library services available to our center. I understand that there needs to be budget cuts, but you have already eliminated a whole library. We really like the books2go program and being able to get different books for the children and Teachers to use in their classrooms every couple weeks. Reading and exploring new books is very important to the Teachers and children here at CCC. The learning that children get from seeing new books on a frequent basis is essential to the learning environment that my Teachers provide. Please consider not cutting library staff and these programs.

Thank you,
Annette Larson

--
Annette Larson
Director
Coulee Children's Center
2935 East Ave S.
La Crosse, WI 54601
608-787-5572

From: Christina Gilliam <crobinzine@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 5:11 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse County Libraries
Attachments: IMG_9895.jpeg; IMG_9906.jpeg; IMG_9899.jpeg; IMG_9888.jpeg; IMG_9890.jpeg

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Good Evening,

I'm writing this email because I've heard about possible budget cuts to the La Crosse County libraries. I just wanted to say that my family and I have thoroughly enjoyed everything the library has to offer. My 1.5 year old daughter absolutely loves going there and playing with all the nice toys and enjoying all the fun things they offer. We especially love the story times on Saturdays and Mondays as it allows her time to socialize with kids her age, she is currently not in daycare because it is too expensive like many things today. We love and appreciate our local library and the wonderful staff. Just today we were there and found out more things they have to offer. We are really hoping the cuts don't affect the La crosse county library system, it is perfect the way that it is. Thank you for reading. Ive attached some pictures of her today at the Onalaska branch.

Christina G.

From: Jenny Wolfe <jrlwolfe@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 5:08 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library

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The LaCrosse Library provides a needed service in the area. When my son was young we would visit the library for books and puzzles and just to look at the Kids area and discover new things.

As an adult I used the library when studying for accounting certifications test. I found it a good place to hide and concentrate rather than at home where I could find lots of distractions - even pre-cell phone.

I remember hearing a woman telling her child that the library is for poor people who cannot afford to buy books. Good lord!!The library is a public service. It provides music, movies, books and so much more.

Now I pick up books for my 90 year old mother-in-law. She loves to read. It is super easy for me because I can find large print books that I think that she may like. If she does not like the subject - I can return. Imagine how difficult it would be if I had to purchase books! Her scope would be very limited.

Please Love the library as much as I do

Thank you,
Jenny Wolfe

From: Justin Holten <Justin.Holten2@scouting.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 4:51 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library Funding 2024-25

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Good day,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Justin and I have lived in La Crosse since I was born in 1997. Currently I am working full time for Scouting America in La Crosse serving our local youth through Outdoor Programing and Leadership trainings. As a teenager I spent my own youth in a low-income household, resources scarce and little to do in my cramped 2 bedroom house for 6 people. Given my situation it would have been hard to grow into the successful adult I am today but I was able to thrive due to many amazing community resources, including one of the most important to me: The South Side Library.

The South Side Library was perfect for a kid like me. A location in a quaint neighborhood, just down the street from a candy shop, a fun park right behind. It was a poor kids dream! I was able to safely bike to the library every single day to meet up with friends, play games on the computers available, rent out new books to read, movies to bring home and watch, and the library even had clubs for me to join too! All of this for no cost helped me thrive as a teenager. I was not only able to expand my knowledge through the books I read and other activities I partook in, but I grew my understanding of our own community as well. At the library I made a friend who had just moved to the USA from Taiwan who knew barely any English, and while that would be hard to handle we learned to communicate with the computers we had access to and bonded over a unique experience in gaming.

The South Side Library meant the world to me and offered so many resources to allow me to thrive, and I can't help but feel saddened that the neighborhood has lost such a valuable asset. Who knows how many shining stars we have who've lost the opportunity to grow into who they could be due to budget cuts.

I'm writing to you not only to share my story, but let you know that it disheartens me to see the continued cuts to the La Crosse Public Library's funding. If anything in our community should continue to have increased funding rather than decreased, it should be the library! Kids these days need an outlet to get off their phones, taking away that resource will not help. Our community needs free access to information and resources to help them in life, taking away that opportunity helps no one.

I hope that in planning the next budget for our city, that we truly think about the needs of the community. If we want to see less people camping in our parks, we need to build up the resources to help everyone, not take them away. If we want to see success in our children, we need to continue to fund that success not take it away. Who benefits from slashing the Library's budget? No one.

Sincerely, concerned citizen and long time library enjoyer,

Justin Holten

Pronouns: he/him

(608) 738-7748

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Craig, Sondra

From: ms.clare <ms.clare@centurytel.net>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 4:45 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: When budgets for 2025 are considered it is my hope that funds for our Public Library will not be cut. It is such an unbelievable resource for our community.

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Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

From: Laura Kish <kishlaura8@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 4:44 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Support for La Crosse Public Library

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Dear Mayor Reynolds and council members,

I am writing to express my strong support for the La Crosse Public Library. The library is a vital resource in our community, offering a wide variety of programs that serve residents of all ages and backgrounds. I have heard discussion of funding cuts and feel that would be a great disservice to our community.

I am particularly impressed by the library's commitment to youth programs, which provide our children and teens with educational opportunities, creative outlets, and a safe, inclusive environment. The library's efforts to ensure that all community members feel welcomed and represented are commendable and greatly contribute to the social fabric of our city. I've also had the pleasure of working with the library to offer movement and sensory based programs!

In addition, the library's innovative initiatives, such as the "creation space" and "tool lending library," demonstrate a forward-thinking approach to community engagement. These programs not only offer practical resources but also empower individuals to learn new skills and explore their creativity.

The La Crosse Public Library is more than just a place to borrow books; it is a cornerstone of our community, fostering education, inclusion, and creativity. I wholeheartedly support the library and its continued efforts to serve the diverse needs of our residents.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Laura Kish

La Crosse resident

Laura Kish, MS, OTR/L

Owner, Wonderland Therapy LLC

Craig, Sondra

From: meganandmarty <meganandmarty@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 4:18 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library funding request

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Hello La Crosse City Council Members,

I am writing today to express my concern for the allocation of resources to support the La Crosse Public Library. As dedicated patrons my family and I want you to know how important the resources available through the La Crosse Public Library means to our family.

We regularly visit and utilize the Creation Space at the LaX Public Library which provides my family with hours of time spent with each other and in community with others from around the area. I want you to know how much of a vital resource the Creation Space is to my family and the community. As a small business owner, I have found the resources and expertise from staff to benefit my business. The ripple effects are tremendous. They have seen record numbers of people attending during open Creation Space hours which makes me realize that there could more open hours made available instead of less.

My family also benefits from the various resources available like children and adult programming, which we attend on a regular basis. We also utilize print, digital, and tool resources on a routine basis bringing new games, books, and tools home to borrow and utilize.

Your influence in our community is appreciated and my hope is that you will hear this request that LaX Public Library funding and resources be approved at the maximum amount with full support.

As one who has donated items to the Creation Space and volunteered to lead a SKILL SHARE SESSION, I want to see the city of La Crosse invest in the LaX Public Library like my family and I have to ensure these essential programs and services thrive and grow.

Most appreciatively,

Megan J. Pike
meganandmarty@gmail.com
sent on the fly via my mobile device

From: Karen Gleason <gleasonkn@icloud.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 3:55 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: LaCrosse Library Funding

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Dear Mr. Mayor and Council members.

As a long time resident of the city of LaCrosse I would like to urge you NOT to decrease funding to the LaCrosse Public Library.

As a grandmother, I remember taking my grandkids to the LaCrosse Public Library when they were young and how much fun they had crossing the bridge to a fun and adventurous welcoming place. The giraffe, the big boat..oh so much fun!!

As an Adjunct Instructor at Western Technical college, I require my Developmental Psych students to visit the library to discover what is available for the pre-operational child. Many of these students are parents who can't always afford to take their children to other places that have admission costs so they discover this resource with this assignment. What a benefit to young parents and kids to learn to love to learn.

As a volunteer in the children's section of the LaCrosse library, I am here to tell you there is plenty of activities for children of all ages. The librarians are honestly the most innovative and clever teachers. They can make a lot of fun activities out of almost nothing. I have to report knowing that one of the librarians saw a moving van and stopped to ask for one of the big boxes that served to make all kinds of fun play times! The Delivery people brought the box to the library for her. From igloos that they made out of milk jugs to the flower shop they made from donated artificial flowers, to the dinosaur of paper and glue!! I can assure that our tax dollars are being spent wisely.

I know your job is not easy but please consider other options and leave the budget in tact (or even increase it)

Karen Gleason
1 Riverplace Dr.
La Crosse, Wi.

From: Jane Erickson <jerickso@lacrossesd.org>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 3:50 PM
To: ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch
Subject: Potential budget cuts to the La Crosse Public Library

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Dear Council Members,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to you as both a resident of La Crosse and a dedicated 4K teacher, deeply concerned about the potential budget cuts to the La Crosse Public Library.

The library plays a crucial role in our community, particularly in supporting early literacy, which is foundational for a child's educational journey. One of the most impactful ways the library contributes is through its monthly outreach visits to my 4K classroom. These visits are not just a highlight for my students—they are an essential part of promoting a love of reading and literacy at an early age.

Here are some key reasons why these outreach efforts are so vital:

1. **Early Literacy Support:** The formative years in 4K are critical for developing the literacy skills that will serve as the foundation for future learning. The library's outreach visits provide my students with exposure to high-quality children's literature, fostering their language development and comprehension skills.
2. **Promoting a Love of Literacy:** The librarian's visits introduce my students to the magic of books, storytelling, and reading. These experiences are often the spark that ignites a lifelong love of reading. Without these visits, many of my students may not have the same opportunities to develop a deep appreciation for books.
3. **Impact of Budget Cuts:** The proposed budget cuts to the La Crosse Public Library will likely lead to a reduction in outreach services, which would be a significant loss for our youngest learners. These cuts would diminish the library's ability to reach out to classrooms like mine, ultimately affecting the literacy development of our children.

I urge you to consider the long-term impact of these budget cuts on early childhood education and the future of our community. The library's outreach services are more than just a program—they are a lifeline for fostering literacy, curiosity, and a love of learning in our youngest citizens.

Thank you for your time and for considering the importance of maintaining the full range of services that the La Crosse Public Library provides.

Sincerely,
Jane Erickson, 4K Teacher
Emerson Elementary, 2101 Campbell Road, La Crosse, WI 54601
608-789-6917

Craig, Sondra

From: Maxwell Smith <maxwellchristophersmith@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 3:39 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Public Library Improves my Life

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Hello!

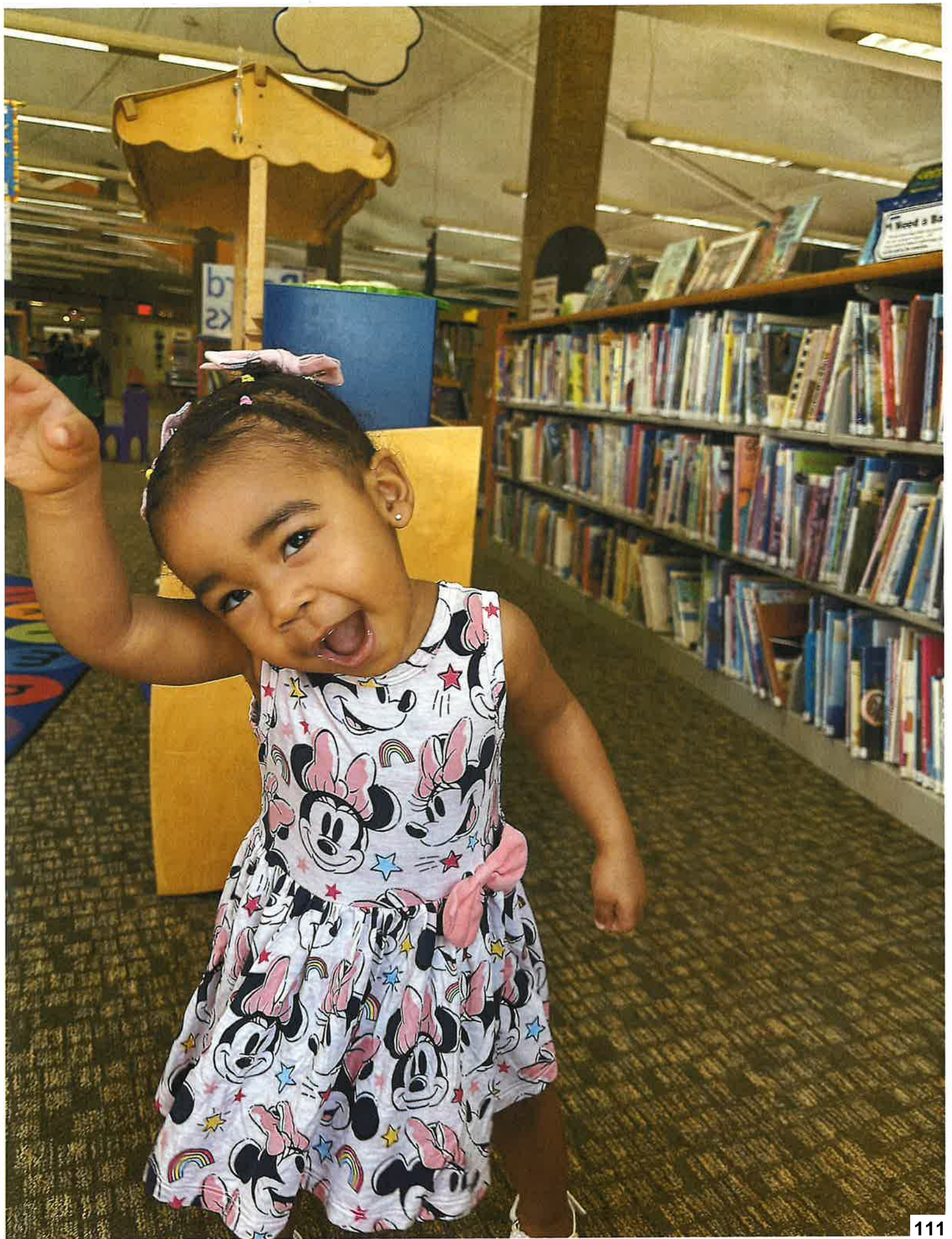
I was informed that the La Crosse Public Library is facing budget cuts. I hope this e-mail adds to the totality of evidence in favor of keeping the library highly operational:

Like many Americans, I suffer from loneliness. La Crosse Public Library provides a refuge from this by offering a welcoming environment in which I can work every day. This has greatly improved my quality of life. Furthermore, the printing and scanning resources have been instrumental in submitting job applications. This place has been a haven for me in a period of transition, and I know it is a highly impactful "third place" for many others.

Sincerely,
Max

--

Strategic + Positivity + Achiever + Developer + Includer





Sensory Backpacks

Visiting the library is often an exciting experience for children and their families. However, it and other activities can also be overwhelming or stressful for children, including those with sensory sensitivities.

These sensory backpacks are available in two versions for checkout and use here or elsewhere. They are full of support tools to help children with a diverse range of sensory processing patterns either stimulate or calm their sensory systems.

Version 1: Stimulating

- Vibrating Snake
- Spiky Roller
- Rainmaker Tube
- Lightup Fan
- Whirly Squigz Toy
- Pop Fidget

Version 2: Calming

- Noise-Blocking Headphones
- Finger Labyrinth
- Weighted Lap Pad
- Liquid Timer
- Therapy Tangle Toy
- Squishy Ball

Funding for these youth backpacks was provided by Project LIVE in partnership with La Crosse County Library.

Project LIVE is the school district of Holmen's special education transition program. Young adults work towards successful transitioning towards independence in the areas such as daily living, recreation and leisure, social skills, workforce training, and much more.

Backpacks are housed at Holmen and Onalaska, but holds can be placed on them at any of our five library locations.

From: Walsh, Colin <walshc@westernnc.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 2:49 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Public Library Partnership

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Dear Mayor Reynolds and City Council Members,

I hope this letter finds you well. I am writing to express my concern regarding potential cuts to the operating budget of our public library. The public library is a vital community resource that plays a crucial role in addressing some of the most pressing issues facing our city.

In recent years, our libraries have become frontline institutions, offering invaluable support to vulnerable populations including the homeless, those dealing with mental health challenges, and individuals who have been justice-impacted. The library staff, with their dedication and expertise, have been instrumental in providing not only access to information but also crucial support services that these populations rely on. Far from being a luxury, the programs and services offered by our public libraries are an essential part of our social safety net. These services often serve as a lifeline for those who are most in need, including:

- **Homeless Outreach:** Libraries offer safe spaces where individuals experiencing homelessness can access resources, receive assistance, and connect with support services.
- **Mental Health Support:** Libraries can help individuals cope with mental health challenges, offering both professional guidance, community, and peer support.
- **Justice-Impacted Individuals:** Libraries are vital for individuals who have been justice-impacted, providing access to legal resources, job training, and educational opportunities that are crucial for successful reintegration into society. The library currently offers a writing class to the men and women in La Crosse County Jail, partners with Project Proven for community events and re-entry groups, and will be leading a new grant targeting GED/HSED completion for the justice-impacted population. Western Technical College greatly values this partnership!

Rather than reducing funding, I urge you to consider how the library system can be further leveraged to address these critical needs. We have an extraordinary team of librarians and support staff who are not only dedicated but also innovative in finding ways to serve our community. By increasing the budget and expanding partnerships with other organizations, we can enhance the library's ability to meet these challenges more effectively.

This could include:

1. **Increase Funding:** Allocate additional resources to maintain and expand existing programs that address homelessness, mental health, and the justice system.
2. **Strengthen Partnerships:** Explore new partnerships with local non-profits, health agencies, and educational institutions to enhance service delivery and expand offerings.
3. **Leverage Community Expertise:** Utilize the skills and knowledge of library staff to develop innovative solutions and programs that meet emerging community needs.
4. **Promote Collaboration:** Encourage collaborative initiatives between the library and other community organizations to maximize the impact of resources and services.

Our public library's potential to drive positive change is immense, but this potential can only be realized with adequate support and funding. I respectfully ask that you look closer at operating costs and look for new opportunities to strengthen and expand the library's role in our community.

I am hopeful that that our public library will continue to be a positive space of hope, learning, and support for all residents.

Sincerely,

Colin Walsh
Project Proven Manager
Western Technical College
Office: 608-789-2083
Cell: 608-313-4342

Craig, Sondra

From: Joshua Bench <joshuabenchwi@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 2:20 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library funding

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I can't begin to explain how important the library is to me, my family, and my friends. Not just to take out books, but as a place to go when it's too hot in the summer or too cold in the winter. The programming and support from the staff there was a godsend when my kid was little.

Closing the south side location was a huge bummer for all of us on the southside... with the recent news that funding is going to be decreased at the main branch, I'm further discouraged. I hope we're not becoming a city that devalues the public places that many of us hold dear.

Thanks,
Josh Bench

From: Bekky Murphy <bekky.murphy@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 2:17 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch
Cc: ZZ Council Members
Subject: What is Important for Local Funding? Libraries!

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Mayor Reynolds,

I am writing to you today as a business owner, community member, advocate and mom in support of funding for the La Crosse Public Library. I would like to share experiences with you to consider while determining a budget for the next year.

I think that La Crosse is one of the best communities to raise children! I am a photographer in town and very involved within the community. Too often in the past people were saying, "there's nothing to do in this town for children." So I became an advocate in sharing local places, parks, activities and events; and many families with young children know who I am because of this reason. In my opinion, one of our biggest assets in this town is our library! Parents are continually looking for play spaces and programming for their children that is affordable. The library is the #1 answer for accessible, inclusive and free! The children's area is welcoming with friendly staff available to answer questions and help parents and there's more for kids to do than just reading great books: toys, sensory activities, scavenger hunts, ipads, computers, playaways and more. The scheduled programming is often some of the best children's events we have ever attended in town! Some of the ones we have attended include storytimes, the Pokemon Club, Fairy Hunts, Bluey Party, Carnival, Stuffie Sleepover, Glow in the Dark Party, and many events with guest performers including Mr. Evan, magicians, reptile handlers, and so much more! So many families plan their summer schedule around the free programs at the library! These events have hundreds of people in attendance!!

I am a mom to two little girls (ages 7 and almost 3 years old) and the library has become our third space: our home away from home! We have crafted in the Creation Space, my oldest has participated in the Tiny Art Show three years in a row, my girls have eaten snacks and Y summer lunches at the library, we look for the library table at every event away from the library, and I have bonded with so many parents while sharing this space. We visit the library at least 3 days a week! I have a few moments that I would have to share with you:

- On my daughter's 7th Birthday this past spring, she was honored to be the "Kid Librarian" and for that day and the following month she got to select books to put on a display shelf where people could check them out! She also received her very first library card and got to hold the giant library card sign to commemorate the moment! The librarians made this day so special for her!
- This summer I happened to be near the main Youth Desk when I heard a Mom asking for Mr. Bill because her daughter was so excited to see if he was working. He is the Librarian who visits her daughter's school throughout the year for storytime. Ms. Dawn and Ms. Brooke are the librarians who come to my

daughter's school the most often. I'll never forget when my daughter was especially excited this year to tell me all about books with the Caldecott Medal on them. Specifically about how Ms. Brooke was chosen to help pick out the 2024 Caldecott Medal Book! How amazing to have a connection right here in La Crosse to something so BIG and nationally renowned! (I actually didn't believe my daughter understood correctly when she came home from school that day, so I questioned if this was indeed true. It was true!!)

- When my youngest was not even 2 years old, she pointed to the library (unable to vocalize the words) while we were driving by. I asked her if she wanted to go to the library and she could say yes! I realized that day at just 22 months old she was choosing what she wanted to do and not just tagging along. She could pretend to check out books, return books in the drop and do the scavenger hunt every time we visited the children's area well before 2.5 years old! Now at almost three years old she asks to "go to library [Li-Barry]" almost every day!
- For Girl Scouts this Spring, my 7 year old was asked to dress like an authority figure for the next meeting. She could dress like a police officer, teacher, firefighter, nurse, etc. My daughter went to her room and picked out a dress with fake glasses and a sweater and told me that she was dressing like Ms. Medora, the librarian!

I know that these moments are precious to me because I am their mother, but I assure you that I am not the only person who has had these experiences with the La Crosse Library. Someone made a post in the mom's group a few months back, to shout out a special La Crosse librarian, and that post received well over 100 likes with so many comments of mom's saying the same types of stories that I have posted above!!

The library has become such a huge part of our family and my life as a mom! While I may be mostly enjoying the library with my small children at this stage of my life, I hope to be able to utilize more of the library's programming in future years! (And my children will want to use the spaces for tweens and teens when they are older). I have friends who have attended life skills classes at the library including budgeting, cooking, and sewing. Plus everyone talks about how much fun Booktok Bingo is! I also shared the weekly senior programming with my retired mother and her friends. There's truly something for everyone at the library, and I would love to continue to grow myself through these programs in the future.

Last year, I took my girls to the Southside library on the very last day that it was open to enjoy that space one last time. I was devastated to tell my little girl that it was closing! I would be so disappointed to see the library lose funding two years in a row. Please consider my testimonial and advocacy for continual funding of the library!!

Thank you,
Bekky Murphy

From: Meagan Ronsman <mhronsman@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 1:28 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Concerns about upcoming cuts

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Hello there,

I am writing to express my concern for potential cuts that may be coming in the city budget, especially regarding the library system. As I'm sure you know, we have an incredible library system and deeply value the services they provide to this community. The ways the library bolsters our community are nearly endless, including building community connections, social capital, a safe space, education, programs for people of all ages, and support services to those in need, to name a few. I cannot express enough how much we value our library and ask that you *please maintain the current budget* and withhold cuts at this time. While we recognize money is tight, this is not the service to cut, especially following the devastating loss of the south branch library. Once things close and services are lost, it is very difficult to get them back. In order for our community to thrive, we need to keep La Crosse a place where families want to live, with robust services and welcoming spaces such as the library.

I also ask that you protect the northside pool and not close this community space as well. Parents of young children have lost so much since the pandemic and feel unsettled about the state of our city. Please protect these vital community resources and keep La Crosse a place families want to live and work.

I know these decisions are not made lightly and so appreciate the work you do for our community. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Meagan Ronsman and family

Craig, Sondra

From: Sheida Babakhani Teimouri <steimouri@uwlax.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 12:57 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch
Cc: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Budget Priorities: La Crosse Public Libraries

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Dear Mayor Reynolds,

I am writing in response to your recent video inviting community members to share their priorities for the city's upcoming budget. After watching your message, I felt compelled to express my strong support for the La Crosse Public Library and to advocate for its continued funding and prioritization.

The La Crosse Public Library is not just a place to borrow books; it is a vital community hub where individuals and families can connect in a safe and welcoming environment. During the summer, the library's programs, such as Storytime and the Creation Space, offer enriching activities that foster social interaction and learning for children and families.

Additionally, the library's digital resources, including its collection of audiobooks, are a lifesaver during road trips, providing both entertainment and educational value. The ability to access these resources makes travel time enjoyable and productive.

The library's role in promoting literacy, lifelong learning, and community connection is crucial for the development of our city. It supports our children's growth, fosters a love of reading, and provides a space for people of all ages to come together.

Given the library's significant impact on our community, I urge you and the City Council to prioritize its funding in the upcoming budget. Ensuring continued support for the library will help maintain the valuable programs and resources that are so important to us all.

Thank you for your attention,
Sheida Teimouri

Sheida B Teimouri

Associate Professor, Economics |Chair of Economics Department| [UW-La Crosse](#)
steimouri@uwlax.edu | [608.785.5296](tel:608.785.5296) | 2134 Wittich Hall

| **Meet with me**

Pronouns: She/Her/Hers | Languages: Farsi, English, Italian





Craig, Sondra

From: Roland Kuhl <rgkuhl@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 12:53 PM
To: ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch
Subject: 2025 Budget and Library

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Dear Mayor Reynolds and City Council,

I encourage you to keep full funding for the La Crosse Area Library because I am an active user of all that it provides - not only borrowing materials, but using it as a place for reading papers and magazines and making use of its other services. My family makes use of the library as well and believe it is a significant aspect of what makes La Crosse a thriving community.

Sincerely,
Roland G. Kuhl
2331 Market St, La Crosse, WI 54601

Craig, Sondra

From: Dodgena Stefanski <dodgenastefanski@aol.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 12:53 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: To whom it may concern- library

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To whom it may concern,

The La crosse main library is a cornerstone for my children's education and social experiences. We go weekly to light their love of reading on fire continuously and it is their favorite spot. Between the endless incredible programs, the most wonderful librarians I've ever met, and the hours upon hours spent curled up with a good book - we pray that this library gets ALL of the required funding to keep up their dedicated work.

Thank you for all you do,

Dodgena Stefanski

Craig, Sondra

From: Cheyenne Behling <cheybehling@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 12:52 PM
To: ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch
Subject: Love for the Library

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Hi,

My name is Cheyenne and I just wanted to take a minute and tell you a bit about how much the La Crosse Public Library means to me.

I moved to La Crosse almost exactly two years ago to be closer to friends, but the main reason it feels like **my** city and like home is because of the public library. I've always loved libraries and went to my local library often growing up, so very shortly after moving here I was looking into the La Crosse Public Library and getting my library card. Everyone who works at the library is so lovely and welcoming and it's obvious how much they care about this city and really fostering a sense of community.

Personally, I utilize the digital resources offered by the library (specifically Libby) regularly as well as the creation space and tool library to help with one-off projects. The programs put on by the library are amazing - I'm proud to say that I've only missed one session of BookTok BINGO hosted by Brooke (and usually Cole) at 608 Brewing. By bringing them to events like BINGO, I've been able to get friends who have lived in the La Crosse area for years (if not their entire life) excited about the library when they previously didn't know much about what the library offered.

The folks at the library also do a lot to support the people in this community through educational materials and programs, technology support, and their little free library of supplies for people in need. There may be many other organizations that provide support like this, but the library is one of the most accessible as well as a great resource to direct people to the other places that can help.

This ended up longer than originally intended, but I hope it helps to show how much the library means to this community as budgets are being discussed for 2025.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Cheyenne Behling

Craig, Sondra

From: Lynne Kuhl <elciekuhl@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 12:51 PM
To: ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch
Subject: Library Funding

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Good afternoon Mr Reynolds and Lacrosse City Council Members,

As a Lacrosse resident and voter I am asking that our public libraries be financially supported with no further budget cuts for 2025.

The \$100,000 budget cut for 2024 was devastating with loss of the south side library. The services of the library to all members of the greater Lacrosse community are fundamental to it's constituents. As a retired university faculty, life long learner, future grandparent, active community member, the library has been a place of consistency through lifes events such as covid. We need to protect and promote the public library for future generations.

I ask the Lacrosse Public Library be a protected budget item with future budgetary planning focused on the growth of the library, it's personnel, and services.

Respectfully,
Lynne, M. Kuhl
224-489-9625

Craig, Sondra

From: Sarah Pember Giannini <sarah.pember@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 12:39 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library Budget

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Dear City Council Members,

My name is Sarah Pember Giannini, and in addition to being a La Crosse City resident and Associate Professor at the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse, I am the mother of a 3 year old child, Henry.

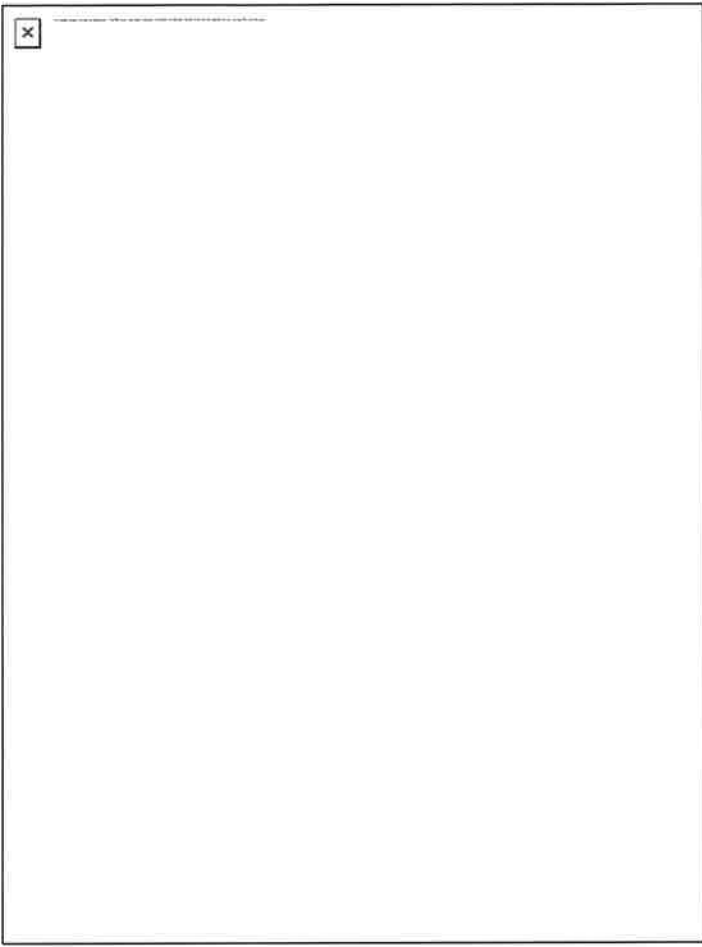
I am writing to you today to ask that you do not cut the library's budget in the comin year. The library is the heart of the community and has been an invaluable resource and happy place for both me and Henry since I moved here in 2017, and since he was born in 2021. This past year, especially, I have found the library to be the greatest gift to me as a mother with a young child. It can be hard as a parent looking to find something for your child to do in the cold winter weekends and sometimes seemingly endless summer hours that is engaging, enriching, fun (!) --- and free --- and the library has provided us with countless opportunities, hundreds and hundreds of books, and many relationships that we continue to foster with librarians and other library patrons. Henry looks forward to every single trip to the library, and, in fact, has told us he wants to live there when he is older. We have loved the storytimes, the special events (Pete the Cat Party and Daniel Tiger Night at the Library especially), and seeing the library at other events in the community.

As a professor of public and community health, I must also say that to in any way compromise the work of the library is to critically damage the community. As a source of information, a safe place for people of all ages, and a community center contributing to many aspects of public and community health, our public libraries **MUST** be given the funding they need to continue the amazing work that is integral to the health and well-being of an inclusive, open-minded, and thriving community.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to seeing even more money given to the library in the coming year's budget (but will settle for no cuts).

Sincerely,
Sarah Pember Giannini
sarah.pember@gmail.com
spember@uwlax.edu
(484)678-3657

When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better, too." --Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*



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When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better, too." -Paulo Coelho, *The Alchemist*

Craig, Sondra

From: Leah Pennekamp <pennelea12@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 12:35 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Public Library

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Good afternoon,

I just wanted to take a moment to tell you how much the La Crosse Public Library means to our family. We visit the library multiple times a week, it is one of our favorite places to visit!

I can't say enough good things about the variety of programs put on by our library. There is something for everyone and my kids have enjoyed many!

We took part in the library system passport challenge and we visited almost 15 libraries this summer! I can confidently say ours is the best! The building is beautiful, the book selection is amazing and the staff are incredible! They take the time to get to know our kids, even taking the time to learn their names and interests.

Cutting the libraries budget would be a huge loss for the community. They do so much for the community as a whole and if they had to cut more from their budget it would hurt so many people. The library is so much more than books. It is a safe place for all, kids can learn and play, adults can access resources and even just find a safe place to land and rest for a bit.

Thank you for your time,
Leah Olson

Craig, Sondra

From: Jane Benzschawel <jbenzschawel@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 12:21 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: We love and need the library!

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Dear City leadership,

My family is one of the many many families who has sought growth, enrichment, and community at the La Crosse Public Library system.

You may have tracked that the Surgeon General has listed loneliness as an epidemic for the country and most recently for citing the crisis of isolation for parents. For families with small children, there are almost no formalized public programs other than our phenomenal and talented staff offerings at the library that are free of charge and so diverse in programming to connect parents and kids with resources and community. Libraries are a critical powerhouse for our social engine and without investment in these spaces, the engine will erode.

Please invest in kids and families in our community and support the library in every way, with every opportunity possible. They (library staff) are simply incredible and we're incredibly lucky and deeply enriched for knowing them.

Thanks for your time.

Be well,
Jane Benzschawel
1624 Johnson St
La Crosse, WI 54601

Craig, Sondra

From: Cole Zrostlik <cole.zrostlik@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 11:46 AM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Budget Priorities 2025- Support for La Crosse Public Library

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As a homeowner, tax-payer, and citizen, I would like to express my support for the La Crosse Public Library during this budget season. It is in the best interest of all citizens that this organization, probably the City's most customer and community service-oriented, doesn't lose funding that supports staffing and services. Customer service doesn't exist in a service organization without people.

Please consider my request this budget season.

--
Cole Zrostlik (she/her)
515 23rd Street South
La Crosse, WI 54601
ph: 319-325-3630
cole.zrostlik@gmail.com

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/czrostlik>

From: Kim Cable <kimcable25@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, September 3, 2024 10:40 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library Funding

Some people who received this message don't often get email from kimcable25@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Dear Members of the City Council:

Dear Mayor Reynolds,

I understand that funding for our public library is under consideration during the budget process. I urge you to ensure no funding cuts are made to the library. They have already had considerable cuts to their system (closing South Branch).

Libraries are more than just buildings filled with books. They are the heartbeats of our communities, centers of learning, innovation, and connection. First and foremost, libraries are sanctuaries of learning and personal growth. They provide free and equal access to information, bridging the digital divide for those who may not have access to technology at home, especially low income households. They are places where knowledge is democratized, and every person, regardless of their background or socioeconomic status, can seek out answers, explore new interests, and improve their skills.

Moreover, libraries serve as community hubs. They host events, workshops, and meetings that bring people together. They support local artists, entrepreneurs, and cultural events, enriching our community life. They are safe spaces where people can gather, collaborate, and engage in meaningful dialogue. In times of crisis or change, libraries often step up to provide essential services, such as access to emergency information, job search assistance, and support for those in need. In 2023, the La Crosse Public Library offered more than 1,500 programs for all ages. Additionally, the Library is the closest thing La Crosse has to offer in day services for those who are experiencing homelessness. They have hired Social Workers and Security Services to adequately serve this population, all while receiving no additional funding.

Investing in library funding is an investment in the future of our society. It is an investment in education, community cohesion, and the well-being of every individual. As we face the challenges of today and look toward the future, let us remember that libraries are not just a nice-to-have—they are a necessity.

Preserving library funding is not just about maintaining a physical space. It is about sustaining a vital resource that fosters learning, supports community, and enriches our lives. Let us commit to ensuring that our libraries continue to thrive, so they can continue to serve as pillars of knowledge and community for generations to come.

Please continue to support our library at the funding levels they require. I cannot imagine a community without a library.

Thank you for your consideration,

Kim Cable

Craig, Sondra

From: Julie Connelly <jconnelly@fspa.org>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 9:16 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: La Crosse Public Library Partnership with the Franciscan Spirituality Center

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Dear City Council Members,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the possibility of the reduction of staff at the La Crosse Public Library to meet a reduced budget. This poses a significant gap to our community's access to essential programming and outreach initiatives, particularly those developed in partnership with other organizations, including the Franciscan Spirituality Center.

The services provided through our collaborations are valuable educational development opportunities for our residents. As a community partner of the La Crosse Public Library, I urge you to consider alternative measures or seek additional funding sources to avoid staff reductions.

I am hopeful that with your leadership and commitment to our community, there will be a sustainable solution.

Thank you for your attention to this pressing issue.

Sincerely,

Julie Connelly
Franciscan Spirituality Center

--
Julie Connelly
Franciscan Spirituality Center
Program and Retreat Coordinator
920 Market Street
La Crosse, WI 54601
608-791-5264

From: Karen Lueck fspace <klueck@fspace.org>
Sent: Monday, September 9, 2024 9:48 AM
To: ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch
Subject: Why the La Crosse Public Library matters

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Hello to all,

The La Crosse Public Library has become a beloved place for me. There are a number of reasons.

1. It is a welcoming place for all. We need more of those.
2. It provides a lifeline for many in the community, for example:
 - senior citizens who can get together for education, exercise, films, book discussions, to read the newspaper, etc.
 - youth who are introduced to wonderful books and a chance to express themselves through creativity.
 - the underserved who can borrow books, puzzles, and even get food when they are in need.
 - people without access to computers.
 - people like myself who read a lot, and would never be able to buy all those books.
 - homebound people and others who can't get to the physical library building easily. I am a library volunteer who delivers books and DVD's to people at an assisted living facility. The joy on their faces when I show up is priceless.

I could go on and on. But I ask you to please not underestimate the need for such a valuable resource in La Crosse.

Thank you.

Karen Lueck, FSPA

--

Karen Lueck, FSPA

From: Jo Brinks <brinksjo@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 8, 2024 7:24 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch
Subject: Valued Service for 2025 Budget

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Hello,

I am a Coulee region resident who wanted to inform you that the La Crosse Public Library provides a multitude of services that are valued by myself and others within the community.

The library not only serves as a means of connecting the people of La Crosse through events that enrich the community, but the library also provides invaluable resources to the city's residents by having free access to technology, information, an open and safe space for everyone, and much more that cannot be fully listed here.

The closing of the South branch of the library was a loss for many residents who frequented it. Other library supporters and I are concerned about what other losses may occur if more budget cuts are directed toward the library. The library, for a lot of people, is more than just books. It is a way to connect to the history of La Crosse, to find and support local businesses, and to have access to all the means to become a contributing citizen. It is a community hub that promotes the culture, knowledge, and welfare of the citizens of La Crosse for the better of all.

Thank you for taking the time to hear the feedback and I hope that it is clear how much support for the library the citizens have and are wanting from the city itself.

Sincerely,

Jo Brinks

From: Aundrea R <aundrearomberg@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 8, 2024 4:53 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Valued Service for 2025 Budget

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Hello,

I am a La Crosse resident who wanted to inform you that the La Crosse Public Library provides a multitude of services that are valued by myself and others within the community.

The library not only serves as a means of connecting the people of La Crosse through events that enrich the community, but the library also provides invaluable resources to the city's residents by having free access to technology, information, an open and safe space for everyone, and much more that cannot be fully listed here.

The South branch of the library closing was a loss for many residents who frequented it. Myself and others library supporters are concerned about what other losses may occur if more budget cuts are directed towards the library. The library, for a lot of people, is more than just books. It is a way to connect to the history of La Crosse, to find and support local businesses, and to have access to all the means to become a contributing citizen. It is a community hub that promotes the culture, knowledge, and welfare of the citizens of La Crosse for the better of all.

Thank you for taking the time to hear the feedback and I hope that it is clear how much support for the library the citizens have and are wanting from the city itself.

Sincerely,
Aundrea Romberg

From: Monta Clark <montaraec1@gmail.com>
Sent: Saturday, September 7, 2024 12:53 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library Funding

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Thank you for continuing to support the Library! I volunteer there twice a month and I'm so impressed by how busy they are. I'm especially impressed with the number of children who visit with their parents and participate in activities. It's inspiring and heartwarming to see how happy and excited they are. Stop by some afternoon around 3:00 and check it out. Especially if you need something to lift your spirits.
Please don't ever feel that it isn't utilized.

Monty Clark

Craig, Sondra

From: sharon hampson <shampson51@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 6, 2024 1:57 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: library funding

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City Council Members;

Library funding must be protected; that is, used only for purposes that are directly library-related. Library funding should not be used to plow the parking lots or to hire security or social workers. The city should be providing those services from other sources, as they do for other departments.

The library is a fundamental piece of democracy that must be protected. It serves all socio-economic groups and people of all sexual and political persuasions. The library should be used to promote education and knowledge among the citizens of our city.

Recently, library funding has been cut to the point that the library is slowly being strangled. One branch has closed, hours have been cut, and staff have been let go. None of this is acceptable. Please protect library funding so that it is used only for library services.

As to the homeless, I understand the difficulties that have arisen with the unsheltered, but the library is not the answer. Social workers should be funded from other sources, it's time the city stood up and took responsibility for the problem. The city needs to open a day shelter and provide services and housing for those that need it OR the city needs to stop sabotaging the Pathways Home project, which was meant to be a joint city-county endeavor. This is going to be a long, complicated, costly solution to a very intransigent problem. If the city can't get on board with the plan, then step aside and let the county carry it out. The city is currently not taking responsibility for services for the homeless, but are systematically sabotaging progress.

Stand up and take responsibility for population-wide problems and let the library be the library, a pillar of democracy.

Sincerely,

Sharon Hampson
Library Patron
823 21st St S, La Crosse



ReplyForward
Add reaction

From: Eric Giannini <egiannini1980@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 6, 2024 10:06 AM
To: ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch
Subject: Library Budget

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Mayor Reynolds and City Council Members,

My wife and I are parents of a three-year old, and greatly disappointed to hear that La Crosse's libraries are once again under threat for additional cutbacks. Since 2020, we have already seen staff reductions and the closure of one of our city libraries. Our libraries are a remarkable resource and go far beyond a simple repository of books. Like many parents of young children, we take our son to the library frequently. He loves books, but also greatly enjoys checking out some of the other resources the library offers - story times, games, puzzles, and more. Our libraries have offered a safe and welcoming destination for cold winter days, rainy days, and extremely hot summer days, when going to a park just isn't ideal.

We love our libraries and are happy to have our taxes fund them. Fully.

What is most disappointing about this is that the while we see the council going back to the library system as a repeated source of funding and service cuts, you have also elected to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars making the region's homeless problems worse. I suspect some of the projected budget shortfall is owed to the council's decision to criminalize homelessness, and the associated costs of repeatedly clearing and cleaning up encampments. You have made it harder and harder for unsheltered members of our community to dispose of their trash themselves and to seek services that might help them find shelter and a permanent home. If the clearing of encampments and cleanups are deemed necessary for public safety reasons, this is something that should come from our public safety budgets. The city parks and library departments should not be bearing the costs and consequences of the council's shortsighted actions. It should not be on Jay Odegaard to request money to clean up the Marsh Trails. After all we have spent on this, the same people are homeless, and services that our residents enjoy are now being eyed for harsh cutbacks.

I'll close by saying that it is completely unreasonable for city residents, myself included, to expect that the city can offer the same level of services without an increase in revenue. We like to tout our area as having some of the lowest property taxes in the state, but neglect to mention that keeping property taxes (not the mill rate) level will naturally lead to a decline in services. At some point, it is completely fair to ask residents to pay their share to maintain services we enjoy and which make La Crosse a great place to live.

I vote in every election, and I will remember your actions when I vote next April.

Regards,
Eric Giannini
209 20th St S, La Crosse

From: Maureen Freedland <maureenfreedland@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 6, 2024 9:30 AM
To: ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch
Subject: Library funding and community patrons

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Dear Mayor and Members of the Council,

I write to you about a certain woman I know well who is a regular library patron, and the deep need that she has for our library services to receive adequate funding.

This woman has a range of physical and cognitive disabilities acquired through no fault of her own -- just congenital bad luck. She works part-time as much as she can. She has no AODA issues. She is able to live independently with government benefits in subsidized housing but she is very isolated.

Despite her isolation, she is determined to better her life and be a productive member of our community. This is where the La Crosse Main Library comes in for her. It may appear to some that she is just sitting around taking up time and space. Quite the contrary.

She frequently, daily or weekly, visits to access materials about employment opportunities, interviewing techniques, and skills-based material to advance herself. She does not drive, and has spent many hours on computer based programs that she would otherwise not be able to access. She listens to and checks out books, music, films, and other media that provide the relaxation that she needs to calm her mental health needs. She is physically and mentally healthier because she walks to a place that is a calm respite and learning environment.

La Crosse is fortunate that our library system offers its amazing range of services to as many kinds of patrons as it does, and that it welcomes and finds ways to provide services to its many diverse patrons.

I am grateful for the support of our library system and urge funding at the maximum levels needed to continue excellent, broad services for everyone..

Maureen Freedland

La Crosse Resident
County Board Supervisor, District 4

Maureen Freedland
2641 Schubert Place
La Crosse, Wisconsin 54601
Tel. 608-796-1076
maureenfreedland@gmail.com

From: Livia Johnson <liviakjohnson@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 6, 2024 6:46 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Fwd: Libraries

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Hello!

I am writing as a concern citizen in our community about the cuts the library is facing. I wish to express how deeply saddened I am by this and how hopeful I am that we can avoid this from happening.

The library plays a vital role in my family's life. I have two young sons at home, and they are always clamoring for new books. Because of the library, I am able to keep them in new and high quality books with zero cost to myself. I am also a voracious reader. While I love the ease of Libby and other online book rentals, the wait time is often months! Our library almost always has a physical copy I can read right away. The amount of joy the library adds to our life in the form of books is incalculable.

Beyond books, we are also so reliant on the library for the services it provides. We love the youth programming, and we are certainly not the only ones. The Bluey program has guests numbering in the 100s! I attempted to sign up for a "Galentine's" event the day of, and all the spots had long been booked up. We frequently make use of printing. Again, not the only ones! Whenever we go, the lab is almost always filled. We also are reliant upon our skilled librarians for book recommendations, help with tech, and research. One librarian sat with me for an hour while I researched the history of my 100 year old home here in La Crosse on Winnebago St.

We love it for the books, the people, and the space itself. There are very few places I can be without the expectation of paying for something. Whether it is waiting for a YMCA class, killing time before dinner, or finding a place to go on a rainy day, the library welcomes me and my family. We can sit in a comfortable space without making a purchase or being hustled out.

The library is vital for a community that considers itself welcoming to all. The services that La Crosse provides its citizens makes it so special.

Thank you,

Liv Johnson

From: Beth Piggush <e21byron@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 10:29 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Our La Crosse Public Library - My 2nd home

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Good evening Mayor Reynolds and Council members,

My name is Beth Piggush and I have been a resident of La Crosse since October of 2010.

I am a wife, mother, neighbor and friend. Tonight with this email, I am also writing to advocate for more funding for our La Crosse Public Library System.

My family has been part of the La Crosse Public Library system since my eldest daughter was first walking, roughly 14 years ago. This library system is like a second home for us. The Main branch staff know my daughters and we feel safe and part of the community.

I know that budgets are tight, and I know that you can all bring the funding necessary to the public library system, because our community needs it.

Here is a short list of the MANY, MANY programs we have loved and valued participating in over the years.

- * baby story time (an outlet for a tired stay at home mom with babies that need interactions and early literacy exposure).
- * fall fundraiser nights (now in a new form, this was a fundraiser night that when we attended, we allowed our daughters to each pick out a book to purchase and dedicate to whomever they wanted to, and it had a life on the stacks for others).
- * summer carnival for youth (this has provided years and years of entertainment and exposure to storybook characters coming to life or live music for the first time).
- * adult book clubs (while we might not be able to join the discussion, we have always enjoyed the series set aside for book clubs and the recommendations).
- * local branches (prior to closing the south branch, our family rotation would be to visit each site at least once a month). Typically we would go to the main branch once a week during the school year and south branch once a week during the summer by bike.
- * THE CREATION SPACE (a game changer, to put an idea into reality, using collective tools with building community at once)
- * summer reading programs (for years this has been a big motivator for our daughters to keep reading and prevent the summer slide)
- * Teen Advisory Council TAC (this program has provided our daughters with a voice to set up programs for youth and also understand what the adults do behind the scenes with all the programs and events).
- * Summer Youth Volunteering - (pre and post covid, this created a space for youth to give back to the place they love going to. Plus a bonus is knowing what new books are coming in).
- * Indigenous Film series (a newer program with the Ho Chunk Three Rivers House, but a great program to keep more information flowing)

- * Seed library (while it did not last a super long time, we valued the opportunity to get new seeds and to be able to share our own seeds with the community).
- * PLAYAWAY books (this version of a book has allowed my family to enjoy quiet car rides as our daughters listen to the MP3 players as individuals)
- * GRAPHIC NOVELS and expertise of librarians (For a short while, I understood that graphic novels were easy readers, it was our brilliant, well educated librarians that shared with me the research that reading a graphic novel is very good brain development for my daughters, PLUS the graphic novel now is SO much more interesting than when I was a child).

.....and more and more and more

I could go on and on with examples as to why we love the La Crosse Public Library.

It is the heart of our community. It is a "both/and" opportunity for funding with the increase in services to support our vulnerable neighbors "and" support youth to grand adults with more educational opportunities. Feeding our minds with knowledge, via books or hands on programs, is what makes our community great.

It also aligns with our SUSTAINABILITY goals. If you think about the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, which includes access to education and community partnerships, we need to fully fund our public library system.

Mayor Reynolds, as a leader on climate action, La Crosse can only achieve our 2050 climate goals, with a strong education partner like the public library system, if they have full funding. The community needs the library as the connector to understand how they can work to implement climate actions. Where are people going to learn about greenspace options and building repairs, while being able to check out the "tools" to complete the projects. We need a fully funded library system, with the staff, to be able to support the community as they help the City and this administration, meet the climate action goals.

I would be happy to talk with each of you further about how the public library is important to me. Please do not hesitate to reach out.

Thank you,
Beth Piggush
2120 Ferry Street
cell 860-371-130
alternative email bpiggush@fspa.org

From: T & L Jesse <tlejesse@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 9:41 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library

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Good evening-

I'm writing to you tonight in support of our public library. With the possibility of a change in the budget allocated to the library, it feels important to share with you the impact the library has had on our family, let alone the entire community.

Our daughter was very young when things shut down for covid, but that meant she wasn't able to have many of the experiences children often get at that stage. What we were still able to do was watch the online version of storytime that the library posted. Being able to sit with her and sing the songs and hear the stories didn't replace being there in person, but it certainly provided her with enrichment still and all of us with some normalcy during that time. Attending in-person storytimes outside at the library ended up being one of the first things we did when we were able. We have been attending library programs ever since.

Every time we walk into the library, the librarians greet our daughter by name. They see countless faces, and they still remember her name. How incredibly lucky we are to have such dedicated librarians who make our children feel so special and so important.

We don't just benefit from the youth programming, though. We also get our books through the library, we love the availability of the tool library, and we can always find what we need in the maker space, as well. The library has adapted to fill so many needs in our community in so many ways.

The library provides a safe space for our children, for us, and for our community. Shouldn't we be providing the library with the funding needed to continue to do so?

Thanks-
Lorianne and Tom Jesse

From: Samantha White <sjmill1111@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 9:06 PM
To: ZZ Council Members; Reynolds@cityoflacrosse.org
Subject: The importance and impact of the La Crosse library on young families

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Dear city council members and Mayor Reynolds,

I understand this is another tough budget year and I wanted to share my thoughts on the importance of our La Crosse library in community families like ours.

We moved here from multiple different areas in the state, but have never experienced such loving and caring librarians who treat our youth with such respect, kindness, and patience as our librarians do here. They get to know the kids personally and treat each one according to their own individuality, never making one feel less important than the other. They also find fun ways to make the kids excited about visiting the library, through programming such as creating real life experiences visiting their favorite book characters like Bluey, anticipating a live dragon egg hatching, to character search quests making story time come to life, expanding the creativity and imaginations of our youth. I have never been so impressed and felt so much love for a library as I do for the La Crosse library.

The library provides our family with so much more than just giving us a few books to read. Their organization and book rotations allows for new reads each week, iPad rentals, child play area, family board games, movie rentals, creative center, and so much more giving busy, exhausted, and often tired parents the much needed break of trying to constantly figure out what to do to keep kids busy and happy, and parents guilt free by giving us a place to visit on those cold winter days rather than plopping them in front of the television. Each visit to the library gives us a unique experience keeping kids excited to go back again.

The La Crosse library is such a valuable asset to this community and one of the best around. It would not be that way without our thoughtful and never resting librarians meticulously planning their next theme or event finding important, free and significant ways to put the funding they receive to high quality use, reaching the interest and lives of so many.

One final story I would like to share how small gestures can make a difference. One time we decided to bike to the library, but realized upon parking we forgot to bring our bike lock. The library thoughtfully had one for us to loan, so we could enjoy our visit, rather than forcing us to bike home missing our weekly library visit. Small gestures like loaning a bike lock can have such a large impact. We still remember that one day even though it was almost two years ago. We would have had some pretty disappointed kids. Instead we had an overflowing heart of greatfulness for our community library.

When I ask each of my young children what they love about their La Crosse library this is what they had to say: Peter age 8: "They have really good child appropriate books and movies. What is also unique is they have so many different board games for our family nights, and you can rent audio books. They have really fun things to do at the creation station. I can read more and find interesting books every week."

Autumn age 6: "I like that it is really nice. They have a lot of books to read and I really like the crafts. It helps me learn."

Charlie age 3: "I like the videos and Micky Mouse books."

With this difficult year of finances, please consider how this one special place can have such a significant and positive impact on the lives of stressed out families. If you want to keep young families in the community don't take away the things that make their lives easier and what matters to them. Free community resources like the La Crosse library is one of the things keeping us around.

Sincerely,

The Whites

Samantha, Jeff, Peter, Autumn, and Charlie

From: Callie Przywojski <callie@vendiadvertising.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 8:28 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Fund the library

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To whom it may concern,

I strongly urge you to not only keep the library budget as-is but increase it. The value to the community is immeasurable -- the tool library, community programs, creation space, resources for the unhoused, and a safe third place for many families including mine.

My four-year-old son absolutely loves the library and it's become a place we visit at least twice a month.

Thank you for your consideration,
Callie Przywojski

From: Hannah Amann <hannah.lynn.amann@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 5:59 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: No Library Cuts

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Dear Council Members,

I am writing to ask you not to make budget cuts to the library. As a member of this community, I have seen the continuous impact that the library staff has made with the limited resources available to them. The staff is warm, welcoming, and always willing to lend a hand.

The programming efforts over my time living in the community have increased due to the passion from the staff. One of our biggest assets in this town is our library! Parents are continually looking for play spaces and programming for their children that is affordable. The library is the #1 answer for accessible, inclusive and free! The children's area is welcoming with friendly staff available to answer questions and help parents and there's more for kids to do than just reading great books: toys, sensory activities, scavenger hunts, ipads, computers, playaways and more.

I have attended life skills classes at the library such as sewing. My family also loves Booktok Bingo each month in the fall. There's truly something for everyone at the library, and I would love to continue to grow myself through these programs in the future. I would be so disappointed to see the library lose funding two years in a row.

Best,
Hannah

Hannah Amann ([she/her](#))
hannah.lynn.amann@gmail.com

From: Katie Bittner <kljleigh@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 5:45 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library services and the Northside pool - budget considerations

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Dear Mayor Reynolds and the City of La Crosse Council Members,

I am writing to all of you in support of our incredible community resources and in particular our libraries and Northside pool. As you enter budget considerations I wanted to share my experience with both of these valuable resources. As a Library Board Member, I have had the opportunity to experience our libraries both as a community member and as a member of the governing body. I can say with great passion that our libraries are serving the needs of our community in ways that go well beyond the traditional perspective and roles of libraries of the past. These spaces are truly "third spaces," locations where all members of our community have access, space and opportunity. The libraries are places of community gathering and building, information sharing, educational opportunities, fun and play, and safety as you are all aware. From little ones, to university students, to families and the unsheltered populations, the staff at each location are present and engaged, connecting with each individual that walks through the doors. I am hopeful that our community continues to see these sites as assets and places that increase our community connections, value and purpose. I know we are in a time of intense budget cuts and reduced resources, but I hope we can maintain these incredible spaces that help make our community such a vibrant place for all who live here and those who will choose this incredible community in the future as their home.

I additionally wanted to reach out about the Northside pool. As a resident in a Northside neighborhood I have been able to see each year the benefit of having a pool in this part of our community. I know many communities are not as fortunate as us with the facilities we have, however I think our community is also unique in that we have three flowing rivers through it that are beautiful and accessible. What I believe our pools provide more than anything, are safe spaces for community members to cool off during those hot summer months. With the proximity to the Black River, without a pool, the next place for children in the summer to cool off will be the beaches. Currently these areas are not staffed with lifeguards and the flowing water creates additional risks. I have been able to see the lifeguards at the pools interact with the community members and they are so engaged, aware, and invested in the safety of everyone at the pool. They know so many of the children individually and the pool is also a space for the Boys and Girls Club to frequent weekly through those months. I hope, again, we are able to find a way to keep our safe water access open in the coming years despite the budget challenges.

Thank you for all you do, for your commitment to serving our community and for tackling the incredible challenges that come with tight budgets and tough decisions.

Sincerely,
Katie Bittner

Craig, Sondra

From: Craig & Stacey Sheffield <headspin54601@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 3:21 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library budget cuts

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Dear Council Members,

I am writing today in support of the public library. They have seen many budget cuts in the last budgets to the point of even having to close a branch that was a wonderful asset to the southside. There should be no further cuts to their funding for several years!

I have been a library user for many years and have been blessed by many of the staff, especially the children's librarians. They have become a part of our family as 'the storytime ladies' as I have taken my daughter to many programs at all the branches of the library. I have seen my daughter grow through her use of the library and the relationships that she has formed there. She is now old enough to volunteer and loves to spend time at the library reading and helping.

It would be terrible to see another branch close or staff to have to be let go from such a valuable asset for our community! Please keep the library fully funded so that they can continue to serve our community in the many ways they do!!

Thank you,
Stacey Sheffield

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)

Craig, Sondra

From: kay rutherford <kaymarilyn64@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 1:53 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Mainlibrary

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I like folks who are helpful and like looking things up;
and, of course, who are kind.
This describes our Main St. Library.
I am thankful for this library and it's employees.
We are lucky to have you.

Kay Rutherford
La Crosse, WI.

Craig, Sondra

From: Kate Parker <kparker@uwlax.edu>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 1:46 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Support for the La Crosse Public Library

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Dear Mayor Reynolds and City Council,

In response to your recent request for City of La Crosse Residents to offer feedback on the city budget, I'd like to reach out and offer my strongest possible support for the La Crosse Public Library. I hope the library will be prioritized in this year's budget because they play such an integral role in the La Crosse community, truly supporting everyone from infants to retirees, and providing specialized support for people on the margins, including our area's incarcerated and homeless populations. As one of the founding members of the UWL Jail Literacy Program and a former volunteer at the Franciscan Hospitality House, this last item is of particular interest to me, and I hope that the City won't just *continue* its support, but indeed *increase* its fiscal commitment to the LPL's programming.

The library provides a space of literacy, learning, and understanding for all community members without cost or expectation. In times of need, the library has been an incredible resource for our population of homeless or transitional housing community members by providing free resources, printing, day-shelter, and enriching programming. It is currently focusing on expanding its resources to folks impacted by the carceral system. Right now, the LPL goes into the jail and teaches a weekly writing class year-round, including those times when our own JLP at UWL is on holiday break. I *know* firsthand how critical these experiences are for incarcerated folks, what a lifeline these programs can be. Missing even a week of programming can have a detrimental impact on the health and well-being of our community's most vulnerable citizens.

The library's innovative staff also offers the Creation Space and Tool Library, which allows patrons opportunities to craft with community members, utilize materials that would otherwise be discarded, and borrow tools that would otherwise be too expensive or used only once before donated or tossed. Through these programs, they have built awesome partnerships with non-profits in our community and help to spread the word about the awesome organizations we have in La Crosse.

I am happy to continue this conversation with you at any time. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if I can provide any additional support.

Thank you for your consideration.

With my best,
Kate Parker



Kate Parker

Professor and Chair, English | [UW-La Crosse](#)
kparker@uwlax.edu | [608.785.8304](tel:608.785.8304) | 433A Wimberly Hall

Tell me it is only human--
to wish for someone to believe in the myth of you.
Emily Stoddard

From: Emily Yang <emilyyang10@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 12:46 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: The La Crosse Public Library's Impact

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Dear Mayor Reynolds and Council Members,

I hope this message finds you well.

I am writing to express my deep appreciation for the La Crosse Public Library and to highlight its significant role in our community. As someone who grew up using the library's services, I can attest to its profound impact on both my personal and professional life.

From my childhood, the La Crosse Public Library has been a cornerstone of support and inspiration. Although admittedly I was primarily drawn to the Children's DVD and VCR selection, I found every corner of the library fascinating. My teenage sister and I would often visit, and I vividly remember her guiding me past the giraffe at the entrance, which I later learned is named Longfellow, before searching for her next good read in the young adult novels section. My curiosity seeing the large boat on the wall and various fun seating spots especially made those visits memorable.

As a college student, the library continued to be a haven. I fondly recall the kindness of the staff, who provided granola bars during last-minute study sessions, demonstrating their commitment to the well-being of all patrons. For the entirety of my undergraduate experience, I was only able to print off my academic papers using printers from the La Crosse Public Libraries. One especially memorable encounter involved a Library Assistant who attentively managed the use of the printer, ensuring that a fellow patron's work was not interrupted. This small yet significant act of consideration left a lasting impression on me, highlighting the library's dedication to all of its visitors.

Now, as a working professional in the non-profit sector, I continue to witness the library's vital contributions on an organizational level. The La Crosse Public Library remains steadfast in its mission to serve individuals from marginalized communities. With its dedicated social worker, numerous community partnerships, and proactive efforts to advocate for and promote available resources, the library exemplifies a model of community service and collaboration.

The library's efforts have enriched my life and continue to foster a sense of home, safety, and security for many residents in La Crosse. It plays a crucial role in making our city a welcoming place, countering reasons why some might consider leaving the area.

As you consider the future development and sustainability of our community, I urge you to recognize the La Crosse Public Library's immense value. Their unwavering dedication to meeting divergent needs and fostering a sense of belonging is a testament to why many of us choose to stay and thrive in La Crosse.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Warm regards,

Emily R.G.J. Yang

Pronouns: She/her/hers/Ntxhais/nkauj/muam

Email: emilyryang10@gmail.com

Phone number: (763)331-2860

From: Megan Morey <meganjmorey@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 12:17 PM
To: ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch
Subject: What I Value - the LIBRARY!

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Good afternoon! Just a quick note to mention how much the La Crosse Public Library means to me. I'm not from here originally and I don't have any family nearby, so when things are tough and I need some support, I head to the Library. I've spent countless hours perusing the non-fiction section, finding answers and inspiration to help me through challenges. I've escaped from the day-to-day through countless fiction novels, usually pulling from staff recommendations. I taught my son to sew at the Creation Space. My son LOVES the children's area (the staff is PHENOMENAL!). As a result of the pandemic many people hoard canned goods and toilet paper, but I hoard BOOKS that I purchase at the Monday morning or weekend sales. I can't imagine life now without the La Crosse Public Library and honestly cannot say enough good things about it. Please know what an asset this library is to our community.

Thank you so much!

Megan Morey

From: Gretchen Guinn Paquette <gretchenguinn@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 11:56 AM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Public library

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Dear Mayor Reynold's and Members of the City Council,

I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the current and future funding of the La Crosse Public Library. As a resident of La Crosse, I have seen firsthand the vital role that our public library plays in fostering community engagement, lifelong learning, and access to essential resources for all citizens. I do know that today is your meeting, and I hope to get my letter in before you make any decisions.

The library is more than just a repository of books; it is a cornerstone of our community that provides free access to educational programs, internet and technology resources, and a safe space for children, students, seniors, and families. In particular, the library's efforts in promoting literacy and supporting early childhood education have been invaluable, especially for families who may not have access to these resources otherwise.

As a parent of young children, I have watched them develop a love for reading and learning through the library's programs and resources. They have learned to navigate the library on their own, finding joy in discovering new books and participating in activities that enrich their understanding of the world around them. The library has become a trusted and beloved place for them, and it has been an essential part of their growth and development.

It has come to my attention that there may be considerations to reduce funding for the library, and I believe this would have a detrimental impact on our community. Adequate funding is essential to maintaining the library's services, updating its collections, and ensuring that it can continue to meet the growing and diverse needs of our residents. Reduced funding could lead to decreased hours, limited access to programs, and fewer resources available to those who rely on the library most.

Investing in our public library is an investment in the future of La Crosse. I urge you to prioritize and protect funding for the library in the upcoming budget discussions. By doing so, you are not only supporting an essential community service but also reinforcing the values of education, equity, and opportunity that define our city.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. I appreciate your service to our community and hope you will consider the significant positive impact that robust funding for the La Crosse Public Library can have on all of us.

Sincerely,

Gretchen G Paquette

From: Chiana Valencia <chiana.valencia@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 11:45 AM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Cc: Shanneon Grant; Dawn Wacek; Brooke Newberry
Subject: Library Letter from Vicenza Valencia, 5th grader
Attachments: image_50415361.JPG

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Attached please find a letter from my 10 year old daughter, Vicenza Valencia, who often checks out 60 books at a time and leaves the library begging me to carry her overloaded bag.

Hi my name is Vicenza Valencia and I am 11 years old.

I am writing because of the possibility to cut money from the La Crosse Public Library.

Now when most people think of a library, they think of books, and with this library they are half correct. With the other half they are wrong.

This library is so much more, it is a safe place learn, code, create, and to be safe. This library also provides food and entertainment and LOVE.

These are only a few things that this library offers, there is much much more.

In conclusion, to kids like me, and a family like mine, the library is very important.

Sincerely,

Vicenza Valencia

Hi my name is Vicenza Valencia and I am 11 years old.

I am writing because of the possibility to cut money from the La Crosse Public Library.

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In conclusion, to kids like me, and a family like mine, the library is very important.

Sincerely,

Vicenza Valencia

Vicenza Valencia

Craig, Sondra

From: Chiana Valencia <chiana.valencia@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 11:41 AM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Love Letter to the La Crosse Library

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Good Evening,

My name is Chiana Valencia and I am writing in response to the news that cuts to the La Crosse Public Library are once again being considered by the City Council.

As a caregiver, educator, volunteer, and frequent patron of the library, I know that the role of the library in any community is an essential one. Having only lived in La Crosse for ten years, I have spent a lot of time in the libraries of larger cities. Despite its size, the La Crosse Public Library offers more than any library than I have ever visited. The vast selection of materials, phenomenal programming, and sense of community that is purposefully curated by talented and hardworking staff needs to be protected. Asking the library to (again) absorb the brunt of another round of budget shortfalls is unwise, unpopular, and inequitable.

The very first time I walked into the library with my toddler, not knowing a soul in this town, the library staff welcomed our family with enthusiasm and joy. We were greeted by name after that first visit, and I continue to be awed by the fact that they do this for every family.

The staff of the library have built it into a third space and gathering place for the community. Exhausted caregivers of infants, grandparents wrangling toddlers who missed a nap but can be placated with a snack, (the library saves the day with their snacks, too!), mothers taking deep breaths as their tweens spew attitude: we are all there, grateful for this space that has been thoughtfully created for all who walk through the doors of the building.

The programming offered at the La Crosse Public Library is outstanding. When we have family and friends visit, they frequently comment about how impressive the offerings are, especially because La Crosse isn't a large town. Story Times, Book Clubs, Pokémon and Lego Parties, Daniel Tiger appearances, the Creation Space, classes and book clubs for our elders, a Tool Lending Library: I am convinced that we have the most diverse and accessible programming of any library system, and the staff at the library make this programming happen.

My family is so grateful to the smart, kind, and patient staff who work at the library as well for the programming provided that we have made the decision to donate yearly; despite our La Crosse address we aren't in the City of La Crosse and therefore our taxes do not go toward any of the services we utilize at the library. In other words, we feel so strongly that the City of La Crosse Public Library needs more funding, not less, that we gladly attempt to offset a fraction of the costs that incur while providing such incredible programming and community outreach.

Decreasing funding for the Library is both a heart-wrenching and illogical proposal as it will directly affect not only patrons, but the staff who have worked so purposefully to provide programming and

joyfully support the community that gathers there. My family asks that you reconsider the proposed cuts to the library so that the phenomenal staff can continue to provide the outstanding programming referenced above.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Chiana Valencia
3600 Ebner Coulee Road
La Crosse, WI 54601
Chiana.valencia@gmail.com
612 759 0734

Craig, Sondra

From: Megan Kirchman <megan.kirchman@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 9:48 AM
To: ZZ Council Members; Reynolds, Mitch
Subject: Library-Budget Cuts 2024

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Hello,

I'm writing to ask that you consider not cutting the budget for the La Crosse Public Library in the upcoming budget year. The \$100,000 cut in 2023 was already incredibly sad for the community and access to the south side of town. I worry any further cuts are going to result in loss of the hard-working, passionate staff that make LPL a safe place for so many people.

LPL has been an enormous blessing of resources for me throughout my 20's, especially the last 2-3 years. When money has been tight, I at least know I have access to free entertainment through materials. I know I have access to tools from the Tool Library that would normally cost me hundreds of dollars. (not to mention, all the amazing advice library staff have offered me while I was fixing my bike, or repairing things around my apartment.) Programs like the Creation Space have given me a place to learn new skills like sewing and be creative in new ways. I'm so thankful to have learned from talented staff, who are excited to share their knowledge with a beginner.

LPL is a safe haven for so many in our community, physically and relationally. Any further cuts to the budget/staff are going to take away services from the people who need it the most.

I appreciate all you do and the hard decisions you make for this city. Thank you for considering,

Megan Kirchman

From: Charlene Krockner <charlenekrockner@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, September 5, 2024 9:43 AM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Funding for providing Library services

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I’m writing about the impact and value of the program offerings, such as Monday Mornings at Main, access to technology, books, and digital resources, the Creation Space, meeting spaces, Tool Library, Home Delivery Services and other library services you value, I would be grateful if you strongly consider continue funding this valuable service.

Thank you for your consideration,

-Charlene Krockner

From: Kayla Kemp <kayla.sue.kemp@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 9:07 PM
To: Reynolds, Mitch; ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library

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Hi Mayor Reynolds and City Council Members,

I'm just emailing to add to the voices of how valuable and important the La Crosse library is to me and my family. It is a huge asset to our community and it is sad to hear that it is facing further budget cuts. We use the library and resources the library offers most days of the week between the hundreds of books my kids get in a year, the digital offerings for my husband and I and the countless movies and games we've borrowed over the years. We often brag to out of town family and friends about how incredible our library is. Please don't take any of these resources away.

Sincerely,
Kayla Kemp

From: Melissa Freund <melissa.zart17@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, September 4, 2024 6:39 PM
To: ZZ Council Members
Subject: Library Funding

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Good evening,

I've heard talk recently that there could be some significant budget cuts to the La Crosse Public Library. So, I'm writing you in hopes that you'll reconsider, given how vital the library's resources are to our community. There is a plethora of reasons why I believe funding for public libraries is so important, so I will do my best to keep this as succinct as possible.

For starters, public libraries are the only true source of free education beyond high school, as even the use of the internet requires internet service and a device. In a climate where books are constantly under the threat of being banned in schools, public libraries are an essential resource that provides access to all sorts of reading materials. (Reading materials, and information, that people may not be able to access anywhere else.) Circling back to my point about free access to education and the internet, libraries are one of, if not the only, places that provide truly free access to the internet. One might argue that you can get free wi-fi in a number of places; however, there is often an expectation that you'll make a purchase in those environments and, as stated earlier, you need to own some sort of electronic device in order to use that free wi-fi. However, at the library, there is no need to purchase anything, you can stay as long as you need, and the internet and devices are provided for you. This free access can be essential, especially for our homeless population, who might be unable to communicate long distances, or search for jobs, without it.

Moving to a more personal note, my family has been visiting the library at least once a week for the past five years. As a parent of an autistic child, I can't tell you how much I appreciate having free access to the library. We can go there whenever we want and work on social skills, like sharing and meeting new people, as well as attend story times where he can practice shared attention in an understanding and low-stakes environment. This is a huge benefit to our family as many other social groups/activities and therapies can be expensive and the costs add up quickly. The library has helped us create amazing connections with other members of the La Crosse community, which I don't believe we would have, if not for the safe space and programming that the library provides.

I would also like to take a moment to mention the amazing staff and all that they offer to our community. Library staff are constantly greeting children by name and taking the time to truly get to know them as individuals. My son is hyperlexic (so he started reading at two and, at five, he's mastering multiplication and division), which the library staff are well aware of. They have been so helpful in finding us challenging books that aren't too mature for him and will often pull-out books saying, "I saw this book the other day and thought you would love it." (And they're right; those books are *always* a hit.) They're also super understanding of his autism. They never flinch when he does something unusual or lacks eye contact. In fact, on more than one occasion, staff members have come over and helped me get him through a meltdown, without me even asking for assistance. They simply see a child who is struggling and immediately step in to help. It's so wonderful to have another space where my kids feel completely comfortable being themselves, and I don't feel the need to explain, or apologize for, their behaviors.

I understand that government funding always has its limits and, often, difficult decisions need to be made. However, the La Crosse Public Library offers an abundance of irreplaceable services to the community.

Therefore, I implore you to take the time to fully consider what the La Crosse community could lose/miss out on if significant cuts are made to the library's funding.

Sincerely,

Melissa Zart

REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION
EMPLOYEE BENEFIT TRUST FUND COMMITTEE
EMPLOYEE MEDICAL BENEFIT PLAN

On August 29th, 2024, the Employee Benefit Trust Fund Committee (EBTFC) convened to identify how to proceed with the Employee Medical Benefit Plan for the 2025 benefit year. A motion was made, seconded, and unanimously approved (4-0, 1 absent) to recommend the following changes to the Employee Medical Benefit Plan for the 2025 plan year:

- First, the Committee recommends offering the option of a high deductible health plan (HDHP) to employees with the option of a Health Savings Account (HSA).
- Second, the Committee recommends increasing deductible, out-of-pocket maximum, and copays for employees as illustrated below.

	Traditional Plan		HDHP	
Deductible				
Single	\$600 (+\$200)		\$3,500	
Family	\$1,800 (+\$600)		\$7,000	
Coinsurance	90%		100%	
Max Out of Pocket				
Single	\$2,000 (+\$1,000)		\$7,000	
Family	\$6,000 (+\$3,000)		\$14,000	
Copays				
PCP	\$30 (+\$10), 10% coinsurance		Ded, \$20 copay	
Specialist	\$30 (+\$10), 10% coinsurance		Ded. \$20 copay	
Emergency Room	Ded. Coins.		Ded. \$75 copay	
Inpatient	Ded. Coins.		Ded. Coins.	
Outpatient	Ded. Coins.		Ded. Coins.	
Pharmacy Copays	\$20/\$35/\$60 (+\$10) Specialty is Tier 3		Ded, then \$0/\$20/\$50/\$150 Specialty is Tier 4	
Charged Rate (Monthly)	w/HRA	W/out HRA	w/HRA	W/out HRA
Single	\$96.21	\$122.17	\$85.79	\$108.94
Limited Family	\$198.98	\$252.67	\$177.43	\$225.30
Family	\$242.24	\$307.60	\$216.00	\$274.28
EE Increase from 2024	w/HRA	W/out HRA	w/HRA	W/out HRA
Single	\$12.09	\$15.35	\$1.67	\$2.12
Limited Family	\$25.00	\$31.75	\$3.45	\$4.38
Family	\$30.44	\$38.65	\$4.20	\$5.33

- The Committee previously approved changes to the prescription drug plan in order to lower costs.
- With these changes, there would be a group increase of 21.2%.

Respectfully submitted this 9th day of September 2024,


Stephen F. Matty, Chairperson