



MADISON
PUBLIC
LIBRARY

September 9, 2021

To our Madison library community, Mayor Satya Rhodes-Conway, and Members, Madison Common Council:

On July 1, 2021, the Madison Public Library Board approved its proposed 2022 Operating Budget, meeting the five percent reduction directive given by the mayor to all city departments. The proposed budget includes the reduction of nearly one million dollars and includes the elimination of Sunday and regular service hours, staff reductions, and significant cuts to public programs and staff training in 2022.

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We presented our budget scenarios in a prioritized way, including sixteen specific reductions at various priority levels:

- Four reductions (in green) total \$45,000 and represent sustainable changes the library can make on a permanent basis with little customer impact.
- Seven reductions (in yellow) total \$223,004, eliminating furniture, professional memberships, programming funds, and staff training. Library customers will be affected by loss of programs and the ability to engage community members inside and outside of library spaces.
- Five reductions (in red) total \$681,666 and represent significant cuts to library operations, resulting in elimination of Sunday hours, Central Library evening hours and staff layoffs. Proposed reductions in red would significantly affect Madison residents' ability to use computers & internet, check out library materials, and use the library as a gathering or meeting space.

While we voted unanimously to approve this budget, it was because we knew we needed to meet a target. But as a Board we feel strongly that a 5% reduction would be an incredible disservice to our community, representing lost opportunities for community connection, personal growth, and economic betterment for Madison's residents. Our libraries are crucial resources for the economic recovery needed in Madison – from literacy and job or writing assistance to connecting with others through art, civic and cultural programs to health, wellness, and social service programs. The library has already experienced \$440,354 in reductions taken in 2021, which represented a loss of 8 FTE and 48 less service hours per week. As board members, we are regularly asked when service hours will be restored by members of our community, and in those communications we hear how deeply residents value their public libraries.

Staff layoffs would directly impact the individuals hired in the past year, hired with a focus not only on their experience and expertise, but whose hiring was also a reflection of our board's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion. Our library staff, essential workers each and every one, have provided exceptional service during this challenging year of ever-changing needs and expectations in our community. Please allow of all them to continue their award winning service.



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Sincerely,

Madison Public Library Board

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Alyssa Kenney, Vice-President

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