

>>> "Tina Hansen" <[tinah@peak.org](mailto:tinah@peak.org)> 04/03/08 2:18 PM >>>

In the City Manager's budget message, one of her recommendations was to maintain the current level of hours for Salem Public Library. She plans, as I understand it, to do this by dropping the book mobile and reducing hours in the library's computer lab from 53 to 40.

This troubles me, since the computer lab is one of the more popular spots in the library. I also am concerned about the book mobile being dropped, as this would have an impact on shut-ins and those who can't get to the library.

I recognize that the City needs to have a balanced budget, but I also recognize that library services are important to this community. The library has been, and can still be, a place that builds community and brings people together. Therefore, I am offering a couple of possible solutions to the funding problem.

One thing the library can do is to drop old or out-of-date books from its collection, such as reference works, travel guides, and the like, from the past 30 years. These could be replaced with current information from online databases that change more often than printed books. Not only could money be saved, but space could be reclaimed and made available for newer technologies.

Given that online research is where things are going, reducing the hours of the library's computer lab seems counterproductive. Reduction of computer lab hours would make it more difficult for those who don't have internet access at home to get online. Volunteers who happen to have a good deal of computer knowledge to share would be a way to fill this void. They could offer training and tech support, and they'd be doing a service to the community.

In the long term, I would love to see library hours increased, particularly at the beginning of the week. Since Salem is growing, this city needs a library that will expand with the population.

I say all this to argue for the importance of the library as a place that builds community. The library has been, and still can be, a place that brings the community together. Therefore, I'd encourage City Council to do all it can to support the library and give it the funds to expand and grow.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
Tina Hansen  
Ward 2