

Dear Mayor Batey, Council President Massey, Councilors Stavenjord, Khosroabadi, Abma; and other members of the Budget Committee

May 4, 2024, Budget Committee Meeting, Community Comment

*Re: The proposed City Budget is flawed because the cost of Council goals when adopted is an after thought*

**When the Council adopts goals, such as the Climate goal, it most often promotes the need for the goal, but does little to convey to Milwaukie residents what the goal-becoming-financial-obligation might ultimately cost. Nor does the Council weigh adequately the goal against other high priority items (say, transportation or parks, for instance.)**

**The same could be said of Milwaukie's Urban Renewal program, which is increasingly reducing the amount of general funds available for critical basic services.**

**The citizens of Milwaukie were not allowed to vote on Milwaukie's adoption of an Urban Renewal District. Other prominent cities, such as Oregon City and Wilsonville, ask their residents first before adopting an Urban Renewal District.**

**Personally, I am disappointed that the City Council chooses to retain a Sustainability/Climate director, a position which has been vacant, while raising the license fees for essential residential utility services (heating, cooling, and lighting) – such increases most likely to be passed onto Milwaukie residents in the form of higher utility bills.**

**I had hoped that the Council would spend this increased funding on certain, specific, and tangible benefits for the residents of Milwaukie who will be indirectly paying the increase in licensing fees.**

**I had even been researching a tree rebate program for the City of Milwaukie that would ultimately provide more shade trees for Milwaukie residents to take refuge under during those hot summer afternoons - and shade trees to help mitigate urban heat sinks. But now with this budget proposal which will spend the extra fee revenues on employing what to me is just another paper-pushing climate warrior wanting to limit how people heat their homes, I can't see that there will be enough funding to offer a tree planting rebate program in Milwaukie. So, I am out.**

**Come time to ask for more property taxes, I will be filing Arguments Against in the Voter Pamphlet. The City's recent polling of citizens, regarding a potential parks levy, indicates that support is not there for any sizeable increase in property taxes. Good luck trying to get a City operating levy for General fund purposes.**

Sincerely,  
Elvis Clark  
resident of the City of Milwaukie