



April 23, 2024

Good Evening City Council Member and City Staff,

I am writing with what I hope is a potential solution to the Gustavus Library budget cuts of \$3000 to our materials budget and \$900 cut to our program supply budget.

The Program Supplies budget is what funds the Summer Reading program, Art Club, Grab & Go Kits, Pizza, Puzzles, and Games, and much more. Adult programs and kid programs alike will be short changed and diminished. In the big picture and scale of the City Budget these two amounts may seem insignificant. They are, however, considerable for the Gustavus Library. The loss of \$900 in the Program Supplies budget area is a *31 percent reduction* in the funds to support the programs we offer.

It would happen at a time that coincides with budget cuts the Gustavus School/Chatham School District is also facing. Please consider the role of the City in supporting the education of our youngest citizens instead of cutting more. Let's seek to provide them with a well-rounded, high-quality education.

The Materials budget is literally our books, DVDs, STEM Kits, puzzles, and games. The *21percent reduction* will be noticed and felt by our Gustavus Library patrons. It really is that simple and frustrating.

I believe the Mayor; City Administrator and the City Council can find another way to balance the budget. Several citizens have reached out with alternative suggestions, and I've encouraged them to communicate with all of you!

If other alternatives are not possible, then my solution is this, use the \$500 in our Equipment budget in combination with employee hour reductions. We had hoped to purchase a new printer but have found a way to make the one we have continue its life expectancy. Jason from Alaska Technical Solutions (ATS) just visited and helped find a solution! In addition, Melisa has agreed to a 5 hour a week reduction in hours for the months of May, June, and July and I offer the same for November, December, and January. Our job descriptions would thus be "Up to 25 hours" instead of "Up to 30 hours" for the agreed upon months. The savings between hours and equipment costs should come close to covering the \$3,900 in materials and program supplies. It is important to remember that these two budget items are literally the lifeblood of the library.

I apologize for the late submission of this idea. Acknowledging, that is the Mayor and City Administrator prerogative to cut department budgets. Moving forward, I'm hoping for the opportunity to work on ways to make those cuts prior to the presentation to the council. However, that would require the Mayor and City Administrator to be forthright in communication of the cuts to the directors. Just to clarify, Melisa was informed of their intention to cut \$3000 from materials but neither of us was informed about the program materials cut.

I offer my solution with respect and great appreciation for the work you do as a City Council.

Sincerely,

LeAnn Weikle,

Gustavus Public Library Services Director