

Dear City Council Members,

April 21, 2024

Your service to the community is deeply appreciated although, often as not, your friends and neighbors neglect to tell you so.

Some suggestions for improving your excellent FY 25 City Budget:

Please do not short-fund the library. Instead of committing \$50,000 in advance of a potential disaster that may or may not occur, set aside \$45,000 and take \$5,000 to fund the service that seeks, five days a week, across all political views, social strata, economic status, and age range, to stitch together the disparate citizens of our town into one Gustavus community. Especially considering that we now have over a million dollars set aside in an emergency reserve fund. Applying a flat percentage cut to the library is regressive in that it would impair the service disproportionately to similar cuts to larger departmental budgets. Please fund everything that the library asked for, including the \$350 in new money they requested. A fully functioning library service is just too fundamental to the Gustavus identity as a single town, especially now with our social and political divides and neighbors having trouble talking with and tolerating each other, to the point of some feeling “endangered” to live here. To underfund the library would be a strategic error for the future of our community well-being.

You might also subtract from that disaster allocation to fund the error that the Treasurer made in transferring the total employment expenditure to the master budget spreadsheet.

Also, it is discomfiting to short the roads budget. Please consider, when previous year carry-over is determined, to prioritize restoring that \$50,000 to the roads budget first, as roads have been, consistently and historically, a primary concern for a majority of Gustavus folk.

Finally, thank you for once again crafting a budget where the total employment expense is less than the total income from local taxes and fees, fully in line with the preference of the citizens as expressed in City Resolution FY19-16. Well done.

Respectfully,

Susan Warner