

Adoption of the 2019-2021 biennial budget

I have three observations to make on the process and the outcome of this budget.

First

The council spent two weekends to create a list of priorities before the budget process:

Yet you made budget cuts to essential services like police, municipal court, planning/building inspections and fire. While valued services like economic development (\$186,000 general fund) and conservation \$300,000, general fund expense and parks received a complete pass with no cuts – all in the general fund where the \$2 million deficit was located. Why didn't you follow your own priorities? Why did you place cuts on essential services while giving a free ride to the lesser valued ~~work~~ services? You didn't even follow your own pre-set priorities.

Second

In the midst of a climate crisis that leaves the Rogue Valley and especially Ashland vulnerable to fire you let the fire chief resign in order to give our community a fighting chance. He saved three fire fighter positions but he had to lose his job to do so. That should never have happened. The money for the position is still there – hire back our fire chief!! Let the fire fighters be firefighters and cut economic development, conservation, and parks positions. *that are non-essential services.*

Third

You are not listening to the citizens of Ashland. Balance the budget by cutting ~~unnecessary~~ expenses. The citizens on the budget committee gave you several opportunities to do so in their motions but you failed to ~~do your job~~. *act on them.* The citizens on the budget committee two years ago warned you about spending too much; they did it again during this budget process. Some of you even admitted the next budget is going to be much harder with payroll expenses increasing 12% with no commiserate revenue increase. Switch to ^{an} annual budget and ~~get to~~ *cut expenses in* work balancing the budget. We entrusted ~~an~~ fiduciary responsibility to our elected officials. We expect you to do your job now not to kick the can down the road for two years.

Dr. Carol Voisin, Ashland

and lower utility rates.

SOU
Retrenchment:

- hiring freeze
- salary increase freeze
- two dozen middle management laid off
- third rail = tenured faculty asked to retire

City third rail is the 6% PERS payment for employees

Payroll