Public Testimony
for new budget
March 2021
Local 884 concerns
Public Testimony for the PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE
March 16, 2021, 6:00pm

Lore Lichtenberg, President
Local 884, City of New Haven Classified Employees

RE: Public Safety Communications / Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP)
Representing Operator/Dispatchers III, Operator/Dispatchers II and Operator/Dispatchers I
(approx. 40 employees)

Local 884 represents approximately 40 Operator/Dispatchers answering public distress calls at the city’s 911 operation. The training process is long; it often takes 3-5 years to become truly proficient in the procedures, the unique dispatch language, familiarity with the city and its patterns of peak activity.

The toxic work environment in PSAP will reach a crescendo when calls not answered properly results in resident’s life. Workplace Violence complaints from staff have gone unanswered for months as a result supervision and employee counseling in not happening in a timely manner to make a positive effect.

In a single room, 911 Call Taking, Fire Dispatch and Police Dispatch operations occur 24/7, 365 days a year. Three shifts of operators rotate through shared workstations. On a basic level, core employee needs are not met; we have continual complaints over chairs. The need for sufficient comfortable, ergonomic and functioning chairs are essential, as Operators are required to sit for 8 to 16 hours a day.

Operators are mandated to stay a second shift (Signal 111) when their replacement does not arrive. Often times this requirement to stay comes at the last minute, and employees must have time to make home care arrangements and alike, causing added stress. Mandatory holdovers are an essential requirement of the position, yet it has become a practice to require some to stay and others excused. This unfair share of the burden creates a toxic atmosphere pitting colleague against colleague.

Employees have lost the spirit of collegiality among the team; there is bitter resentment, management does not address toxicity and bullying in a timely manner. Investigation and response to complaints of workplace violence are two years, one year, three months outstanding.

The position of Operator/Dispatcher is a difficult and complex responsibility. It requires every member of the team to be on their “A” game every time they answer a call. They must be able to respond professionally in times of true crisis and during those times when the public calls to report a barking dog next door. The added stress in the room distracts employees from focusing on the job at hand and the attention they are able to give the public.

We ask the Public Safety Committee stress city managers’ attention to address the toxic workplace concerns. Administrators and supervisors must be present and work side-by-side with the operators. Managers must actively mediate issues of dispute, address and correct poor behavior in a fair, consist and timely manner.

The Operator Dispatchers worked throughout the COVID shut down, their hours altered to 12 hours shifts in order to provide for more social distancing. Operators demonstrated their commitment to the city, the city needs to reciprocate with better treatment.
This Year Budget

Sandra Caro <sandracaro33@gmail.com>
Fri 3/12/2021 2:23 AM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

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From my own experience in this city, the only thing I can say about the budget is: It is important to managing wise money, though it is also important to don't blame the victims. The point is simple, as long as the system is unfair by giving privileges to the wealthy of not paying taxes and provide the way for them to get richer, the only way for city services to operate is by oppressing and reducing the cost and expenses of their own services and people, increasing taxes on their citizens, and asking for money to the Federal government.

Megan Keenan • Westville
Even though public testimony is for the city, since I believe these become public record, I encourage people to use this as an opportunity to put more pressure on Yale. The amount they pay hedge funds to manage their endowment each year is roughly equivalent to 40 years worth of their payments to the city of New Haven. They earned $1billion on their endowment from 2019-2020 alone while families struggled financially. I'm an alum of the public health school, I'm proud of the institution as a whole (aside from the questionable practice of making the public health school pay for affiliation). But the tax exempt status is truly disgusting considering they use that status to hoard wealth.
Civil Service Meeting 3/25/2021

Local884 AFSCME <local884@gmail.com>
Thu 3/25/2021 9:24 AM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>; Noelia Marcano <NMarcano@newhavenct.gov>
Cc: Maria Sterling <MSterling@newhavenct.gov>; Stephen Librandi <SLibrandi@newhavenct.gov>

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Civil Service Commission,

Meeting: March 25, 2021, Item 2: Temporary Pending Test Requests

Local 884 wishes to be on the record to express descent in the matter of permitting SCHOOL SECURITY OFFICERS to be hired "pending test". The position is currently posted and open. The closing date is tomorrow Friday March 26, 2021.

Time is sufficiently close to test, evaluate, select and hire, without the necessity of breaking the established chain.

We wish to speak on this matter. Thank you,

--
Lore Lichtenberg, President
AFSCME Local 884
New Haven CT
203.946-8115
Bike Rider Education
Bicycle rider education

Joel LaChance <lachancej2@gmail.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 12:00 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

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To whom it concerns,

Last Spring New Haven Public Schools were set to pilot the inclusion of bicycle rider education and training for second grade students as part of the Physical Education curriculum in one of it's schools. There is tremendous interest and support for this initiative to exponentially grow the bike riding culture safely and professionally in our city. The benefits of including bicycle rider training extend far beyond an enthusiastic physical education class. It includes references to math, health, geography, and physics applications.

The teacher directed to teach the bicycle rider education is still planning to do so. Please insure there is funding for this highly useful and rewarding program.

Thank you for considering this initiative,

Joel LaChance
The Goatville Cyclesmith LLC.
203 907 9526
Yale Contributions
Crisis Budget

Megan Keenan <keenan.megan@gmail.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 12:50 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

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To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing in support of the Mayor’s efforts to avoid the need for the crisis budget and strongly encourage Yale University to reconsider its role in our community. It is the $31 billion elephant in the room.

In addition to being a New Haven resident, I am an alum of the public health graduate program and a university employee from 2007-2010 during the previous economic crisis. During that time, the university’s endowment took a substantial hit and they asked their employees, many of them residents of this community, to make sacrifices. A significant number of people were laid off, raises were postponed, benefits were trimmed back. In contrast, during this economic crisis, the university’s endowment amassed approximately $1 billion during a year when the rest of us suffered financial hardship. It is a classic example of privatizing gains while expecting the public to shoulder losses.

Given the size of the endowment relative to the size of the university, I do not think it is an exaggeration to say that Yale is essentially a hedge fund that runs a school for the tax advantage. In 2015, Yale paid its hedge fund managers over $480 million (that amount is likely higher today). In contrast, Yale pays New Haven a voluntary amount of only $13 million each year. Put another way, one year of payments to its hedge fund managers is equivalent to nearly 40 years of payments to the city of New Haven. Even the increased amount requested by the city is only 10% of what the university pays to its hedge fund managers each year.

I am not writing this to bash Yale. I am a person who, like many others in this community, is proud to call New Haven home and proud to be part of the Yale community. But the pandemic and economic fallout of the past year has made it impossible to defend the university’s tax exempt status and position that it has little financial responsibility to this city. This city is home to most of its employees who already pay among the highest property taxes in the state. They shouldn’t be asked to pay a larger portion of their salaries toward taxes to maintain basic services. This city is where they send their kids to school, it contains the parks and libraries their kids rely on to play and grow. This city’s employees keep our public spaces clean and safe and they deserve to keep their jobs and be paid fairly.

I am calling on Yale University to do better. To not just train young people to go out in the world and become leaders in their communities but to exemplify that leadership here in New Haven. I am calling on Yale University to look at their endowment for what it is, money that they accrued and continue to accrue through an unjust financial system. Paying their fair share is not charity. It is the painfully obvious and unquestionably right thing for a highly profitable non-profit to do.

Thank you for your consideration.

https://outlook.office365.com/mail/inbox/id/AAQkAGE4MDdOZwzLTxxMjUINDAxYi04MzhmLWVIMDg2OTkzMzI3YQAQADMshyk7hD1Gr6jzmSsz9Zk... 1/2
Sincerely,
Megan

Megan Keenan, MPH
203.928.0506 | keenan.megan@gmail.com
City Budget testimony

Ian Skoggard <iskoggard@hotmail.com>
Mon 3/8/2021 2:30 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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Dear City of New Haven Board of Alders,

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. My name is Ian Skoggard and I live at 42 Cleveland Road, New Haven

I remember the first budget hearing last year, COVID-19 was just appearing in the United States, but the breadth and extent of the crisis was not yet clear. Even then, we knew our city was in a crisis. The city assessor Mr. Alex Pullen reported that 60 percent of New Haven’s real estate was tax exempt. He showed that the lion’s share of this real estate was owned by Yale University and Yale New Haven Hospital; these two organizations owned over 4.7 billion dollars of tax-exempt real estate. The total taxable real estate was only $5.7 billion. This leaves the Alders and the Mayor in an impossible position: cut city services or raise taxes, or do both. But, given the suffering in our city we need to expand city services and lower taxes. We could do this if Yale University and Yale New Haven Hospital simply paid their fair share like the rest of us.

The solutions that Yale has put forward for our challenges have not worked. For example, Science Park borders Newhallville, the neighborhood with the shortest life-expectancy in the city. Science Park separates Dixwell and Prospect Hill. An individual who grew up in the largely Black neighborhood of Dixwell now earns a median income of $24,000, whereas an individual who grew up in an enclave of white privilege, Prospect Hill, earns a median income of $71,000. Meanwhile, the tax break that Yale receives for its properties in Science Park grow year after year.

So, I ask when will Yale president, Peter Salovey, begin to care enough to take the actions that are commensurate with the urgency of this moment. When will he recognize the widespread suffering in our city and act by working harder to end segregation in New Haven? When will he treat New Haven with respect by deciding Yale has a greater responsibility to New Haven after having benefited so much from massive tax breaks for so many years?

When it comes to New Haven, Yale does not deliver like one of the world’s best universities. Yale University made a jobs commitment to our city, but it failed to honor this commitment. In a hearing just months before the job’s agreement deadline, the University was hundreds of jobs behind its agreed upon goal. These are hundreds of families who could have had more stability. These are hundreds of children would could have had more stable housing and a more promising start in life. These are residents who could have been working throughout the COVID crisis. But Yale failed in its commitment and these families have suffered. It has now been over a year of asking Yale to be a partner on our city’s finances, and still President Salovey has refused to make any significant contribution that comes close to the tax break that the University receives from the city. Even if the Mayor’s more ambitious budget is adopted and funded, Yale will be doing far too little. New Haven ultimately needs transformation, a true change of heart, not tweaking the status quo.

Yale’s track record is shameful and sad. By working together, New Haven could be the city that actually overcomes the legacy of redlining and a history of racism. New Haven could be a model in sustainability as we enter the era of severe climate change. New Haven could be safer and healthier, a city on the hill. President Salovey could have the legacy of a global leader in community-university relations. Yet these are formidable challenges, and so far, Yale has shown that it is not up to the task.

Thank you.

Ian Skoggard

https://outlook.office365.com/mail/inbox/d/AAQkAGE4MDdIOWZLTkxMjU4NDAxYl04MzhlM/WViMDg2OTkM2I3YQAQA%2BFlI4e4DkJNhZIoUUZT%... 1/2
Testimony
BoA Budget Hearing
March 8, 2021

Hello, my name is Anna Word. I live at 17 Nicoll Street in Ward 9 of New Haven. Thank you very much for having me today.

I'm a biomedical researcher at Yale and a member of Local 34 and of Sunrise New Haven. Sunrise is a grassroots climate and environmental justice group fighting for a Green New Deal. The Green New Deal assures a just transition to a future in which everyone has the right to a green job that pays a living wage, affordable housing, quality healthcare, clean air and water, and a livable climate. All of these things are also priorities in the Board of Alders' legislative agenda, and I thank them for recognizing these issues as important to our city.

However, right now Yale University and Yale New Haven Hospital are preventing our city from making progress on these extremely important issues. They are hoarding their wealth, paying only $15 million of the $157 million in property taxes that they should owe to the city. And this despite the university posting an operating surplus of more than $200 million even during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This $157 million could do many things to positively transform the city that Yale claims to call its home, but I want to touch on one in particular that is extremely relevant to our current dual crises of climate change and the pandemic: access to healthcare.

51% of the children in the Hill live in households that fall below the poverty line, and 25% of the residents in Fair Haven aged 18 to 64 do not have health insurance even as the pandemic rages on. I'm sure that you can imagine the profound negative effects that has on their access to healthcare. The fear and anxiety I, and I am sure many of you, have experienced during this pandemic has often been overwhelming, but because I work at Yale and because of the hard work of Local 34, I have free, high quality health insurance. To not have reliable healthcare is a danger that I do not have to face, nor should anyone, pandemic or no pandemic.

As climate change progresses and our world warms, infectious diseases like COVID-19 will likely become more prevalent and we may even see more frequent pandemics like the one we are currently still experiencing a year later. People in New Haven need low-cost, quality healthcare. How can Yale University claim its mission is to "improve the world today and for future generations" if they do not choose to support the New Haven community here and now? How can Yale New Haven Health claim to be "putting patients and families first" and "valuing all people" when they will not pay their fair share in taxes to support New Haven and its communities of color like the Hill and Fair Haven?

It's passed time that Yale gets away with not paying property taxes. We know how to improve New Haven: investing more money in good things like healthcare, jobs, and housing all in a green way, and other things that New Haven neighborhoods, themselves, want. That way, we
Climate Crisis
Testimony for the Board of Alders.

Kian Ahmadi <kahmadi24@students.hopkins.edu>
Tue 3/30/2021 4:29 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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My name is Kian Ahmadi. I’m a first-generation immigrant and I’ve lived in New Haven my whole life. New Haven is my home. I think it is imperative that the Board of Alders address the climate emergency. Given that health emergencies like COVID-19 and air pollution affect New Haven on a daily basis, now more than ever it is important to create climate solutions to better public health and infrastructure for the citizens of New Haven. Rising sea levels, carbon pollution, and other factors of the climate crisis are dangerous for the coastline of New Haven, which is why it is imperative that the Alders address these emergencies through proactive climate policy.

I ask the Alders to address the climate emergency because I love my city and care for its citizens. James Baldwin says, "I love America more than any other country in this world, and, exactly for this reason, I insist on the right to criticize her perpetually."

While the Board of Alders finalizes the budget I kindly ask them to consider the climate emergency, how it affects New Haven, and its presence in their legislative agenda.

Best,
Kian
Testifying to the Board of Alders

Vedant Aryan <varyan24@students.hopkins.edu>
Tue 3/30/2021 2:15 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

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Dear Board of Alders,

My name is Vedant Aryan, I'm a freshman at Hopkins School, and I think it is important that the Board of Alders address the climate emergency. With health emergencies like COVID-19 and air pollution affecting New Haven daily, now more than ever it is important to create effective climate solutions to better public's health and infrastructure for the citizens of New Haven. Rising sea levels, carbon pollution, and other factors of the climate crisis are dangerous for the coastline of New Haven, which is why it is imperative that the Alders address these emergencies through proactive climate policy. Action is needed. While the Board of Alders finalizes the budget they must consider the climate emergency, how it affects New Haven, and its presence in their legislative agenda. I want my grandchildren to be able to play in the snow. Thank you for your time.

-Vedant Aryan
Climate

Brendan Cafferty <bcafferty24@students.hopkins.edu>
Tue 3/30/2021 9:44 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

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My name is Brendan Cafferty and I think it is important that the Board of Alders address the climate emergency. Given that health emergencies like COVID-19 and air pollution affect New Haven on a daily basis, now more than ever it is important to create climate solutions to better public health and infrastructure for the citizens of New Haven. Rising sea levels, carbon pollution, and other factors of the climate crisis are dangerous for the coastline of New Haven, which is why it is imperative that the Alders address these emergencies through proactive climate policy. As a resident of the New Haven area, I would still like to enjoy the snowy winters I'm accustomed to. And so, while the Board of Alders finalizes the budget they must consider the climate emergency, how it affects New Haven and its presence in their legislative agenda.
Add Climate Action to the Budget

Kiana Flores <kianaeflores@gmail.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 8:17 AM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

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Hello,

My name is Kiana Flores. I am a senior at Cooperative Arts and Humanities High School and a member of the New Haven Climate Movement.

My family is from Honduras, and they have directly experienced the consequences of torrential storms like Hurricane Mitch that are amplified by climate change. However, the climate crisis is not simply a future foreign affair; it is a growing crisis whose effects already stare us in the face. With high asthma rates and sea-level rise, New Haven has an interest in adequately addressing climate change. If New Haven fails to take progressive, urgent action, we condemn ourselves to an unsafe, uncertain future.

Of course, I understand that New Haven is not full of climate deniers. But, to reach the goal proposed in the Climate Emergency Resolution passed in 2019 of carbon neutrality by December 2030, we need solid action now. To take the necessary action, the city must prioritize funding climate projects and innovations. There have been countless documents proposed and passed offering community insight, projects, and project planning. To ensure these don’t remain as empty desires and ideas, we must have the proper budget. Spending money on these issues is an investment in our future. We must decide, are we going to pay the price now, or later? That’s why I’m advocating the Alders consider New Haven Climate Movement’s Climate Justice and Green Jobs Fund, which would allocate .2% of the city’s budget toward the climate projects necessary to cut our carbon emissions and create a greener, more sustainable future.

I ask that the Board of Alders recognize the need for money to support climate action and to protect our beloved city.

Thank you,
Kiana Flores
Finance Committee Written Public Comment - 3/30

Adrian Huq <adarahuq917@gmail.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 4:09 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

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New Haven Board of Alders Finance Committee
Written Testimony - March 30th

Good afternoon,
My name is Adrian Huq and I am an 18 year old organizer with the New Haven Climate Movement. I am writing in support of our proposed New Haven Climate Justice and Green Jobs Fund to invest in climate solutions for our city and provide benefits to low-income communities.

Given that health emergencies like COVID-19 and air pollution affect New Haven on a daily basis, now more than ever it is important to create climate solutions to better public health and infrastructure for the citizens of New Haven. Rising sea levels, carbon pollution, and other factors of the climate crisis are dangerous for the coastline city of New Haven, which is why it is imperative that the Alders address these emergencies through proactive climate policy.

While the Board of Alders finalizes the budget they must consider the climate emergency, how it affects New Haven, and its presence in their legislative agenda. You have made climate justice a part of your legislative agenda, yet there's no money for climate work/projects in the 2021 budget. I hope you will support implementing the Climate Justice and Green Jobs Fund and/or setting aside money for climate in the budget.
Thank you.
Adrian Huq
Please Address New Haven's Climate Issues

Leila Hyde <lhyder24@students.hopkins.edu>
Tue 3/30/2021 9:50 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

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Hi,

My name is Leila and I think it is important that the Board of Alders address the climate emergency. I go to school in New Haven, my parents work in New Haven, and many of my close family and friends live in the New Haven area, and I deeply care about their health and safety.

Given that health emergencies like COVID-19 and air pollution affect New Haven on a daily basis, now more than ever it is important to create climate solutions to better the public's health and infrastructure for the citizens of New Haven.

Rising sea levels, carbon pollution, and other factors of the climate crisis are dangerous for the coastline of New Haven, which is why it is imperative that the Alders address these emergencies through proactive climate policy. While the Board of Alders finalizes the budget, they must consider the climate emergency, how it affects New Haven, and its presence in their legislative agenda.

Thank you, please take this into consideration.

Sincerely,
Leila H.
Written Testimony

Patricia Joseph <pjoseph0415@gmail.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 5:25 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

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My name is Patricia Joseph and I think it is important that the Board of Alders address the climate emergency. Given that health emergencies like COVID-19 and air pollution affect New Haven on a daily basis, now more than ever it is important to create climate solutions to better public health and infrastructure for the citizens of New Haven. Rising sea levels, carbon pollution, and other factors of the climate crisis are dangerous for our coastline city of New Haven, which is why it is imperative that the Alders address these emergencies through proactive climate policy! While the Board of Alders finalizes the budget they must consider the climate emergency and how it affects New Haven neighborhoods.
Finance Meeting

John Kiely <jkiely24@students.hopkins.edu>
Tue 3/30/2021 1:29 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

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Dear Finance Committee,
I am calling on you to allocated money in the interests of environmental action. As someone who plans on living on this earth for the next 70+ years, this is something that will affect me, and my generation. Climate change is not a joke, it will destroy our world. I am begging for you to stand on the right side of history as someone who defended Earth against a massive threat. New Haven is already a polluted city, with rising sea levels, growing air pollution, and wildlife death this is something that needs to be fought. Thank you for your consideration.
Addressing Climate Change

Tanner Lee <tlee23@students.hopkins.edu>
Tue 3/30/2021 1:39 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

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Good Afternoon,

My name is Tanner Lee and I think it is important that the Board of Alders address the climate emergency in our community. Given that health emergencies like COVID-19 and air pollution affect New Haven on a daily basis, now more than ever it is important to create climate solutions to better public health and infrastructure for the citizens of our beloved city. Rising sea levels, carbon pollution, and other factors of the climate crisis are dangerous for New Haven's natural wildlife, such as the coastlines and marshes, but also these factors are dangerous for the citizens of New Haven. This is why it is imperative that the Alders address these emergencies through proactive climate policy. On a more personal note, I love the city of New Haven and I have spent my whole life growing up here. I want to help make a lasting impact by using part of the city's budget to hopefully solve New Haven's climate emergency. When the Board of Alders finalizes the budget they must consider the climate emergency, how it affects New Haven, and its presence in their legislative agenda.

Sincerely,

Tanner Lee
Climate Emergency in New Haven

Erin Melocowsky <erinmelocowsky13@gmail.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 1:23 AM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

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My name is Erin Melocowsky and I think it is important that the Board of Alders address the climate emergency. Given that health emergencies like COVID-19 and air pollution affect New Haven on a daily basis, now more than ever it is important to create climate solutions to better public health and infrastructure for the citizens of New Haven. Rising sea levels, carbon pollution, and other factors of the climate crisis are dangerous for the coastline city of New Haven, which is why it is imperative that the Alders address these emergencies through proactive climate policy. While the Board of Alders finalizes the budget they must consider the climate emergency, how it affects New Haven, and its presence in their legislative agenda.
(No subject)

Gabriel Mena <gmena24@students.hopkins.edu>
Tue 3/30/2021 1:58 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

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My name is Gabriel and I think it is important that the Board of Alders address the climate emergency. Given that health emergencies like COVID-19 and air pollution affect New Haven on a daily basis, now more than ever it is important to create climate solutions to better the public's health and infrastructure for the citizens of New Haven. Rising sea levels, carbon pollution, and other factors of the climate crisis are dangerous for the coastline of New Haven, which is why it is imperative that the Alders address these emergencies through proactive climate policy. While the Board of Alders finalizes the budget they must consider the climate emergency, how it affects New Haven, and its presence in their legislative agenda. Most of my life revolves around New Haven. I go to school there, my father works there, and it is a city that I truly care about. That being said I wouldn't want it to be harmed, which is why I am writing this email. It is necessary for the Board of Alders to address the climate emergency sooner rather than later, so they can positively affect the future of the city.

Kind regards,
Gabriel Mena
Budget Comment

caitlin owens <caitlinr721@gmail.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 5:41 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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Good afternoon,
My name is Caitlin, I'm a senior at Cooperative Arts and Humanities, and I volunteer with the New Haven Climate Movement. I, along with our organization, request that you allocate part of the city budget towards slowing down the effects of the climate disaster. New Haven is a coastal city, and is already suffering from sea level rise, and New Haven as a city is responsible for a large amount of pollution, and currently has a climate debt of $120 million. Our younger generations and most vulnerable communities will be forced to pay for current inaction.

Thank you for your consideration,
Caitlin Owens
Climate Change Emergency

Preston Parker <pparker24@students.hopkins.edu>
Tue 3/30/2021 2:20 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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My name is Preston Parker and I think it is important that the Board of Elders address the climate emergency. I currently live in Bermuda, but I am moving to the New Haven area in May permanently. Given that health emergencies like COVID-19 and air pollution affect New Haven on a daily basis, now more than ever it is important to create climate solutions to better public's health and infrastructure for the citizens of New Haven. Rising sea levels, carbon pollution, and other factors of the climate crisis are dangerous for the coastline of New Haven, which is why it is imperative that the Elders address these emergencies through proactive climate policy. While the Board of Elders finalizes the budget they must consider the climate emergency, how it affects New Haven, and its presence in their legislative agenda. I want my time in New Haven to be enjoyable and with a stable climate you can ensure that. So please help!

Respectfully,
Preston Parker
Safe Streets
March 30, 2021
New Haven Budget Public Hearing

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the Finance Committee,

My name is Max Chaoulideer. I am a member of the Safe Streets Coalition and am testifying today to strongly encourage you to prioritize the safety and well-being of our city’s most vulnerable road users. Our streets are shaped by decades of design and policy that have prioritized the free movement of private cars over every other form of transportation and use of our streets. This regressive infrastructure now exacerbates a confluence of crises: rising pollution from emissions, increasing numbers of preventable injuries and deaths from motor vehicle crashes, widening equity gaps along racial and economic lines due to a range of mobility injustices, and the continued loss of our most valuable public spaces: our streets.

Thankfully, the city has begun to acknowledge these crises and is taking an important first step towards addressing them. I am heartened to see that the city has launched its new Safe Routes for All initiative to create a city-wide transportation plan that would put the needs of the most vulnerable and marginalized first. This has the potential to radically transform our city with an eye toward reclaiming our streets for everyone. It also has the potential to end up on the increasingly tall stack of unrealized past plans that our city has failed to prioritize and fund. As far as I know, the city has not secured or earmarked any funding for this current plan. I call on every alderperson to stand up for pedestrians, public transit users, kids, the elderly, bicyclists, wheelchair users, and everyone else left behind and endangered by the shape of our city today. I ask that you prioritize implementing this plan to ensure that New Haven will become a more equal, healthier and safer, more sustainable, more beautiful, and more joyful city.

Thank you for considering my testimony.

Sincerely,

Max Chaoulideer
New Haven
Safe Street for All

Olivia Martson <friendsofdwight@gmail.com>
Mon 3/29/2021 8:07 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the Finance Committee:

My name is Olivia C. Martson. I am a member of the Safe Streets Coalition. You heard earlier from fellow advocates expressing the urgent need for New Haven to prioritize safety on our streets for pedestrians, cyclists, public transit riders and drivers. We need to ensure that there is funding for maintaining sidewalks, improving crosswalk signals, building more bus shelters, adding bike lanes, and many other often simple and obvious improvements to our streets. I’m adding my voice as a resident and advocate for safe streets and urging the finance committee and board of alders to prioritize and fund traffic and transportation infrastructure improvements.

Thank you for your time.

Olivia Martson
203 668-7350
friendsofdwight@gmail.com
friendsofdwighthistoricdistrict.org
Dear Madame Chair and Members of the Finance Committee:

My name is Rachel Mihalko. I am a member of the Safe Streets Coalition and Archivist at Yale Library. I am testifying to ask the finance committee to prioritize funding for improved public transportation and infrastructure to ensure the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit riders on our streets.

Drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists face life-threatening incidents on our streets that are completely preventable, but our infrastructure is designed for the convenience of high-speed motor vehicles rather than the people who walk, bike or take public transit around New Haven. The city has currently invested in the Safe Routes for All Initiative to create a roadmap with priorities and recommendations to ensure equitable, safe streets in New Haven. We applaud the city for investing in this project and ensuring that all communities have meaningful input in the planning. However, this plan is meaningless unless there is committed funding to follow through on the priorities set forth in Safe Routes for All.

We need to ensure that there is funding for maintaining sidewalks, improving crosswalk signals, building more bus shelters, adding bike lanes, and many other often simple and obvious improvements to our streets. I’m adding my voice as a resident and advocate for safe streets and urging the Finance Committee, Board of Alders, and city officials and staff to prioritize and fund traffic and transportation infrastructure improvements.

Lastly, I’ve heard other community members testify to the importance of funding the Mitchell Library and I want to second the critical need for this community space and knowledge center.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Rachel Mihalko
Testimony for Public Budget Hearing

Neil Olinski <neil.olinski@gmail.com>
Mon 3/29/2021 11:29 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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Dear Madame Chair and Members of the Finance Committee:

In advance of the upcoming city budget hearing, I am writing to advocate for the importance of traffic safety as a budgetary priority for the Fiscal Year 2021-22 City Budget. In New Haven, we must not lose sight that traffic safety is a big issue of importance to many, if not all, who live and visit New Haven.

I am asking the Finance Committee and Board of Alders to prioritize making modifications to infrastructure that will improve safety for pedestrians, cyclists, transit riders, and drivers. Additionally, a little over a week ago, a member of our community was killed while crossing the street on Chapel and Temple. Last year, 13 members of our community were killed in these crashes, and many more were injured. Since 2017, there have been nearly 450 vehicle crashes that resulted in either serious injury or death on our streets. Most, if not all, of these life-threatening or life-threatening crashes could have been prevented or at least minimized through traffic-calming, street retrofits, and traffic-safety-infrastructure improvements such as: fixing/improving street lighting, retrofitting or removing unnecessary vehicle lanes to reduce highway-like vehicle speeding/weaving and to shorten crosswalk/crossing distances, adding more speed humps/raised and so on. This should also include improvements to bus stops across New Haven, and also note that many infrastructure upgrades can be made in coordination with the City. It is currently investing in the Safe Routes For All planning initiative to create a roadmap with priorities and recommendations to ensure equitable, safe streets in New Haven. This plan and ensuring that all communities have meaningful input in the plan. However, this Safe Routes For All plan will be meaningless unless there is committed funding and implementation of the priorities and infrastructure improvements set forth in it.

I am asking the Finance Committee, Board of Alders, and city officials and staff to prioritize many simple and often inexpensive improvements we need now to make a safer city for everyone. Thank you for your time and consideration in reading this testimony. It is greatly appreciated as we continually strive to create a safer city for everyone.

Sincerely,

Neil Olinski

Safe Streets Coalition of New Haven /
Lighthouse Road resident
New Haven
March 30, 2021

Thank you Madame Chair and Members of the Finance Committee:

I am a member of the Safe Streets Coalition of New Haven, a transportation advocacy group in our city and a founding member in 2000 of Elm City Cyclists. I am asking the finance committee and Board of Alders to prioritize improved public transportation and infrastructure to ensure the safety of pedestrians, cyclists, and public transit riders on our streets.

Pre-Covid, I was an almost daily bicycle commuter from Hamden to downtown New Haven. I liked to say that I sleep in Hamden but I live in New Haven, and hopefully will again one day soon. Over the past 34 years, I have seen significant improvements in bike infrastructure, from zero, and in pedestrian infrastructure, with raised crossings and better signage, and a few roundabouts that slow traffic. I appreciate the commitment of our mayor and our director of Transportation, Traffic and Parking, and of members of the Board of Alders, to further improving the safety situation. There is certainly plenty more to do.

In my experience, excessive speed of motor vehicles is still the biggest impediment to safety of both pedestrians and cyclists. The best way to tackle the problem is through changes in infrastructure so that enforcement will become unnecessary: things like rotaries, bump-outs, and protected bike lanes.

I am asking the Finance Committee, Board of Alders, and city officials and staff to prioritize the many simple and often inexpensive improvements we need now to make our streets safe for all residents. It’s incumbent on the city and Board of Alders to ensure that these essential projects are completed so that we do not continue to lose members of our community to traffic violence.

Sincerely,

Melinda Tuhus
103 Carmalt Rd.
Hamden, CT 06517
Save the Mitchell Library
March 8, 2021

Dear Members of the New Haven Board of Alders,

Thank you so much for your leadership and service. I am here as a concerned resident, a literacy educator, and an elected officer of the board of directors of the New Haven Free Public Library.

I find it deeply distressing to see in the Mayor’s proposed budgets any mention of library branch closure, even under hypothetical crisis conditions. Whether or not PILOT yields as projected, I am here to express my opposition to the very idea of closing a branch, even if only mentioned for political point-making. I cannot imagine that such a mention does any good for our dedicated library staff, given how much they do for this city and how hard they work, despite salaries that haven’t risen as they should over years and don’t compare well to peer systems. I cannot imagine that such a mention does any good for library patrons who depend upon local branches as community centers, refuges for reading and research, and neighborhood anchors that promote safety, literacy, social connection, and belongingness. I cannot imagine what it sounds like to US Senator Chris Murphy, who nominated the library for its national medal based on its known reputation as “an indispensable hub of culture and innovation.” To be honest, the mention of branch closure does nothing for my own morale, as someone who cares deeply about my neighbors city-wide, and especially those experiencing precarities that the library works so hard to address.

Budgets are moral documents, and the treatment of our libraries by those documents speaks deeply to our shared values. For every $1 spent on public libraries nationally, roughly $5 is returned to their communities; without question, investing in our libraries is investing in the long-term well-being of our city and its people. Mentions of branch closure do not represent well who we are and what we value. If anything, during times such as these, we should be recommitting to do whatever we can to fortify the public institutions that so well serve the public good. Indeed, in that regard, the public library is a peerless gem that has pivoted to provide essential services to patrons during the pandemic (i.e., curbside pickup, mobile hotspots, loaner laptops, online programming, a renovated website that extends access, etc.) and that promises to be a lynchpin in the city’s social, cultural, and economic recovery.

While these arguments hold system-wide, the branch mentioned for closure is one I frequent, and so I’d like to speak about it specifically. I’m a regular Mitchell patron, who came to the branch pre-pandemic to work and check out resources and during the pandemic as my most frequent curbside pick-up spot. It’s always a joy to visit. Staff are warm and professional. Spaces reflect pride of presentation. The collection is fantastic. And patrons are a true mix - exactly as we’d hope in a city with the wonderful diversity ours has. And now, after years of excellent leadership, the Mitchell branch is helmed beautifully by one of the city’s treasured Black librarians, the indomitable Marion Huggins, who is poised to lead it forward in crucial ways. When closure was mentioned on social media, there was an outpouring of upset. Khalilah Brown-Dean, decorated political scientist, Quinnipiac University professor, and host of the WNPR show Disrupted, commented: “I wrote much of my book sitting in Mitchell Library. Mr. Bostic always checked on me to see what I needed. Rarely did I need a book. I always needed a reassuring smile that it would all work out. I sat in that library and saw community in all its beautiful forms. Chapel Haven residents who imagined the world beyond the confines of the present... Families introducing their children to books while seeking a warming shelter and later a
cooling shelter... Elders gathering for knitting circles. College bound students seeking financial aid assistance. People searching the computers for work or mere human connection. Most of all I saw what I fell in love with as a shy 4th grader the first time my librarian introduced me to Virginia Hamilton's work: the power of connection. I know there are tough budget decisions to be made. But libraries are never just buildings. This one deserves to stay.” As usual, Dr. Brown-Dean says it all far better than I could. What does it say to our community to even suggest that this branch is expendable?

In short, there are no expendable branches in our national medal-winning NHFPL system. Health is truly wealth. And the health, and thus wealth, of this city depends upon the fortification of its libraries - its literal circulation system - including a deepened commitment to the vaunted main branch and to the comforting and familiar, locally-responsive neighborhood branches.

Thank you so much for your role in protecting and further fortifying our libraries.

Lauren Anderson / 946 Elm Street
Re:

Charles Asner <ceasner@gmail.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 9:00 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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I've never been good at public speaking, so it's no surprise that when I testified, I stumbled over a lot of my words. Furthermore, there were some points that I felt were important to add which weren't in my original written testimony. Therefore, I would like to submit, for the record, a revised version of my written testimony, which goes as follows.

My name is Charles Asner. I live in the Westville area, I have autism, and I'm a member of Chapel Haven, a community for people with disabilities. There are a lot of people who use the Mitchell library, and I would hate to see it shut down. Many people depend on libraries not only as a source of literacy and education, but as a means of connecting with their community through things like art galleries, science lectures, political talks, etc. People with disabilities, like people from Chapel Haven, would lose access to all of this, especially those who are unable to take the bus, whether it's due to their personal disability or it's because of the pandemic. This is the only library they have immediate access to. If keeping the library open is too expensive, then please find a way to raise the money. For example, the tennis stadium, which is owned by Yale, and is therefore tax-exempt property, hasn't been used for tennis matches, or anything else, for a few years now, and was therefore a waste of money. They're finally using it for something, mainly outdoor concerts, which will hopefully bring more revenue into the city. My apartment building doesn't have any recycling bins. If it was easier for people like me to recycle, the city wouldn't have to spend so much on solid waste removal. Worst case scenario, if raising the money to keep the library open isn't an option, then maybe cut certain non-essential costs. But don't throw out the baby with the bath water. I strongly urge the city of New Haven to consider the alternatives to closing Mitchell library, or for that matter, any branch of the New Haven Free Public Library. Please think of how closing the library would hurt the community. I beg of you not to deprive the citizens of Westville, especially the greater disabled community, of these important resources. Thank you for your time and consideration.

On Mon, Mar 29, 2021 at 10:27 PM Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov> wrote:
Thank you for your testimony. It has been received, forwarded the Alders and added to the record.

From: Charles Asner <ceasner@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 24, 2021 7:08 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>
Subject:

Please be cautious
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My name is Charles Asner. I live in the westville area, I have autism, and I'm a member of chapel haven, a community for people with disabilities. There are a lot of people who use the Mitchell library, and I would hate to see it close down. A lot of people depend on that library not only as a source of books and movies but as a source of culture and art and community connections within westville. People with disabilities, like people from chapel haven, would lose access to all these things, especially those who are unable to take the bus, weather it's due to their disability or it's because of the pandemic. For a lot of these people, this is the only library they have immediate access to. If keeping the library open is too expensive, then please find a way to raise the money. But don't throw out the baby with the bath water. I strongly urge the City of New Haven to consider the alternatives to closing Mitchell library, or for that matter, any branch of the New Haven free public library. Please think of how not having a public library would hurt the community. I beg of you not to deprive the citizens of westville, and in particular, the large disabled community, of these important resources. Thank you for your time and consideration. I eagerly await your response.
Mitchell Library

Richard Canalori <richardcanalori@gmail.com>
Mon 3/8/2021 4:54 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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I would like to say something at the public hearing on Monday evening. My name is Richard Canalori. I grew up on Emerson Street and taught that Sheridan middle school. I also wrote a curriculum unit, The Development of Westville. It is a history of Westville, with Mitchell library as the very center, both figuratively and literally. The curriculum unit can be found on Google. It is part of the New Haven teachers Institute. Thank you
Dear Members of the Board,

I am writing to support the funding of the Mitchell Library. Over the past few years I have attended a number of in-person and virtual events that have enriched my life and connected me with the greater New Haven Community in very positive ways. The Mitchell Library is an important resource for all citizens. I urge you to be generous with providing funding for this valuable organization.

Thank you,
Patricia Chamberlain
Guilford, CT
Saving Mitchell Library

jiyoun Chang <jiyoun.chang@gmail.com>
Sat 3/20/2021 1:36 AM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

8 attachments (21 MB)
IMG_5085.jpeg; IMG_5090.jpeg; IMG_3535.jpeg; IMG_5091.jpeg; IMG_5118.jpeg; IMG_6184.jpeg; IMG_5410.jpeg; IMG_6655.jpeg;

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I am writing to you to save our library in Westville.

We moved to Westville to have a family 7 years ago.
Our child just turned 7 last December.
We thought Westville would make us a perfect home.
It's close to my husband's job.
There is a lovely park and cafes.
And there is a library.

Especially when our child was very little, Mitchell Library was a great place to go to and to take some rest as she was busy wandering around either with other children at the readings, playing with legos, coloring pictures, or reading books.
We would get 5 to 10 books at a time to enjoy at home.
Mitchell Library was especially special to us because it always invited artists to fill the little room with inspirational imagination and creativity.
And it continued to be inspirational even during a pandemic with little tiny paper bags of little craft greeted us when we picked up books. It gave us hope and love when we needed it.

One of our neighbors told me to watch out for tax increase when he knew I was going to write to you to save Mitchell Library. I couldn't believe what I heard.
I hope you never used Mitchell Library to increase tax.
I hope you never thought of closing Mitchell Library to attempt to use the budget for something else.
A library with such a small budget should not be a political toy.
A town without a library is not doing its service to the people who live in.
A library is a basic privilege people can ask for like clean water.

Please save Mitchell Library for the goodness sake for families who need books and for children who need more resources for their learning.
Please save our library if you mean to make our town healthy in mind.

Sincerely yours,
Jiyoun Chang

--

Jiyoun Chang
Lighting & Scenic Designer
(c) 718-344-9377
Monsters at the Mitchell!
Mitchell Library

Jim Congdon <jcongdon@touchsites.com>
Mon 3/8/2021 4:11 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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Please do not close Mitchell Library. It is a very valuable resource for the community of Westville. Prior to the pandemic, I went there often and there were always people using the workstations, borrowing books and media, and studying. This includes both adults and children.

Sincerely,
Jim Congdon
Resident of Westville
Dear Finance Committee Members,
I'm writing in support of keeping the Mitchell Library Branch OPEN. I am a homeowner in the Beaver Hills neighborhood (on Dyer St.) with a 10 year old daughter. We are frequent users of the Mitchell Library branch (it's the closest one to our house) and it has been a mainstay in our neighborhood, not only providing valuable resources (books, media, etc), but also providing wonderful programs and workshops for both children and adults!
The staff at the Mitchell Library have been so helpful and were instrumental in encouraging my child to read when she was younger through book giveaways (via the summer reading program) and providing a space where we can read together. My daughter was also inspired by the wonderful arts-based workshops that the branch library staff & volunteers provide throughout the year!
Since Marian Huggins became Branch Manager at Mitchell, she has brought vital programming through (virtual) book clubs around Black History & Literature. Especially in light of #BlackLivesMatter, having spaces to highlight books by Black authors is crucial to bringing about greater understanding to fight systemic racism.
Even during the pandemic, the services (both curbside pickup and virtual services) provided by the branch libraries (in addition to the main library location) has been crucial to being able to make it through these tough times.
I believe it would be a grave mistake to cut any of our library services, especially at the Mitchell branch, where there are many families who utilize their services.
Sincerely,
Hannah Croasmun
37 Dyer Street, New Haven, CT 006511

Hannah Croasmun, LMSW
ARISE Child & Family Specialist
Christian Community Action
p: 203-777-7840 ext. 1043
e: hcroasmun@ccahelping.org
Mitchell Library

Callie Cromer <ccromer@me.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 12:47 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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Please consider keeping the Mitchell Library Branch open - even if you have to cut back on the hours to do so. Mitchell is walkable to so many Westville residents! The elementary schools in the area aren’t providing kids with library access (due to covid - but also, prior to covid, I learned during school tours of Davis and Mauro-Sheridan that they don’t have full time librarians.) As a mother of three, I’ve been so grateful for Mitchell’s quick turnaround on book requests during covid. The kids of Westville need an option for access to books - especially during this school year with so much learning happening via screens. Especially this summer as parents endeavor to find books and keep them reading so they don’t fall farther behind. Please consider the value Mitchell adds to the Westville neighborhood as a place of connection, learning and access to resources that are within walking distance for so many. A library is a critical part of the neighborhood that makes it feel like home, please don’t shutter this shared space! Mitchell will become an even more critical point of connection for many as we emerge from isolation in the coming year.

Thank you for your consideration,

Callie Cromer
resident of Westville
Mitchell Library Closure

Adam Crowle <abcrowle@gmail.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 2:48 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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Good afternoon,

My wife and I bought a home last October on Barnett St. located in Westville. We are small business owners that have been saving for years to finally buy a home and we had our hearts set on Westville for many reasons, but one of the main reasons was that we could walk to the Mitchell Library.

We also recently had our first child and we knew that many events were held on the lawn as well as classes etc. To hear that the library may close due to budget constraints when it only makes up 1/20th of 1% of the overall budget is disheartening to say the least. We haven’t even had a chance to take advantage of the Mitchell Library due to the pandemic and it was a beacon of light at the end of the tunnel knowing that when much of the population is vaccinated, it would open again.

Please reconsider. It is an institution in this community. All of our neighbors are heartbroken to hear this news and will most likely be showing up to the meeting tonight or will be writing like myself. I hope that this makes a small difference.

--

Adam Crowle
abcrowle@gmail.com
802-760-8751
Mitchell Library Closure

Jezrie Marcano-courtney <j.mcourtney001@ymail.com>
Mon 3/29/2021 2:58 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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Good afternoon,

I am Jezrie Marcano-Courtney, a resident of Beaver Hills and supporter of the NHPL Mitchell branch. It's exceptionally concerning this library branch is in danger of being closed to save money in the city's budget, already in the red. The NHPL Mitchell branch is a staple of my community. I actively participate in the library's Urban Expression book club series, and its Urban Cultural Academy, facilitated in partnership with the Urban League of New Haven.

Given the circumstances of the pandemic I think it's fair to say everyone and everything has been worn quite thin here in New Haven. It's scary to wrap my head around constantly changing routines, where money will come from to pay the cost for necessities, and how my unconscious choices can heavily impact people in my community. Tax hikes on top of all we currently deal with may seem unthinkable for some, but if it will keep my local library branch open, continue to employ the staff of my local library branch so that they can continue to care for their families, and financially support the city through paying taxes and participating in its local economy, I am willing to pay the taxes that will see these efforts through. In a critically isolating year, the Mitchell branch has literally been life saving. It has saved my life. I wouldn't want to begin to consider returning to the isolation I've endured for so long. I also assume this is a similarity many of us in the city of New Haven share.

Please save the NHPL Mitchell branch. And, thank you for your time in reading and considering this message.

Sincerely,

Jezrie Marcano-Courtney
272 Goffe Terrace, New Haven, 06511
Mitchell Library - Westville

Alissa Davis <alissamdavis2019@gmail.com>
Mon 3/22/2021 10:17 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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Good evening,
I'm writing to express my support for keeping all of New Haven public libraries open, and more specifically Mitchell Library in Westville. This branch is a hub in the neighborhood, a beloved institution not only for the services it provides but for the people that it brings together. If this year of Covid has shown us anything, it is that we need these real places to gather; our children and our elders and everyone in between benefit from our local library.

Thank you,
-Alissa Davis
Westville Resident
Andrea Downer Ward 27 DTC Co Chair Testimony for Saving Mitchell Library

Andrea Atkinson Downer <andreaandbritt@aol.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 4:28 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

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Testimony of Andrea Downer
Address: 140 Westerleigh Road

Greetings,

As the Democratc Co-Chair of Ward 27, I want to first acknowledge the members of the City of New Haven Aldermanic Board that are present in this meeting. Prior to the city operating in pandemic mode, I regularly visited the library, not just for resources but for tutoring K through 12th grade students in Mathematics. Why choose Mitchell Library? Choosing Mitchell Library, as a location was a no-brainer. The location is safe. The library has useful books, resources and information easily available. Also its location in downtown Westville promotes the characteristics and culture of Westville, which is very deeply committed to an artistic community. Mitchell Library is a place where children can also connect with the fundamental benefits of reading, as all of my students signed up for a library card and borrowed books regularly. While visiting the library the entrance walkway was always inviting with the latest cultural, holiday, or creative events. This library always promoted a welcoming environment including the staff. It will be a great loss to Westville is Mitchell Library was closed. I sincerely urge the admiristration to please reconsider closing this branch.

Regards,

Andrea Downer
Mitchell Library

Alexandra Fantl <alexandra.fantl@gmail.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 3:53 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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Dear Committee,

We just moved to New Haven a few months ago. Part of the reason we chose the Westville community is because of the Mitchell Library. We have two young children, and one of the first things we did upon moving here was to get them library cards (even though we can’t go inside the library). The experience of walking over and greeting the librarians at the door and receiving special books has already had such an impact on my children and they cannot wait to experience the library to its fullest potential as it’s safer for all to do. I want them to have the library experience that I did when I grew up.

Please do not close this incredible asset to the community. It offers such a huge service to all of us.

Best,

Alexandra Fantl
Re: Please keep Mitchell Library open!

Laura Fawcett <lauralfawcett@gmail.com>
Wed 3/31/2021 9:24 AM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

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PLEASE NOTE: I neglected to identify myself in last night's support letter. I'm the New Haven program manager for Basic Literacy at Literacy Volunteers of Greater New Haven, as clarified in the revision below."

Hello Board of Alders,

Please do not shutter the Mitchell Library. There's never a good time to close a stellar community-based library that serves a severely under-resourced area. During the Covid-19 a pandemic has got to be one of the worst imaginable times to consider this action.

The superintendent recently announced that more than 4 times as many high school students in fall 2020 are failing (n=657) five or more classes as were in fall 2019 (n=160). Mitchell Library is a vital resource for New Haven school students.

In addition to K-12 students, adult learners also rely on Mitchell Library as a vital source of information and support. Literacy Volunteers of Greater New Haven uses the Mitchell Branch as a central tutoring site for tutors to meet their adult students from the Westville/West Rock area, including students from New Haven JobCorps, Chapel Haven and other CBOs in the area. Literacy Volunteers also had a conversational English class at Mitchell in recent years, sponsored by its ESOL/English for Speakers of Other Languages programming.

Please save Mitchell Library!

Sincerely,
Laura Fawcett
Program Manager, Basic Literacy
Literacy Volunteers of Greater New Haven

On Tue, Mar 30, 2021 at 10:50 PM Laura Fawcett <lauralfawcett@gmail.com> wrote:

Hello Board of Alders,

Please do not shutter the Mitchell Library. There's never a good time to close a stellar community-based library that serves a severely under-resourced area. During the Covid-19 a pandemic has got to be one of the worst imaginable times to consider this action.

The superintendent recently announced that more than 4 times as many high school students in fall 2020 are failing (n=657) five or more classes as were in fall 2019 (n=160). Mitchell Library is a vital resource for New Haven school students.
In addition to K-12 students, adult learners also rely on Mitchell Library as a vital source of information and support. Literacy Volunteers of Greater New Haven uses the Mitchell Branch as a central tutoring site for tutors to meet their adult students from the Westville/West Rock area, including students from New Haven JobCorps, Chapel Haven and other CBOs in the area. Literacy Volunteers also had a conversational English class at Mitchell in recent years, sponsored by its ESOL/English for Speakers of Other Languages programming.

Please save Mitchell Library!

Sincerely,
Laura Fawcett
3/8 Testimony Andrew Giering

Andrew Giering <Andrew_Giering@fd.org>
Mon 3/8/2021 7:28 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

1 attachments (184 KB)
Library Operating Income.pdf;

Please be cautious
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Good evening,

Here is a written copy of my testimony. I am also attaching an excerpt from Connecticut’s Public Libraries, A Statistical Profile: 2019-2020, referenced in the testimony, for the alders’ review.

--

Andrew Giering, 43 Harbour Close. I'd like to talk about the New Haven Free Public Library.

While the possibility of PILOT funding gives us reason for cautious optimism, I am stunned by the threat of closing Mitchell Library to save less than $200,000, as proposed in the Crisis Budget before this committee.

Others will testify today about the many resources that the Library has continued to provide during the pandemic. I would just like to quickly mention a couple new resources that everyone might not be aware of. I encourage you to share this information with your constituents. For one, the Library has been beaming WiFi off of Ives, Wilson and Mitchell, allowing residents to access free WiFi anywhere in a three-block radius of these buildings. Every Library branch also has Chromebook laptops and WiFi hotspots that any resident with a Library card can borrow at no cost. In other words, during this time of remote work and learning, the Library has helped level the playing field in our very unequal City by ensuring free Internet access for everyone.

Our Library won the national library medal in 2019. This means that New Haven's library system, through the incredibly hard work of our staff, has reached a level of national recognition that surpasses any other city department. The staff has accomplished this not because the Library is so well-funded, but despite that it is, in fact, severely underfunded. Our Library receives only $4 million from the City.

I have attached to my written testimony an excerpt from a January 2021 Connecticut Public Libraries report that shows how our Library's total operating income of about $4.5 million stacks up against libraries in Connecticut’s other cities. It’s not a flattering comparison. Bridgeport gets $7.8 million, Stamford gets $9.9 million, and Hartford gets $12.4 million. The Town of Greenwich, with 60,000 residents compared to our 130,000, gives its library $12.2 million. Two other numbers for you to consider in comparison to the Library’s $4 million allotment: the more than $203 million surplus that Yale posted this year, and the $31.2 billion in Yale’s endowment.

There is no reason why New Haven should be so far behind Bridgeport, Stamford, and Hartford, the state’s other three big cities, in library funding. But we are. As far as supporting its libraries is concerned, New Haven is lagging. For this reason alone, any further cuts to this already underfunded department are unacceptable. I urge you to emphatically reject the proposal to close any of our branch libraries or to reduce funding to our Library, which already does so much with so little. Mitchell Library and the entire New Haven Free Public Library system are essential to equity and recovery in our City, and need our support now more than ever.
Thank you for your time and attention.

--

Best,
Andrew
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Investments as % of Operating Income</th>
<th>Income from All Other Sources</th>
<th>Non-Gov't Income Added to Endowment</th>
<th>Non-Gov't Income Used for Operating Expenses</th>
<th>All Non-Gov't Income Per Capita</th>
<th>Non-Gov't Income as % of Operating Income</th>
<th>Total Operating Income</th>
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Use Sort & Filter Tool → →

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Ashford - Babcock 0.0% $0 $0 $6,021 $1.42 3.1% $191,201
Avon 0.3% $0 $0 $120,785 $6.61 6.5% $1,852,575
Beacon Falls 0.0% $0 $0 $3,088 $0.50 1.6% $195,535
Berlin - Berlin-Peck 0.6% $0 $6,093 $27,160 $1.33 2.5% $1,073,620
Bethany - Clark 0.0% $2,000 $0 $37,945 $6.84 11.5% $330,549
Bethel 0.0% $0 $0 $16,583 $0.84 1.9% $894,975
Bethlehem 0.0% $0 $0 $8,393 $2.47 6.0% $139,957
Bloomfield 0.1% $0 $6,769 $12,717 $0.60 0.7% $1,889,432
Bolton - Bentley 0.0% $0 $0 $1,557 $0.32 0.6% $276,068
Branford - Blackstone 2.1% $0 $0 $218,510 $7.83 13.1% $1,665,500
Branford - Willoughby 0.0% $0 $0 $14,957 $0.54 6.0% $247,233
Bridgeport 0.0% $0 $0 $54,162 $0.38 0.7% $7,813,575
Bridgewater - Burnham 14.2% $8,830 $0 $44,035 $26.93 26.8% $164,307
Bristol 6.5% $0 $100,708 $72,601 $1.21 3.1% $2,358,378
Brookfield 0.0% $6,533 $0 $13,874 $0.82 1.7% $822,630
Brooklyn 0.0% $2,001 $2,001 $399 $0.05 0.3% $143,516
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Canton 0.1% $0 $0 $22,441 $2.19 3.5% $635,954
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Colchester - Crugin 0.4% $0 $0 $12,953 $0.82 1.7% $749,308
Columbia - S.B. Little 0.2% $6,370 $2,369 $22,569 $4.20 5.3% $422,690
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Coventry - Booth Dim 0.0% $1,189 $0 $12,455 $1.00 2.4% $513,573
Cromwell 0.0% $0 $0 $1,020 $0.07 0.2% $597,141
Danbury 0.0% $35,000 $0 $110,000 $1.30 4.7% $2,359,033
Darien 8.0% $0 $0 $1,102,286 $50.73 22.2% $4,970,998
Deep River 2.2% $0 $0 $11,300 $2.54 4.9% $229,580
Derby - Derby Neck 88.0% $0 $0 $598,086 $48.47 88.8% $673,837
Derby - Derby Public 6.8% $1,750 $0 $43,607 $3.53 8.1% $540,943
Durham 0.0% $0 $0 $20,620 $2.88 3.7% $500,555
East Granby 4.0% $1,111 $0 $72,113 $14.03 25.6% $281,893
East Haddam 13.8% $18,649 $0 $76,726 $8.53 18.9% $405,659
East Hampton 0.0% $0 $0 $4,107 $0.32 0.9% $436,490
East Hartford 0.0% $0 $0 $6,567 $0.13 0.5% $1,230,731
East Haven - Hagaman 5.4% $4,641 $0 $79,182 $2.77 8.1% $982,749
East Lyme 3.3% $0 $0 $92,101 $4.99 6.9% $1,325,885
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Eastford 0.0% $0 $0 $804 $0.45 1.6% $50,846
Easton 0.0% $0 $0 $12,259 $1.63 1.6% $787,819
## Connecticut's Public Libraries: A Statistical Profile, July 2019 - June 2020 - Library Data

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<th>Non-Gov't Income Added to Endowment</th>
<th>Non-Gov't Income Used for Operating Expenses</th>
<th>Non-Gov't Income Per Capita</th>
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### Use Sort & Filter Tool

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**Use Sort & Filter Tool**

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## Connecticut's Public Libraries: A Statistical Profile, July 2019 - June 2020 - Library Data

### Sources

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<th>Connecticut's Public Libraries: a Statistical Profile, July 2019-June 2020 Library Data</th>
<th>Investments as % of Operating Income</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>STATEWIDE AVERAGE</strong></td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>$0</td>
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<td>$33,533</td>
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<td>178</td>
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public testimony for the Mitchell Library

Jacquelyn Gleisner <jgleisner@gmail.com>
Mon 3/29/2021 2:03 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

The Mitchell Library is part of my weekly routine, even throughout the pandemic. I request books often and make use of the library’s free online resources. Closing this location would have an immense and negative impact on the whole community.

The Mitchell Library is an important hub of community engagement. It’s a destination for young students from Elm City Montessori as well as people from Chapel Haven, a nearby school and living environment for adults with autism. When my partner and I first moved to the Westville neighborhood, the library was part of our decision to buy a home here. We love the library and the events it organizes, from the summer pie festival to its book clubs.

As a professor of art, I have organized art exhibitions in the meeting room at the Mitchell Library. This was a very important opportunity for my students to engage with the broader New Haven community. It also brought art to library patrons. As a young parent, I look forward to bringing my new son to this location to browse its collection, and I have frequented this location many times with my nieces and nephews. Their love for reading stems from their many visits to this library.

This location also offers shelter from the harsh summer heat and extreme cold for those facing housing insecurities in the area. This place brings together people from diverse backgrounds. This spirit of democracy and unity is what makes the library the beating heart of Westville! Without it, the whole neighborhood and greater New Haven area suffer.

--
Jacquelyn Gleisner
jacquelyngleisner.com
connecticutartreview.com
Testimony in support of Mitchell Library

Nichole Gleisner <nichole.gleisner@gmail.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 5:44 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To Whom it May Concern:
I would like to submit the following comments as public testimony tonight at the Finance Committee meeting (March 30, 2021).

I live near Mitchell Library and visit this library at least once a week. Even during the pandemic, Mitchell Library has been an invaluable resource to me and my four children. I have been able to supply them with books to keep them reading, non fiction materials to help them with research projects, and digital content to keep them busy when I am working from home. From Mitchell, we have received take-home craft kits that really cheer up my kids after days of virtual learning and screen time. I am on a first name basis with the wonderful and helpful librarians who work behind the scenes. I regularly run into friends and neighbors in front of Mitchell, returning books or picking up a new curbside order.

When we first moved to New Haven, Mitchell Library was the place where I met my first friends: by attending a toddler play group and simply just spending time at story time. Our au pair Estelle, a nonnative English speaker, visited Mitchell Library once a week for English lessons when she lived with us.

My children attend Elm City Montessori and their school does not possess a large library. Before COVID19, children from this school regularly walked to Mitchell Library to check out books and access texts for school projects. It is a valuable resource for this New Haven Public School and a meeting place for many local groups. Edgewood Drama Club has met in its basement. A local violin instructor has held her students' concerts here. Residents of Chapel Haven visit the library regularly as it is within walking distance. Retirees would gather at Mitchell for book groups or technology assistance. Afternoon tutoring took place here.

Mitchell Library is truly the beating heart of a thriving body of people who all regularly depend on its existence. Closing this library would be devastating to all of these groups of people and so many more.

Sincerely,
Nichole Gleisner
Public Testimony: Mitchell Library

Sarah B Greenblatt <sarahbgreenblatt@gmail.com>
Fri 3/26/2021 2:58 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To Whom it May Concern:

I write with serious concern about closing the Mitchell Library as one strategy to balance the City’s Budget. This effort makes no fiscal nor educational or social-emotional sense. This proposed cut creates a deep loss as the Mitchell Library is a hub of learning and connecting in the Westville community as well as throughout the City of New Haven.

With the addition of Federal COVID Rescue dollars as well as potential state PILOT funds, New Haven should not need to make this unnecessary and disrespectful cut. Surely there are other areas that can be reduced that would prevent the closure of an important community resource serving the diverse members of our great City.

Thank you for your consideration.

Most sincerely,

Sarah

Sarah B. Greenblatt, LMSW
SBGreenblatt Consulting, LLC
sarahbgreenblatt@gmail.com
203-836-6022 - cell
Mitchell Library

Polly Halfkenny <pollyhalf43@gmail.com>
Wed 3/24/2021 6:43 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

**Please be cautious**
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I moved to Westville last September. Because of COVID and the need to limit time outside my home, reading has become an important part of my daily routine. I cannot imagine this wonderful community without the Mitchell Library. It is an easy walk for me and gets me out of the house several times a week - picking up or returning books. I especially appreciate the new books which are readily available and the Mitchell’s wonderful staff and programs. Libraries are the lifeline for many of us. Keep them fully funded.
Polly Halfkenny
173 Alden Ave 1st fl
06515
Do not close Mitchell Library

Matt Higbee <higbee.matt@gmail.com>
Mon 3/8/2021 9:30 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To the Board of Alders,

Closing Mitchell Library would be very shortsighted. So many residents benefit from this branch, especially people with low incomes who live far from other branches or downtown. This is a place kids come after school for a safe place to do homework. Where teens and adults look for jobs. Where art, cultural and community events take place. This is a functioning resource. I see other items in the budget that are not even up and running. Why would you prioritize cutting a service that exists over services that don't even exist. This should not even be up for discussion.

Matthew Higbee
257 West Rock AVE.
in support of the Mitchell branch library

silvia hines <shines2500@yahoo.com>
Mon 3/29/2021 6:18 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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Hello,

I've lived in Westville for 51 years and have raised two children here, enjoying the Mitchell branch library during all those years. I'm strongly opposed to the proposal to close the Mitchell branch, as well as any of the other branch libraries!

I understand the need to address a budget deficit; however, closing libraries feels like an ominous direction to take. The Mitchell branch is cherished by so many people, including seniors, children, and disabled adults, many of whom might find it difficult to get downtown regularly to use a library. As you know, education and literacy are crucial values that a thriving city needs to support!

Sincerely,
Silvia Hines
Please DO NOT CLOSE MITCHELL LIBRARY!

Jeffrey Hutchinson <jdhutch64@gmail.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 6:28 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>; Adam Marchand <WARD25@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To Whom It May Concern and my Alder, Adam Marchand,

The closing of our Westville community's beloved Mitchell Library Branch as a plan to reduce the city's deficit should be taken off the table at once. We must continue to provide the New Haven community access [with parking!] to a vibrant source of learning by keeping this library open. The faithful staff of Mitchell Library took care of us cheerfully throughout the pandemic by delivering books safely to borrowers curbside. Is closing them down how we should reward them? This particular library is an important community gathering place for many of us with shared interests beyond the books and media it offers. Consider what closing this library will take away socially from the nearby residents of Chapel Haven who traverse the neighborhood on foot. Think of what accessible resources you will remove from the firemen standing duty in their station at the end of the library's street. Think of Mitchell’s perpetually kind employees of diverse backgrounds who depend on their positions and enhance our community with their outgoing personalities at work! The staff there are the opposite of a stereotypical librarian who'd prefer that everything quietly be kept in place on the shelves rather than to encourage sharing and interaction. They go out of their way to educate and to build community. Not to mention the fact that the library for some New Haven residents is the only free access they have to the internet.

All it would take is for Yale to be held accountable to donate the finances needed to keep our useful, accessible, free public library open. At this rate, eventually all the loanable books in the city will be the ones locked up behind the gates and doors of Yale University, inaccessible to the majority of New Haven's tax-paying residents. Do not let a single one of our city's public libraries close. The citizens need access to the education our libraries freely and eagerly provide. Give everyone a chance to learn. Taking away children's easy access to books will have a horrific, detrimental effect on our city's future.

Take a step in the right direction. Hold Yale more deeply accountable. Please FIGHT for the funding of the Mitchell Branch of New Haven's Free Public Library to continue.

Thank you for your time and service.

Respectfully,
Rev. Dr. Jeff Hutchinson
420 Yale Avenue
New Haven, CT
Possible closing of Mitchell Library

Marisa <marisa1969@sbcglobal.net>
Fri 3/19/2021 7:18 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

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Why are libraries often one of the first services to be targeted when budget cuts are considered? Libraries are the only facilities open to anyone that provide free educational, entertainment, and informational services, just to mention a few of the benefits. It is a safe environment for children, adults in need, people looking for jobs and computer services, and so much more. Not only should Mitchell Library be safe from budget cuts, but all the New Haven libraries should be protected.

Marisa Kalt
West Rock Ave.
Westville
testimony for hearing to Keep Mitchell Library open!

Susan Klein <susankleinsk@gmail.com>
Mon 3/8/2021 4:18 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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Closing Mitchell Library -- or any other branch of NHFPL --- is a terrible idea, not least because it goes against the public's recommendations to Mayor Elicker published and widely distributed at the time of his inauguration. Libraries are crucial community centers in the best of times, and now during the pandemic our libraries have adapted magnificently to continue serving all our community in every way possible. I have been a library patron all my life (72 years!) and a library volunteer for 13 years; I will protest mightily to keep all the libraries open. Money to support the city budget must come from another source, such as PILOT, increased tax for the very wealthy, and/or CT's share of the military budget. Please take the libraries off the chopping block!

Susan Klein
42 Young Street
New Haven, CT 06511
203-389-9547
susankleinsk@gmail.com
Mitchell Library

Koenigsberg, Rebecca <rebecca.Koenigsberg@ynhh.org>

Mon 3/22/2021 2:05 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposal to close the Mitchell Library. The Mitchell Library contributes greatly to the quality of life in the Westville neighborhood for residents of all ages and backgrounds. In addition to loaning books, it also provides a place where people from a wide variety of backgrounds can meet, mingle and spend time together. In these days of where we are so aware of the need to diversify our associations, the Mitchell Library is a place where we can begin to do that.

With New Haven’s professed mission to enhance the experience of the individuals who live and work in the City of New Haven,

Closing of the Mitchell Library would constitute a direct contradiction and violation of that mission. With due respect and appreciation of the improvements and enhancements being performed in other areas of the city, the residents of Westville are also worthy of New Haven’s attention and resources

Rebecca K. Koenigsberg

This message originates from the Yale New Haven Health System. The information contained in this message may be privileged and confidential. If you are the intended recipient you must maintain this message in a secure and confidential manner. If you are not the intended recipient, please notify the sender immediately and destroy this message. Thank you.
Mitchell library

MARIA LAMBERTO <marialamberto@sbcglobal.net>
Tue 3/30/2021 2:05 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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Dear members of the board of alders,
Please keep Mitchell library open. The library and its staff, including Branch Librarian Marian Huggins, are a wonderful resource to our entire community. Before Covid forced Mitchell library to close its doors to in-person programs, it was a hub of activity, including story times for children, activities for babies and their families, multiple book clubs, and activities targeted to specific groups including seniors, and English-learners. Other activities have included guest speakers, earth day celebrations, pie making contests, outdoor concerts under the trees, and a knitting club. Every time I visited to check out the new-book section, there was something going on.

Since the shutdown, patrons have been able to reserve and retrieve books safely and resume book club discussions remotely by Zoom. The library is easily reached by bus, bike, and walking, and there is adequate free parking to pick up reserved books and greet the friendly helpful staff. Contact with library staff by phone and email and remotely has helped maintain a sense of community in this awful time of social distancing.

Please consider how important Mitchell library is to all segments of our community and keep our library open.

Respectfully,
Maria Lamberto
Member Beaver Hills neighborhood Association and longtime resident of Ruby Street.

Sent from AT&T Yahoo Mail for iPad
Mitchell library

Eli Lebowitz <eli.lebowitz@gmail.com>
Wed 3/31/2021 9:42 AM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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As a resident of Westville I am writing to express my strong concern about the proposal to close Mitchell Library. I am opposed to this proposal. The library serves a crucial function for the community, and never more so than during these times. Closing it would be devastating to many in the area.
Sincerely
Eli Lebowitz
Mitchell Library

Amy Aledort Lehrer <aaledort@gmail.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 4:51 PM

To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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To members of the Finance Committee:

As a member of the Westville community I am appalled at the idea that anyone would consider closing the Mitchell Branch Library. Patrons have looked forward to the many services offered, from browsing the shelves and borrowing books, using the computers for research, bringing in family members for the various childrens' activities, and even enjoying the outdoor summer concerts, baking contests, etc.

Libraries are a treasured resource, and often a refuge for those without internet access at home. All of the city's branches serve their neighborhoods and none should be threatened with closure. New Haven's Public Library was awarded the 2019 National Medal for Museum and Library Service. If our library service was given this prestigious award it seems preposterous that one of it's much used and much loved branches should close.

Sincerely,
Amy Aledort Lehrer
proposed budget

martha lewis <marthawlewis@gmail.com>
Mon 3/8/2021 8:20 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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Dear All:
I am beside myself at the proposed budget cuts- really:- a LIBRARY?? and that Yale is not being held accountable-. I have heard that we the citizens are going to get a 7 plus percent hike- guess what? I am ALREADY paying too much. How about all of the non-tax paying graduate students who inflate the rental prices and drive around without paying car tax? how about creatively finding ways that get those not paying their fair share to chip in? I am an artist, not an accountant or a tax attorney, so my ideas may sound naive, but I DO KNOW that making the working class and middle class float the very poor AND the very rich is not a plan.
I went to graduate school in the 90's at Yale. New Haven was a very difficult place- lots of drugs and prostitution and yale barricaded away and increasingly locked up to avoid infiltrations The people with options leaving town to find safer living and work conditions.
Please do not recreate that polarized, barren and socially irresponsible version of our city again. This is a pandemic, most of us are in financial crisis and tax hikes and services cuts are NOT what we need right now. we need healing we need to support each other and we need to reach across race and class divides to keep the city strong.
thank you
Sincerely
Martha Lewis

* Martha's Current Art Projects:

I Saw The Figure Five In Black, a site specific installation is up now in the rotunda of the New Haven Museum [https://www.newhavenmuseum.org/education/current-exhibitions](https://www.newhavenmuseum.org/education/current-exhibitions/)

Curatorial projects:

Declaration of Sentiments: a celebrating 100 years of women voting is up now actually and virtually at the Gallery Upstairs at the Institute Library [https://institutelibrary.org/gallery](https://institutelibrary.org/gallery) [https://institutelibrary.org/gallery/]

Forthcoming:

Plants & Insects a major commission by the State of Connecticut at the Jenkins Weggoner Laboratory, in collaboration with artist Marion Belanger. Celebrating the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station's Library, Collections, & Archive, this permanent immersive work is slated to open late spring 2021- stay tuned!

Website: marthalewis.com Sign up for a monthly art newsletter here.

Radio/Audio:
Mitchell Library

Ken Maltese <kenmaltese@gmail.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 8:04 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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To the Finance Committee

I would like to express my support the the Mitchell Branch of the New Haven Free Public Library system.

The branch libraries bring a respite to their respective neighborhoods and provide a quite space for everybody to gather. This branch, and I would guess in other neighborhoods they would say the same, is a treasure for those of us that love to read. It is also a resource for those who cannot afford internet services, it provides a meeting space for a wide variety of events and has helped us through the pandemic.

There are no other alternatives in our neighborhood to this library.

Please do not consider eliminating this service to our community.

Thank you

Joseph Maltese

325 Stevenson Road,

New Haven CT.

--

This email has been checked for viruses by AVG.

https://www.avg.com
Testimony for Finance Committee Meeting 3/30

Ben Mattison <btm428@gmail.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 6:18 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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The following is testimony for the Finance Committee meeting on March 30, 2021.

I urge you to preserve Mitchell Library in the upcoming budget. I live across the street from the library and have witnessed for years how it serves as a vibrant, vital hub for our neighborhood. Parents bring their babies and toddlers to the library to play with the trains and read the books, and then, as the years pass, those same kids, having developed a love for reading, ride their bikes over to take books out themselves. The computers offer access to online services to those without internet—and the patient, enthusiastic librarians provide free tech support along with book recommendations.

Closing the library would leave a huge hole on our street—an active, happy community center turned into a vacant lot. What a terrible message that would send about our priorities. The library is a worthy investment in literacy, community, and learning.

Ben Mattison
Harrison St.
MITCHELL LIBRARY

christine mccargar <christinemccargar@me.com>
Fri 3/26/2021 11:45 AM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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I am reaching out in support of the Mitchell Library, I live in the neighborhood as do my grandchildren and we use it frequently. It would be a huge disservice too are community to close.
Christine Mccargar
Keep Mitchell Branch Open

Kathryn Greene-McCreight <greene-mccreight@aya.yale.edu>
Fri 3/26/2021 8:44 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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Dear Finance Committee Members,

I write in support of KEEPING OUR LOCAL MITCHELL BRANCH of the NHFPL open and in service to the public. Mitchell is an anchor to our community and provides resources that many people in our area of New Haven would not have access to apart from our local branch.

Those who do not have access to internet services and have no transportation to the other sites benefit from our local Mitchell branch. Those who need help locating books and other reading material, whether for entertainment or educational purposes, need the personal assistance of our local library.

Please don’t forget our children who need the encouragement and skills to search the stacks, and to develop a love of reading. The team at Mitchell is the best! Please allocate the funds to keep Mitchell at its current address.

In gratitude for your support,

The Rev’d Kathryn Greene-McCreight, PhD
198 McKinley Avenue
New Haven, CT 06515
--
Rev Kathryn Greene-McCreight, PhD
Writing in support of keeping Mitchell Library open!!

M McCreight <unclemingo@comcast.net>
Fri 3/26/2021 8:46 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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As a resident of Westville and New Haven, I want to express my strong support for keeping Mitchell Library open and thriving. It is such a fundamental part of our community, of keeping us connecting and especially helping so many children and adults who otherwise would not have the opportunity to read, learn, come together.

I understand these are challenging financial times but I urge you to find the funds to keep Mitchell open

Sincerely
Matthew McCreight
198 McKinley Avenue
New Haven, CT
06515
Save Mitchell Library

Marie McDaniel <mcdanielm4@gmail.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 2:07 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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I am a mother of two, and a professor at Southern Connecticut State University who lives in Westville. Mitchell Library is at the heart of the Westville neighborhood in New Haven. Without it, the community would suffer, and in turn so would the rest of the city.

Personally, my children and I regularly check out books from the library, we have attended children’s story time, we have made pies and attended concerts in the summer on the lawn, I work there when I need a change of scenery. I have conducted interviews, and I met my two current best friends in that library when I first moved to New Haven ten years ago.

It’s more than a building. It’s a world of opportunity for our residents, especially our children. My son expanded his food palette when we found a recipe book from Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs on the library bookshelf. He read his first book sitting in front of the train table. We regularly see children working on homework or accessing the computers to expand their knowledge. And you want to take that away from them? Really?

It’s not enough that there are other libraries in other parts of the town. We are a local community. We are diverse, we are welcoming, but we need to be able to walk to our place of refuge. We need books here. We need computers here. We need this space here. It is the heart of this community, don’t tear it away.

Marie McDaniel
Westville
Public Services are Vital to our Community

Emmett McMullan <emmett.mcmullan@gmail.com>
Mon 3/8/2021 6:43 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To the Finance Committee of the New Haven Board of Alders,

The Mitchell Branch of the New Haven Free Public Library has tremendous value to the local community. An overwhelming number of us living in the neighborhood rely on the convenient location for books and print services. A significant number of residents are pedestrians exclusively and would be unnecessarily burdened (or unable) to safely travel downtown for assistance at the Main branch. I further wonder what the Library system and patrons would be expected to do to access the materials that are kept at Mitchell Branch? Our libraries have limited enough shelf space presently, so the large collection at Mitchell likely could not simply be moved into all of the other branches. One of the largest and most diverse collections of quality materials for children and youths is housed at Mitchell. In order for staff to access those materials and continue to circulate them to the community, the city would still need to open and heat the building long enough to collect those materials and tote them to the other branches (as they presently do for redistribution of hold requests). We cannot let those books and videos languish in disuse under any circumstances. Our younger generations depend on them for learning and enriching and entertainment. The parents and grandparents of our community rely on those materials for sharing quality time with their children and grandchildren.

Find the means to keep Mitchell Branch, the Senior Center, and the Fire Station open, and expand funding for the Board of Education; our public schools have been in a budget crisis for years and I do not want a future where our strong academic community crumbles and dissolves to give way to for-profit Charter schools. I acknowledge that we are in a rock and a hard place if state PILOT funding and additional monies from Yale do not come through, but additional funds must come through for our community. Yale has no business claiming that the salaries it pays to its employees is money spent "directly" on the town of New Haven. Our city deserves a fair and stable budget, good access to Library services, Emergency Fire and Rescue, Senior Centers for our elders, and a public education to set up our next generation of adults for success, and Yale has no business hoarding its wealth when we have the financial crisis we are facing.

Thank you for your time,

Emmett McMullan
Resident of Westville for four years.

https://outlook.office365.com/mail/inbox/id/AAQkAGE4MDdOZWZjLxMjUxNDAxYi04MzhmLWVIMd2OTIkMzI3YQQA+i8WwrDQDJEjVEUx4LlVc8...
Mitchell Library

Justine Menchetti <jmenchetti@chapelhaven.org>
Tue 3/30/2021 11:51 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I am writing on behalf of over 200 New Haven residents in the Mitchell Library neighborhood. I have been the Art Director at Chapel Haven Schleifer Center at 1040 Whalley Avenue for over 25 years. Mitchell is our next door neighbor and considered part of our “family” for the students that reside at CHSC and those who have graduated from our program and now live in the community. Mitchell is the hub of the neighborhood. Our students frequent the library for many needs knowing that they have friends there and will always be treated kindly and with respect. These folks do not drive and many do not own their own computers. It’s a social as well an educational and informative site for all.

CHSC has had many art shows and other events hosted by the library. We know all the staff by name and most of the staff know our clients by name. Our volunteers have maintained the gardens and grounds. We have had students filing and replacing books.

This would be absolutely devastating to the neighborhood and the Westville community to lose such an important piece of our home. We need the Mitchell Library for so many reasons.

Please reconsider closing this branch.

Sincerely -
Tina Menchetti

Tina Menchetti
Art Director
Chapel Haven Schleifer Center, Inc.
(203) 397-1714 <tel:(203)%20397-1714> ex.202
Jmenchetti@chapelhaven.org

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testimony in support of Mitchell

Alka Menon <alkavm@gmail.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 6:34 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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Hello,

I would like to submit public testimony in support of the Mitchell branch of the New Haven Free Public Library. I am new to the neighborhood, but quickly found my way to the library. I'm an avid reader and greatly value having a local public library close at hand. A public library is a vital part of any community. As the number of public spaces for community gathering decreases, it is all the more essential to preserve the sites that remain. Public library branches offer resources to people of all ages, from a site for printing and internet/computer access to books and job training. Despite New Haven’s budget challenges, I feel strongly that we should do what we can to keep the Mitchell branch open.

Best,
Alka Menon
Westville, New Haven resident
Hi there,

I am writing in support of Mitchell Library. It is an anchor institution in Westville and it is one of the reasons I live here (I live within walking distance). I am on a first-name basis with Sharon the librarian and since I read a lot I sometimes ask her for recommendations. I talk reading very seriously and having a well-read librarian is (oddly) a really wonderful asset! The staff is unfailing helpful and nice.

Whenever I was at Mitchell Library (pre-pandemic), it was always serving folks with very young children, teenagers, older folks and random adults like me. It has a very diverse population who access its services: books, space, warmth, computers, social activities, talks, crafts, etc.

While Westville has lots of restaurants and shops, it does not have a lot of indoor spaces people can gather without having to pay. This is important for social sanity, particularly as we emerge from this economically-devastating pandemic. People will need safe spaces to gather and re-acquaint themselves with the community without having to pay or be around more high risk activities (such as eating).

Please deeply consider funding Mitchell Library as an important social and learning institution in the Westville community.

Thank you,

Ravenna Michalsen
Mitchell Library

Paty Morales <patymorales96@gmail.com>
Wed 3/31/2021 12:31 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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Dear Sir or Madam:
I just want to say that closing Mitchell Library will be a great loss for Westville. We can not afford not to have it. It brings some much joy to many, specially our children. Walking to the Library and looking forward to checking books out is an outing/activity that will stay with the children their whole life as well as their interest to read. Please keep Mitchell Library Open.
Thank you.
P. Morales, Westville Resident
Testimony in Support of
Funding the Mitchell Library Branch of the New Haven Free Public Library

Submitted to:
Finance Committee, Public Hearing, City of New Haven
publictestimony@newhavenct.gov

Submitted by:
Sofia I. Morales, MPH, CPH
New Haven, CT
March 30, 2021

Dear Mayor Justin Elicker and esteemed members of the Finance Committee of the City of New Haven:

My name is Sofia Morales and I live in the Westville neighborhood of the City of New Haven, Connecticut. Today I submit this written testimony in support of funding the Mitchell Library Branch of the New Haven Free Public Library (NHFPL) and implore you to please keep our beloved library open.

Libraries are one of the most important cornerstones of a healthy community. Not only do libraries serve as gateways to knowledge and culture, but they are also crucial in providing resources and opportunities for community members to meet their basic needs and be able to thrive. Libraries help our communities by providing: (1) free access to computers and the internet; (2) information on local community-based social services; (3) resources that assist in finding jobs and furthering careers; (4) access to quiet study spaces for people of all ages; (5) free programming and classes for children and teens, as well as for adults; (6) access to research resources such as free databases; among many others!

In our great City of New Haven, the New Haven Free Public Library (NHFPL) is an essential, popular, and well-used public service. The five thriving branches of the NHFPL reach every demographic in our city, every single day. NHFPL works with more than 100 community partners, organizations, nonprofits, and advocacy groups to present collaborative programs, provide meeting space, share resources, and contribute to the vitality of New Haven.

Of the 5 branches, Mitchell’s total circulation is more than all other neighborhood branches combined. The service area for Mitchell includes a significant portion of the west side of the City, including the Beaver Hills, West Hills, Edgewood, and Amity neighborhoods, which represent an extremely large and diverse population.

Closing the Mitchell Library Branch would be disastrous for New Haven and would further amplify the disparities and inequities that already exist in our city.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of funding the Mitchell Library Branch and keeping our cherished library open and accessible to our community.

Sincerely,

Sofia I. Morales, MPH, CPH
Mitchell Branch

Susan Neitzke <sneitzke1@gmail.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 11:02 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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I'd like you to know how very much I appreciate having the Mitchell Library available to me. I'm new to New Haven. When showing homes in this area the realtor took my family to see the Mitchell Library. It's a lovely neighborhood library with ample parking in a relatively safe area. I have a young grandchild and we use this library extensively despite having other libraries closer to my home. I hope that the city will find a better way to tackle its funding shortfall than closing down its valuable public libraries.

Susan Neitzke
Closing Mitchell would be a mistake

Heather Powell <HeatherPowell1@yahoo.com>
Mon 3/8/2021 7:57 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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We are unable to join the zoom call (links aren't working!) but we would like to lodge our deep concern regarding the proposed closure of Mitchell Library. This is an extremely valuable resource for the Westville community, and has been so for over 50 years. Scott went there as a kid. Now we are raising our children using the events and books from there. We use the library to meet other families, to attend activities hosted by their incredible staff, and routinely visit the space in non-Covid times. Closing the library would be a grave error of judgement and would negatively impact this small yet close knit community.

Thank you for taking our concerns under consideration.
Heather Powell and Scott Dworkin
17 Philip street, new haven

---
Heather Powell
Skype: heatherpowell
Cell: 860.992.4252
Mitchell library

Heather Powell <HeatherPowell1@yahoo.com>
Mon 3/8/2021 4:42 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>; Scott Dworkin <tourwithscott@gmail.com>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Greetings, we want to make sure there are enough people speaking for Mitchell library. We do not need time reserved if the space is already busy, but are willing to speak if needed. This crucial part of the Westville community cannot close. Thank you. Heather and Scott, 17 Philip street, New haven

---
Heather Powell
Skype: heatherpowell
Cell: 860.992.4252
Testimony on behalf of Westville library

Heather Powell <HeatherPowell1@yahoo.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 1:45 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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Greetings,

The Westville public library is an extremely valuable community resource. We, and our neighbors, regularly use it as a source for books, community events (baby playtime, story time, meetings) and making connections. It has been an integral part of our community for years, and needs to continue to be that. Costs to keep it open are low; please look elsewhere to trim the budget and ensure that this vital community gem remains intact.

Heather Powell and Scott Dworkin
17 Philip street

---

Heather Powell
Skype: heatherpowell
Cell: 860.992.4252
Mitchell Library

Shelara Pullen <pullen.shelara@yahoo.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 8:29 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To the Finance Committee of the City of New Haven,

As a member of a book discussion group held at Mitchell Library, I was appalled to hear that there is talk of closing this vital institution in the Westville area.

Libraries are more vital now than ever in providing information, education, and connection. The Mitchell branch has continued to provide services for a community in desperate need at a desperate time. The staff has done so, while also creating safe spaces for all people from all backgrounds to come together to discuss books, but more importantly ideas.

I have worked with many of the families that live in the Westville/Whalley Ave area. The families that I know would lose a great and vital resource if the Mitchell Library were to close. Struggling families without transportation or the ability to travel would have to now find a way downtown by bus or car to travel to the nearest library. At this critical time, when so many parents are trying to provide learning resources and education to their children at home while also attempting to keep or find employment, it is imperative to keep the local library open, funded and operational.

I implore you to keep the Mitchell Library open, and I ask that you continue to invest in the Mitchell Library, its staff, and the communities of New Haven.

Sincerely,
Shelara Pullen
Mitchell Library

Nancy Moss-Racusin <nancymr@snet.net>
Wed 3/24/2021 4:37 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To the Finance Committee, City of New Haven:

I would like to voice strong support for maintaining the Mitchell Library as a community resource. As a private practice psychologist in New Haven, I am aware of individuals who depend on the Mitchell Library for much-needed information and leisure reading. As a citizen, I also know that the Mitchell Library is important to many people. I urge you to keep the Library open and fully staffed. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Nancy E. Moss, Ph.D

Sent from my iPhone
Letter of support for the Mitchell Branch/NHFPL

Ainissa Ramirez <ainissa@gmail.com>
Sun 3/28/2021 8:05 AM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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Dear Finance Committee Member,

My name is Ainissa Ramirez and I am a long-time resident of New Haven, Connecticut. I am a scientist by training (my doctorate is from Stanford) and I am an author. Recently, I wrote an award-winning book called "The Alchemy of Us." It has been recognized by the LA Times as a finalist for their biggest book prize. I wrote this book in the Mitchell Branch of the New Haven Free Public Library. This book would not have happened if it wasn’t for the staff and resources of this branch (which I state in my book’s acknowledgements). As such, this letter is for my wholehearted support of the Mitchell Library.

Libraries are important, particularly during a pandemic. They provide a way for people to grow, connect, and learn. Taking libraries away is shortsighted. You are taking away a child’s chance to learn. You are taking away a citizen’s opportunity to develop new skills. You are taking away a senior’s opportunity to continue to thrive. New Haven has always been forward-thinking with libraries and with getting books to people of all demographics. Let’s continue this tradition. By taking away libraries you prevent citizens from successfully making career changes. You are constraining how children develop. You are also robbing a community of its heart. This is not the legacy that you want to have. Once the library dies, tax-paying citizens will leave and they won’t come back.

Consider another way to address your budget’s deficiency. Consider aligning with the mission of the city, which is to create an engaged community. Removing a library, I fear, is a step in the wrong direction. You will negatively impact children, citizens, and communities. You will make a great void, which unlike a pothole, cannot be patched over.

Thank you so much for considering this letter. I do hope you will continue to support the Mitchell Branch and all other library branches in New Haven. Libraries are the heart of the Elm City. Let’s keep them thriving.

Best,
Ainissa Ramirez

--
ainissa g. ramirez, ph.d.
@ainissaramirez
m. 201.780.2401
www.ainissaramirez.com
ainissa@gmail.com

Check out my new award-winning book The Alchemy of Us (from the MIT Press)
In support of keeping mitchell library open

Marc Ramirez <remarcs@yahoo.com>  
Sat 3/27/2021 7:16 PM  
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious  
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

My name is marc ramirez. I am in support of keeping mitchell library open. I use it for my books as well as classes and as a neighborhood community meeting place. As a long time resident of New Haven I can attest to the importance and frequent use of the library by the neighborhoods surrounding it. Please reconsider the closing of this venerable establishment.

Signed,

Marc Ramirez

Sent from Yahoo Mail on Android
Mitchell Branch library

Claire Roosien <claire.roosien@gmail.com>
Sun 3/28/2021 4:30 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear New Haven Finance Committee,

In advance of this week's meeting of the Finance Committee, I am writing to urge you to make sure that the upcoming city budget includes full funding for the Mitchell Branch Library. As a new resident of Westville, the Mitchell Branch library has been a lifeline for me and my children during the pandemic. We walk to the library more than once a week to pick up books and craft kits for my children to read. These resources have been indispensable as my children (NHPHS students) are still in remote learning. But the library isn't crucial just for my family -- the Mitchell Branch library sits in a highly populated area, and is, importantly, walkable for the neighborhoods that surround the library. In addition to books, the library provides essential resources for people in the neighborhood, helping them access key social services and job search needs, e.g. printing, internet, and research support. Shuttering the Mitchell Branch library will mean that my family and many of our neighbors will not have access to the educational resources and social services they depend on. I urge you to do the right thing and fund the Mitchell Library.

Claire Roosien
Mitchell Branch library budget meeting

Isha Vela <ing.rod@gmail.com>
Mon 3/29/2021 5:26 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To whom it may concern,

I am offering my public testimony about the proposal to close the Mitchell Branch library in New Haven.

This library has been our saving grace for the last 10 years and especially during the quarantine.

When my children were little, we attended the bilingual meet and plays on Friday morning. This gave us an opportunity to connect with other members of the community who had young children and create lasting friendships.

During the two years we were homeschooling our children, we would come to the LEGO play times and to other arts and crafts activities that provided social time for them.

Being able to order books and use the pickup service during quarantine while schools were closed helped us stay sane while isolated and shut away from so much of the world.

I cannot underestimate how important it has been for my girls to have access to books that sparked their creativity and also allow them to travel to distant places while learning from home.

There is so much more I want to say about this particular library, suffice it to say that even though we have moved out of the neighborhood, we continue to come back for the activities and the books.

I hope that Mitchell library remains open and in service of the community.

Warmly,
Ingrid Rodriguez
SAVE MITCHELL LIBRARY

Diane Ruben <dianeruben@sbcglobal.net>
Fri 3/19/2021 3:33 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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This branch has broader diversity than any other: African Americans and Italians and Latinx and religious jews and white middle class. Rich and Poor, Black, White, Brown, Asian--this is the best New Haven offers; it would tragic to lose this branch.

I've used it for over forty years, so have my children and now my grandchildren. the array of programming is incredible--from summer concerts to community groups using the function room, from reading marathons to book groups, from job fairs to computer access.

Toddlers, elderly, professionals, retired, children, teenagers--all love this branch. PLEASE SAVE IT.
Fwd: Two great quotes regarding possible closing...(Thanks for your time.) :)

tory sansing <vdsansing@gmail.com>
Fri 3/26/2021 5:55 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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1. Libraries should be the VERY last thing to ever consider closing, especially during a year of racial tension and disyance learning (!!).
2. New Haven's citizens cannot afford more mill rate increases. If this HAS to happen, realize that the fraudulently called "mansion tax" is an attack against the middle class, and will entail New Haven over taxed property owners yet ANOTHER 1 point mill rate on top of the proposed 7% increase after the 11% increase we are still dealing with from a couple of years ago.

From a very concerned single Mother in Westville,
Victoria Sansing
860-593-5711

"Cutting libraries in a recession is like cutting hospitals in a plague."
Eleanor Crumblehulme
"Libraries will get you through times of no money better than money will get you through times of no libraries." Anne Herbert
Fwd: Mitchell Library: an invaluable asset offering enrichment, education, and community for ALL people in New Haven, the great equalizer. It’s a shame our children even have to see city leaders considering shutting down their Mitchell Public Library a...

tory sansing <vdsansing@gmail.com>
Fri 3/26/2021 5:12 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
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PLEASE SEE THESE SLIDES W DESCRIPTIONS AND FORWARD TO ANYONE INVOLVED WITH NEW HAVEN’S BUDGET DECISIONS. I spent a great deal of time making this slideshow (which you need to manually click through [easy enough however] to see. Westville neighbors added to it. please look at it and pass it on. Thank you!

Subject: Mitchell Library: an invaluable asset offering enrichment, education, and community for ALL people in New Haven, the great equalizer. It’s a shame our children even have to see city leaders considering shutting down their Mitchell Public Library at a time when we all need it the most.

Protect Mitchell Library
The invaluable
Mitchell Library
“Mitchell Branch Library is essential to the Westville - West Hills neighborhood. It is the most visited branch of the NATIONAL AWARD WINNING New Haven Free Library system with the exception of the main library downtown. In addition to serving all functions of a reading/lending library Mitchell Library Branch serves the community by providing; tutoring and learning opportunities, social opportunities, showcasing local artists in the gallery, promoting cultural understanding through programs and the foreign film series, as well as providing workshops and computer services to help people improve their lives. The list goes on and on. They do so much on a very skimp budget. They should be getting a prize not being threatened with closing.”

Kathleen Bradley
(longtime Westville resident/active community member)
“A library outranks any other one thing a community can do to benefit its people. It is a never failing spring in the desert.”
Informally opened Dec. 27th, 1910

The original Mitchell Library, the Beecher House. (Torn down in 1967, replaced by new building.)
Reading room in original Mitchell Library
Another active citizen: Robert Babcock

Westville resident Harold Houston (seen here w his daughter) whose family has been in the area between 150-170 years is a wealth of knowledge in regards to Donald Mitchell and the library’s history.

Seen here circa 1950 at St. Aedan’s church for daughter’s
Volunteering on the library board, mentoring young people in his 70s, and always picking up garbage on the New Haven Green on his daily walks, Bob Bobcock has always kept his priorities straight.
Robert and Victoria Babcock’s WWII time wedding

96, settled in Westville area in the 1950s to raise his family. They loved the original Mitchell Library. In 2000, he volunteered on the city library board of directors and they facilitated the Mitchell Library’s gorgeous renovation.
Robert Babcock visits with his great granddaughter, Freya Sansing, who now lives in Westville and is a benefactor of the Mitchell Library.
Freya finding her great-grandfather’s name on plaque referencing Mitchell Library’s 2002 wonderful renovation.

And every time she visits the library!
Our children (students) benefit from the symbiotic relationship between school and library.

Mitchell Library decorated creatively for the delight of the community.
Bird bath at Mitchell Library garden donated by artist. Many volunteers and well meaning community groups have contributed to the library and lovely Beecher Park.
There was always something going on at the Mitchell Library. They showed our child's Legos to the public in the glass display, which made our child feel special. During pandemic, whenever we picked up books, we would get tiny goodie bags home to make something like ornaments. Mitchell Library is very important to us not to mention the whole community. We want the library to be there and their books and kind librarians. It would be a big shame to lose our library. If our city doesn't value books for children and any other educational facilities for families who can't afford to have access to, then what can it expect from them?"

Jiyoun Chang
Dean Nguyen enjoying the community at Mitchell Library.
Nothing sickens me more than the closed doors of a library.”

Barbara Tuchman

"The only thing you absolutely have to know is the location of the library.”

Albert Einstein

Walk to the library
Wannabe Pysanky Eggs made by mother and child at the Mitchell Library’s free event...taken home and put on mantle.
Oiji Chang and daughter enjoyed and were inspired by the “monster drawings” at the Mitchell library.

Families meet to make gingerbread houses at Mitchell Library!
Monster drawings at the Mitchell Library!
The Chang’s monster art in baby’s bedroom was inspired by the Mitchell Library.

“Libraries will get you through times of no money better than money will get you through times of no money.” – Anne Herbert
“The library is important for the west side of New Haven. As residents of New Haven we all know the difficulties associated with visiting the main library on Elm Street. A visit to the main library is time-consuming due to the traffic and congested streets that we must use to get there, the limited parking in the library area (which must be paid for), and the time it takes to walk from the car to the library. For a family with children it is especially inconvenient. Having branch libraries is a great solution to this problem. It is much more user-friendly. For families and children, it is very easily accessible. And it goes without saying that it is in a wonderfully convenient area for people of all ages.”

longtime resident of Westville community
Nel Smith enjoyed the Mitchell Library as a baby.

Nel continues to enjoy Mitchell Library as a toddler, as people have for over 100 years.
John Nguyen and his son Dean enjoy Dean's book selection.
SCSU volunteers work day at Mitchell Library

More Solar Youth volunteers at the library
School children at Mitchell Library
What would Donald G. Mitchell who was smart enough to graduate from Yale at the age of 15 say about Mitchell Library possibly closing?

Vivienne’s mother reports that since Vivienne loves the Mitchell Library, this is how she would respond to the library closing.
“Cutting libraries in a recession is like cutting hospitals in a plague.”

Eleanor Crumblehulme

The front garden at Mitchell Library was begun by Block Watch 303. Chapel Haven volunteers have worked on it as well. The Urban Resources Initiative has been supportive as well throughout the years. Max Burbank originally designed the garden.
“As a taxpayer in New Haven, I have tried to refrain from being too critical because I know running this City is tough. For years I have paid my taxes and put up with the potholes, speeding, litter and all the rest but threatening to close Mitchell Library is a bridge too far.”
Mitchell Library

Deborah Schmidel <dleeschmidel@gmail.com>

Mon 3/29/2021 10:14 PM

To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Mitchell Library was one of the first places I investigated when we moved here a couple of years ago. Such good vibes, and so many happy people using it, and the chance to get passes to shows. And of course the books! I felt like I had officially become a New Haven resident. Please don't close this little gem of Westville. We just got here!

D. Lee Schmidel
City of New Haven  
Finance Committee Testimony  
March 16, 2021

Esteemed members of the Finance Committee:

My name is Shana Schneider; I reside at 118 Edwards Street in New Haven and I write to you on behalf of the New Haven Free Public Library (NHFPL). I am currently the president of the NHFPL Board of Directors.

While the passing of the State PILOT program House Bill and conversations with Yale give us reason to be optimistic about New Haven's budget, the threat of closing Mitchell and not pushing to make the Library a central part of recovery for our city and next steps for growth is, in my view, preposterous and shortsighted.

If there is any institution that serves all of New Haven, it is the Library. We can go back to the Mayor’s transition report to see how important the Library is. For an administration touting its work to close the equity gaps that run throughout our city, considering closing a library branch seems in direct opposition to this goal.

The Library has shown through the years and most recently during this pandemic just how essential it is to the community – it never truly closed and was always there through its 24-7 website providing access to books, music, movies, and databases; then expanding its free wifi to surrounding blocks outside it's buildings, adding a laptop lending program, and offering countless online programs and it did this through partnerships because the Library is more than its buildings and its staff are not only good at their jobs they are amazing community builders.

We are one Library with five branches. To prune one would be a detriment to the whole system. I'm frustrated to have to prove the worth of all the branches, when the programming, the quality of our staff (even with the salaries well below industry and statewide comparisons), the feedback from our community members and the National Awards don't seem to provide that perspective.

For us to be a forward-thinking city, moving together and ready for whatever comes our way, we need to be investing in our Libraries. These are the places and the institution where our tax dollars can be seen to truly work and benefit everyone – by providing continued education, entertainment, working spaces, networking, new experiences with and ongoing access to technology.

It is the democratic heart of the city and can be an economic engine if not starved for funding. Right now, the national ROI for public libraries is about 1 to 5. For every $1 spent on public libraries, $5 is returned to the community.
I am not asking to just save Mitchell. I'm here asking you to be the leaders that you were voted in to be. See the big picture and give the Library the support it needs at 1% of the city budget.

I have no doubt that Alderperson Morrison has also shared some of these insights and concerns. While she is more than capable of speaking on behalf of NHFPL, I would be happy to talk with you to answer any lingering questions you may have about allocating additional budget dollars to NHFPL.

Thanks in advance for your attention.

Respectfully submitted,
Shana Schneider

118 Edwards Street
New Haven, CT 06511
PH 203-843-0718
Save the Mitchell Library

sepweb <sepweb@aol.com>
Wed 3/31/2021 2:08 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To Whom it May Concern,

I have lived in Westville for most of my life. I am a recently retired special education teacher and taught in New Haven for many years.

The Mitchell Library has always been an integral part of our community. The proposal to possibly close it is outrageous!! We need more community libraries not fewer!! Libraries should never be on the chopping block! The cost of running the Mitchell Library is a very small part of the budget. Closing it would do little to solve budget issues, but would do great harm to our community!

TAX YALE!!!
PROTECT THE MITCHELL LIBRARY!!!

Priscilla Webber-Sepulveda
Taxpayer

Sent from my iPhone
Preserve Mitchell Library

judy Sparer <sparer6789@gmail.com>
Thu 3/25/2021 11:08 AM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I am writing in support of the New Haven Public Library system in general and Mitchell Library in particular.

All of the libraries do wonderful work in supporting our community in so many ways, not only with books, but many rely on the libraries for reliable internet service, movies and, before the pandemic, a place to meet your neighbors.

Mitchell Library, even during the pandemic, has a constant stream of people coming to the door to pick up books and movies. I leave nearby and pass it daily and their are always people in and out. The staff is friendly, knowledgeable and welcoming. I have attended many programs on many subjects both before and during the pandemic on zoom. I have recently attended the Cultural Academy, an interracial reading and discussion group that I believe all who attend look forward to and benefit from. It is something we need more of in New Haven, and Mitchell Library is making it possible.

I have worked with both Mitchell and Wilson Libraries before the pandemic to present movies and discussion on Black History, always with terrific encouragement and support from staffs at both libraries.

Our City would be a much poorer place without this Library. I beg you not to close it.

Judy Sparer
101 Harrison St., NH
PUBLIC TESTIMONY
BEFORE THE FINANCE COMMITTEE OF THE NEW HAVEN BOARD OF ALDERS
ON THE PROPOSED FY 2021-2012 BUDGET FOR THE CITY OF NEW HAVEN
Submitted by Lenny H. Speiller | March 8, 2021

Dear Board of Alders,

I am writing to submit written testimony expressing my **STRONG OPPOSITION to the proposed closure of the Mitchell Branch of the New Haven Free Public Library**, as outlined in the Mayor’s proposed “Crisis Budget” for FY 2012-2022 for the City of New Haven.

As a Westville resident, my family frequents the Mitchell Branch regularly to borrow books and avail ourselves of other community resources and services. Prior to the pandemic, my daughter regularly enjoyed in-person programming, such as the "Stay and Play" Story Hour and other children’s and family events. Going to the library was always one of the highlights of our week, and we are eager for those in-person services and programs to resume once public health guidelines permit.

The Mitchell Branch is an anchor of the Westville community and a critical community resource, and the staff are always so kind and helpful. Closing it would be incredibly short-sighted for the meager amount of money that would be realized to balance the city’s budget gap and a horrible disservice to neighborhood and city residents.

I urge the Board of Alders to firmly REJECT the proposed closure of the Mitchell Branch and find other ways for the city to balance its budget.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Lenny H. Speiller
McKinley Ave | Westville | New Haven
Dear Board of Alders,

I am writing to submit written testimony expressing my **STRONG OPPOSITION to the proposed closure of the Mitchell Branch of the New Haven Free Public Library**, as outlined in the Mayor's proposed "Crisis Budget" for FY 2012-2022 for the City of New Haven.

As a Westville resident, my family frequents the Mitchell Branch regularly to borrow books and avail ourselves of other community resources and services. Prior to the pandemic, my daughter regularly enjoyed in-person programming, such as the "Stay and Play" Story Hour and other children's and family events. Going to the library was always one of the highlights of our week, and we are eager for those in-person services and programs to resume once public health guidelines permit.

The Mitchell Branch is a treasured institution within the Westville neighborhood and a critical community resource, and the staff are always so kind and helpful. Closing it would be incredibly short-sighted for the meager amount of money that would be realized to balance the city's budget gap and a horrible disservice to neighborhood and city residents.

I urge the Board of Alders to firmly **REJECT** the proposed closure of the Mitchell Branch and find other ways for the city to balance its budget.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

**Lenny H. Speiller**

Resident
McKinley Ave | Westville | New Haven
Mitchell Library: Please Don't Close It

Lydia Theys <lydia@theys.net>
Fri 3/19/2021 10:24 AM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I am writing in support of Mitchell Library, an incredibly important resource for the Westville neighborhood.

When my children were growing up in Westville, a walk to Mitchell—or a drive if the weather was not good—was something we all looked forward to. In fact, it was often the carrot that followed the "If you're good and..." kind of statement parents so often rely on.

It was a magical place for kids, filled with delicious stories and other kids to play with. Parents met there as well and sat talking quietly while their children discovered the joys of reading.

Every neighborhood is a better place with a library. Instead of closing this one, we need to open more.

I no longer live in New Haven, but I still recall Mitchell fondly, as do my now grown children.

Lydia Theys
Woodbridge, CT

--

www.lydiafaziotheys.com
SUPPORT FOR MITCHELL LIBRARY

luis m victori-cintora <lmvictori@me.com>
Tue 3/30/2021 3:03 PM
To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

About Mitchell,

A proactive, public-minded and engaged community must expand even in financial crisis.

Someone there must be blind to not appreciate the power of local spaces that shape the future of our communities, neighborhoods and therefore our cities.

Spaces like Mitchell Library not only design our neighborhood and shape our space but encourages equity, social cohesion, multigenerational and racial communication, participation, and unity.

Community spaces are city making, include development and social initiatives. Mitchell is an open space where everybody, individuals and groups are welcome to contribute to any conversation.

The current context is NOT to exacerbate the social crisis trying to solve an economic one. The objective should create a paradigmatic grow offering new and different forms of community spaces and areas for public use, for culture, education, and social life.

Instead of closing, re-imagine; instead of destroying, rebuilt; look for new opportunities for Mitchell and diversify its role; look for a new and wider agenda that will redefine its value in the neighborhood and in the city.

Go beyond the Library itself; ask for a participative action that involve inhabitants, neighborhoods' representatives, and local authorities. Go beyond what it is and build an institutional format that can scale up as a model for urban regeneration.

Mitchell is real, it is right, and it is viable.

It is not good for anyone to face unacceptable dilemmas.

Thank you

Luis Victorri
Mitchell Library

Marjorie Wiener <marjoriwiener@yahoo.com>

Mon 3/29/2021 2:39 PM

To: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I have lived in Westville for 33 years. How wonderful to have everything within walking distance. So to my surprise when my two boys were about 1 and 3 that the city chose to close the Mitchell Library hours. Just when I needed it most. I could walk to the library, children programs, meeting other kids in the neighborhood, great activities and poof, they were gone. I had to drive to Woodbridge to take part in enrichment for my children.

Please don’t do this again. How lucky that I could drive there. Don’t do this to the children who need this resource the most. Now with the schools having been closed for a year, we need this the most.

I chose to stay in New Haven, because I love this community. Find a way to keep this gem!

Marjorie Wiener
Lawncrest Rd
RE: Testimony in support of Mitchell Library

Adam Marchand <WARD25@newhavenct.gov>
Mon 3/29/2021 11:50 PM
To: Susan Yolen <yolensusan@gmail.com>
Cc: Public Testimony <PublicTestimony@newhavenct.gov>

Hello Susan,

Thanks so much for your testimony, I will make sure it will be entered into the public record.

Best regards, Adam.

Adam Marchand
Alder, Ward 25
Vice Chair, Finance

From: Susan Yolen [mailto:yolensusan@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, March 29, 2021 11:20 AM
To: Adam Marchand <WARD25@newhavenct.gov>
Subject: Testimony in support of Mitchell Library

Please be cautious
This email originated from outside of the organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

I cannot seem to locate the email address for public testimony, so I hope you/your committee will accept the following:

TO: Members of the Finance Committee, New Haven Board of Alders
FROM: Susan Lloyd Yolen, 267 McKinley Avenue, New Haven
RE: Funding for Mitchell Branch Library

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of the Westville neighborhood library.

My family has resided in the City since 1979, and our children grew up amongst the shelves in the children’s section of the Mitchell, reading, playing and borrowing books we love. It is essentially where our kids learned about libraries and how to use them: a necessary life-saving skill!

Now, later in life as a retiree, I have observed the regular use of this treasured space by people of all backgrounds, for a wide variety of reasons and needs.
Recently, the pandemic has shown the creativity and resilience of the library staff, as they have capably served so many of us who were unable to venture inside the facility. Just today, I returned and picked up books through the easy to use "curbside" service that the Mitchell team offers.
Mitchell is a lifeline to all of us in Westville, and certainly for those (especially now) who may be unable to purchase subscriptions or books, for those lacking computer access at home, and for those seeking help as they look for employment, the Mitchell is a local access point that should not and cannot be eliminated for lack of municipal funds.
Libraries often seem to make the list of "non-essential" services which, in difficult times, should be reconsidered or eliminated (even if only temporarily). I hope that this is not a ploy, knowing so many of us would stand up in protest. If anything, the pandemic has shown us how many services, like libraries, we take for granted or perhaps minimize, but ARE indeed essential.

Many of us routinely complain about the taxes in New Haven, as compared to suburban towns. One of the things most of us agree that our City should offer taxpayers is what Mitchell Library already is a focal point around which our neighborhood joins and gains strength, sometimes even inspiration. A casual summer concert on the lawn outside Mitchell is one of life’s pleasures.

I hope you will keep these comments in mind as you finalize the City budget, as I join my voice with what I imagine are many, in the chorus to save Mitchell and any other City branch library that is at risk.

Sincerely,
Susan Lloyd Yolen

Susan Lloyd Yolen
yolensusan@gmail.com
203 535 7034