

**From:** [Miriam Hanson](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** "Council Agenda" Re: Duluth Public Library  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 3:17:29 PM

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Miriam Hanson  
1315 N 8th Ave E  
Duluth, MN 55805

RE: DULUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY

**I believe that all decisions regarding the future of this viable, valuable, vital public resource deserve transparency as well as community participation and input.**

ON January 24, 2020 Gallup published an article titled "In U.S., Library Visits Outpaced Trips to Movies in 2019 [by a factor of 2]." The first paragraph states:

"Visiting the library remains the most common cultural activity Americans engage in, by far. The average 10.5 trips to the library U.S. adults report taking in 2019 exceeds their participation in eight other common leisure activities." (Link included below).

I grew up in Duluth and spent my literate childhood in the public library. I would spend summers filling my backpack with 30 paperbacks at a time, read them in a few days, and eagerly ride the bus back to the library from the East side to load up again. The world the library afforded me to become a life-long avid reader also contributed to increasing my vocabulary, creating independence as an activity my parents considered very safe for me to partake on my own and injecting me into community and community resources at a young age. I received the Whiteside Scholarship and graduated Valedictorian from East High School in 1994 and the library is no small part of these successes.

After living in Roatan, Honduras for 12 years, with NO available public libraries, I was overjoyed to return to Duluth where I now own a home and contribute to the local economy by working for FIVE local women-owned businesses that I love, I count the public library as an extremely valuable public resource that I am proud to patronize frequently. I secured a library card among the first things I did upon moving back: 4/6/15. Since then, I have checked out 238 books (this number would surely have been several dozen digits higher if I had been able to do curbside pickup during the last two months). I know these facts because of the user-friendly website maintained by the Duluth Public Library, that is also aesthetically pleasing and resource-rich.

The public library is public resource that provides the rich community asset of being a one-stop shop with a wide variety of resources for so many different socioeconomic, generational and needs-based layers. I have been looking so forward to bringing my 4 year-old nephew in to the library, to play with other kids and experience the awe of the vast world of books as he is just beginning to truly love them.

I believe that all decisions regarding the future of this viable, valuable, vital public resource deserve transparency as well as community participation and input.

Thank you,  
Miriam Ree Hanson

**From:** [Miriam Hanson](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** "Council Agenda"  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 3:19:58 PM

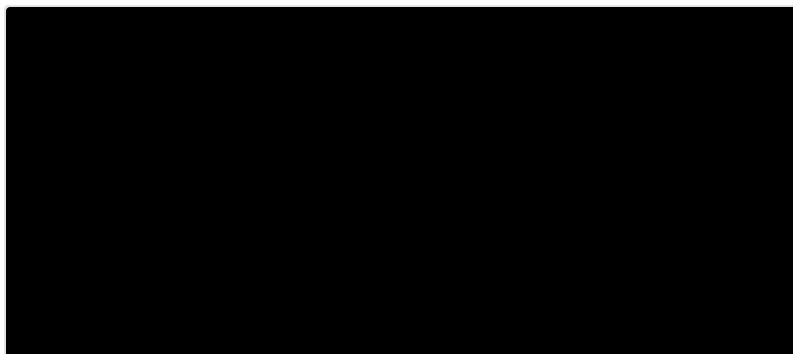
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Miriam Hanson  
1315 N 8th Ave E  
Duluth, MN 55805

RE: DULUTH PUBLIC LIBRARY

Follow-up link to previous letter:

[In U.S., Library Visits Outpaced Trips to Movies in 2019](#)



**In U.S., Library Visits Outpaced Trips to Movies in 2019**

Gallup, Inc.

Of nine leisure activities, visiting a library is the one Americans did most frequently in the past year, follow...

**From:** [Amy Broadmoore](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Agenda -- In support of our public library  
**Date:** Sunday, April 26, 2020 10:03:04 PM

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Good evening,

This evening, I received an email from my kids' school (Congdon Elementary School) asking students to return their school library books and rely on the public library for reading material for the remainder of the school year.

Right now, Duluthians need our public library more than ever. We need our public library to provide books to teach kids. We need our public library to provide free access to information and resources for families struggling financially. Research shows that public library use increases during economic downturns as users turn to public libraries for information, access to technology and entertainment.

Investing in our public library -- and looking for ways to ramp up services quickly and safely - is an important step towards getting Duluth back on our feet. Please, support our public library!

Sincerely,  
Amy Broadmoore

**From:** [Aimee](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Agenda Tonight  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 8:28:06 AM

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Dear City Councilors,

First I want to say thank you for everything you're doing to help keep the city of Duluth going and to promote the well-being of people living here in general and during this pandemic.

I am writing to you to urge you to support the Duluth public libraries and staff. Access to information and assistance finding the information you need is a foundational part of a democratic society. In addition, access to literature, movies, books, and databases is vital to support K-12 education, to support personal research and growth, and for fun.

There are many other services the library staff provides in addition to access to books and movies and many community events it sponsors. I could go on and on about the wonderful work the staff does and how important it is to our community, but in the interest of time, here are my concerns and questions that I hope you will address tonight at the meeting:

1. What is the plan to protect the health of the library staff and public while providing curbside services - which guidelines/standards are being following in terms of cleaning and protective equipment?
2. Why is half of the library staff being laid off instead of furloughed?
3. Are all of the library staff being laid off from the same class of staff / union?
4. Will the library staff who are being laid off in 2 weeks be without health insurance? If so, will these staff members be the ones required to work on providing curbside service during the next 2 weeks possibly putting themselves and their families at risk?

Thank you for reading my concerns. Duluth needs to continue to have a great public library system.

Sincerely,  
Aimee Brown  
Duluth, MN

**From:** [Julie Bernhardt](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City council agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 6:42:29 PM

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Greetings City Council Members, and thank you for your service to our fine city, especially during this difficult period!

I'm writing today as one of the 49 City of Duluth employees who just lost their job and health insurance during a global pandemic. To my knowledge, other cost-saving measures were not discussed before the decision was made to take away our jobs and benefits. I see city execs and admin making their full paychecks, when in fairness cuts should be happening all around.

I urge you, beg you to fight on our behalf, to help us get a furlough instead of a layoff. With a furlough, we can keep our health insurance. Let it be noted, it is inhumane to take away someone's health insurance during a global pandemic. Health insurance should be a human right.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Julie Bernhardt  
City of Duluth Resident and Library Technician

**From:** [Mrs. M.](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City council agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 6:52:16 PM

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Our libraries are for so many low income people. West Duluth branch, could we loose any more than we already have? The closure is devastating. Libraries and those who work in them are all some have. They and the !library become "family" for those of us who have none.

Librarians save lives!!

Libraries save lives!!

Thank you!

**From:** [Julie Bernhardt](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City council agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 6:42:29 PM

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Greetings City Council Members, and thank you for your service to our fine city, especially during this difficult period!

I'm writing today as one of the 49 City of Duluth employees who just lost their job and health insurance during a global pandemic. To my knowledge, other cost-saving measures were not discussed before the decision was made to take away our jobs and benefits. I see city execs and admin making their full paychecks, when in fairness cuts should be happening all around.

I urge you, beg you to fight on our behalf, to help us get a furlough instead of a layoff. With a furlough, we can keep our health insurance. Let it be noted, it is inhumane to take away someone's health insurance during a global pandemic. Health insurance should be a human right.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Julie Bernhardt  
City of Duluth Resident and Library Technician

**From:** [nancy thompson](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** city council agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 5:11:43 PM

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Hello,

I am writing to about the recent layoffs of 49 city employees. I am one of the 25 laid off from the library. Our entire job classification. We care so very much for our patrons. It's just not books and DVDs. We are not librarians, we are the support staff that does so many things and we do them well. Many of my coworkers have written very heartfelt eloquent letters about what they do. So much outreach, programming, reference questions, story times, processing new materials, mending materials. My coworkers have been doing massive amounts of work from home, coming up with innovative ways to help everyone staying safe in their homes. None of this will happen now. In this unprecedented time, the library has never been needed more. City administration had been working with our union on an MOU working jointly towards cost savings. On Monday the 20th the mayor announced we were starting up a curbside service. We were all sent layoff letters dated Tuesday the 21st. We are losing our health insurance during a pandemic.

The public values us. We fear the administration does not. We feel betrayed. Technicians were asked to work now doing the curbside service. They are in there now working for the public. When we are all gone, the service will suffer. The public will suffer. I cannot believe there isn't a way for the administration to work with the union, as they already were, to at the very least, have this layoff period be a furlough instead, and preserve our health coverage. Please take this into consideration when the budget report is presented to you tonight. Please support us and all the other laid off, dedicated city employees.

Nancy Thompson  
8806 Hilton St  
Duluth MN 55808

Much of it is in person, helping to our city get a library card. A gateway to learning English

**From:** [Laura Hauschildt](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 5:36:10 PM

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Dear City Council Members,

My name is Laura Hauschildt. I am a life-long Duluthian and a life-long supporter of the Duluth Public Library system, from kids' storytimes to being an intern there last summer. I have appreciated all you have done for the city during this time of pandemic and quarantine that has helped Duluthians keep going.

I am emailing you at this time to consider helping instead of hindering the library system during this time by laying off 25 library technicians, especially as they are just starting their curbside pick-up program to help the rest of the city.

I, as a patron of the library, care for the people working there and their families, especially during this time where we are all struggling. I hope that with the help of the Foundation at the library, you can find a better solution than having to lay off many of their workers on their staff while also keeping their jobs and health insurance intact.

Thank you for all you do for our city, and I appreciate all the time you put into making it great,  
Laura Hauschildt

**From:** [Meghan Sperl](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Agenda  
**Date:** Sunday, April 26, 2020 8:34:21 PM

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Hello,

I wanted to voice my support for the library staff that has been laid off. The library is a significant resource in our community and I hope you'll consider looking at other ways to cut costs. I know there are serious challenges ahead, but the work these people do for all in our community is great.

Thanks for your thoughtful attention to this matter.

Sincerely,  
Meghan Sperl  
422 Ridgewood Rd  
Duluth, MN 55804

**From:** [Maren Kostrzewski](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City council agenda  
**Date:** Sunday, April 26, 2020 9:33:21 PM

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Hello,

I understand that 50% of the library staff is being laid off. I understand that cuts are necessary during times like this, but this hurts so badly. The libraries are so important to lifelong learning, so important for the underprivileged... A place where people of all ages learn critical thinking and get help on countless issues that cannot be helped elsewhere. Libraries are the backbone of education, for adults, but also for summer reading programs and research of all kinds.

I DO understand that cuts need to be made somewhere, and no matter where they come from, they will be hard to swallow, but please, if at all possible, preserve the libraries.

Thank you.  
Maren Kostrzewski

**From:** [katie.kaiser.rich@gmail.com](mailto:katie.kaiser.rich@gmail.com)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 7:02:07 AM

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Dear Representatives,

In the midst of this crisis, please do not cut our public library staff. I am a Duluth resident with two young children and we adore the Mount Royal Library. The most challenging Covid-19 change for my five year old has been the loss of our adventures to the library. He is just starting to read now, but the library has always been one of his favorite places. We love our libraries, please don't cut their staff. In a crisis like this - with schools closed and families hurting financially - we need our libraries now more than ever! Please use common sense, see this as a much needed service in the community. And while you are at it, please fund Lester Park Golf Course. We need these publicly funded services to keep us going in this pandemic.

Thank You,  
Katie Rich

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Nancy Eaton](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 8:40:19 AM

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Dear Council Members,

I am asking you to reconsider and address the drastic cut in library staff. 25 Library Technicians - an entire job classification - is at least 50% of the staff, which seems an excessively disproportionate cut for a single department. Libraries have always been an equalizer in society: a way for the less-advantaged to find information, to have access to technology, to find recreational reading and free programming to entertain themselves and their children.

I realize that the library is currently not open for browsing or computer lab use. When restrictions are lessened and people are allowed back in the building, there is a certain level of staffing needed for safety, of both staff and public, as well as to provide services. Branch libraries bring those services into neighborhoods; branches will not be viable without library technicians on staff.

At a time when an unprecedented number of people have lost their jobs and can no longer afford to buy books, movies/streaming services or pay for Internet service, reducing their access to these things by cutting library staff and ultimately cutting library services is a great public disservice.

Our public library is a jewel and allowing it to be devastated should not be taken lightly. Our library staff are extremely dedicated and have a strong ethic of serving the public. Please find another way of cutting city costs without destroying the library.

Nancy Eaton  
20 W. Toledo St.  
Duluth

**From:** [Rebecca Patronas Lind](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 8:46:09 AM

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Dear City Council representatives,

I am reaching out to you today regarding the proposed cuts to the library staff. Cutting half of the library staff seems very drastic. I understand the libraries are not fully functioning right now however there was a recent announcement which would allow people to stop by and pick up books from the library. I can't see that program really taking off or being sustainable with the library staff being cut in that way. I understand budget constraints, but I urge you to look at other departments and not make the impact to our library services such a large piece of the budget savings.

Thank you for taking this into consideration and thanks for the work that you do.

Rebecca Lind  
[r\\_patronas@yahoo.com](mailto:r_patronas@yahoo.com)

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Marge Martin](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City council agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 9:30:42 AM

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There are all sorts of things we can do with less of or none at all. The Duluth Public Library services are NOT one of those things!

The Technicians that will be layed off on May 8 are the engine that runs the Library. Without them, many of the Library services we hold near and dear to our hearts won't happen and those that do, will take a lot longer to happen as the staff left behind will be overwhelmed with not only their workload, but that of the Technicians who will be unemployed and collecting Unemployment Insurance.

Why take away some of the most needed services during these hard and isolated times? For all the patrons of the Duluth Public Library, the young and old alike, who need these services for school, work, or entertainment, these are FREE services! They are ESSENTIAL to the health and wellbeing of all.

Think about yourself and your family. How long would you want to go without these services? How comfortable are you going to be with a decline in Library services as we have known them in the past?

Please, fight for those Technicians to stay on at the Library so we can continue to have the top notch services we have come to know and expect from our well-oiled engine, our Library Technicians. I know you will do what is right for all patrons of the Duluth Public Library.

Thank you from a lifetime Library patron,

Marge Martin

**From:** [Carrie Boberg](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 9:54:44 AM

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Hello,

Thank you for all that you do in working hard for the City of Duluth and supporting all of our Citizens.

I'm writing today about the recent lay-offs of 49 City Employees. I am one of the 25 employees laid off from the Duluth Public Library. I know our community loves and supports the library and I'm asking you dot do the same. We were made essential workers as of last Monday (April 20th - you may remember the Mayor's enthusiastic press conference) as the Mayor announced our beginning Curbside service starting today. Only two days later 25 library technicians were laid off. Not only was the timing a slap in the face but it really showed us how much the Administration does not value or even really understand what we do to support our community.

Personally I work at the Mt. Royal Branch Library. Along with general technician duties, I also provide weekly story times, craft programs, multiple enrichment and passive programs throughout each week. Since being at home mid-March I have continued to reach out to patrons in our community by providing a daily chapter-book read-along & weekly story times. Plans were in the works to include craft projects, scavenger hunts, summer reading, etc. I say this and want you to know I am not alone. We have been working from home this entire time - whether it's doing outreach like myself & others, help with reference questions or setting up e-access cards for those who did not have access to digital library materials before we closed. Library professionals LOVE to support our community and will continue to do so. I am afraid the service of Curbside pick up with be greatly diminished which less than 50% of our staff working the front lines. The techs were so willing to figure it out and support this decision.

I know that in this pandemic economic hardships were bound to happen. I feel like with the dismissal of an entire job class that this was a decision made too quickly and without enough forethought. Especially right after how "important" we were made to believe we were. I hope that this lay-off can become a furlough status through some MOU negotiation with AFSCME and the Administration and that my fellow co-workers and myself will not be left without health insurance during such troubling times. I also hope that perhaps some other concessions can be agreed to so that we can get back to work as soon as possible. Our community needs us.

Again, thank you for your service to Duluth. We appreciate all that you do in advocating for us and the rest of the citizens.

Carrie Boberg  
1308 E 7th St  
Duluth, MN 55805

**From:** [Jennifer Campbell](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 10:16:51 AM

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Dear City Councilors,

I am writing to express my deep sadness in the recent decision to lay off the many library technicians from Duluth Public Libraries. As a mother of two young children, the library has become very special to our family. I have enjoyed bringing my 3 year old son to many weekly story times at the Mt. Royal branch. When he started preschool this past fall, he was so sad to be missing out on this weekly event. We would still visit the library to check out many books on his favorite topics - mostly dinosaurs and sea creatures, and now bugs. Every time we visited the library, he was greeted with a smile and often a hug. He is excited about reading and learning because of these experiences. Even now during this time of quarantine, we have been watching the weekly storytime on Facebook. I know there are many families who share this same connection to the library and its great staff members. When the world goes back to a new normal, these are exactly the types of people and services we are going to NEED. The programs they provide enrich our community, and as a tax payer in this city, I am proud to support the library. Please preserve this invaluable service to our community.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Campbell  
Duluth resident

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [jtmjournes](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City council agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 10:22:35 AM

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Hello Councilors & Mayor Emily-

Seems like there's concern about the well-being of our City libraries from recent layoffs. I depend on our library for access to books. Reading is my main non-sleeping activity. I also think about all the folks that use the library to access computers & internet.

Please do what you can to keep our library staffed and functional for the many Duluth-area residents that depend on it.

Appreciatively

Terry McCarthy  
127 E Calvary Rd #303  
Duluth 55803

Sent from my T-Mobile 4G LTE Device

**From:** [Shelley Neumann](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 10:50:14 AM

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Dear Councilors and Mayor Larson,

I am very concerned about the lay off of 25 library technicians. I have volunteered at the West Duluth branch of the library for over 10 years and have seen firsthand the importance of the library in the community. It provides access not only to books but also to music, movies, computers and numerous programs from story time for children to movies for senior citizens. The library also provides a safe and friendly environment for all in the community. Countless times I have been amazed and inspired by the interactions between the library technicians and library patrons. They are knowledgeable, kind, patient and extremely helpful and hardworking. Without them, the library will not be able to offer many of the services it currently provides and our community will suffer. At all times, the library is an invaluable resource of education and entertainment. During these hard economic times (not only for the city but for the entire community) it is imperative that the library continues to be funded to provide all of us with its invaluable services.

Thank you,  
Shelley Neumann

**From:** [Corry Duffy](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City council agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 11:24:26 AM

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We use the library all the time in order to foster a love of reading in our kids. I'm always impressed by the library professionals who are ready to help every member of the community engage with reading and learning.

I know there are a lot of hard choices to be made right now, but my family and I value the library so much and hope that the city can find a way to support the library workers during this time. In particular, I hope there is a way to help library workers keep their health insurance.

Thank you  
Corry Duffy

**From:** [Nick Lamon](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 12:01:30 PM

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Dear Council Members,

In 2011 57% of Duluth voters approved a 3.2% tax hike to fund and keep the libraries and parks open. This was estimated then to raise 2.6 million dollars annually for their budgets (MPR, Nov 9, 2011). Therefore, it should be no secret to you that the libraries and parks are services Duluth citizens value greatly. Consequently, it disturbed me greatly that these were the first areas targeted last week with layoffs. Is there any explanation for this? I would like to know where the voter approved money is going, if not to the libraries and parks

Additionally, to take away city employees' health care during a pandemic is beyond cruel. I know my fellow Duluth citizen's would agree that the money we approved in 2011 should at the very least keep these employees insured. I implore you to reconsider this and keep these employees whole. These people are our friends and neighbors--we have a responsibility to them during this unprecedented time.

Sincerely,  
Nick Lamon

**From:** [Michelle Blenker](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 12:06:06 PM

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Covid-19 has effected our family in both negative and positive ways. As a family of 5 we are now spending more time together than ever before. We are trying to take this opportunity to build a strong family unit, including learning new things together. Not having our local library as a resource during this pandemic has been the most missed "item" from our lives. My 5 year old is learning to read, my 9 and 11 year old devour books, and my husband and I try to read regularly to relax as well as set a good example. A physical book lets us bound, escape from reality and learn to read and grow as an individual. We were so excited to hear about curbside pick-up and the return of some thing normal, but sadden greatly by the layoffs and lack of support for our public library. Now more than ever resources need to be available.  
-Michelle Henningsgaard

**From:** [Jen Maki](#)  
**To:** [Council](#); [Emily Larson](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 12:56:46 PM

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Dear City Council Members and Mayor Larson,

As a lifelong library patron, and a 30+ year patron of the Duluth Public Library, I am writing today with grave concern regarding the City's proposal to cut all library technicians. This is a very sudden development, and I am extremely bothered by the fact that among the proposed cuts City-wide, half of them are from the library, and target one job class: the library technician. Library technicians make the least money and yet provide the majority of the library's services to the public, services especially crucial to lower income community members. In regular times, they help folks access the internet for job and benefit opportunities, and provide social connection to many who are isolated. As curbside service is being launched, the people normally serving as the backbone of such a service won't be there. Will this service have to be scaled back before it's even begun?

I would like the Councilors and Mayor to consider other issues surrounding the proposed cuts. For example, as a result of these cuts, will branch library services end, reducing access further for those who can't easily access the main library? In what ways will the community support its most vulnerable residents to replace the services the library has provided? Are library technicians being targeted for cuts because they are less powerful than other City employees and expected to provide less resistance? If not, why weren't people consulted or other options considered?

In the time of a pandemic, it is short-sighted and dangerous to reduce access to information resources. More than ever, our community needs to invest in information access and literacy, as well as reading for fun and enjoyment while following physical distancing guidelines. I urge you to consider other cost saving measures, including furlough and inclusion of other City positions in the conversation. Involve stakeholders in the conversation and decision-making process. The disproportionate targeting of the public library is unacceptable.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Maki

106 W Anoka St.  
Duluth, MN 55803

**From:** [Emily](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 2:37:50 PM

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To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to ask you to reconsider the layoffs of library staff. I grew up with a book in hand, and have continued to be an avid reader at least in part because of our wonderful library system. My kindergartener got her first library card this year. She recognizes the familiar faces of staff at the Mount Royal branch and knows exactly where to go to find book and games to her liking. The Mount Royal branch has been such a positive in our lives, especially during this time of uncertainty. We've been participating in virtual story time as a family to stay connected. Please don't eliminate this shining light among so much sadness and fear that we are currently feeling. Before the pandemic, Mount Royal was a place we could run into quickly (so convenient with hours and location) or a place we could hang out and feel comfortable and welcome as long as we liked. Please don't take away the staff that make our library system such a delight.

Emily Opacich

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Andrea Crouse](#)  
**To:** [Council](#); [Emily Larson](#)  
**Subject:** City Council Agenda: Please Re-consider Library Technician Layoffs  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 1:38:48 PM

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Hello Mayor Larson and City Councilors,

First off I want to thank you for how you have lead our community through an unprecedented time. I am grateful to live in Duluth because of the strong leadership and ongoing communication you have provided citizens.

Today I would like to respectfully ask you to re-consider the layoffs that were announced last week which dramatically impact our Public Library and Library Technicians in particular.

In this time of social distancing, Library Techs can provide key services in our community, connecting people with resources, information, and education opportunities. Not to mention entertainment and the enjoyment gained from reading a good book to escape the daily challenges we may be facing. Their role in our survival through the COVID-19 pandemic could be significant, moving us from simply survival mode (which is also something they often help people with and is not to be underestimate in importance) to growth, maintaining and supporting thriving communities. Let them work and be part of the circle of city heroes that are getting us through with dignity.

The library provides essential services that go way beyond books for some of the most marginalized people in this City. Library technicians make the least money and yet provide the majority of the library's services to the public, services especially crucial to lower income community members. As curbside service is being launched, the people normally serving as the backbone of such a service won't be there. Over 1000 people have requested books and resources. This will put a huge burden on the remaining Library staff and be detrimental to the community.

I implore the City to explore other options for dealing with the tight budgets necessary due to the pandemic. Additionally, I ask that future layoffs and furlough be conducted with more transparency to show your staff- the face of the city in the community- the respect they deserve.

Thank you for your consideration and work for our community.

Respectfully,  
Andrea B. Crouse  
106 West Anoka St. Duluth

**From:** [Laurie Kovacovic](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** City council agenda: support for library  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 5:45:35 PM

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Dear Council Members,

I do not envy the difficult choices facing our city due to COVID 19 budget shortfalls.

During the time - we desperately need library services to continue to tether our community to each other and to the invaluable resources it provides. These resources are critical in serving our communities equitably. Our library is a lifeline to education - and our children especially need a way to stay connected to learning resources.

The staff should not lose their jobs and health insurance.

Furlough if necessary, but keep these exemplary public servants tied to the mission of our library and make it a priority as we reimagine how they can fulfill their purpose safely moving forward.

Thank you for your time and service.

Sincerely,

Laurie Kovacovic

Duluth

**From:** [Scott Seagroves](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** city layoffs  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 10:07:57 AM

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Hello - I am concerned about layoffs at the library and other layoffs the city has implemented.  
Why weren't furloughs used as an intermediate step?  
thank you,  
Scott Seagroves

**From:** [Molly J. Wick](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** council agenda - library layoffs  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 4:32:23 PM

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Dear City Council and Mayor Larson,

I was so disappointed to hear that two of my friends, and many of their coworkers at the library lost their jobs and health insurance last week. I value the libraries and the friendly staff at the libraries so much. They are the folks who help me find the books and resources I need to satisfy my own curiosity, but for the larger community, they do even more. They pull our community together. They provide valuable services for marginalized people and those who do not have access to other digital resources. Libraries are so important that in the US, trips to the library far outpaced trips to the movies in 2019

([https://news.gallup.com/poll/284009/library-visits-outpaced-trips-movies-2019.aspx?fbclid=IwAR3Qo9F0WRGW1O7AyObtIVRaOBL8ev9W\\_4JD0GgdmIEJCCqX\\_CZSANEx4-M](https://news.gallup.com/poll/284009/library-visits-outpaced-trips-movies-2019.aspx?fbclid=IwAR3Qo9F0WRGW1O7AyObtIVRaOBL8ev9W_4JD0GgdmIEJCCqX_CZSANEx4-M)).

In the words of one library worker, "Library technicians help people use computers to find jobs, apply for benefits, print pictures of grandchildren and purchase and print bus tickets. We connect people with homelessness resources. We call for ambulances. We comfort people. We sometimes provide the only social contact people have in a day. We deescalate arguments and help people find things. Yes, we move books around (and yes, I do like books) but libraries are not just about books or even DVDs or books on disc. Curbside service will be a nice start, but it will be nearly impossible to maintain at reduced staffing levels. And then what's next? Who is going to help vulnerable residents access digital resources?"

Laying off these employees leaves them without health insurance, during a global pandemic. This is shameful. Were other options assessed? Why were employees not furloughed so that they could maintain their health insurance and access to health care if they get COVID-19 or other health issues? Why were employees not warned of this possibility? Why did this come out of nowhere, right after the Mayor announced curbside library service?

I urge you to rehire city staff and reassess options to temporarily furlough or otherwise maintain staff health insurance and ensure a successful library system to serve our community long into the future.

Thank you.

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**Molly J. Wick**  
**1003 E 5th St. Duluth MN 55805**  
Phone. 612-481-7253  
Email: [mollwick@gmail.com](mailto:mollwick@gmail.com)

**From:** [Carmen E.S.](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Council Agenda 4/27/20  
**Date:** Sunday, April 26, 2020 10:30:35 PM

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Dear City Council Members,

Thank you for your service to our community, and for taking the time to attend to public comments. This evening, I am specifically asking for your attention in regards to the city's budget, which as you know is facing significant gaps in income due to the COVID-19 pandemic. I am very aware of how hard our city is going to be hit, and I also think there are a number of creative ways the administration can go about adjusting for these gaps. I know that as councilors you have no direct say over the details of how the city goes about setting and implementing it's budget, but you do APPROVE the budget and have a right to question the administration on why they make the decisions they do about the budget. Ultimately, you can choose not to pass a budget if it falls out of line with our priorities as a city. As our city administrators attempt to navigate and adjust the budget because of the pandemic, they are taking measures that, to me, seem out of step with the values our city holds dear - we take care of one another and believe in providing equitable services to all of our citizens.

The specific method of lay-offs are what I would like to address. As a Library Technician, I, along with 24 co-workers, have been told we will be laid off effective May 8th. (Additionally, what I have to say about this is not limited to the Library Technicians, and I am also very concerned for the other staff who have been laid off.) This lay-off includes an end to our health care coverage.

First and foremost, taking away health insurance during a pandemic is simply inhumane and unjust. It is not just the individual employees losing their insurance - it is many of their family members too. I refuse to believe that there is not a way for the administration to work with AFSCME to remedy this; particularly because they are already expecting remaining staff to sign a Memo of Understanding asking them to make additional concessions that are outside the current contract. This MOU could include furlough language that protects the health insurance of the employees being laid off.

Second, this method of laying off an entire job class also seems suspicious. If they can do it to one job class (instead of across the board by seniority) what is to stop them from doing it to additional job classes? I certainly hope it is not true, but this could be viewed as anti-union behavior and strategy.

Lastly, despite a number of attempts from a number of different people to get answers, the city administration has not been clear about what other cuts they intend to make. Are those at the top of the pay-scale (including our Mayor and CAO) taking pay cuts? Our Governor certainly has led by example here - are they willing and planning to do the same? Are there projects that are being put on hold so the funds can be reassigned to save employees instead?

These are questions I think we all have a right to ask, and to which we deserve answers, and I humbly ask that you take these questions into consideration when the budget report comes before you. I ask for your support for the Library Technicians, and the other laid-off employees. An injury to one is an injury to all.

Carmen Schempp  
1534 N 8th Ave E  
Duluth, MN 55805

**From:** [carly](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Council Agenda- budget cuts, layoffs of city employees  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 3:18:21 PM

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Hello,

I'm writing to you today in regards to the recent layoffs of 49 City employees. I am one of the 25 Technicians laid off from the Duluth Public Library. We make up more than half of the total staff at DPL, and our work is varied and critical to the success of the Library and the services we can provide to all of our community.

The news of this mass layoff was quite shocking, especially coming only two short days after the Mayor excitedly announced that DPL would begin offering curbside pickup starting today. In an email forwarded to staff on April 16, Mayor Larson stated that the services we provide "are absolutely critical, now more than ever" and that our community needs us. She is right, but from the decision made last week, it seems the Administration has already forgotten the importance of a fully-functioning public library and has limited understanding of what and who it takes to make it that way.

I know that in this pandemic economic hardships are unavoidable; however, I feel like the dismissal of an entire job class was a rushed and unfairly-made decision. I hope that this layoff can become a furlough status through some MOU negotiation with AFSCME and the Administration, and that my fellow co-workers and myself will not be left without health insurance during such risky and unsettling times. I also hope that perhaps some other concessions can be agreed to so that we can all get back to work as soon as possible. Our community needs us and we are eager to continue to serve them. It's what we love to do.

I ask for your support for the Library Technicians, and the other laid-off employees. An injury to one is an injury to all.

Thank you for your service to Duluth. I appreciate all that you do in advocating for us and the rest of our community.

Carly Madden (she/her)  
419 N 1st Ave W  
Duluth, MN 55806

**From:** [Dan](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Council Agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 6:32:54 PM

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City Councilors,

Thank you for everything your position entails.

I am writing today as a Library Technician that was laid off. I've worked for the Library for 14 years, and I'm really just floored, disgusted and saddened that workers like myself are being laid off and not furloughed. To lose our health insurance during a pandemic is cold and beyond cruel. I put in months of personal time, door knocking, phone banking and doing everything I could to help elect candidates that would stand up for workers like myself in times of need. Emily Larson, and the whole slate of people up for election like Gary Anderson, Janet Kennedy and Renee Van Nett. I won an award with AFSCME for Political Action that year. Emily helped me believe we can make a difference at the local level of government, and helped shape the development of the type of leader I wanted to become in my community. To say I'm disappointed that leadership decided to layoff an entire job classification is an understatement. Without Library technicians, we lose all branch staff, and the majority of all frontline staff. We do so much more than checkout books. We form long lasting and important relationships with our community. A community without a functioning library isn't a community that people want to be a part of. We're valued members of our community, we deserve to keep health insurance.

Thank you for your service to our community. It's so important to be advocated for.

Dan Buckanaga  
1378 Highland Village Dr  
Duluth, MN 55811

**From:** [Kevin Malmquist](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Council Agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 6:53:56 PM

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It's often said that a society can be judged by how it treats its most vulnerable members. I wonder then what could be said of the City and its administration as it lays off many of its lowest-paid workers, including over half of the public library staff, apparently without putting much effort into exploring options that might allow all staff among the City to share the upcoming budgetary burdens. All library technicians, making up half the workforce of the Duluth Public Library system, will be laid off as of May 8<sup>th</sup> and lose their health insurance at the end of May – during a viral pandemic.

These technicians, which includes myself, or rather *did* include myself, are a very public-facing part of the City serving all area residents, regardless of background. Just as we are apparently some of the lowest paid employees among the City, we coincidentally serve some of the more vulnerable residents of our community. Many people misunderstand the role of the library technician to be simply checking in and checking out books. We do so much more than that. Aside from the myriad different activities that go into maintaining a library's collections and all the programming for youth and adults, we help bridge the technological divide by facilitating access to services and devices that many people don't have. We support employment by helping people make resumes and submit job applications. We help connect those experiencing homelessness to resources and people that can help them. We work with dedicated volunteers to help make sure residents that can't physically get to the library have access to its books. All of these are services that will only be seeing an increase in demand as a result of the coronavirus.

The City CAO has rationalized our layoff by saying we cannot perform our job duties during the pandemic, which I find insulting as I wrote much of this today on my lunch break, wearing a mask, between operating the phone lines for the library's new curbside pickup. It's simply not true. Operating this service before the Governor has lifted stay-at-home orders was deemed essential by City administration only 1 day before laying us off, on National Library Staff Day.

Many organizations in the area are busy looking for creative ways to get through this crisis. Those who will be the most successful of them have MANY different scenarios laid out... that are presented with a resolve to try to preserve people's jobs and health insurance. I would hope that we could look toward leadership at the City to do the same. I ask the the councilors to explore whether that has happened and is happening. It would make it easier to have confidence in the Mayor and City administration when they talk about how much they value the library and its services... and certainly would express the values we need to get through these trying times, with an eye toward the least of those among us.

Kevin Malmquist

419 N 79th Ave W

Duluth, MN 55807



**From:** [Bridgit Maruska](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Council Agenda  
**Date:** Sunday, April 26, 2020 7:27:01 PM

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City Councilors,

Thank you for your service to Duluth. I'd like to take this opportunity to address the 49 city lay-offs that go into effect May 8 and specifically how they are affecting the 25 library technicians and the library's operations. The points I want to briefly and specifically make are the following:

- Lay-offs were made in a sweeping ax strike to library technicians, eliminating an entire job class (which you may know is unheard of) instead of seniority based lay-offs which would have been taken with more understanding. This action demonstrates admin's complete lack of understanding of the role technicians play in the library.
  - Ex: curbside pick up is a function of circulation which is managed by technicians, not librarians. Librarians are being required to work outside of their job class and acquire new skills to make curbside pick up a reality.
  - Ex: two positions eliminated functioned as the library's Public Relations Team (the staff responsible for all electronic, website, social media communication) The PR Team has one Senior Tech left who is drowning in the job duties given much of the services have moved online. I am one of the PR positions eliminated and can attest to working full-time during the library's physical closure. The workload in PR is immense.
  - Ex: nearly all of the online Storytimes and programming were produced by technicians.
  - The list could go on but there are other points needing to be made.
- To my knowledge lay-offs were made with no warning to library management and without consideration of furlough instead of lay-offs. These lay-offs result in 49 city workers losing health insurance during a global pandemic. This is wholly immoral and a completely stunning act of disregard for staff's safety and well-being. No amount of daily "COVID-19 Update" emails from the city's CAO reminding staff of their (soon to be no longer valid/accessible) EAP ("Employee Assistance Program via Sand Creek with a toolbox of support for anxiety and mental wellness in a global climate of uncertainty") will bring back those services once these employees are laid-off.
- A day after the Mayor announced curbside pick up for the citizens of Duluth as an "essential" service she and her team laid-off half of the essential employees who are arguably the most capable and able to offer this service. It should be noted the decision of these lay-offs was LITERALLY made on National Library Worker's Day. Ironic.

Library Technicians at DPL are united in asking city leadership to change the lay-off to a furlough at the very least so we can maintain our health insurance and benefits to remain whole during this very uncertain time.

Thank you for taking the time to hear and consider my concerns.

Bridgit Maruska

DPL Library Technician: Public Relations, Youth Services, Branches

**From:** [Cameron Herrity](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Council Agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 11:34:19 AM

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Hello!

I am writing in support of furloughing public workers vs layoffs. In a city that worked hard to pass “Earned Sick & Safe Time”, it’s surprising you wouldn’t give city employees continued access to their health benefits, especially during a pandemic! Please change the status of these employees from laid off to furloughed.

In Solidarity,

Cameron Herrity

**From:** [Bill Temple](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Council Agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 1:38:56 PM

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To members of the Duluth City Council:

We understand that you will be discussing making necessary cuts to the City's budget tonight. We feel that the proposed cuts to the Public Library will be detrimental to service to the citizens of Duluth. Cutting all technicians will limit the service, even in this difficult time. If there are plans to institute curb-side pick-up, technicians will be needed. When the library re-opens, experienced technicians will be important to a rapid and successful reopening. We use and appreciate the services the Public Library offers!

Bill and Pat Temple  
1417 N Basswood Ave  
Duluth MN 55811

**From:** [Em Ryme](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Council Agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 2:04:48 PM

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Dear City Council Members,

Thank you for your work for the City of Duluth and for your consideration of public comments.

I am another voice writing about the recently announced lay-offs of 49 City Employees. I am one of the 25 Library Technicians being laid off from the Duluth Public Library on May 8. It has been an exhausting process with little concrete information. I am less than two weeks from my lay-off date and, as I write this, I still have no information in writing about what is happening beyond my initial letter informing me of my lay off. I have heard some details, but those are from an ongoing conversation between representatives of City Administration and my union, AFSCME.

Since those details are in flux, I want to shift directions by sharing what I know about these roles at the library and the work we having been doing, work that will be cut short by these lay-offs.

Even while the library building has been closed to the public, library staff have been innovative in developing services that can be offered remotely. We have hosted online [trivia games](#), [storytime and middle grade book readings](#), [local author videos](#), created [e-access cards](#) for [digital materials](#), collected [resources to help our community](#) through their unique COVID-19 experiences, started an [online reference librarian service](#), and even organized an impromptu [community reading program](#). Our programming/events committee was working on some really neat ideas for how to provide services to Duluthians who are not able to be with us online; takeaway crafts-in-a-bag, story walks, and other such ideas were just the start of library staff putting their minds towards the question of how to serve Duluth in the context of COVID-19. We were excited to see our role expanding when on Monday, April 20, Mayor Larson held a press conference announcing the new curbside pickup service. That energy was immediately deflated as on Tuesday, April 21, the lay-off letters were approved and sent out with the Mayor's signature. I was called by my supervisor Wednesday morning and received my lay-off letter in the mail the next day. The whiplash of that week still has my coworkers and I reeling.

My work, as one of the Library Technicians who works in the Public Relations office, is to promote all of those events, resources, and services on multiple platforms; create and maintain the web pages of the Duluth Public Library website and eNewsletter; and help programming staff navigate the technical challenges of how to serve the public in a creative ways that fit our new circumstances. In calmer times, I would've been working on creating and distributing printed promotional materials, press releases, and working on several literary and library committees as well.

That is also something to note about Library Technicians--we may be all one job class, but the roles that we fulfill are diverse and often require highly specific skill sets. We don't just circulate materials, even as core as that is to our identity as a library. We do storytimes, curate resources, process and repair materials, provide customer service online and onsite, plan

programs, run social media, update websites, make reading recommendations, assist with technology, and more. In fact, all of those earlier links were made possible either in partnership with or by the efforts of library technicians. Even within our job class, we are not easily exchangeable.

I would be overjoyed to see City Administration consider the option of furloughs for Library Technicians, especially since there is discussion that two 15-consecutive-day furloughs are being requested for the rest of my not-laid-off AFSCME union members. I would also be happy if City Administration offered a voluntary furlough option so that employees who can take furlough with less strain and financial hardship take it and thereby accommodate employees who cannot do the same.

The budget issue caused by COVID-19 is formidable. Being without my healthcare insurance as of the end of May is intimidating. Having no end in sight for these abnormal times makes every decision difficult. I wanted you to know who these Library Technicians were, and what we were providing the City of Duluth. I wanted you to know that we are all about creative solutions and would love to work on another way through these circumstances rather than laying off so many so abruptly.

Thank you for your attention and time.

Best regards,

Emily Ryme  
1825 Piedmont Ave  
Duluth, MN 55811

**From:** [Laura Vavrosky](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Council agenda  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 2:51:17 PM

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Good afternoon,

My name is Laura Vavrosky and I would like to make a written comment in advance of the City Council meeting this evening. This comment applies to the "OPPORTUNITY FOR CITIZENS TO BE HEARD" agenda item.

I support the Duluth Public Library and utilize library resources, both physical and digital, on a regular basis (several times per week). I also value the knowledge and assistance that library staff provide. Because of this, I am disappointed in the recently-announced layoffs which seem to disproportionately affect the library and will drastically reduce the library's ability to deliver resources, services, and information to the community. In a time when many individuals are searching for trustworthy information and resources to help them navigate this pandemic and deal with its effects, laying off library staff strikes me as a very poor decision.

Thank you,

Laura Vavrosky  
4106 McCulloch St.  
Duluth, MN 55804

**From:** [Shana Aue](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Duluth Public Library layoffs  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 5:52:34 PM

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Dear City Council Members,

Thank you for your service to our community in this difficult time, and thank you for taking the time to read and consider public comments. I understand that the city budget is facing a considerable income gap, and that difficult decisions will need to be made in the weeks and months to come. As you look towards approving the city budget, I would like to draw attention to decisions made by the City of Duluth over the past week, which I have found to be out of line with our values as a city.

On Wednesday the City of Duluth announced layoffs of 49 full-time city employees. I was deeply concerned to see that 25 of these layoffs were at the Duluth Public Library. This number accounts for almost half of library staff. From the articles I read, it appears that the next hardest-hit city department lost only five employees. The disparity is shocking. The large number of layoffs at the library was especially confusing given that on Monday it was announced that the library would begin curbside pickup, a new and complicated program. With half of the staff gone, how is the library expected to manage this new initiative? How will they do so while still maintaining the online services that they have been working so hard to bring to our community? And which is it: are full library services so crucial that staff must risk their health and safety by reporting to the library building during a pandemic, or are libraries so disposable that the first round of full-time layoffs includes half of the library staff?

As a library worker at UMD, I am involved in the library community and have worked with many of the staff at DPL. As I talked to library workers who have been laid off and learned more about the layoffs, I found them more and more disturbing. Rather than an across-the-board layoff by seniority, all of the layoffs are library technicians. This amounts to the elimination of an entire job class, a move that is unprecedented and raises questions of classism and anti-union intent on the part of city administrators. Furthermore, library techs are front-line employees who have been providing invaluable services to our community during this time. Library techs have produced online storytimes; they have kept the community informed with social media and other online public relations and outreach. As the majority of front-desk and circulation staff, library techs are the people best equipped to successfully execute curbside pickup. Many of these employees have years or decades of experience that could be utilized to keep the library functional and innovative during this time. These layoffs will have major ramifications for the library's ability to serve our community during the pandemic, and for years into the future.

This decision happened during National Library Week, a week that should be about celebrating libraries and their vital contributions to our community. Tuesday was National Library Workers Day, on which we recognize the value of all library workers, no matter their job class. The next day, 25 library technicians learned that they would lose jobs they are passionate about, jobs at which they work incredibly hard every day, and jobs that they were relying on to have health insurance during a global pandemic. This is not who we are as a city. This is not how we should treat our libraries or our library employees. At the very least, city leadership should change these layoffs to furloughs, so that library techs can keep their health insurance during the pandemic, and DPL can have some hope of reopening with full services

once the crisis has passed.

Respectfully,

Shana Aue  
1315 N. 7th Ave E.  
Duluth, MN 55805  
Archives Assistant, Kathryn A. Martin Library, UMD

**From:** [Becky Gamache](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Furlough city workers  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 6:41:33 AM

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To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing in support of furloughing public workers vs layoffs. In a city that worked hard to pass “Earned Sick & Safe Time”, it’s surprising you wouldn’t give city employees continued access to their health benefits, especially during a pandemic! Please change the status of these employees from laid off to furloughed.

In Solidarity,  
Becky Gamache

**From:** [Sally Larson](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Library  
**Date:** Sunday, April 26, 2020 9:21:07 PM

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I was very disappointed to hear so many library employees were laid off. Perhaps the council can consider them furloughed instead of let go. This would allow them to keep their health insurance that is so vital now. The library is one of the best things about our city. While I am glad to be able to order and pick up books, I am concerned that not having enough staff will make this very stressful for everyone. This quarantine is hard enough. Getting through it without books is horrible. Please consider adding back these vital staff.

Sent from my iPhone

**From:** [Harmony Feldman McCullough](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Library layoffs  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 8:53:11 AM

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To Our City Council Members:

I am writing in support of furloughing public workers vs layoffs. In a city that worked hard to pass “Earned Sick & Safe Time”, it’s surprising that you wouldn’t give city employees continued access to their health benefits, especially during a pandemic! Please change the status of these employees from laid off to furloughed.

Sincerely,  
Harmony McCullough

4124 Luverne St  
Duluth, MN  
55804

**From:** [Lynn Schwarzkopf](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** library layoffs  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 3:59:25 PM

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Dear City Council Members,

Thank you for your work for the City of Duluth and for hearing our voices.

I am one of the twenty five library technicians being laid off effective May 8th. By now, you have received a number of emails from us and I am sure more will arrive in your inbox. I am finding it challenging to put into words the disappointment I have over the city administration's decision to lay employees off. This is not only an injury to us workers who want to continue serving the public, but it will hurt the many citizens who rely on us for accessibility to services and programs. There are so many of these services and programs that we have been working to provide throughout the healthcare crisis as you have read about in my coworkers emails.

I will quickly focus on what the community will miss out upon when I can no longer work for the library. I am the early literacy library technician who works on the Every Child Ready Duluth early literacy initiative. I was chosen to join this team because I bring a thoughtful perspective from an experience teacher to this library initiative.

The early literacy librarian and myself make a great team and we're working hard to improve school readiness in our community from a whole child approach. We're leading this initiative, but it is community driven. Contrary to what some administration may say, I have been working hard during the pandemic to prepare for parent education courses, building relationships with other community organizations, creating digital storytime, and finalizing our community learning report.

Each laid off library employee have a story about what the library will be missing without us. I implore you to listen to the voices speaking up about this topic and please know that for every voice that speaks, there are more who simply can't find the words. Please stand in support of the workers who have been laid off by encouraging the City to retain these positions in other ways - at the very least, encourage them to work with the bargaining unit to establish a temporary furlough for all 49 workers instead of this layoff with loss of benefits. Duluth's residents will benefit from retaining this skilled and dedicated workforce.

Thank you for listening to my voice. Please know that I also fully support the group email sent on behalf of all library technicians.

Sincerely,

Lynn

Lynn Schwarzkopf  
816 N 17th Ave E  
Duluth, MN 55812

**From:** [Ina Newton](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Library Techs  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 10:33:51 AM

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I was uncomfortable when I read that the library tech's were laid off without access to much needed and deserved health benefits. I understand we are in a difficult time, but I strongly urge the city council to discuss options to support the health of wellbeing of those that you lay off. From my understanding they do receive COBRA but at a rate that is unaffordable.

Thank you for all you do, and I hope to hear you all further discuss this at your meeting tonight.

Sent from [Mail](#) for Windows 10

**From:** [Kay Strand](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** library  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 6:59:53 PM

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The public library is one of our most important resources. Please keep it viable with all employees retaining employment.

Thank you.

Kay Strand

**From:** [Carmella Hatch](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Regarding Library Technician Lay-offs  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 11:51:49 AM

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Dear City Council,

I'm a librarian at DPL and want to express how frustrated, angry, and devastated I am with the city's decision to lay off 25 library technicians. What infuriates me about this decision is that the city apparently made it based on the their thought that the position of technician doesn't lend itself to working at home, that the decision was made to eliminate an entire job class of people apparently without exploring other options, and how this decision was rolled out to staff and the public.

Library technicians provide some of the most varied services of all the library staff. Yes, customer service is part of their jobs, but that is only one aspect. The work they have done at home has been no less varied. For example, the reason we even started offering virtual storytimes was because two library *technicians* were determined to do so immediately. Those same two technicians took it upon themselves to create other weekly and daily online programs and videos for children, as well. Other technicians have been working tirelessly as our PR staff—they are the only reason that the public has been able to access online programming, receive social media updates and they are the reason that the library's website has been adapted to provide the public with up-to-date information and resources about how to deal with the pandemic. Those things were all done by **technicians**, not librarians and those are only a few examples. Personally, I am very proud of how many online offerings the library has been able to provide and excited by all of the ideas staff members have been coming up with to adapt our usual summer reading program offerings to a distance model. Now, however, I am devastated. How can we possibly provide the high level of service that we have been over the past month in addition to curbside pick-up with a skeleton crew?

In regard to the curbside, it sent very contradictory messages when the city administration praised the library as a vital service, pushed for and announced curbside pick-up services, and then less than a week later, eliminated such a huge portion of our workforce. If the city knew they were going to have to make such a drastic cut to our staffing, why try to roll out curbside pick-up? Our ability to provide services to the public will be greatly diminished by these staffing cuts and it is our patrons who will end up suffering the most.

Lastly, this elimination of an entire job class is deeply concerning. Library staff—the ones who will be most affected by this change—have been given very little information about what this means. Why are our technicians being laid off and not furloughed? As I understand it, a furlough would at least allow them to keep their benefits and position of seniority. Will they maintain that seniority if/when they are brought back? What circumstances will allow staff to

return to work? What other measures is the city taking to combat budget issues? Are administration staff taking pay cuts? If not, why not? Why should staff who have been working very hard over the last month lose their jobs entirely if other members of the city are not willing to do their part to reduce the financial burden?

Thank you for listening to my concerns. I wanted to bring them to the attention of the City Council, hoping that you will use your abilities as city councilors to express to the city the importance of our library technicians and how they need to do everything in their power to preserve these jobs.

Sincerely,  
Carmella Hatch

**Carmella Hatch**

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DPL Logo



**From:** [jbrostro University of Minnesota](#)  
**To:** [Council](#)  
**Subject:** Where the City can save staffing dollars  
**Date:** Monday, April 27, 2020 6:51:19 PM

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I've some suggestions where the City can save some staffing dollars - in no particular order:

1. Furlough the Sustainability Coordinator - position not needed until things turn back to what we used to think of as "relatively normal."
2. Furlough the Earned Safe and Sick Time staffer - the vast majority of people impacted by this position are out of work anyway and keeping the position open makes no economic sense.
3. Eliminate the Human Rights Officer and all staff. Reason: The State of MN has a person and accompanying staff to handle such issues. There are no sense duplicating services already in place.

As the Mayor said last week, the City needs to provide services that are available no where else: Police, Fire, utilities are three examples. Staff in these areas must be maintained at current levels, with the exception of staff action the Mayor has previously taken in affected areas/City departments.

This letter is not intended to be mean spirited - rather, it's a common sense fiscal approach during these difficult times. Thank you and best wishes to us all.

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