

Hello,

I am forwarding testimony that was sent to our local city counsel yesterday as well. I have also included testimony from our entire downtown retail community. Please See attached.

Best,

Kelly Jean Cooney

Hello,

After learning that tonight's City Counsel Meeting will not have the normal Open Forum, I am submitting my thoughts here.

I am reaching out as a business owner and life-long Ashland resident. Obviously our entire town, state, and country are suffering right now, and after canvassing the entire downtown retail community, I have some implementable and necessary relief proposals that will save jobs and businesses.

Immediately, the city must:

-Denote Ashland/the County as a disaster so small businesses will be able to apply for SBA loan relief. We are not able to access these low-interest funds until the proper Disaster Qualification has been announced by the Governor or other elected officials. This funding is VITAL, and we are reliant on our elected officials to access these funds. Many states and counties have already gotten access to these funds, and Southern Oregon must be next, before they run out or are overwhelmed by requests.

-Suspend Utility Payment for the foreseeable future. This is a small change that would prevent further layoffs in our small business community.

-Work with the County to suspend Property Tax Payments. This would allow landlords to lower or suspend rent during a time that many businesses will not be able to remain open.

-Work with the state to suspend payroll taxes. Payroll tax is about 30% of our total payroll, and even a suspension of the State taxes would allow us to keep more people employed.

-Work with the State to postpone or cancel the New CAT taxes. This tax is based on previous year sales, which seems particularly cruel considering many businesses will not even be open when this new tax will first be implemented. It would be prudent to shelve this tax until Businesses are able to pay it.

Personally, our business, Paddington Station, has been heavily impacted. Sales are down and decreasing daily. Additionally, we've laid off 19 people (about half our staff) since the Corona Virus hit. While we intend to rehire as soon as possible, these are heartbreaking decisions, and we are desperate for guidance on how to retain our current staff and maintain a sustainable business model. For reference, myself and my co-owners are not taking a paycheck during this time. Our employees are our priority, and I am struggling to support them in this time of diminished sales.

In closing, these are incredibly uncertain times, and small businesses locally are suffering from mandated shutdowns, lack of tourists, and our local population self quarantining. Without help, our downtown business community will not be able to recover, leaving a large portion of the population unemployed. Relief needs to be immediate and generous. I've attached the findings from our canvassing of local retailers- **please see the number of Small Business Owners who are asking for SBA loan access.**

Allowing our small businesses to apply for SBA disaster loans is the quickest and easiest step the Counsel can make tonight. Many other States and Counties are already accessing these funds, and they will not be available forever. Let us be next on the list for these SBA funds- all we need is a Disaster designation.

Thank you for your time,

Name of Store	Staffing	Sales	SBA Loan Interest	Future Prospects
Sew Creative	Voluntary Hours Cut	Down	Yes	working on website
Anonymous	Layoffs	Down	N/A	Business not viable w/o OSF
Anonymous	None Yet	Down	N/A	Niche product, may survive w/o OSF
North and East	Cutting Operating Hours	Down	Yes	New Business, uncertain future
Travel Essentials	Layoffs- 2FT, 4PT	50-60% Down	Yes	Unable to survive without OSF
Anonymous	Not Yet (Voluntary Horus Cut)	Down	No	Unknown- depends on OSF
KIXX	No, but necessary hiring has been put off	30% Down	N/A	N/A
Anonymous	Employees fearful of layoffs, hours have been cut	Down	N/A	N/A
As You Like It	Layoffs- more may be done	45% Down	Yes, if applicable	Uncertain future
The Fly Shop	Not Yet	30% Down	Yes	Yes, but in a different capacity or location
Diana's Records	No (small staff)	Unknown	No	Optomistic for Future
Middle Earth Shoes	No (no staff beside owner)	15% down	No	Optomistic for Future
Outback and the Temple of Venus	Layoffs Pending, Operating Hours Cut	40% Down	Yes	Will transfer stock to another location and close
Heart and Hands	Layoffs	Between 50-75% down	Yes	Very Questionable about Future w/o OSF
Art and Soul	Cutting Operating Days to 4 days a week	50-70% down	Yes	Wants tech support or guidance to sell online
Sunday Afternoons	No Staffings Cuts, only 3 employees	80-90% down	N/A	N/A
Rogue Valley Runners	No Staffing Cuts	16% down	N/A	OSF and Track Season are major drivers of business
Sheperds Dream	Not Yet	Down	Yes	N/A
Press For Oil	No, new business	Down	No	New Business
Alice in Marrakech	Sole Proprieter	at least 50%	Yes	Reliant on OSF for business
Pelandaba Ashland	May Cut Operating Hours	Down	Yes	Cannot remain in business w/o OSF
Tree House Books	Voluntary Hours Cut	Down 9% for March, Down 75% since COVID	Yes	Business will be restructured w/o OSF
Manzanita	Not Yet	Down 30%	No	Business will shut w/o OSF or Events (weddings)
Anonymous	restructuring Employees	Down 66%	N/A	N/A
Thread Hysteria	No	Down 30%	Yes	May not survive without OSF
Gold and Gems	No	Down 50%	Yes	Business will survive w/o OSF
Mountain Provisions	No- very minimal staffing	Down 30%	Maybe	PCT and OSF are big factors
Art Fx	Hours may be cut	Down 50%	Potentially	Will move to Idaho or Bend if business fails
Anonymous	Operating Hours have been cut	Closing Store due to lack of sales	N/A	N/A
Paris Green	Laid off 2 employees	Sales Down 100%	Yes	Cannot survive w/o OSF
Howard Hansen Gallery	No- small staff	Sales Down "lots"	No- will retire instead of borrow	
Northwest nature	No	Sales Down Unknown Percent	No	Will survive w/o OSF
Anonymous	Will move sales online	Down	N/A	N/A
Book Exchange	Laid off all employees but owner, hoping to rehire	Down	Maybe	They will work to survive the summer
More Fun Comic Books	Sole Proprieter	Down	No	Niche Industry that will survive
Paddington Station	Yes- 19 Layoffs	Down, incrementally more day by day	Yes	Business will be restructured
County Cork (Klamath Falls, OR)	Laid off All staff but one	Down, refusing uncoming orders	Yes	
N/A= responder was an employee and unable to answer on behalf of the owner				