

Committee of the Whole
May 26, 2020

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Tuesday, May 26, 2020
10:10 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILMAN DEREK S. GREEN
COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH
COUNCILMAN BRIAN O'NEILL
COUNCILWOMAN CHERELLE L. PARKER
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA
COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS

BILLS: 200285, 200286, 200287, 200288, 200289
200290, 200291, 200292
RESOLUTIONS: 200307, 200331

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Good morning. We're going to get
4 started. I understand that the state
5 law currently requires that the
6 following announcement be made at the
7 beginning of every remote public
8 hearing as follows: Due to the current
9 public health emergency, City Council
10 Committees are currently meeting
11 remotely. We are using Microsoft Teams
12 to make these remote hearings possible.
13 Instructions for how the public may
14 view public testimony and public
15 hearings of Council Committees are
16 included in the public hearing notices
17 that are published in the Daily News,
18 Inquirer, Legal Intelligencer prior to
19 the hearings, and it can also be found
20 on phlcouncil.com.

21 Well, I know that the hour
22 has come. Mr. Stitt, will you please
23 call the roll to take attendance.
24 Members that are in attendance will
25 please indicate that you are present.

1 Also, please say a couple of brief
2 words to ensure that the response is
3 initiated on the screen.

4 Mr. Stitt, please call the
5 roll.

6 THE CLERK: Councilmember
7 Bass.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
9 morning. Good morning. And Happy
10 Tuesday to all you.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
12 Morning.

13 THE CLERK: Councilwoman
14 Brooks.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Good
16 morning, everyone. How are you all.

17 THE CLERK: Councilmember
18 Domb.

19 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Morning,
20 Council President. Morning,
21 Colleagues, Administration and the
22 public.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
24 Morning.

25 THE CLERK: Councilmember

1 Gauthier.

2 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good,
3 morning, Council President. Good
4 morning, Colleagues and everyone.
5 Happy to be here today.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
7 Good morning.

8 THE CLERK: Councilmember
9 Gilmore Richardson.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
11 RICHARDSON: Good morning, Council
12 President. Good morning, Matt and
13 Colleagues, and my thoughts and prayers
14 are with the Johnson family this
15 morning. Thank you.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
17 Absolutely. Good morning.

18 THE CLERK: Councilmember
19 Green.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Good
21 morning, Council President. Good
22 morning, Colleagues. I echo the
23 sentiments of my colleague
24 Councilmember Katherine Gilmore
25 Richardson. Looking forward to another

1 session of City Council budget
2 hearings.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
4 Morning.

5 THE CLERK: Councilmember
6 Gym.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
8 morning, Council President. Good
9 morning, Colleagues. I share the same
10 for Councilman Johnson, and please vote
11 June 2nd.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
13 Good morning.

14 THE CLERK: Councilmember
15 Henon.

16 COUNCILMAN HENON: Good
17 morning, Council President. Good
18 morning, Colleagues. Hope everybody
19 had an enjoyable weekend and never
20 forgot the purpose of the Memorial Day
21 weekend for those who made the ultimate
22 sacrifice for our country. Thank you.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
24 Good morning.

25 THE CLERK: Councilmember

1 Johnson.

2 Councilmember Jones.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good
4 morning, Mr. President. Good morning,
5 Colleagues. For those who celebrated
6 Ramadan, Eid Mubarak. For those who
7 celebrated Memorial Day, lest we forget
8 and hopefully you got to see
9 respectfully some of your family at a
10 distance.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
12 Morning.

13 THE CLERK: Councilmember Oh.

14 COUNCILMAN OH: Good morning,
15 Matt. Good morning, Council President,
16 Colleagues.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
18 Good morning, Councilman.

19 THE CLERK: Councilmember
20 O'Neill.

21 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Good
22 morning, everyone.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
24 Good morning, Councilman.

25 THE CLERK: Councilmember

1 Parker.

2 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Good
3 morning, Mr. President and Colleagues.
4 Looking forward to a robust
5 conversation about the City today.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
7 Good morning, Leader.

8 THE CLERK: Councilmember
9 Quinones-Sanchez.

10 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-
11 SANCHEZ: Good morning. Good morning
12 to everyone, Colleagues, Council
13 President Clarke. Thank you.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
15 Good morning.

16 THE CLERK: Councilmember
17 Squilla.

18 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Good
19 morning all.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
21 Morning.

22 THE CLERK: Councilmember
23 Thomas.

24 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good
25 morning to my colleagues. I echo the

1 sentiments of a lot of other folks
2 praying for the Johnson family. Also,
3 I want to recognize yesterday being
4 Memorial Day and thank all of those who
5 made the ultimate sacrifice.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

7 All right.

8 THE CLERK: And, Council
9 President Clarke.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

11 Thank you. Thank you. And may God be
12 with the Johnson family at this very
13 trying time at the Homegoing service.
14 Our prayers are with you and as always,
15 we are there for you during these
16 difficult times.

17 So we clearly established a
18 quorum, so we're going to get started.
19 Before we dive into what I'm sure will
20 be a very informative session, I'd like
21 to say a few words about today's
22 process. The coronavirus pandemic has
23 changed the world, and that obviously
24 includes this Council so we're not in
25 the same room. And it's been difficult

1 but we're getting a little better at
2 this. And I want to thank our friends
3 from OIT and all of the support systems
4 that are in place.

5 We will be changing a little
6 bit in terms of the agenda. Today is
7 the last day to apply for applications
8 for mail-in ballots so we will be
9 moving the City Commissioners first to
10 allow for them to get back to the
11 business of making sure that everybody
12 has a safe way to vote.

13 I understand that we've
14 actually exceeded projections in terms
15 of people applying for the ballots, so
16 I want to say kudos to the City of
17 Philadelphia and the citizens and its
18 voters, but we do have to get those
19 processed so they need to be out of
20 here relatively soon. And if need be,
21 we can call them back. We have a
22 couple of callback dates later on in
23 the budget process.

24 So -- somebody mute yourself
25 or whatever or close the car windows,

1 it sounds like someone's in the car,
2 that will allow the public to watch and
3 participate. This new environment
4 comes with some new limits however,
5 which I want to emphasize with you.
6 Our budget schedule is more compressed
7 than in past years.

8 The massive damage to our
9 economy caused by the COVID-19 required
10 that the Administration throw out the
11 original proposed budget and prepare a
12 brand new one, which we didn't receive
13 until earlier this month. So we have
14 less time in these hearings than we're
15 used to, a lot less time so we need to
16 be mindful of that.

17 And I want to thank everybody
18 for really working with us to assure
19 that we get as best possible enough
20 information out, enough questions
21 asked, not necessarily the number that
22 we'd like; but again, we will have an
23 opportunity for callbacks later on in
24 our budget process. But we do have a
25 time frame. 1 o'clock the

1 Administration has its daily brief so
2 we do have to finish around 12:30 as
3 Channel 64 will be moving in speed to
4 that presser.

5 So there's a lot to cover and
6 as time permits, we're going to get
7 started. So our first round we will
8 ask individuals for five minutes, ask
9 the individuals responding to please
10 make their responses clear and concise
11 so we can get as much in as possible,
12 so thank you very much. We can get
13 started.

14 This is the public hearing on
15 the Committee of the Whole regarding
16 Bill Nos. 200285, 200286, 200287,
17 200288, 200289, 200290, 200291, 200292
18 and Resolution Nos. 200307 and 200331.

19 Mr. Stitt, please read the
20 titles of the bills and resolutions.

21 THE CLERK: Bill No. 200285,
22 an ordinance to adopt a Capital Program
23 for the six Fiscal Years 2021 through
24 2026 inclusive.

25 Bill No. 200286, an ordinance

1 to adopt the Fiscal 2021 Capital
2 Budget.

3 Bill No. 200287, an ordinance
4 adopting the Operating Budget for
5 Fiscal Year 2021.

6 Bill No. 200288, an ordinance
7 amending Chapter 19-1200 of the
8 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Parking
9 Tax," by revising certain tax rates,
10 under certain terms and conditions.

11 Bill No. 200289, an ordinance
12 amending Chapter 19-1800 of the
13 Philadelphia Code, entitled "School Tax
14 Authorization," by revising certain tax
15 rates, all under certain terms and
16 conditions.

17 Bill No. 200290, an ordinance
18 amending Chapter 19-2600 of the
19 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Business
20 Income and Receipts Taxes," by revising
21 certain rates, under certain terms and
22 conditions.

23 Bill No. 200291, an ordinance
24 amending Chapter 19-1500 of the
25 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Wage and

1 Net Profits Tax," by revising certain
2 tax rates, under certain terms and
3 conditions.

4 Bill No. 200292, an ordinance
5 amending Chapter 19-1300, entitled
6 "Real Estate Taxes," to eliminate the
7 discount for early payment of real
8 estate taxes, all under certain terms
9 and conditions.

10 Resolution No. 200307,
11 resolution providing for the approval
12 by the Council of the City of
13 Philadelphia of a Revised Five Year
14 Financial Plan for the City of
15 Philadelphia, covering Fiscal Years
16 2021 through 2025, and incorporating
17 proposed changes with respect to Fiscal
18 Year 2020, which is to be submitted by
19 the Mayor to the Pennsylvania
20 Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority
21 pursuant to the Intergovernmental
22 Cooperation Agreement, authorized by an
23 ordinance of this Council approved by
24 the Mayor on January 3, 1992 (Bill No.
25 1563-A), by and between the City the

1 Authority.

2 Resolution No. 200331,
3 resolution approving the Director of
4 Finance's Budget Stabilization Reserve
5 Fund Withdrawal Certification for
6 purposes of allowing utilization of
7 \$34,276,000 in the Reserve Fund for
8 General Fund purposes in connection
9 with the FY2021 Operating Budget.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

11 Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Stitt.

12 Today we continue the public
13 hearing on the Committee of the Whole
14 to consider the bills read by the Clerk
15 that constitute proposed operating and
16 capital spending measures for Fiscal
17 2021, a Capital Program and a forward-
18 looking Capital Plan for Fiscal 2021
19 through Fiscal 2026.

20 Before we begin to hear the
21 testimony from the witnesses we have
22 today, everyone who has been invited to
23 the meeting to testify should be aware
24 that the public hearing is being
25 recorded; because a hearing is in

1 public, participants and viewers have
2 no reasonable expectation of privacy.
3 By continuing to be in the meeting, you
4 are consenting to being recorded. I
5 want to make that for the record as
6 required by law.

7 Additionally, prior to
8 recognizing Members for the questions
9 or our comments that we have for
10 witnesses, I will note for the record
11 at this time that we will use the chat
12 feature available in Microsoft Teams to
13 allow the Members to signify that they
14 wish to be recognized. In order to
15 comply with the Sunshine Act, the chat
16 feature must only be used for that
17 particular purpose. Thank you very
18 much.

19 Today we will hear testimony
20 from the following City departments:
21 The Managing Director's Office that
22 will testify on operations. Falling
23 under the jurisdiction of the Managing
24 Director's Office is Streets, oTIS that
25 deals with transportation, L&I, Parks &

1 Rec, Free Library, Homeless Services,
2 OEM, Office of Emergency Management,
3 SEPTA will also be a part of that
4 testimony and the City Commissioner's
5 Office. As I said earlier, we will get
6 them on first so they can go back and
7 take care of our vote-in ballot
8 election.

9 Again, I keep emphasizing
10 this but I want to make sure that you
11 know that we do have time to get
12 additional questions. We will be in a
13 position to have callbacks.

14 Mr. Stitt, the first person
15 to testify is?

16 THE CLERK: Chairwoman Deeley
17 with Commissioner Schmidt and Sabir.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
19 Thank you.

20 Good morning. Proceed.
21 State your name for the record and
22 proceed with your testimony.

23 COMMISSIONER DEELEY:
24 Inaudible.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

1 We're not hearing you, Commish. You
2 guys have your mics muted.
3 Commissioner Deeley, I think you all
4 have your mics muted or somebody is
5 muting you according to my screen. I'd
6 like to ask our team to do a little
7 troubleshooting.

8 Hello. Are you hearing us
9 yet?

10 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Hello?

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

12 There you go.

13 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: There
14 we go. Good morning, President Clarke,
15 members of City Council. I'm
16 Commissioner Lisa Deeley, Chairwoman of
17 the City Commissioners. Joining me
18 today are Commissioners Al Schmidt and
19 our newest colleague Commissioner Omar
20 Sabir. Deputy Commissioner is Nick
21 Custodio, Seth Bluestein and Jenne
22 Ayers, and Budget Officer Lisa Coleman.

23 I have provided written
24 testimony on the Office of the City
25 Commissioner's Fiscal Year 2021

1 Operating Budget. To summarize, the
2 proposed Fiscal Year 2021 General Fund
3 budget totals \$12,229,691 which funds
4 our department at Fiscal Year 20
5 levels. This is a decrease of
6 \$10,248,844 from our original proposed
7 budget.

8 The last fiscal year we have
9 had significant increases in our
10 operating costs primarily due to the
11 recent passage of Act 77 of 2019 and
12 Act 12 of 2020, the continued worker
13 associated with implementing a new
14 voting system and an increased workload
15 due to the Presidential General
16 Election occurring in the second
17 quarter of Fiscal Year 21.

18 We understand that the newly
19 proposed budget is a COVID budget, and
20 that the City is unsure of what revenue
21 will look like and what financial
22 resources will be coming from the State
23 and Federal Governments. But please
24 know that the cost of the running
25 collections has dramatically increased

1 and we'll likely not have the funds to
2 make it through Fiscal Year 21.
3 Therefore, we would like to ask that
4 you please consider revisiting our
5 budget in the first or second quarter
6 of FY21 when more information about the
7 City's fiscal health is known.

8 The new law creates an
9 entirely new method of voting. While
10 many relates it is similar to absentee
11 voting, it is legally distinct. Voters
12 can apply for a mail-in ballot without
13 providing a reason or excuse. It is
14 fortuitous that this is available now
15 during this pandemic, as it offers
16 voters an opportunity to exercise their
17 right to vote from the safety of their
18 own homes.

19 To further allow for voters
20 to stay home, we've provided prepaid
21 return postage so they do not have to
22 go out and buy stamps. The deadline to
23 apply for an absentee or mail-in ballot
24 is today at 5:00 p.m. So far we have
25 processed 206,276 absentee and mail-in

1 applications. For comparison purposes,
2 we received 16,101 applications for
3 2012 General; 15,887 for this 2016
4 General; and 5,742 for the 2016
5 Primary.

6 I would like to thank Council
7 President Clarke and also members of
8 Council who worked with us to provide
9 radio ads to promote the vote-by-mail
10 option for the primary. The over 30
11 times increase in applications from
12 four years ago has exceeded what our
13 staff can do on our own. But thanks to
14 additional staffing assistance from
15 Council, the Kenney Administration, the
16 First Judicial District, the Parking
17 Authority, the Sheriff, the Controller
18 and the District Attorney, we have been
19 able to keep up with the demand.

20 However, if there is a fall
21 COVID spike, applications for the
22 General Election might exceed 400,000
23 to 500,000 and we will have to explore
24 ways to process them timely. In
25 addition to the mail, we have set up a

1 ballot drop box outside our City Hall
2 office and are working with District
3 Councilmembers for primary day drop-off
4 locations in each Council District.
5 This is all in an effort to get as many
6 ballots returned to us by the 8:00 p.m.
7 June 2nd deadline.

8 We also had to consolidate
9 the polling places for the June 2nd
10 primary. Instead of 831 polling places
11 we had last November, we will have 190
12 locations on June 2nd. We will be
13 sending a postcard to every voter's
14 household with their polling location
15 as it will run in newspapers this week,
16 and our polling placefinder app on our
17 website has been updated. Voters who
18 choose to vote in person can go to
19 pollingplaces.philadelphiavotes.com,
20 type in their address and find their
21 polling place.

22 In addition to the additional
23 expenses due to Act 77 and Act 12,
24 implementation of a voting system has
25 added significant ongoing costs to our

1 budget in material, shipping and labor
2 costs. For instance, just the new
3 paper ballots cost \$190,000 a year.
4 The process to get those paper ballots
5 returned at the end of the night
6 requires renting 150 vehicles and
7 engaging personnel in multiple City
8 departments, something that we did not
9 have to do with the old DRE machines.

10 The new voting equipment has
11 more involved pre-election testing and
12 takes longer to complete and ship than
13 the old Danahr voting machines, so it
14 requires additional staff at the
15 warehouse. They ship in a different
16 manner than the Danahars, so our
17 shipping costs have increased. That
18 was a big change from the last fiscal
19 year. We had a successful roll-out of
20 the new voting system with the voter
21 verifiable paper ballot. This success
22 was thanks to the hard work of hundreds
23 of City workers across multiple City
24 departments.

25 Leading up to last year's

1 General Election, our department
2 trained thousands of poll workers, held
3 over 800 educational events and
4 communicated with thousands of
5 Philadelphians so that citizens of
6 Philadelphia could be prepared as
7 possible to transition to the new
8 paper-based voting system.

9 I know there were some who
10 questioned the rush to debut this new
11 system in November, but we were very
12 fortunate that we did. Imagine the
13 chaos of trying to implement a voting
14 system in the presidential year and
15 during a pandemic. During these
16 unprecedented times managing a
17 presidential election year in the midst
18 of a global pandemic, we are committed
19 to protecting and supporting the votes
20 of every citizen of Philadelphia.

21 We appreciate this
22 opportunity to present our testimony
23 and are happy to answer any questions
24 that you may have.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

1 Thank you very much, Commissioner.
2 Realizing your time frame, we're going
3 to try to get you out of here as quick
4 as possible. I do have a couple of
5 quick questions.

6 One, I want to get a sense of
7 your ability to conclude all aspects of
8 what we're doing, i.e., get the
9 applications in time understanding the
10 deadline, and being able to get the
11 ballots back out because my
12 understanding is there's a lag between
13 the applications and the ballot
14 actually being sent to the individual;
15 then subsequently that individual
16 having it in the now drop box, and
17 thank you for adding that feature.

18 And the other question is
19 leading up to November, which is
20 clearly a very, very important
21 election, we don't have to say why,
22 what would you need in place to assure
23 that we have a seamless transition to
24 that particular election given the
25 additional likelihood that there will

1 be probably twice as many people voting
2 in November?

3 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Thank
4 you, Council President. So as of the
5 close of business yesterday, every
6 ballot was ready to go out to the
7 voters. We had -- everything was
8 complete up to close of business
9 yesterday. As we speak today, we are
10 waiting for the mail delivery which we
11 anticipate we'll get hit with a lot of
12 additional paper applications. And
13 with the additional help that the other
14 departments have provided us, we are
15 confident to get those applications
16 processed and those ballots out by
17 tomorrow.

18 We are putting the ballot box
19 out in front of City Hall. And making
20 more opportunity for voters to drop off
21 their voted ballots will increase the
22 number of ballots we get back
23 significantly, as people take advantage
24 of that opportunity. As we look to
25 November, we really are seeing right

1 now the many challenges that we're
2 going to have. In addition, we hope to
3 have -- to be able to fulfill our
4 complementive staff which was part of
5 our preparation for Act 77, which we
6 did not get to fulfill. And also, it
7 is our hope that this health crisis
8 eases up on our ability to provide
9 inperson ballot access for people 50
10 days before the November election so
11 that people can be present earlier and
12 apply for their ballots earlier, which
13 would hopefully give us -- take a
14 little pressure off of us and apply for
15 all of these paper ballots all at one
16 time.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

18 All right. And one last question,
19 assuming that if we successfully move
20 to Phase Yellow I guess in a week and a
21 half, then we're in a position to
22 continue to move towards whatever
23 phase, will that possibly free up
24 additional locations for voting
25 machines so we don't have to

1 consolidate those from 800 to 200?
2 My assumption is that a lot of these
3 consolidations were based on
4 availability of the traditional polling
5 places. So is it likely that we'll be
6 able to change that whole scenario?

7 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Yes,
8 Council President, precisely. We had
9 to consolidate our polling locations
10 due to the availability of a lot of the
11 locations that we typically use because
12 we are in a shutdown. And in addition,
13 we consolidated because of that
14 shutdown and the risk of the virus. We
15 have not -- we lost a lot of our poll
16 workers. But we are as hopeful as
17 everything, I think, on this call that
18 we will be able to stand up an election
19 in a familiar way that Philadelphians
20 are used to come November.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
22 Thank you. Thank you, Commissioner.
23 Chair recognizes Councilman
24 Green.

25 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,

1 Council President.

2 Good morning, Commissioners.

3 Thank you for all of the work you've
4 been doing in trying to get information
5 out for people to do mail-in voting. I
6 know the City Commissioner's Office
7 received dollars from Governor Wolf.
8 I'm curious in reference to
9 conversations you've been having with
10 some of your other county
11 commissioners, that in the fall because
12 it will be a much more increased
13 important number of people voting in
14 the fall, has there been any thoughts
15 in reference to reaching out to the
16 Governor's Office requesting additional
17 dollars because of the possibility of
18 having a second wave as well as an
19 increased number of people voting?

20 I know it's been a
21 significant strain on your capacity and
22 you're doing all that you can by asking
23 for people to volunteer. I'm curious
24 if there's been any outreach in that
25 regard?

1 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Thank
2 you, Councilman. I'm going to let
3 Deputy Commissioner Nick Custodio
4 answer the budget question on what
5 we've gotten. But for the record, we
6 really haven't gotten any additional
7 money from the State. We did get
8 matching dollars in the grants from the
9 State, but no specific increase from
10 the State for any resources. Nick?

11 MR. CUSTODIO: Thank you,
12 Councilman, for the question. We have
13 received \$825,000 in election security
14 grants passed through the State from
15 the Federal Government and about three-
16 quarters of \$1 million in CARES Act
17 funding passed through the State from
18 the Federal Government. We are
19 constantly lobbying the State House,
20 the State Senate and the Governor's
21 Office for additional state funds.

22 The amount of money that cost
23 us to run an election in the last year
24 from mandates from the StateBook, from
25 the new voting system and Act 77 and

1 Act 12 have raised our costs
2 dramatically. And we're not the only
3 county in the Commonwealth that is also
4 seeing this. The State needs to step
5 up and provide more funding down to the
6 counties for elections. All of our
7 costs are increased.

8 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.
9 And I'll close with this, I know the
10 County Commissioner Association of
11 Pennsylvania is really concerned about
12 this year. It may make sense some time
13 once we get past the election and all
14 of the ballots have been counted, for
15 some type of analysis done regarding
16 counties across the Commonwealth and
17 then reaching back out to Governor Wolf
18 in reference to that request for
19 additional money. I know they're doing
20 an interim or half-year budget, so that
21 may make sense considering how many
22 more people will come out in the fall.

23 Thank you, Council President.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

25 Thank you, Councilman.

1 Chair recognizes Councilwoman
2 Gilmore Richardson.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

4 RICHARDSON: Good morning. Thank you
5 so much, Council President.

6 And thank you so much to the
7 Commissioners for all of your work and
8 for your partnership in helping us get
9 the word out to our constituents with
10 all of the information you have
11 provided, but also prior to COVID for
12 your partnership with my office
13 ensuring that we can take the new
14 election system out to all the
15 faith-based organizations on a weekly
16 basis, but I have a very quick question
17 relative to vote-by-mail applications.

18 How much would it cost to
19 mail vote-by-mail applications to every
20 voter in the City to make sure they can
21 vote? How much would that cost your
22 office?

23 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: I'm
24 going to ask Nick Custodio to answer
25 that question.

1 MR. CUSTODIO: Thank you,
2 Councilwoman. The cost would likely be
3 over \$1 million just in postage and
4 printing alone, but then you're looking
5 at additional staffing costs. One
6 paper application takes about seven
7 times longer for our office to process
8 than an online application. So if we
9 were looking to mail a paper
10 application to over a million
11 registered voters, we would need a
12 significant increase in the number of
13 staff and a whole other office space
14 for us to use, either on a temporary
15 basis or on an ongoing basis.
16 Otherwise, we would risk not being able
17 to process all of those applications in
18 time to get everyone their ballots.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

20 RICHARDSON: Okay. Thank you. So
21 would you say it's closer to the 1
22 million or closer to 2 million?

23 MR. CUSTODIO: Overall, once
24 you start going into the additional
25 costs beyond postage and printing, you

1 probably are looking close to the \$2
2 million mark. And then you're talking
3 about office space, you're talking
4 about staff, either temporary staff or
5 permanent staff, overtime, short-
6 terminals, equipment, that kind of
7 stuff, you start looking at the \$2
8 million mark.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

10 RICHARDSON: Sure. And then quickly if
11 you could just talk about your plan for
12 processing all of the ballots on
13 Election Day since we've received at
14 this point 206,276. How long do you
15 think that would take? That's my last
16 question.

17 And I just wanted to say
18 thank you to Donna in your office,
19 Commissioner Deeley, and Jenee in
20 Commissioner Sabir's office for all of
21 your assistance with processing the
22 folks that we sent to your office.
23 Thank you.

24 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Thank
25 you.

1 MR. CUSTODIO: We are not
2 going to be starting processing the
3 applications on Election Day. There is
4 a staffing component of that and we
5 don't have the staff to begin
6 processing on Election Day. We are
7 going to start processing immediately
8 on Wednesday. That's a start with the
9 review of the return ballots, opening
10 them and then beginning to scan.
11 Overall, it may take up to a week to
12 process them all. And also, please
13 keep in mind that the military and
14 overseas ballots are not due back to us
15 until the 9th. At the very least,
16 we're not even getting all of our
17 ballots back until the 9th.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

19 RICHARDSON: Thank you.

20 Thank you, Council President.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

22 Thank you, Councilwoman.

23 Chair recognizes Councilwoman
24 Gauthier.

25 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank

1 you, Council President.

2 Good morning, Commissioners.

3 Thank you for all of your hard work in
4 making sure that this election goes
5 well. Given the speculation that we
6 could have a potential second wave of
7 this virus, what is the likelihood that
8 we could send the actual ballots to
9 every voter to ensure that everyone can
10 vote safely and that they don't have to
11 risk their health to participate in our
12 election?

13 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Thank
14 you, Councilwoman. Right now that
15 would require a change in the state law
16 for us to be able to mail a ballot to
17 every voter in Philadelphia.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
19 you.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
21 Thank you, Councilwoman.

22 Chair recognizes Councilwoman
23 Parker.

24 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Good
25 morning, Commissioners, and thank you

1 Council President.

2 First, let me start too by
3 saying a special thank you to all of
4 our Commissioners Deeley, Sabir,
5 Schmidt, for all of the work that you
6 have done. You guys were thrown into
7 this. It was baptism by fire and
8 you've done everything that you could,
9 possibly could, to rise to the
10 occasion. I want to commend you along
11 with your teams because we've been
12 calling. But when we call, you've been
13 answering, so I want to say thank you.

14 I want to start with this:
15 Councilwoman Gilmore Richardson already
16 asked a question about potentially
17 mailing the applications with postage
18 prepaid in the fall. Councilwoman
19 Gauthier just asked the question about
20 mailing the ballots and what that would
21 take. With that being said, I've got
22 to ask you because I've communicated to
23 you on numerous occasions, it is
24 impossible for anyone to look at the
25 number of vote-by-mail applications

1 that the City of Philadelphia has
2 received and not look through them
3 through a disparity lens, and when I
4 say a disparity lens, I'm talking about
5 across the board. I'm talking about
6 social and economic status. I'm
7 talking about race and then this
8 digital divide that is relative to
9 technology that has all of a sudden
10 swept across the City, is dinging us in
11 public education with the number of
12 students that are getting access to
13 online education, it's dinging small
14 businesses that didn't have the
15 technical capacity to apply for
16 applications, and now it's dinging
17 voters, right, who may not, one, be as
18 savvy relative to technical use and/or
19 have immediate access to the technology
20 at hand.

21 With that being said, I want
22 to ask you what innovative and creative
23 strategies do you think that we will be
24 able to come up with between now and
25 the General, similar to the pickup

1 locations that we are doing now? And
2 thank you so much for that one per
3 Council District, where we now partner
4 with City facilities to allow people to
5 go to different places to apply for a
6 vote-by-mail application. I don't know
7 what the answer is, but I'm putting it
8 out there because we can't be satisfied
9 with the number.

10 There are African-American
11 communities that traditionally had
12 extremely high turn-out. And when you
13 look at the percentage of vote-by-mail
14 applications that have been sent in,
15 the numbers are alarming. So I'm just
16 raising a red flag to say, we've got to
17 get through this primary and you've
18 done everything you can, and we're here
19 to partner with you and go to battle
20 with you for more resources, but we
21 have to have a strategy to address
22 these disparities, and any comments you
23 have in how we can help. Not us
24 telling you what you should be doing,
25 but you telling us what's the best way

1 you think City Council can assist you
2 in this matter.

3 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Thank
4 you, Councilwoman Parker.

5 Commissioner Sabir?

6 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Hello.
7 Can you hear me? Can everybody hear
8 me?

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I
10 hear you, sir.

11 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Yes, I
12 hear you, Commissioner.

13 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Yes. So
14 we've been working on this community
15 outreach plan. We definitely want to
16 take out our radio ads with
17 African-American outlets and of course,
18 African-American newspapers such as the
19 Philadelphia Sun, the Tribune, a lot of
20 various community organizations. And
21 we also wanted to do geofencing to
22 target areas which are primarily areas
23 where we see people are not applying
24 and we could have different missions on
25 social media platforms, because a lot

1 of the social media platforms have been
2 a vehicle by Washington D.C. to
3 disseminate negative information about
4 voting, so a lot of people don't trust
5 the information or if there's
6 misinformation.

7 For example, they're telling
8 people that felons can't vote, things
9 like that. So it's a lot of negative
10 information that's being paid for in
11 Washington, D.C. and we understand the
12 (inaudible), so we have to -- we need
13 resources for television commercials,
14 radio commercials and geofencing and we
15 also need to hire people from the
16 community to disseminate the
17 information, trusted messengers that
18 people trust in their African-American
19 and Latino communities about the voting
20 process.

21 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Well,
22 Commissioner, listen, I want to say
23 thank you for that response. I would
24 ask that as you all work as a team to
25 develop the strategy for the fall,

1 along with the strategy for how we will
2 select, like what polling places -- if
3 we do have a second wave, what polling
4 places will be selected. Please feel
5 free to use us Councilmembers, all the
6 elected RCOs, so that we can have some
7 sort of voice or recommendations that
8 we can provide to you in advance of
9 your work. But I want to say thank you
10 to each and every one of you for the
11 awesome job that you have done during
12 this time.

13 COMMISSIONER SABIR: Thank
14 you.

15 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Thank
16 you.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
18 Thank you, Councilwoman.

19 Chair recognizes Councilwoman
20 Gym.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Good
22 morning, Commissioners. I want to echo
23 my colleagues all who have thanked you
24 for being so receptive on the phone,
25 for being available and answering all

1 the questions that I've been texting at
2 all hours of weekends. We really,
3 really appreciate it.

4 I had a couple of very quick
5 questions. One, there's been a number
6 of constituents who reached out about
7 that they failed to put in their
8 mail-in ballot accurately. So, for
9 example, they failed to use the
10 security envelope. Do we know what
11 actually happens when those -- right
12 now you're running up against the
13 deadline. So if you see those kinds of
14 ballots come in, are those then
15 invalidated? Like, for example, if
16 they can request a new ballot today,
17 they had time to do that, but are their
18 ballots then invalidated and would they
19 be informed of that?

20 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Thank
21 you, Councilwoman. We are getting the
22 ballots in, in the envelopes. We don't
23 open those envelopes until we start the
24 count. So if a voter realizes that
25 they made that mistake, they certainly

1 can ask for a duplicate -- or a
2 replacement ballot. But if we get a
3 ballot that as long as it has -- it has
4 been my experience with elections that
5 as long as the intent of the voter is
6 clear and the security of the envelope
7 is intact, the vote will be counted.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay.

9 Thank you very much. And I assume
10 that -- are there plans to have a more
11 public accounting for how the June
12 primary went? Will there be a larger
13 kind of grouping or will you do that
14 mostly within the context of your
15 Commissioner hearings and public
16 meetings?

17 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Yes, it
18 is my intention because this was such a
19 unique election cycle and with the many
20 layers and the many challenges that
21 we've witnessed in every turn, to have
22 like a debrief so that we can take
23 stock of the decisions that we made
24 that were good and the decisions that
25 we made that maybe weren't so good and

1 where we could improve, and certainly
2 we will look to all of our colleagues
3 and Council to help us in the event
4 that we would have to do this again in
5 November. We will do it armed with the
6 knowledge that we take with us from
7 June 2nd.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Exactly.
9 Thank you very much, Commissioner.

10 And then my last question
11 would be if you have a marginal
12 increase, I think there was something
13 like \$1 million allotment or something
14 that fairly covers some of the needs
15 that you have going on. You are not
16 only -- this budget session not only
17 covers the November 2020 election which
18 is highly critical, but also the
19 following May primary. What are things
20 that you think will or will not get
21 done with the current budget that you
22 got going on right now?

23 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: I mean,
24 quite frankly with the current budget
25 that we have going on right now, we

1 would be in danger of not being able to
2 have the November election stand up.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Understood
4 and heard loud and clear. Okay. Thank
5 you very much, Commissioners, and we
6 really appreciate all the work that
7 you've done. Thank you.

8 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Thank
9 you.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
11 Thank you, Councilwoman.

12 Chair recognizes Councilwoman
13 Bass.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
15 morning. Good morning. How are you,
16 Commissioner?

17 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Great.
18 Thank you.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good.
20 Good. I just have a statement and a
21 question. And I just wanted to say
22 that I just wanted to rewind a little
23 bit because last year at this time
24 there was a lot of criticism for the
25 Commissioners for the machines that

1 were chosen, and that criticism in my
2 opinion was really misplaced. I
3 thought the focus really should have
4 been and still should be in light of
5 the situation that we're in now, the
6 focus really should have been on the
7 statewide process and selection. And I
8 think that questions, confusion, issues
9 across the board could have been
10 handled just across county lines no
11 matter what part of the Commonwealth
12 that you're in.

13 So I just really wanted to
14 state that again I think the machines
15 themselves were not the issue. The
16 issue was really the process and that
17 we should have been able to rely on
18 Harrisburg to really help us, help the
19 entire Commonwealth in terms of making
20 a selection, but now here we are. And
21 as we get ready for next week, I've
22 heard a couple of different -- my
23 question was asked a couple of
24 different ways, but I'm not really sure
25 that I got the answer I was looking

1 for.

2 And the question really is,
3 post-June 2nd, a strategy to avoid the
4 onslaught of mail-in ballots, so just
5 from your earlier statement you
6 suggested that you thought that come
7 November, we might have an onslaught of
8 these ballots. Is there a strategy?
9 Does that rely primarily on the budget
10 that you all receive or an increase in
11 the budget from the State or how do we
12 avoid an onslaught, I guess is really
13 what my question is?

14 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Well,
15 thank you for your question and thank
16 you for your support with regard to the
17 machine selection and the process.

18 We're hoping that as we
19 approach November, we will go to green
20 as a county and then we'll be able to
21 roll out Act 77 in the way that it was
22 meant to be implemented. So that would
23 give communities the opportunity to
24 vote early in a way, because they could
25 go to -- they could come and apply for

1 a no-excuse mail-in ballot and get that
2 ballot on the spot and vote, and that
3 hopefully will take a burden away from
4 having all the mail-in ballots come in
5 through the Postal Service all at once,
6 and that will also help with
7 Councilwoman Parker's ballot concerns
8 and comments, because that will enable
9 us to get into the communities before
10 election, talk about the opportunities
11 with no-excuse mail-in ballot, talk
12 about the opportunities for voters to
13 vote before Election Day at an early
14 voting center or vote center for
15 mail-in ballots with no excuse.

16 We had started down that road
17 looking at locations that we could have
18 throughout the City and have people
19 come in, in churches and organizations,
20 bring people in to apply, but
21 unfortunately, the virus stymied all of
22 those plans and efforts. So hopefully,
23 we'll have an opportunity to see Act 77
24 in its full potential, obviously not
25 its fullest potential in a short time

1 frame. But hopefully, we'll be able to
2 have some opportunity for voters to
3 vote on a ballot before the deadline,
4 before racing to get it in the mail,
5 they will be able to do that in person,
6 but that will require resources, the
7 staff and everything else.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Got you.
9 Thank you.

10 Thank you, Mr. President.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
12 Thank you, Councilwoman.

13 Chair recognizes Councilwoman
14 Brooks.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Good
16 morning. I want to start by saying I
17 share the sentiments of my colleagues,
18 all the amazing work you guys are doing
19 over there. It has been a pleasure for
20 me and my team to work directly with
21 you on some of the issues that my
22 colleagues brought up around the
23 digital divide and voter suppression
24 and how we can get these applications
25 out to the community.

1 So I have a few questions. I
2 want you to be able to talk about any
3 work that's being done to train younger
4 poll workers, because we know that a
5 large part of our poll workers are
6 senior citizens and populations that
7 are at risk on this pandemic, so is
8 there any plan to reach out to younger
9 people as well as what adjustments are
10 you considering in preparation for the
11 General Election in November,
12 especially in regards to poll worker
13 recruitment, and is this cost included
14 in the \$2 million estimate that you
15 mentioned to my colleague Katherine
16 Gilmore Richardson?

17 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Thank
18 you, Councilwoman. So that's a great
19 question and that has been a passion of
20 mine since being elected, getting the
21 word out to our young people about the
22 importance of voting, getting them to
23 start early and hopefully be
24 participants in the process as they
25 grow older.

1 We did start a student poll
2 worker program and that we highlighted
3 and now that we have the pandemic and
4 the schools are closed, it's been a
5 little bit of a challenge. But we hope
6 to really roll that out again for the
7 November General Election where we know
8 that we'll have much more interest from
9 our young people in the General
10 Election, and certainly provide an
11 opportunity for young people, 17-year-
12 olds, to work the polls with us on
13 Election Day.

14 I've partnered with Bo
15 Daujon(ph) and the School District and
16 other organizations to do all that we
17 can, Millennials In Action and several
18 different organizations in trying to
19 get young people involved in the
20 process. And now that I have much
21 younger colleagues, Commissioner
22 Schmidt and Commissioner Sabir, I'm
23 sure that my colleagues will continue
24 that great work and we'll get all that
25 we can and do a better job of getting

1 some young people at the polls working
2 for us in November, because the level
3 of interest is certainly much higher in
4 the General Election.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Yes.

6 I looked --

7 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: And \$2
8 million that was referenced to
9 Councilwoman Gilmore Richardson, that
10 was just related in regards to mailing
11 everybody an application. That doesn't
12 even -- we haven't even talked about
13 Election Day. That's just the
14 application, mailing it, having
15 applications come back, having to have
16 them all opened and processed and then
17 a ballot goes out. And that is
18 independent of whatever costs would
19 happen, in addition to stand-up in
20 election.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank
22 you, Commissioner. I have one more
23 question. Can you talk about the app
24 you created to increase civic
25 engagement with young people and has it

1 been successful and how are you
2 measuring the process and how would
3 third-party independent and more
4 aggressive movements be represented in
5 using that app?

6 I thought it was a really
7 good initiative that you guys launched
8 in the beginning and I just would like
9 to see what it's going to look like
10 moving forward. And that will be the
11 end of my questions. Thank you.

12 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Thank
13 you, Councilwoman.

14 The app is actually one of
15 the items that we are hoping to be able
16 to fully implement. It's Commissioner
17 Sabir's initiative and that is part of
18 our budget constraint that we have now
19 with this new budget that we have.
20 With our previous budget numbers, we
21 had expected to implement the app and
22 roll it out. We had thought we would
23 roll it out as soon as possible, but
24 then the virus and now we have a
25 General Election, and now our budget

1 has been drastically cut making it a
2 challenge to be able to do that.
3 That's one more thing that is the
4 victim of our budget cut at its present
5 numbers.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

7 Thank you. Thank you, Councilwoman.

8 Chair recognizes Councilman
9 Thomas.

10 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good
11 morning. I just want to start by
12 echoing the sentiments of my colleagues
13 and commending the Commissioners for
14 the great work they're doing as well as
15 the opportunity to partner with you on
16 a number of different occasions. I too
17 appreciate all you've done. And I just
18 have a few questions. I know you have
19 to go so I don't want to be too long.

20 My first question, I just
21 want to start back where my colleague
22 Councilmember Katherine Gilmore
23 Richardson spoke to specifically about
24 the \$2 million estimate as it related
25 to mailing everybody a ballot. I'm

1 wondering from a logistics perspective,
2 and I don't need an actual number
3 because I know you will be just
4 estimating, but from a logistics
5 perspective I'm wondering your thoughts
6 on if we were to only mail a ballot to
7 people who requested it in a primary
8 and people who actually voted in a
9 primary, so that would maybe limit the
10 number of ballots that we send out by
11 possibly half if we were to just go for
12 people who already mailed in a ballot
13 and people who already voted. I'm
14 wondering your thoughts on that and
15 logistically, do you think that will be
16 a little more feasible for the
17 Commissioner's Office to accomplish?

18 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: I'm
19 going to call on Nick Custodio to
20 answer that question.

21 MR. CUSTODIO: Thank you,
22 Councilmember. The issue is like the
23 Chairwoman said earlier, state law
24 right now does not allow us to just
25 send a ballot to voters without an

1 application. However, Act 77 did have
2 an expansion of the permanent mail-in
3 and absentee list, so there's a box on
4 both the online and paper applications
5 that voters can check to get onto the
6 permanent list, so all of the voters
7 who apply to be on the permanent list
8 will be automatically mailed a ballot
9 for this November's election
10 immediately in the beginning when we
11 start mailing. And then in February,
12 they'll get another application to ask
13 them if they would like to continue to
14 be on the permanent list for next
15 year's election.

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: That's
17 amazing. Do you know how many people
18 have signed up so far to be on that
19 list, an approximate maybe?

20 MR. CUSTODIO: I'm not sure
21 off the top of my head, Councilmember,
22 but I can look it up and follow up with
23 your office afterwards. I know,
24 especially in the beginning, especially
25 if you're getting online, the number

1 was fairly significant.

2 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
3 you. So real quick because I know you
4 have to go, I'm wondering when you set
5 up the early voting centers,
6 approximately how much does it cost us
7 to set up an early voting center, and
8 do you think that increasing the number
9 of early voting centers leading to the
10 General Election would help with some
11 of the logistical issues you have? And
12 after that, I am done. Thank you.

13 And thank you, Council
14 President, as well too.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
16 Thank you, Councilman.

17 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Well,
18 I'm going to answer the second half of
19 that myself. And as far as the cost, I
20 don't really know that we have an
21 estimated cost. If we do, Deputy
22 Custodio will answer. But certainly, I
23 believe that if we are able to have
24 some of these locations throughout the
25 City in various communities, it will

1 give us a unique opportunity to engage
2 with people before Election Day, get
3 people signed up and voted already and
4 that would have -- it could have the
5 potential of drastically limiting the
6 number of paper applications that we
7 get in the mail. As far as the cost,
8 Nick?

9 MR. CUSTODIO: Thanks,
10 Councilman. I can look up the cost and
11 follow up with your office afterwards.
12 We were doing some basic estimates.
13 Basically, it's staffing and equipment
14 costs. In addition to that, we do have
15 some limitations around the City as far
16 as technology costs with getting
17 locations on City.net in order to
18 securely connect to the Sure network,
19 but I can put together the cost
20 estimates and follow up with you on
21 that.

22 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank
23 you. Thank you again for everything.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
25 Thank you.

1 Chair recognizes Councilman
2 Squilla.

3 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
4 you, Council President.

5 Thank you, Commissioners, and
6 I appreciate all the work and effort
7 you guys have put into this. A lot of
8 questions have been asked and answered
9 already.

10 Just a quick question on
11 people who are contacting us for some
12 questions. I know that the phone lines
13 have been busy and it's hard to answer
14 all the questions from the public. But
15 people said that they have received
16 emails or notices that their mail-in
17 ballots have been received and
18 recorded, but then they get another
19 email saying that your ballot has been
20 rejected because of duplication.

21 Is there a way we can get an
22 answer for them on how that works? And
23 was it that somebody tried to input it
24 twice or can we email it directly to
25 Nick or you, Lisa?

1 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Thank
2 you, Councilman. So my office is open.
3 Every day we're here. The phones have
4 been a real challenge for us. Just
5 this morning I had over 400 voicemails
6 on just my phone in the office and the
7 phones continue to ring, so getting to
8 the voicemails has been a unique team
9 effort with Commissioner Sabir's office
10 staff and my office staff just calling
11 people back day after day trying to get
12 all of that information. But of
13 course, you can email me or email Nick
14 or anybody on my team and give that
15 information out to any of your
16 constituents who may be calling.

17 There is some issue with a
18 duplicate that may be related to the
19 Sure system, and then there are other
20 issues where people may have forgotten
21 that they applied or the time that they
22 applied was so long ago they forgot or
23 they didn't think they were going to
24 get their ballots so they reapplied.
25 All those questions and issues we're

1 happy to answer if you just send me an
2 email or anybody on my team. We're
3 happy to answer that or you can --

4 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
5 you, and I appreciate it. I know we've
6 been hounding you guys the last several
7 weeks and I appreciate your
8 responsiveness and your team's
9 responsiveness. It's not always you
10 like the answers you get, but we do get
11 answers from you guys and that's the
12 most important part. So thank you all
13 for the work you're doing and we'll
14 continue to work with you to get
15 through this.

16 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: If I
17 may, Councilman, I'm going to have Nick
18 Custodio address the issue from the
19 technical standpoint so that everybody
20 has the answer, because I know voters
21 are calling about it. Nick?

22 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
23 you.

24 MR. CUSTODIO: Thank you,
25 Councilman. If you know a constituent

1 that has that, feel free to forward
2 that over to us, specifically in the
3 case that you mentioned where a voter
4 has submitted their vote, has voted
5 already. If they're getting a thing
6 on duplicate, they should ignore it
7 because their vote is counted if they
8 sent their ballot to us.

9 The issue is every time you
10 sign up on the State's website, you
11 apply on the State's website, it
12 creates a unique record for you. So
13 though your first application was
14 processed correctly, all of your
15 subsequent duplicate applications,
16 you'll get an email when those are
17 rejected as duplicates because other --
18 we're only sending one ballot per
19 voter.

20 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay.
21 Thank you very much.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
23 Thank you, Councilman.

24 Thank you all for your
25 questions and thank you, Commissioners,

1 for your responses. We're going to let
2 you guys go so you can get those
3 applications processed. Still waiting
4 for mine in the mail. I understand
5 it's a very, very lengthy process and I
6 appreciate the fact that we're getting
7 a much more significant response than
8 we anticipated, so that's a good thing.
9 So thank you all and thank you for your
10 testimony. We look forward to talking
11 to you after this is all over to see
12 what we can help you do to improve the
13 process. Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER DEELEY: Thank
15 you so much. Thank you.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
17 And next up we'll be having the
18 Managing Director's Office. Let us
19 know when you guys are ready.

20 MR. ABERNATHY: I'm ready
21 when you are, sir.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
23 Ready? Okay. Well, unlike the
24 traditional way, we don't have to wait
25 for everybody to walk out of the room

1 and walk in the room to testify in
2 Council chambers, so this is a very
3 smooth transition.

4 So, Mr. Abernathy, you can
5 please proceed with your testimony. We
6 would generally appreciate it. Thank
7 you so much for being here.

8 MR. ABERNATHY: Thank you,
9 sir. And good morning, President
10 Clarke and members of City Council.
11 I'm Brian Abernathy, Managing Director.
12 And joining me today are a number of
13 members of my senior staff as well as
14 senior staff members from the
15 Departments of Streets, Parks &
16 Recreation, Free Library, Licenses and
17 Inspections, the Office of Homeless
18 Services, the Office of Emergency
19 Management, the Office of
20 Transportation, Infrastructure and
21 Sustainability as well as from SEPTA.

22 I wanted to touch on major
23 changes in the newly proposed budget
24 quickly for each of those departments.
25 In the Managing Director's Office, we

1 are eliminating a number of existing
2 and vacant positions, including the
3 originally proposed Opioid Response
4 Unit staffing. We are also proposing
5 reduction of the Animal Care and
6 Control Team Professional Service
7 Contract, reduction of the
8 Transportation and Infrastructure
9 Professional Services contracts related
10 to CONNECT and Vision Zero, the
11 elimination of the proposed expansion
12 of the Police-assisted Diversion
13 program, the restructure of the Youth,
14 Violence Reduction Partnership, which
15 will be restructured and integrated
16 into the Group Violence Intervention
17 strategy, reduction of the Targeted
18 Community Investment Grant Program
19 budget, which provides grants to
20 community-based organizations, and
21 finally, reduction of Legal Services
22 contract with the Defender Association
23 as well as some decreases in class of
24 300 and 400.

25 In the Department of Streets,

1 they have completely deferred the city-
2 wide expansion in mechanical street
3 cleaning and eliminated a number of
4 programs, including Future Track and
5 Keep Philadelphia Beautiful that do not
6 contribute directly to core services.
7 The Department will defer investments
8 to enhanced project management and
9 notably, the Department was able to
10 negotiate a reduction in recycling
11 rates and this is positively reflected
12 in the proposed budget.

13 Transportation and
14 Infrastructure has consolidated Zero
15 Waste and Litter Cabinet within
16 Sustainability and restructured
17 Sustainability's climate and resiliency
18 focus to reduce in delaying new hires.
19 Requests for funds for professional
20 services have been significantly
21 reduced and the Solar Rebate Program
22 has been eliminated, and funds for
23 efficiency improvements to municipal
24 facilities have been shaved down.

25 In Parks & Recreation, there

1 are reduced operating hours at a number
2 of our recreation centers. We have
3 eliminated a number of part-time and
4 seasonal positions, and the Dell season
5 will not happen this season and pools
6 will not open this season. At the Free
7 Library, we have moved to five-day
8 service at our neighborhood branches
9 and eliminated part-time and seasonal
10 positions.

11 At the office of Homeless
12 Services, our General Fund has been
13 reduced by 12.9 million and those
14 expenses have been charged to the new
15 Emergency Shelter Grant Program and a
16 small number of positions were also
17 eliminated. And finally, in Licenses
18 and Inspections the Department's public
19 demolition program will be slightly
20 reduced. Project demolitions for FY21
21 have been reduced from 450 down to 375.
22 A small number of unfilled plans review
23 and inspectional positions are being
24 eliminated with no impact to pre-COVID
25 service level, and the Department's

1 support for violence reduction efforts
2 will concentrate on police department
3 pinpoint areas. That concludes my
4 brief summarized testimony. I'm happy
5 to answer questions as well as our
6 other departments that are present.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

8 Thank you, Managing Director. I got a
9 couple of quick questions as members
10 are teeing up.

11 Real quick, Mann Music
12 Center, what's the City's relationship
13 with the Mann Music Center?

14 MR. ABERNATHY: The Mann --
15 actually, Deputy Wilson, are you on?

16 MR. WILSON: Yes.

17 MR. ABERNATHY: All right.

18 MR. WILSON: Good morning,
19 Council President.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

21 Good morning.

22 MR. WILSON: The relationship
23 with the Mann -- the Mann is a leased
24 entity to the City. We do provide them
25 with some support on the capital side.

1 But for the main part, that's a
2 nonprofit organization that runs that
3 structure or runs that venue.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

5 The first part, you said they have a
6 lease?

7 MR. WILSON: Yes, it's a
8 lease agreement with a nonprofit entity
9 that manages that venue.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

11 And the owner is?

12 MR. ABERNATHY: The City.

13 MR. WILSON: The City is the
14 owner. They lease --

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

16 Because I'm asked this question when
17 they talk -- somebody heard the Dell
18 was closing and I explained to them we
19 can't have crowds. Is the Mann also
20 closed?

21 MR. WILSON: My
22 understanding, the Mann has not -- I
23 have not gotten any information on them
24 running any events this year. So
25 basically, I believe that their

1 schedule has been suspended. I have
2 not heard from them for anything that's
3 later in the summer.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

5 Okay. If you can just check, because
6 as soon as they hear the Dell which is
7 adjacent to my District, people ask me
8 about the Mann.

9 MR. WILSON: We'll check on
10 that.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

12 Okay. Thank you.

13 Mr. Abernathy, I got a couple
14 of quick questions about the MDO's
15 Office and OEM, and you guys
16 essentially have been at the center at
17 this whole response to the COVID-19
18 issue. And I know the roles have
19 shifted as we move through this
20 process. I know here at Council we've
21 shifted our response doing different
22 advertisements, Zooms and now we're
23 moving the budget process and so on.

24 In terms of the process, will
25 you all be shifting your role? And

1 I've seen a little bit of that focus
2 shift. Can you just kind of quickly
3 talk to me about the shift in your
4 responsibility and how you strategize
5 as you move along. And then added to
6 that question, I'm going to ask you
7 what your role will be in the economic
8 recovery aspect of what we need to do
9 in the City of Philadelphia?

10 MR. ABERNATHY: Certainly.
11 So the Office of Emergency Management
12 is primarily a coordinating and
13 facilitating agency and planning
14 agency. And so, when the crisis first
15 began, we did follow basic incident
16 management protocols which stood up a
17 Unified Command Group, which consisted
18 of myself, the Chief of Staff, the
19 Chief Administrative Officer,
20 Commissioner Thiel is also the Director
21 of Emergency Management, Commissioner
22 Outlaw and the Finance Director and
23 Health Commissioner as well as the Law
24 Department, and I feel like I'm
25 forgetting someone in that group and I

1 apologize now.

2 That Unified Command Group
3 met daily twice a day to talk through
4 what happened and what initial
5 responses needed to be made. And so,
6 as we looked at, say, the initial
7 response of standing up the Liacouras
8 Center, those decisions were made by
9 the Unified Command Group under
10 incident commands. The Mayor often sat
11 in on those as well, so he was aware as
12 we made those decisions. That Unified
13 Command Group has continued to meet,
14 although our focus is not as much on
15 operations. And so, we are still
16 tracking personal protective equipment.
17 We're still tracking fatality
18 management. We're still tracking the
19 usage of hospital beds throughout our
20 system, but we are now also focused on
21 reopening, what precautions do we need
22 to take, what levels do we need to hit
23 in order to move from red to green --
24 or red to yellow, yellow to green, what
25 precautions do businesses need to use,

1 what business guidance do we need to
2 provide and then how does our Recovery
3 Committee begin to make sure that we
4 get the most out of our financial
5 recovery and make sure we don't leave
6 any dollars on the table as it relates
7 to CARES and Stafford Act money.

8 All of that work continues
9 and certainly that -- and again, that
10 Unified Command Group is a cross-
11 section of agencies. While the Office
12 of Emergency Management certainly
13 staffs that group and provides again
14 facilitation and staff support, it is
15 not the primary driver. And again, I
16 would declare it as more of a
17 facilitator than I would say -- and a
18 convener rather than necessarily a
19 leader.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

21 You answered my next question which was
22 maximizing state and federal resources
23 that could be available so that you
24 guys in OEM I guess, particularly as it
25 relates to our early phases, will make

1 sure that happens. During the course
2 of all of this and we've never been
3 through anything like this before,
4 we've had starts and stops as it
5 relates to the relationship between
6 Council and -- the Legislative and the
7 Executive branch. At times, there had
8 to be a request for briefings and
9 information.

10 As we move towards the
11 recovery phase, have you all given any
12 thought to having any more inclusive
13 type of relationship with Council
14 because we've been asked to step to the
15 plate and pass legislation in a timely
16 way doing whatever we had to do. And
17 in all honesty and I guess in a very
18 public way, we would like to see a more
19 inclusive process. Members of Council
20 do have good ideas, and that's not
21 suggesting that somehow you all are not
22 interacting with us because we do, but
23 we are in this together, this is the
24 real deal, and we would like to be in a
25 position in realtime, not necessarily

1 after decisions are made to say, well,
2 we're going to be briefed and this is
3 what we did and this is what happened.
4 It would be a little better for all the
5 citizens, I think, if we had those
6 conversations early on, if you know
7 what I mean.

8 MR. ABERNATHY: Yes, sir.
9 I'm happy to have that conversation --

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: --
11 in a clear and productive way.

12 MR. ABERNATHY: -- to figure
13 out what that structure is and make
14 sure that you all are included in it.
15 To your point, you all have been
16 incredible partners throughout and we
17 do know that we have to move quickly
18 and in a way that is not -- none of
19 this has been normal and we appreciate
20 you all's patience and willingness to
21 kind of trust us to help manage that,
22 but I certainly understand your point
23 and I'm happy to have that conversation
24 to figure out what that interaction
25 looks like.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

2 And for the record, you've always been
3 very responsive. I just want to let
4 folks know it's not to that degree.

5 You got a couple of things on
6 here that I'm a little concerned about
7 in terms of cuts, and I know that the
8 Police Department we're obviously
9 keeping whole. The Mayor has said,
10 I've heard him on a number of
11 occasions, he wants to make sure that
12 we stand up education, we stand up
13 public safety and I'm all for that.
14 But particularly, on the public safety
15 side there are underlying issues that
16 we've talked about for a long, long
17 time and understanding you all have
18 been a part of that discussion.

19 And I'm a little concerned
20 that we're cutting back on programs
21 that deal with the front side, as an
22 example, this issue with respect to
23 Workforce Development. People have
24 jobs. It's a clear relationship
25 between the likelihood of that person

1 (inaudible); this issue about Violence
2 Prevention Office, there's a clear
3 relationship; this issue around
4 poverty, there's a clear relationship.
5 And I don't know what role you play in
6 terms of the operating side of it, but
7 I just want to say that there is a
8 concern that if you don't stand up the
9 front side, I think the backside gets
10 worse, not better. Can you just kind
11 of talk to me of any role in the MDO's
12 Office of being responsible to the
13 degree that you are --

14 MR. ABERNATHY: Sure.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: --
16 to thinking it.

17 MR. ABERNATHY: So in
18 violence prevention specifically, I'll
19 start there, we've tried to maintain
20 our investments in Group Violence
21 Intervention as well as in the
22 Community Crisis Intervention Program,
23 two programs that are evidence-based
24 and have shown -- in the case of CCIP
25 have shown some early indications of

1 making progress before COVID-19 hit.
2 So we do believe those investments will
3 be continued. YVRP has been a
4 longstanding program and we believe we
5 can integrate on much of YVRP's success
6 into both CCIP and into GVI. And so, I
7 think we are maintaining or at least
8 trying everything we can to maintain
9 the Office of Violence Prevention and
10 the gains that they've made.

11 On the Office of Workforce
12 Development, this was a challenge and I
13 think we also recognized that the
14 office didn't exist three years ago so
15 this is a relatively new office,
16 although the functions certainly
17 existed. And so, some of those
18 functions have moved over to the
19 Commerce Department. And I think we've
20 also recognized that we're going to
21 need to do more on the Office of Adult
22 Education, specifically around digital
23 access and digital literacy. So my
24 staff, my Chief of Staff, the Policy
25 Director from the Mayor's Office and

1 others are talking through exactly what
2 does that look like in the future. But
3 we do recognize that we are going to
4 need to stand up those functions and
5 make sure that we are providing those
6 services to our constituents and our
7 residents in a way that the current
8 proposal doesn't do. So I think that
9 is a criticism that I will own and we
10 will be making adjustments to make sure
11 that we cover those issues.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

13 All right. Well, I don't want to come
14 off as a criticism because like I said,
15 we're all one team, the City of
16 Philadelphia. We just want to make
17 sure that we deal with this issue. The
18 pandemic has affected us all. It --
19 and we understand that there's some
20 things that we still must do. It's
21 still essential that we reduce poverty.
22 It's still essential that we make sure
23 that people have a reasonable place to
24 live. It's still essential that we
25 make the Police Department's job a lot

1 easier by having less people finding
2 themselves in the critical path towards
3 interaction with the police and the
4 criminal justice system. So as we move
5 ahead through this very truncated
6 process, i.e., Fiscal '21 budget, we
7 want to have a little bit more
8 conversation whenever we can break off
9 time to talk about how we strategize
10 moving forward.

11 All right. Well, I want to
12 get off because I know we got a
13 timeline. And I believe next up is
14 Councilman Jones.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
16 Mr. President.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
18 You're welcome, sir.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: And I'm
20 sure you will share this point of view
21 with me. The Managing Director, we
22 claimed him. He originally came from
23 City Council in Member DiCicco's
24 office, and it's almost like watching
25 one of your younger cousins grow up in

1 front of your eyes. And I want to give
2 you and Tumar in particular, a shout-
3 out because this wave of pandemic, I
4 watched every single briefing from the
5 Federal White House to Jersey to
6 Pennsylvania, and none of them have
7 been as forthcoming and ready to
8 withstand the wave as you guys have, so
9 I'm proud to be a Philadelphian in part
10 because of you.

11 Having said all of that, here
12 comes the good stuff. So one of the
13 things just as an FYI, Mr. President,
14 the Mann has canceled all of its season
15 except for two concerts that they're
16 holding out. One is the Hall & Oates
17 concert in September, and then the
18 Roots concert in August has yet to be
19 determined. And a lot of that will be
20 determined by some of the questions I'm
21 going to ask today.

22 The first thing I guess I
23 want to talk about is, you've had to
24 build a plane and fly it at the same
25 time. You didn't get a manual handed

1 to you to do this. But what I want to
2 focus on and drill down on is places
3 like the complex MSB, City Hall and the
4 Justice Center, how are you reshaping
5 social distancing to keep the public
6 safe but also folks like people who
7 work for City Council and other
8 departments safe and what does that
9 mean by way of physical plan?

10 Are we going to come back,
11 and I'm guessing some time after June
12 4th, will we have the notorious lines
13 out in front of City Hall to get in?
14 How do we do spacing? When we will
15 have a plan for dispensaries of
16 sanitation equipment, those kinds of
17 physical little things that mean so
18 much in a pandemic?

19 MR. ABERNATHY: Sure. So we
20 are actually working on those issues
21 now. And unfortunately, I don't have
22 all of the answers for this morning,
23 but certainly, I'm happy to give you an
24 update on where we are. And if you
25 have ideas on how we can shift, I'm

1 happy to listen to those. But I think
2 there -- as we look at not just the
3 quadplex, but just all business
4 operations throughout the City, we are
5 going to be providing some guidance and
6 some recommendations on how to operate
7 safely.

8 Some of that is obviously
9 public masking. I think we will be
10 requiring masking in all of our City
11 buildings for all of our employees.
12 Unless they're in their private office
13 or at their cubicle, they're going to
14 be required to wear a mask whenever
15 they leave, or when they go into a
16 meeting, we'll certainly be
17 recommending handwashing. We've
18 already increased the amount of
19 cleaning in all of our buildings.
20 We've added barriers in many cases,
21 whether those are sneeze guards or
22 plexiglass screens for our security
23 guards, so those things are already in
24 place. And then we'll also be
25 enforcing, you know, if people come to

1 work sick, they're going to need to go
2 home. And --

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: So, Brian,
4 because he'll gong me, does that mean
5 that we'll have temperature testing at
6 the doors and if someone is found to
7 have a fever of 105, will they be
8 turned away? When will that policy be
9 in the hands of the President so that
10 we know how to follow it?

11 MR. ABERNATHY: Sure. So
12 we're still trying to finalize all of
13 those policies and we should be able to
14 get them to you in the next week or so.

15 Mr. Alexander, do you have
16 anything to add since you were working
17 on those directly?

18 MR. ALEXANDER: Yes. I would
19 just -- good morning, everyone. Tumar
20 Alexander, Deputy Managing Director.

21 I would just add that we've
22 been working with departments to sort
23 of -- so we put out a survey to all of
24 the internal City departments and also
25 to the independent elected officials

1 just trying to get a sense of what are
2 some items you need to come back, is
3 there ability for folks to continue
4 working from home even as we progress
5 through the yellow and green phase.
6 We're looking at a phased approach to
7 government. So it's not June 5th the
8 Governor will announce we'll be moving
9 to yellow that every City department --
10 or we'll ask every City department,
11 every City employee to report back to
12 work.

13 We've been standing up our
14 offices in phases, so we stood up a
15 bunch of offices to support the
16 construction industry being reopened.
17 We stood up some more offices to
18 support the real estate to being
19 reopened, so we're looking at that
20 phased approach. The next phase is how
21 do we help support the citizens, so is
22 it come into the concourse to do water
23 revenue transactions, L&I transactions,
24 is it the Register of Will's Office to
25 help people probate their estates and

1 take care of that type of business, is
2 it support in the Office of Planned
3 Development to be able to be get ZBA
4 online and other sort of supportive
5 activities.

6 And, Councilman, I wouldn't
7 say that, you know -- as we're working
8 through these policies, I wouldn't say
9 we're going to be strict or look at
10 temperature-taking everyone in the
11 building. We're trying to design this
12 department by department for certain
13 needs, so there will be a questionnaire
14 similar to when we go to the doctor's,
15 like are you feeling well, have you had
16 a fever, just some of that stuff,
17 that's instituted in some of our
18 departments now, but we're going to
19 look to push that out and come up with
20 a plan.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: So major
22 entrances and exits, there's a new
23 technology, and it's a little invasive,
24 I will say that, but it can hit a body
25 image and tell the temperature. And we

1 should take a look at that going into
2 at least our major buildings.

3 And finally, will there be
4 a -- I've been talking to a lot of the
5 small businesses in the City of
6 Philadelphia as you know,
7 Mr. Alexander, and they are anxiously
8 anticipating regulations that can be
9 given to them on how they slowly,
10 softly open back up and be able to from
11 Main Street to Market Street to North
12 22nd Street, as you say, Mr. Alexander,
13 in an equitable lens be able to open
14 up. So I know there are groups
15 meeting. Tell us who they are that are
16 around that table, what voices, and
17 when can we expect a manifesto?

18 MR. ALEXANDER: So like Brian
19 mentioned, we're trying to get that out
20 this week or next week trying to get
21 ahead of the June 5th sort of yellow
22 phase reopening, but it's all
23 departments. So it's OIT at the table,
24 it's Managing Director's Office, it's
25 the Commerce Department, it's

1 departments all across City government
2 that sit at the table and we're being
3 led and sort of coordinated by the
4 Health Department and the Health
5 Department's guidance. So we're going
6 to have those individual
7 guidance/regulations for those
8 industries on how once we reopen, how
9 they can continue to socially distance
10 and continue to keep citizens safe and
11 continue to also try to recover their
12 businesses as well.

13 MR. ABERNATHY: And just to
14 also piggyback on that, in addition to
15 the internal departments, we're also
16 inviting input from the restaurant
17 industry, the hospitality industry,
18 those businesses that are actually
19 going to be impacted by the regulations
20 that we're putting forward, and
21 Commerce has helped us coordinate that
22 advice.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
24 Mr. President.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

1 Thank you, Councilman.

2 Chair recognizes Councilwoman
3 Parker.

4 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
5 you, Mr. President.

6 And let me echo the
7 sentiments that you heard from Council
8 President Clarke and Councilman Jones.
9 Brian, Tumar and all members of the MDO
10 team, no one can prepare you for this
11 moment, but you've done your best to
12 meet it. I want you to know that I
13 don't apologize for blowing your phones
14 up and calling you and texting you at
15 all times at night, in the morning.
16 That's what I'm supposed to do. What I
17 do appreciate is the responses that
18 you've given to me.

19 With that being said, Brian,
20 many of the departments that fall under
21 your purview, Streets, L&I, Parks &
22 Rec, Homeless Services, OEM, these are
23 the frontline workers. We've listened
24 to the briefings and we're keeping
25 track of the numbers city-wide. We

1 thank you for the efficiencies in
2 reporting them. But we need to know
3 out of those frontline workers, I'm
4 interested in the demographic
5 information relative to our City
6 employee who contracted COVID-19.

7 For example, how many Streets
8 Department employees have contracted
9 COVID-19? What divisions are they in,
10 for example, Sanitation? What's the
11 racial, ethnic and gender breakdown of
12 Streets Department employees who have
13 contracted COVID-19? How many have
14 recovered and how many have succumbed
15 to the virus? And I'm going to ask the
16 same thing of SEPTA because of its
17 frontline workers. Have we collected
18 or do we have any of that type of data
19 online available?

20 MR. ABERNATHY: So,
21 Councilmember, we've taken a city-wide
22 position that we won't be sharing the
23 numbers of people who have been
24 impacted by COVID-19 by department,
25 that we were -- we found very early

1 that the press had tried to identify
2 those employees, and for the sake of
3 their privacy didn't feel like to have
4 that conversation publicly was helpful
5 for the public conversation and wanted
6 to protect our members' privacies.

7 Now, having said that, I'm
8 happy to have a conversation with you
9 to kind of talk to you of what those
10 impacts are on our workers, what we
11 have seen and what our challenges have
12 been. Not trying to hide that
13 information from you as our partner,
14 but it is something that we don't think
15 it's a benefit to have a public
16 conversation on.

17 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: And
18 relative to public safety and privacy,
19 let me say I understand that
20 perspective. But I would even if it's
21 not based on department, what should
22 suffice is the ability for the City to
23 tell us what the demographic data is.
24 Of all of the City employees who
25 contracted COVID-19, give us a racial,

1 an age. And if you can't give us a
2 department, the public and we should
3 have a snapshot of how this is
4 impacting frontline City of
5 Philadelphia workers.

6 And again, part of the reason
7 why I asked this question is because I
8 introduced a resolution in Council to
9 hold hearings about the safety and
10 well-being of workers in the Sanitation
11 division and I look forward to having a
12 hearing. But, Brian, that hearing is
13 going to switch now, right. Instead of
14 just general safety, it's going to talk
15 about how sanitation workers have been
16 impacted by COVID-19 as well, so that
17 information would be extremely
18 important to me.

19 Next, help me with this:
20 Trash, residential trash collection,
21 it's skyrocketing, it's through the
22 roof. Commercial trash collection has
23 declined. How has this impacted our
24 pickup schedules and that kind of
25 processing? That's for Streets. And

1 then before my time is up, I have to
2 get to a question about Rebuild.

3 MR. ABERNATHY: Certainly.
4 So I think we have been pretty clear
5 that our collection times during a
6 recycling week often run a day,
7 sometimes two days behind, while during
8 a regular sanitation collection, we're
9 generally running on time or a couple
10 of hours behind.

11 But, Commissioner Williams, I
12 don't know if you have anything else to
13 add?

14 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS: Sure.
15 Good morning. This is Commissioner
16 Carlton Williams from the Streets
17 Department. I hope everyone is staying
18 safe. It has had a tremendous impact
19 as you stated, Councilmember Parker.
20 The amount of trash that's being
21 generated from the stay-at-home order
22 has definitely increased. We saw an
23 additional 4,000 tons in the month of
24 April alone in that area, so we're
25 challenged with that. Attendance has

1 been a challenge as a result of COVID.

2 And, Managing Director Brian
3 Abernathy, while we can't state
4 numbers, I can tell you it has a direct
5 impact as employees try to manage their
6 personal lives in dealing with COVID,
7 when they have contracted it or a
8 family member versus being able to come
9 to work. I want to say that they've
10 done an outstanding job helping us get
11 through this crisis. They've been on
12 the front lines. They've been out in
13 difficult weather conditions, and
14 they've also put themselves at risk,
15 but they are working and we have been
16 able to manage keeping trash at least
17 on a consistent schedule while it's
18 been delayed, but we're still
19 challenged, but we're still moving
20 forward hoping things will get better.

21 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
22 you, Commissioner, and that was the
23 purpose of my asking about that
24 demographic data, because when we have
25 frontline workers like sanitation

1 workers and others who are putting
2 their lives on the line, we need to
3 know the disproportionate impact
4 because we need to be able to measure
5 and for the public to know in a very
6 transparent way the sacrifice.

7 I don't know if we'll get to
8 a second round on this, but you have to
9 let me know, MDO, about Rebuild. We
10 gathered from the testimony last week,
11 no additional bonds will be issued for
12 Rebuild until at least FY22. That's
13 what we heard from Finance. However,
14 as your testimony said before COVID-19,
15 Rebuild's goal was to complete the 72
16 approved Rebuild facilities that have
17 been approved by Council. You wanted
18 to complete those projects and an
19 additional 10 projects were to have
20 been proposed to City Council this
21 spring.

22 Now, according to your
23 report, 65 of the 72 facilities are
24 under way. What's the status update of
25 the seven remaining sites in the first

1 batch? And then what are we going to
2 do about those 10 additional projects
3 to be able to move them forward in
4 FY21?

5 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:
6 Ms. Strong?

7 MS. STRONG: Hi. Good
8 morning. This is Kira Strong,
9 Executive Director of Rebuild. Hello,
10 Councilmember Parker. Thank you for
11 your question. I just want to make
12 sure you can hear me.

13 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Yes, I
14 can hear you well.

15 MS. STRONG: Great. Good
16 morning. So we are as you know and
17 mentioned active on 65 sites,
18 Councilmember, and we are looking
19 forward -- we had originally proposed
20 last spring to add an additional 10
21 sites. And when our legislation is
22 introduced and comes forward again, we
23 still, in working closely with each
24 Councilmember, have those 10 sites
25 still in our draft legislation. So

1 we're --

2 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: I'm
3 sorry. Let me ask you this: Are you
4 talking about -- you mean when the
5 legislation is moved; is that what
6 you're referencing?

7 MS. STRONG: That's correct,
8 the 10 additional sites.

9 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Got it.
10 My time is up. If we get a second
11 round, I'll come back.

12 Thank you very much,
13 Mr. President. Mr. President, I still
14 see your initials on the screen. I
15 don't know if that is my sign, but I
16 don't see you.

17 However, we will continue.
18 And the Chair recognizes Councilwoman
19 Helen Gym. Council Lady, can you hear
20 me? Councilwoman Gym? Okay. We'll
21 keep it going and come back to
22 Councilwoman Gym. She may have stepped
23 away.

24 Councilwoman Gauthier, are
25 you there?

1 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes.

2 Thank you, Madam Chair.

3 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Sure.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Given
5 the Administration's priority of
6 keeping people housed and sheltered
7 during this time, can you explain the
8 decision to cut funding for the
9 Philadelphia Eviction Prevention
10 Project. This initiative would seem to
11 be a prime candidate for an increase
12 from our emergency funding given the
13 anticipated spike in eviction filings
14 to come once the courts reopen in July.

15 MR. ABERNATHY: Certainly.
16 So just for the record to reflect, we
17 did not eliminate the program but we
18 did reduce the funding from where it
19 was last year. So I believe there's
20 still \$500,000 for Community Legal
21 Services to support the program. And
22 to your point, Councilmember, we
23 certainly recognize that there may be
24 additional funds that might be needed
25 and as we are evaluating our recovery

1 office and our recovery efforts, there
2 may be opportunities there to help
3 provide support. But as far as General
4 Fund support, we had to make a host of
5 difficult choices and present it with a
6 menu of bad choices. We thought it was
7 important to make sure the program was
8 still at least partially funded,
9 although there's a number of things
10 that we're not able to fund to my
11 satisfaction, but also recognize the
12 situation that we're in.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Our
14 housing crisis is likely to get worse.
15 And so, as we are prioritizing and
16 thinking about the things that will be
17 important to invest in as we recover, I
18 think housing needs to be at the top of
19 the list, and the PEPP program in
20 particular.

21 MR. ABERNATHY: It should --

22 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
23 Philadelphia is a sanctuary city and
24 that determination has a critical role
25 in the safety and security of families

1 across the region. With the cuts to
2 the Pennsylvania Immigrant Family Unity
3 Project, which is a public private
4 partnership funded in part by the City
5 to provide legal representation to
6 immigrants and detention, how do
7 families find relief? And
8 additionally, we've stated that a key
9 consideration for this budget is
10 equity. But how is it equitable to
11 allow families to stay in cages and to
12 be in mortal peril without any
13 assistance?

14 MR. ABERNATHY: We don't
15 think it's equitable. In fact, we've
16 called on the President multiple times
17 to actually reform the immigration
18 system. I've personally been in
19 Federal Court about his immigration
20 policies and will continue to fight
21 back against the rhetoric and the
22 actions of Washington, D.C.
23 Unfortunately, we've taken on a huge
24 and tremendous burden because of
25 federal policies and that burden is

1 very difficult for a city to bear on
2 its own.

3 And so, I think we will
4 actively try to fill that gap with
5 philanthropic dollars. We've already
6 offered and will continue to offer
7 support to help do that. But as it
8 relates to General Fund dollars, again
9 these are incredibly difficult
10 decisions that we've had to make and
11 really focus on core services. And so,
12 there's nothing that you say about that
13 program that I'm going to disagree
14 with. That program has been incredibly
15 successful. We really appreciate the
16 work that they've done. We've just had
17 to make some very challenging,
18 challenging choices.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: It's
20 a small budget program that provides a
21 lot of return on its investment to help
22 people who don't have any other access
23 to help, so I think that should be
24 considered.

25 And then lastly, the City of

1 Philadelphia funds Philadelphia
2 Unemployment Project at about \$55,000
3 which is 15 percent of their operating
4 budget and is required for an
5 additional PennDOT investment of
6 \$367,000. The project transports
7 Philadelphians from my District and
8 from many others to jobs in the
9 surrounding suburbs with starting wages
10 upwards of \$13.50 an hour and it
11 operates 24 hours a day, providing a
12 safe and reliable option when public
13 transportation is not available.

14 Given the importance of this
15 service to numerous community members,
16 what was the rationale around cutting
17 this line item in light of our
18 priorities of equity?

19 MR. ABERNATHY: Again, we've
20 had to make a number of difficult
21 choices as it relates to this budget.
22 And as we look at the number of people
23 helped by that program and what the
24 cost-effectiveness of it was, I think
25 again we had to make some challenging

1 choices and certainly, we'll provide
2 what support we can through Philly
3 Works for anyone who couldn't manage
4 transportation outside of the City
5 to -- for we can hopefully find jobs
6 inside the City.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I
8 guess the running theme of my
9 question -- the running theme is that
10 we state that a value of ours is equity
11 in the way that we've structured this
12 budget. But in terms of the cuts, the
13 people who are hurt are the most
14 vulnerable. I don't see the blue line.
15 I don't see where it's playing out.

16 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
17 you, Council Lady. Thank you so much
18 for your question.

19 Let me just say, Colleagues,
20 I just received a note from staff that
21 we still have to get SEPTA in and they
22 need to put their testimony on the
23 record before 12:30. SEPTA has to put
24 their testimony on before 12:30.

25 So now we're going to hear

1 from Councilwoman Gym. Thank you.

2 Thank you, Councilwoman
3 Gauthier.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
5 very much, Councilwoman Majority
6 Leader, and I appreciate your putting
7 me in.

8 First of all, I want to thank
9 Brian and your entire time for all the
10 work that you've been doing. This has
11 been unimaginable for you and for the
12 City, and I know a lot of this falls on
13 the weight of your shoulders as well.
14 I want to follow up a little bit with
15 what Councilmember Gauthier was talking
16 about regarding housing, of all the
17 calls that we're getting into our
18 office, the worry about how to make
19 rent and what are the things that are
20 in place while people are actually
21 waiting for unemployment insurance to
22 come through.

23 So as we know on this call
24 and those of you who are watching, we
25 have made a big breakthrough on

1 unemployment insurance. It covers gig
2 workers. It covers up to 100 percent,
3 but there's a tremendous delay at the
4 state level in order to get into it.
5 Only something like half of people are
6 able to get on. Many people that we've
7 talked to said that they can
8 potentially pay their rent if they can
9 get onto unemployment, but it's been
10 delayed by months.

11 And so, one of our concerns
12 about with 5,000 evictions already
13 scheduled to go in landlord tenant
14 court and those will start to begin on
15 July 10th, how is the City able to
16 allocate resources to prevent an
17 avalanche of evictions from hitting our
18 shelters, from the costs that we're
19 going to incur, to alleviate some of
20 our courts? And that's perfectly what
21 the PEPP project is able to do for
22 thousands of people. You know, we
23 can't pay for rent for everybody, but
24 we can help direct people into better
25 resources.

1 MR. ABERNATHY: Certainly.
2 And we share your concerns about what
3 may happen as the courts open up and
4 evictions start to occur. It's one of
5 the reasons we propose denying dollars
6 for rental support of individuals.
7 Now, that is a drop in bucket. We
8 certainly recognize that's not going to
9 solve the challenges we're about to
10 face.

11 And again, we'll continue to
12 look at what dollars we might make
13 available through federal funds to
14 support those programs going forward.
15 But again, as far as it relates to the
16 General Fund, I think we had to make
17 some challenging decisions. But again,
18 PEPP has been a great program. I
19 appreciate your advocacy and the way
20 both you and Councilmember Gauthier
21 have really championed that program.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Can City
23 funding, emergency funding resources be
24 used towards that, including
25 reimbursable funds including expansion

1 of PEPP?

2 MR. ABERNATHY: So it is
3 unlikely the Stafford Act dollars which
4 would be reimbursable dollars would
5 available for those funds or for that
6 purpose. It is possible that some
7 CARES Act money might be, and that
8 again as we continue to analyze exactly
9 how we can pull down dollars and for
10 what purpose, we're trying to sort
11 through that. But certainly, I've
12 heard loud and clear that housing is a
13 priority for Council and certainly, one
14 of our concerns as well.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Could you
16 give us an analysis on what federal
17 funds might be available around the
18 house issue? Can you get back to me on
19 that?

20 MR. ABERNATHY: Yes, I can
21 get back to you on that.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Great.
23 Thank you. And just a real quick
24 statement about Pipe Up, this is the
25 Immigrant Legal Defense Fund that the

1 Mayor was such a great champion of.
2 Philadelphia joined a handful of other
3 cities. And to be clear, I think one
4 of the things is we recognize that we
5 can't bear the burden of all the legal
6 defense on the City's shoulders. But I
7 think the hope was that the City was
8 able to maintain a nominal investment
9 in the program to keep it going while
10 so many immigrant families are bereft.
11 When an immigrant member goes into
12 detention, they lose a job and because
13 no immigrants, including legal
14 immigrants, green cardholders, LPR and
15 TPS recipients cannot qualify for
16 federal relief fund, this is a
17 particularly important issue.

18 So my last question is about
19 the \$13 million cut to OHS's budget
20 this year. Can you talk a little bit
21 about what amount of resources is OHS
22 able to devote to new emergency
23 homelessness prevention needs and how
24 are new needs and programs being
25 prioritized right now?

1 MR. ABERNATHY: And so, we
2 are maintaining with the emergency
3 shelter grant. We're maintaining
4 service goals from FY20 and are
5 currently looking at additional
6 resources and how to provide additional
7 support for both emergency and long-
8 term housing needs in the future.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: I want to
10 respect people's time. But could you
11 help us with maybe getting back to us
12 about what how the funds are being
13 differentiated between existing needs
14 and then new emergency needs that are
15 coming up that require new spending?
16 Can you get back to us on that?

17 MR. ABERNATHY: Certainly.
18 Yes.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you.

20 MR. ABERNATHY: No problem.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: All right.

22 Thank you very much, Madam Majority
23 Leader.

24 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
25 you, Council Lady.

1 Chair recognizes Councilman
2 Green.

3 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
4 Madam Chair.

5 Thank you, Managing Director
6 Abernathy, for the work that you and
7 your staff have been doing throughout
8 this COVID-19 pandemic. I want to echo
9 the statements made by Council
10 President Clarke and Councilmember
11 Jones regarding the guidelines
12 regarding business reopening. I know
13 from your daily calls you've been
14 talking about those guidelines coming
15 out in the next few weeks, but I think
16 it is very important that we have a
17 collaborative effort in helping to
18 share that information as we get that
19 information out, to really make sure
20 our businesses from all sizes are able
21 to reopen and get back to work.

22 I know the Mayor used a safe,
23 healthy and educated lens in reference
24 to putting together this budget, and I
25 understand and you made various

1 statements about how this budget has
2 been very hard and difficult, and I
3 understand that perspective. But what
4 would you say to those who say what
5 division for the City's future for
6 certain offices like the Office of
7 Adult Education has been eliminated or
8 the Office of Arts and Culture being
9 eliminated?

10 It's one thing to reduce
11 funding for those offices, but when you
12 eliminate them all together, what type
13 of message does that send to the vision
14 and future of our City when both of
15 those entities, one, help people get
16 educated and help them increase their
17 income potential and, two, Arts and
18 Culture help really provide stimulus
19 for a lot of our hospitality as well as
20 our business sector?

21 MR. ABERNATHY: Sure. So I
22 think my message is that by finding
23 fiscal stability, it will lay a
24 foundation for Philadelphia's future.
25 This crisis is not like anything we've

1 ever seen. The 2008 recession pales in
2 comparison to what we're facing so we
3 have had to make some very difficult,
4 very quick choices in order to address
5 these concerns. Without fiscal
6 stability, making smart choices now
7 will allow Philadelphia the opportunity
8 to grow in the future. And while the
9 offices may have closed, some of their
10 core functions have been retained.

11 So I spoke earlier about
12 making sure that we provide digital
13 access and literacy, making sure that
14 we're still providing some of the core
15 functions that the Office of Workforce
16 Development did in our Commerce
17 Department, and we're maintaining some
18 of our core functions in the Office of
19 Arts and Culture as well. Again, so we
20 can be in a better position to champion
21 and move forward those industries when
22 the recovery begins.

23 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I
24 understand the transfer of staffers
25 from those offices, but that's not the

1 messaging I think a lot of people in
2 the City received. They're getting the
3 perspective that the office is closing,
4 being eliminated and it really sends a
5 very challenging message in reference
6 to arts and culture in our City as well
7 as to adult education. And when those
8 offices are not eliminated as well as
9 trying to provide a messaging that
10 we're transitioning these departments
11 because of the issues of impact because
12 of COVID-19, and we can possibly bring
13 them back in future fiscal years.

14 In addition, I understand
15 that the Administration is bringing in
16 a consultant to help them manage all of
17 the CARES Act funding that's coming as
18 well as other federal funding. What's
19 the current status of that?

20 MR. ABERNATHY: So they
21 are -- they have finished their
22 interviews of the finalists and hope to
23 make a selection shortly.

24 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And then
25 also, Rob Dubow testified to this in

1 his budget testimony last week, and
2 I've also shared with you on a daily
3 basis a lot of information received
4 from the National League of Cities, and
5 it's my understanding that the Menendez
6 Cassidy bill or the SMART bill has a
7 very good chance of passing. However,
8 we're not sure the timing of the
9 passing of that legislation.

10 I know that if there would be
11 any type of transfer of dollars, that
12 would be part of a trans ordinance.
13 However, what kind of collaboration do
14 you anticipate with Council? And how
15 are you prioritizing those dollars now
16 if we're able to get that funding prior
17 to the end of the fiscal year?

18 MR. ABERNATHY: So any of the
19 recovery dollars, and Council does have
20 a representative on the Recovery
21 Committee, so that conversation will
22 continue to go forward. And if there's
23 additional collaboration that's needed,
24 we're happy to have that conversation
25 with the Council President.

1 COUNCILMAN GREEN: But my
2 specific question is how will you
3 prioritize those dollars? If we
4 receive those dollars prior to the end
5 of the fiscal year, are there certain
6 offices that you would bring back, are
7 there funding challenges or cuts you
8 would have needed to make? How would
9 you communicate that to not only
10 Council but also to the City?

11 MR. ABERNATHY: I think we
12 would have that conversation with
13 Council at the time. I think it's hard
14 for me to say and sit here today to
15 talk through what exactly those
16 priorities would be without having a
17 broader conversation with Council and
18 with the Mayor's Office but certainly,
19 we'll recognize the impact on the
20 budget process going forward.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
22 Madam Chair.

23 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
24 you, Councilman Green.

25 To all of our colleagues who

1 are in queue and a special thanks to
2 Councilwoman Sanchez who was actually
3 next, because our tech staff has
4 alerted me that we have a hard stop and
5 we got to get SEPTA on before 12:30,
6 we're going to ask SEPTA to prepare.

7 If GM Leslie, I'm not sure,
8 Leslie Richards if you're still -- are
9 you here?

10 MS. RICHARDS: I'm here.

11 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Okay.
12 Leslie, I apologize for this adjustment
13 of schedule. We're going to ask the
14 Managing Director to stay on. We also
15 want you to give your testimony right
16 now. Please feel free to summarize it.

17 And then to all of our
18 colleagues, if you have questions for
19 the MDO along with SEPTA for those who
20 are in queue, feel free to ask them.
21 So if you can give the summary of your
22 testimony, we will greatly appreciate
23 it.

24 MS. RICHARDS: Absolutely.
25 Thank you so much. And I will be very

1 brief in my summary. I know you've
2 already received the written testimony.

3 As has been mentioned by many
4 of the people who have already
5 testified today, a lot has changed
6 around us. SEPTA is dealing with the
7 financial consequences of COVID-19.
8 They're nothing short of devastating
9 us. We're dealing with ridership
10 declines of 92 percent on transit, 98
11 percent on rail. We obviously -- in
12 addition to low ridership, our farebox
13 revenue losses will surpass hundreds of
14 millions of dollars and will continue
15 until at least Fiscal Year 2022.

16 We also know that lots of our
17 funding that comes through the state,
18 we know that sales tax, we know that
19 lottery funds which helps us with
20 seniors and pretty much all of our
21 subsidies that we receive also may be
22 impacted. We know that the Turnpike
23 Commission, who provides a good
24 percentage of the subsidies coming to
25 SEPTA, has also been hit very hard, so

1 we're not really sure what we can count
2 on as far as funding, what we receive
3 as well as with revenues because of
4 what I've just stated on our ridership.

5 We faced daunting challenges
6 every single day. We have many issues
7 as has been discussed today with the
8 vulnerable population on our system,
9 implementing new cleaning and social
10 distancing protocols. We want to make
11 sure that our riders and our employees
12 feel safe on our system and we are
13 doing everything that we can to make
14 sure that they do and they should with
15 everything that we're doing.

16 We're working productively
17 with our unions in ways that we haven't
18 done before. I'll say I have not been
19 here for a long time, but we are making
20 up, and making up for it and getting to
21 know each other very quickly which is
22 good, and we all have the mutual goal
23 of keeping our employees safe. We also
24 have seen how our essential workers and
25 essential trips throughout the region

1 truly count on us.

2 We're talking about the new
3 challenges that we have. I agree with
4 what Council President Clarke said at
5 the very beginning and, that is, our
6 vision is the same, our values are the
7 same. And while I anticipated
8 discussing different elements of these
9 values without COVID-19, they stay the
10 same and they will be changed a bit.
11 So equity's still in the forefront of
12 everything we are doing at SEPTA.
13 We're moving forward with a fair
14 proposal of the elements that help and
15 can give relief to our customers and we
16 are holding off on any cost increases,
17 at least until January of next year.

18 We're moving forward with
19 comprehensive bus network redesign.
20 We're moving forward with trolley mod
21 phasing as well and we're doing
22 everything we can to make our system
23 more equitable and accessible. We
24 share with this Council the goal of
25 equitable and inclusive growth in

1 everything that we do. We continue
2 with sustainability and we continue to
3 get some of our power from solar and
4 clean energy sources.

5 And, in fact, we move forward
6 with an agreement with a solar farm and
7 we still plan on getting 20 percent of
8 our power needs off of this clean
9 energy. We include of course to always
10 have clean energy on our buses. We
11 still have 25 battery electric buses in
12 our plan. This is one of the largest
13 bus weeks in the United States and
14 we're very proud of that. We continue
15 with stormwater challenges, working
16 with the Water Department, as well as
17 very proud to be hosting farmer's
18 markets and getting fresh produce to
19 our communities. Safety is still very
20 important.

21 And while we will still
22 continue working with traffic
23 congestion and fatalities and we know
24 that transit is safer than traveling by
25 car, now we will include protocols for

1 social distancing and sanitizing as
2 well and we will continue to be an
3 economic driver here. We have always
4 been, and I think nothing has
5 highlighted it more than this pandemic,
6 where essential jobs have counted on
7 transit in ways that we never -- I
8 believe we never really focused on
9 before.

10 There is no metropolitan
11 area, and the Philadelphia region is no
12 different, that has not needed transit
13 to get essential workers to grocery
14 stores to stock shelves, to clean
15 hospital rooms, to feed those who are
16 getting health care, for those who are
17 delivering packages, and I feel that
18 that will only increase, the importance
19 of our customers and the work that they
20 do, and of course, the important work
21 that our frontline workers do. I will
22 get back to that.

23 Actually, let me just state
24 that right now. And, that is, that
25 SEPTA that has been hit very hard by

1 this pandemic, and I would just like to
2 take a brief few seconds here to
3 acknowledge that we lost seven members
4 of our SEPTA team, Ted Nixon, a
5 Mechanic out of Elmwood Shop with more
6 than 30 years of service here at SEPTA;
7 Phil Williams, a Fueller out of Southern
8 Depot with more than 24 years of
9 service; Michael Holt, a Mechanic out
10 of our Midvale Shop with 21 years of
11 service; Michael Hill, a Regional Rail
12 Conductor with more than 30 years of
13 service; Yolanda Woodberry, a Bus
14 Operator from Frankford Depot with 17
15 years of service; Steve McFadden,
16 Regional Rail Conductor, 29 years of
17 service; and Terrence Burton, Bus
18 Operator of Midvale Depot with 18 years
19 of service.

20 We've had many employees as
21 well test positive, and the good news
22 is while we've had over 280 or 275
23 employees test positive, we've had 140
24 fully recover and come back, and come
25 back to work at SEPTA and to provide

1 the essential service that we are. And
2 we're very proud of that of course, but
3 it's also an opportunity for us to
4 re-evaluate every single thing that we
5 do.

6 And so, I'll just end on the
7 opportunity that this gives us to be
8 better, to be more equitable, to be
9 more inclusive, we've revamped our
10 communications. In fact, this
11 afternoon we'll be having our operating
12 budget's virtual hearing, virtual for
13 the first time. They will be offered
14 in English and Spanish as well as in
15 Mandarin and we will have sign language
16 as well. We'll be the most inclusive
17 that we've ever been able to do these
18 types of hearings and we are very, very
19 proud of that.

20 We are prioritizing people in
21 a very intentional way, and it's a
22 shift in our culture. It's one I'm
23 extremely proud of. It's one that our
24 staff has risen to the occasion in ways
25 that I could not even imagine when I

1 came here in January. With that, I do
2 appreciate you allowing us to put our
3 testimony on the public record.

4 I do want to quickly answer
5 Councilwoman Parker's question. I
6 thought it was a good one. We do have
7 that data and we do keep track of which
8 divisions as well as which employee
9 groups are testing positive. I just
10 wanted to let people know that we've
11 had high rates with our conductors, our
12 assistant conductors, our maintenance
13 custodians, our equipment and our
14 mechanics, our revenue attendants,
15 operators obviously on our sub, El, our
16 bus operators, our customer experience
17 and advocacy.

18 I just want to say that this
19 virus does not discriminate. It has
20 hit every single department here at
21 SEPTA and as I said, it has really hit
22 us hard, but we'll come back and we'll
23 be part of the regional recovery here
24 and we look forward to working with
25 Council in doing that and we are in it

1 together with everybody. Thank you.

2 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Well,
3 listen, we want to thank you for your
4 testimony. And this is baptism by
5 fire. This is your first Council
6 budget hearing, isn't it? You come to
7 us from years of experience in the
8 State, years of experience in the
9 County, so we welcome you here and
10 thank you for your testimony.

11 I want to remind all of my
12 colleagues who are in queue,
13 Councilwoman Sanchez is next. You can
14 ask your questions of both Brian
15 Abernathy, our Managing Director, along
16 with Leslie the GM over at SEPTA, so
17 you don't have to type your name twice.
18 If you are in queue, just ask your
19 question of either of them. Thank you.

20 Councilwoman Sanchez.

21 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-

22 SANCHEZ: Thank you very much, Madam
23 Chairwoman.

24 And I will save my questions
25 for Leslie. I want to thank her and

1 welcome her to this process through
2 Councilman -- Councilmember Johnson.
3 She has been on call and available to
4 Council throughout this entire
5 pandemic, so we want to thank you. I
6 know some of those conversations have
7 been very, very tough as it relates to
8 the labor and some of the service
9 issues, so I appreciate the fact that
10 you've always been since you've been on
11 board available to all of us. And we
12 look forward to working with you as
13 some clarity about your funding and all
14 of those things become clearer in how
15 we can continue to support you, so
16 thank you so very much.

17 My question is for Brian, and
18 I do want to thank the entire Managing
19 Director's Office team. I know how
20 hard this COVID pandemic has been and
21 everybody pivoting to just a crisis
22 response team. And as we move from
23 crisis to recovery because it is our
24 responsibility to send a message that
25 we are going to transition from crisis

1 to recovery, let me remind folks that,
2 you know, and I want to echo what
3 Council President Clarke said as we
4 talk about poverty and around cuts,
5 equity doesn't always account for the
6 institutional disparities that have
7 existed.

8 And so, I want to remind
9 folks, and I know my Council Colleague
10 Members Gym and Gauthier as we talk
11 about housing, let us not waste this
12 opportunity to move away from program
13 services that are not as efficient and
14 effective and let us really try to meet
15 people where they are. And meeting
16 people where they are is taking them
17 through this transition and minimizing,
18 as Council President says, if we don't
19 invest in the front end, the backend is
20 going to be even more dangerous for a
21 city like ours.

22 So when we totally eliminate
23 things, it does say to folks that we're
24 no longer committed to them, so the
25 adult literacy, workforce development,

1 all the things we need as part of a
2 recovery -- and I look forward to
3 working with the Administration around
4 that kind of messaging and how do we
5 ensure that core services are still put
6 in place.

7 One of the areas of major
8 concern that I have, and we saw it as
9 we woke up this morning with the
10 Brewerytown party, in the 7th
11 Councilmanic Districts parks like
12 McPherson has been totally off the
13 chain, Ferko, Hunting Park. We had
14 shootings on G & Hunting Park because
15 folks are feeling the pinch and they're
16 coming out. Warmer weather is upon us.

17 In the last two weekends, the
18 police have really, really struggled to
19 maintain some of the discipline in some
20 of our parks. And I know you guys have
21 had to make really hard decisions
22 around our parks, but we need
23 maintenance and police safety at the
24 parks. This weekend and everywhere,
25 Collazo Park, Ferko, it has been out of

1 control and we're going to see more of
2 this as we open up. So I want us to
3 think strategically around the
4 maintenance issues.

5 Look, the Streets Department,
6 Carlton, Keith, the entire team, we all
7 have learned to manage the 300
8 unsheltered people in Kensington and
9 they do the best they can, but I think
10 we're going to have to start again
11 moving from crisis to recovery taking
12 back and reclaiming some of those
13 places, and how we invest in them and
14 how we keep them will send a message
15 around how people utilize them.

16 So, Brian, tell me, again
17 going back to the disparities in terms
18 of equity around making some of these
19 decisions, how have the cuts been
20 administered? Most corporations cut
21 the middle. How are we ensuring that
22 the frontline staff is intact and how
23 is that represented in your layoff
24 situation? And then what product lines
25 are you looking to change that are

1 inefficient as opposed to just cutting
2 some of the innovation that we were
3 starting on?

4 MR. ABERNATHY: So that's a
5 big question, Councilmember. Thank
6 you. I think I'll start with how we
7 approached a number of the layoffs. So
8 as exempt layoffs, we did specifically
9 look at the middle and middle
10 management as we approached, and
11 certainly did some reorganization as I
12 touched in my testimony. Shifting the
13 Waste and Litter Cabinet in the Office
14 of Sustainability, looking at
15 efficiencies in some of our contracts
16 of both Sustainability and the Office
17 of Transportation and Infrastructure.

18 Looking at, you know, is
19 there a better way we can provide
20 violence prevention services, and so,
21 have restructured the Youth Violence
22 Reduction Partnership and shifted some
23 of those functions into the Group
24 Violence Intervention and then CCIP,
25 and we have tried to take that

1 approach. This was trying to be
2 thoughtful as we approached a number of
3 these issues, and also to really look
4 at those offices that came into
5 existence during this Administration.

6 And so, the functions of the
7 Office of Workforce Development
8 certainly existed and those functions
9 still exist today, but the office
10 hasn't been maintained. And part of
11 that, while we certainly understand
12 that we do have to move from crisis to
13 recovery, part of that really was
14 trying to send a signal to the public
15 about how really severe this economic
16 crisis is and the challenges and the
17 choices we're being forced to make are
18 going to impact service levels.

19 And so, as we're asking
20 residents to see service level
21 reductions, we also wanted to make sure
22 that they saw that the City is taking
23 these concerns seriously, that we are
24 trying to be thoughtful in our approach
25 and we'll continue to find ways to

1 provide those core services.

2 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Listen,
3 Brian, I want to thank you so much for
4 your response.

5 And thank you, Councilwoman.
6 Again, we have a half an hour, a hard
7 stop at 12:30, and two, four, six,
8 eight Councilmembers in queue. You can
9 ask your questions of both Managing
10 Director along with Leslie.

11 Thank you Councilwoman
12 Sanchez. We greatly appreciate it.

13 Chair recognizes Councilman
14 Oh.

15 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: And
16 I'll just ask you, Leslie and Brian, if
17 you can please be just as succinct as
18 possible in your responses, we would
19 greatly appreciate it because we want
20 all members to get on the record.

21 COUNCILMAN OH: All right.
22 Thank you very much, Chairwoman.

23 Good morning, Brian. How are
24 you, Managing Director?

25 MR. ABERNATHY: Well, sir.

1 COUNCILMAN OH: Okay. I'm
2 going to start with this: When I look
3 at the estimated revenue losses and
4 making up that \$649 million gap, has
5 the Administration calculated into it,
6 I assume you have, the amount of money
7 that is coming in from
8 properties coming off the tax
9 abatement?

10 MR. ABERNATHY: From my
11 understanding, Councilmember, yes. But
12 that might be a better question for the
13 Budget Director or Finance Director. I
14 don't know if the Budget Director is on
15 at this point.

16 MS. WAXMAN: Yes, I'm sorry.
17 The question about the tax abatement,
18 what was the --

19 COUNCILMAN OH: I didn't see
20 in the reports that when the gap of
21 \$649 million was being calculated, that
22 there was a number for estimated
23 revenues coming in from properties that
24 will now start paying property taxes
25 because they're coming off the

1 abatement. Is that number somewhere in
2 there?

3 MS. WAXMAN: So, yes, that
4 number is incorporated into all of our
5 revenue projections. And for FY21,
6 it's estimated at about \$16 million
7 would be the Year 11 recapture.

8 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you
9 very much. Next question, and maybe
10 you can get this to me in writing if
11 you don't know, but do you know how
12 much money has been saved with the
13 reduction of the prison population over
14 the last couple of years?

15 MR. ABERNATHY: We'll need to
16 get back to you with that number and
17 certainly, the Public Safety
18 departments I think are scheduled for
19 next week and we'll be prepared to talk
20 about it then.

21 COUNCILMAN OH: Okay. From
22 what I've read, there's no anticipated
23 spending of money, soda tax money, for
24 Rebuild in Fiscal Year 21; is that
25 correct?

1 MR. ABERNATHY: Again,
2 that's --

3 MS. WAXMAN: I --

4 MR. ABERNATHY: -- yeah, go
5 ahead.

6 MS. WAXMAN: So, no, that's
7 not correct. The FY21 includes
8 payments for debt service for Rebuild.

9 COUNCILMAN OH: Okay. And
10 then finally, is there a possibility --
11 you did do this resolution last week in
12 response to numerous, numerous concerns
13 from citizens and other folks about not
14 eliminating the Office of Arts, Culture
15 and Creative Economy on June 1st. Is
16 that a possibility?

17 MR. ABERNATHY: At this
18 point, layoff notices have already been
19 issued and those employees will be let
20 go. Again, I think the office and its
21 functions will move into the Managing
22 Director's Office. And certainly, on
23 July 1st those issues will be
24 quantified by the budget.

25 COUNCILMAN OH: Okay. Thank

1 you very much.

2 Thank you, Madam Chair.

3 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
4 you, Councilman.

5 Chair recognizes Councilman
6 Bass. And again, I want to remind
7 everyone this is questions for SEPTA
8 and MDO.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank
10 you. I have a number of questions and
11 I'm going to jump right to it because I
12 know we're short on time. I want to
13 start with really just a statement and
14 I want to echo what my colleagues have
15 stated thus far, is that we really
16 can't recover without having the Office
17 of Adult Literacy, the Housing Trust
18 Fund, Workforce Development being front
19 and certain stage.

20 We really just can't -- in my
21 mind I just cannot even imagine that we
22 put together a budget that said that we
23 had these values, this equity lens,
24 this racial equity lens and that we
25 were going to proceed a particular way

1 and then these are the cuts that were
2 made. They really speak against what
3 was planned or what was stated in terms
4 of a mission by the Administration.

5 And so, actually as the Chair
6 of Parks & Rec, I'd like to start
7 there, if possible. And I'd like to
8 ask about the programming, the
9 branches, the hours. I know that the
10 Administration or the Commissioner had
11 stated that she was working on coming
12 up with a plan of what Parks &
13 Recreation was going to look like for
14 the summer. And so, I'm wondering is
15 that available yet, is that plan
16 available?

17 MR. ABERNATHY: Commissioner
18 Ott Lovell.

19 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Hi
20 there. Thank you. Thanks for your
21 question, Councilwoman.

22 So we are still working
23 through our plans for the summer. It
24 is our hope to have summer camps
25 running and we just received some

1 information from the Health Department
2 with some specific protocols that are
3 related to state and federal CDC
4 protocols for how we can safely do
5 that, so we are very hopeful that we
6 can continue to offer a summer camp,
7 especially for parents who need child
8 care this summer. And then --

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And so --
10 go ahead.

11 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
12 Then we're also looking -- of course,
13 we're still doing our Playstreets
14 program, which is our meal distribution
15 program that will happen all over the
16 City, and we have done a huge push over
17 the last week to encourage more folks
18 to apply for Playstreets on their
19 blocks. And so, we're hoping also to
20 create some enhancements for that
21 program, so if the kids can't come to
22 rec centers, if the rec centers are not
23 up and running this summer, then we can
24 bring that recreation to children where
25 they are and also of course, those

1 meals. So regardless of what happens
2 with summer camps -- and Playstreets,
3 we do plan on having those meals
4 available both at the Playstreets and
5 at our rec centers at the very minimum,
6 and then hopefully summer camps on top
7 of that.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So just
9 to be clear, it appears that our plan
10 for the summer for our parks and
11 recreation is summer camps and
12 Playstreets. And I ask that because
13 I'm hoping that there's more, because
14 what we saw last night on Cecil B.
15 Moore Avenue in North Philly, what we
16 saw last night I think is just the
17 beginning of what we're going to
18 continue to see throughout the summer
19 if there's not more significant
20 activity for young people.

21 We have to have a plan or
22 else this City is going to have a real
23 problem on its hands. And I think that
24 the summer camps and Playstreets are
25 good for younger children, but they're

1 not usually the ones that we need to
2 have as much activity for as a means to
3 keeping them safe and keeping them off
4 the street and keeping them away from
5 negative activity. So I have a great
6 amount of concern that we're not doing
7 what we need to do to make sure that we
8 have more activity for them.

9 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:

10 Yeah, I definitely share your concerns
11 and we're going to be working with our
12 Health Department and the Managing
13 Director's Office as well as with the
14 police and our public safety leaders to
15 try and figure out what more we can be
16 doing when it is safe and when we can
17 do what we can to do everything that is
18 possible.

19 One other thing that we're
20 doing, however, is we are still
21 employing all of the young people that
22 we employed traditionally, so we're
23 keeping our WorkReady program going.
24 We've already begun processing close to
25 1,000 teenagers between 14- and

1 18-years-old that we will be hiring
2 this summer to work for us in some
3 capacity, so we will offer them good-
4 paying jobs. And then we also received
5 an additional 280 positions for young
6 people between the ages of 19 and 24 to
7 also work for us this summer through
8 the SLIP program, so I think jobs are
9 going to be important to give people
10 not just something to do but also
11 income that they're going to really
12 need for themselves and also to help
13 support their families.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I think
15 jobs are really important. I think
16 that that's going to be significant in
17 making sure that we keep younger adults
18 busy throughout the summer. But I will
19 say I wish we were further along in the
20 planning process for them. So I know
21 that you mentioned that you were going
22 to go back and have additional
23 conversations about what else we can
24 do, but we're really out of time,
25 summer is here.

1 And all this week the
2 temperatures are going to be well into
3 the 80s, so we are really out of time
4 to begin to try to figure something out
5 or plan for them, and we really need
6 more. We need a whole lot more to be
7 able to make sure all of our kids are
8 safe regardless of their age, that
9 they're safe, that they're in
10 productive activities and that there's
11 some sort of activity, you know, safe,
12 socially distanced and wearing PPE.

13 Over at our recreation
14 centers, our pools are closed. What
15 are our kids going to do, where are
16 they going to go? If I had a teenager
17 who did not luck up and end up with one
18 of the summer jobs, where are they
19 going when they wake up on a Tuesday
20 morning in July? Where are they going
21 and what are they doing with the pools
22 closed with no activity at the rec
23 center with nothing going on? And
24 again, understanding that there's a lot
25 of question and concerns and safety

1 that needs to be paid attention to, but
2 we're out of time. We really need to
3 do something very quickly to address
4 this issue.

5 And if possible, I will come
6 back. I do have more questions so I'll
7 come back around on the second round,
8 if it's possible, Madam Chair.

9 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
10 you, Councilwoman Bass.

11 Let me say to our colleagues,
12 again hard cut-off. We're going to
13 have to do a lightening round. Both
14 the MDO of Recreation and all of the
15 departments have said, if you send your
16 questions to them, each and every
17 question is answered. The tech staff
18 is now going to begin to set the clock
19 to four minutes, four minutes.

20 Chair recognizes Councilwoman
21 Brooks.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank
23 you so much, Madam Chair.

24 I'm going to address my first
25 question to SEPTA. I have a host of

1 questions for Brian and his team but I
2 am going to email them. And I might
3 pop in one, if I can.

4 My question for SEPTA is
5 SEPTA's response to the pandemic has
6 been remarkable. I'm very familiar
7 with embarking on a new position and
8 being thrown into a whole new way of
9 operating, so thank you for your work
10 and help steering the City and region
11 through this pandemic. My question is
12 about the Nicetown gas plant. I want
13 to talk about SEPTA's gas plant's
14 efforts in expansion.

15 As a long-time Nicetown
16 resident and parent of an asthmatic
17 daughter and a grandmother of young
18 children, as you can see they've been
19 floating around, I'm very concerned
20 with the immediate and long-term impact
21 of SEPTA's Midvale CHP plant.
22 Additionally as you know, the deadly
23 impact of coronavirus has been
24 particularly dangerous in the Black
25 community, adding a lot of increased

1 risk to Black folks stemming from
2 comorbidities, many of which are
3 respiratory. We know that these
4 comorbidities are a result of
5 institutional and environmental racism.

6 With that in mind, can you
7 discuss how the short-term needs for
8 this facility overrides the long-term
9 impact on the people in an environment
10 in this and other neighborhoods and how
11 does this fit into the City's racial
12 equity lens? And I have one simple
13 question. Did you put in (inaudible)
14 to handle the 50 megawatts at the
15 Midvale CHP plant? And you can answer
16 those later.

17 My next question is on
18 federal funds. As we work through this
19 pandemic response, I want to thank you
20 for continuing to provide services for
21 essential workers. And it must be
22 challenging to make necessary changes
23 when conditions change hourly. You
24 stated that SEPTA received \$644 million
25 in CARES funding. Seeing that there

1 are tight restrictions on how the
2 funding can be used, how will you use
3 what you have received and can you
4 provide a list of (inaudible) --

5 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Okay.
6 Somebody needs to mute. I'm sorry,
7 Council Lady. Go ahead, please
8 continue.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Can you
10 provide a list of eligible qualifying
11 expenses that you anticipate using the
12 money for? And those are for SEPTA.

13 MS. RICHARDS: Sure. While
14 in the interest of time, let me just
15 address your first question very
16 briefly and I'll give you a detailed
17 written response. I have been to
18 Midvale. I've visited there. I also
19 wanted to let you know because we are
20 both new to where we are, what you may
21 not know is I worked for the EPA in
22 their Air Quality division for many
23 years, so I'm well aware of the testing
24 that we've done in the area as well and
25 we will get back to you as far as why

1 we need this, why we need to move
2 forward and why with the tests that
3 we've had, we feel that the impact --
4 there is no impact to the
5 neighborhoods. But I am more than
6 willing to have a lengthy discussion
7 with you on that issue, and I know it's
8 very important and it's very important
9 to us as well. We want to make sure
10 that we fully understand all the
11 impacts, and we'll go through those
12 with you, so I look forward to doing
13 that with you in the future.

14 As far as the federal funds,
15 I'd like to get to that because I think
16 other Council people may have that
17 question as well. Yes, we did receive
18 644 million from the CARES Act. I
19 would divide our needs into three
20 issues, and they would be our revenue
21 shortfalls, our subsidy shortfalls and
22 additional COVID expenses that we
23 anticipate. So our revenue shortfalls,
24 that's at the farebox. Just to give
25 everybody an example, we normally count

1 on over \$480 million from the farebox
2 in a given year. That's 40 million a
3 month and this month we'll have 4
4 million. And so, we need that to
5 expand and we think that ridership is
6 not going to come back quickly. We
7 know that's for sure. It may not come
8 back to the numbers that we see now.
9 There's various scenarios, and so we
10 will use it for those revenues. And --

11 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Leslie,
12 I want to ask you and I know you were
13 responding, we heard your three
14 buckets, fare revenue, subsidies,
15 COVID. We heard it all. Please send
16 your response in detail in writing to
17 us and to all of the questions that
18 Councilwoman Brooks asked.

19 Councilwoman Brooks, thank
20 you so much.

21 We're going to move forward
22 to Councilwoman Katherine Gilmore
23 Richardson.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Madam
25 Chair?

1 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Yes?

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I'm

3 sorry. Madam Chair, this is

4 Councilwoman Bass. Point of

5 information or actually a question. I

6 hate to interrupt, but I did hear

7 Commissioner Ott Lovell state that

8 someone was out to get her on this

9 call. I feel like as a body, as

10 members of Council, that that was very

11 disrespectful because I'm the only one

12 who asked her a question so I would

13 like her to elaborate in terms of --

14 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: I

15 do apologize, Councilwoman Bass. I do

16 apologize for that.

17 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Okay.

18 Thank you all so very much. Chair

19 wants to hear from Councilwoman Gilmore

20 Richardson.

21 Thank you for putting that on

22 the record, Council Lady.

23 Councilwoman Gilmore

24 Richardson.

25 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

1 RICHARDSON: Thank you so much and
2 thank you, Madam Chair.

3 And I also just want to echo
4 the sentiments to my colleagues to
5 welcome the new General Manager to
6 SEPTA, Leslie Richardson. Thank you so
7 much for your responsiveness and for
8 really working to answer a number of
9 our questions. I know we've had
10 several conversations. And quickly for
11 you, I just want to put on the record
12 that your workforce has been
13 acknowledged as essential workers and
14 my concern is that they remain healthy
15 as they continue to serve the City.

16 So how does your budget
17 address employee safety and also, how
18 is SEPTA working with addressing the
19 vulnerable population? I know we had
20 conversations on some of the specific
21 stations that we had concerns about,
22 particularly for the essential health
23 care workers who are utilizing those
24 stations to get to and from work. So I
25 just wanted to put that question on the

1 record. I know we don't have time for
2 you to answer it now. But I want to
3 say welcome to the City of Sisterly
4 Love and thank you so much for all of
5 your work.

6 And then, Madam Chair, my
7 next set of questions I wanted to put
8 on the record around SEPTA, and thank
9 Councilmember Brooks for asking the
10 question that I had around Midvale and
11 the complex in Nicetown.

12 So also to our Managing
13 Director Brian Abernathy, my former
14 colleague in Council and our Deputy
15 Managing Director Tumar Alexander,
16 thank you so much for all of your hard
17 work and for your responses to
18 inquiries. I just wanted to ask you a
19 quick question around the RFP for
20 community testing. And can you just
21 detail for the record where the
22 contract of -- where the RFP is in
23 process, and what your plans are around
24 moving forward with community testing
25 as a whole as we move into the new

1 faces of COVID-19, and then I have a
2 question for Streets.

3 MR. ABERNATHY: Certainly,
4 Councilmember, and happy to -- I'll
5 provide a general response today. The
6 Health Commissioner will be on, on
7 Wednesday and he may be able to provide
8 more detail. The RFP is accepting
9 rolling responses. As of Friday, I
10 believe we had only received one
11 response and they will be issued as
12 funding becomes available and those
13 responses come in. I think the
14 community testing is going to become
15 increasingly important as we approach
16 reopening of the City. We recognize
17 that testing and contact tracing is
18 going to be key in order for us to
19 reopen safely and to be able to monitor
20 our progress. And so, it is a key
21 component of what our next steps are
22 and continue to -- our intent is to
23 invest in it well.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
25 RICHARDSON: Thank you. And quickly, I

1 just wanted to also echo the sentiments
2 my colleague Councilmember Green around
3 the vision for our City, particularly
4 around the proposed cuts to the Office
5 of Workforce Development, Adult
6 Education and the Office of Arts and
7 Culture and Creative Economy and the
8 African-American Museum.

9 Quickly for the Streets
10 Department, I want to say thank you to
11 the Streets Department for all of your
12 hard work and for answering our calls.
13 I have a question around the change in
14 the sanitation pickup schedule, and if
15 there were any changes to the waste
16 management contract.

17 COMMISSIONER WILLIAMS:

18 Okay --

19 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: For the
20 record, Commissioner Williams, we're
21 going to have to ask you to respond to
22 that question in writing and any
23 additional questions that don't get on
24 the record that Members have, we want
25 to get them all in writing to each of

1 our departments and they will respond
2 immediately.

3 So thank you, Councilwoman
4 Gilmore Richardson.

5 The Chair now recognizes
6 Councilman Thomas.

7 And let me also say to
8 colleagues that we do not have enough
9 time to do another round, so we will
10 stop at Councilman Squilla. Councilman
11 Squilla will be the last question. If
12 there are any minutes left, then we
13 will come back around.

14 Chair recognizes Councilman
15 Thomas.

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good
17 morning -- wow, good afternoon now,
18 everybody. Real quick, I just want to
19 say thank you to everybody that's
20 involved for all the great work that's
21 being done. I would go more in depth
22 about that, but clearly we're running
23 low on time. In writing, I would first
24 like to see something that gives an
25 update on what's going on with health

1 care workers; and the prisons, where
2 are we at with that and what's the
3 latest there.

4 I would also like to see
5 something in writing that talks about
6 what happens when we reopen,
7 specifically thinking about how do we
8 enforce social distancing during this
9 unfortunate crisis. We've seen a
10 number of negative incidents involving
11 police and citizens and I am concerned
12 about how we enforce social distancing
13 and the possibility of exploring social
14 distancing officers to possibly allow
15 for some level of activity once we
16 reopen.

17 I appreciate my colleagues
18 for asking about the SEPTA plant. I
19 too have several questions about that
20 process, specifically how it took place
21 in Nicetown. I was a City employee
22 when that happened. And again, I have
23 a number of questions and concerns as
24 it relates to that specific area.

25 Councilmember Bass spoke in

1 depth about concerns, specifically as
2 it relates to activity this summer. I
3 want to echo and put emphasis on the
4 statement that she made. I also want
5 us to consider with the cuts that we're
6 making and also looking at the arrest
7 rate here in the City of Philadelphia.
8 When you looked at what other members
9 talked about, I believe it was
10 Councilmember Parker, about confirmed
11 positive cases, we see the perfect
12 formula right now for communities of
13 color to really go down. So I'm
14 wondering why the Managing Director's
15 Office or the Administration, why
16 there's no taskforce in place,
17 specifically to focus on the African-
18 American community, again because of
19 the high numbers of positive tests,
20 because of the high numbers of deaths,
21 because of the significant increase in
22 gun violence and because we know that
23 there are going to be limited
24 activities. And when you look at all
25 of these different issues that we know

1 exist, we know that the African-
2 American community will be impacted
3 more than any other community as it
4 relates to negative activities this
5 summer. So again, I'm wondering why
6 there's no taskforce in place
7 specifically for that.

8 The last question for the
9 record, we spoke with the Office of
10 Arts, and specifically looking at the
11 cultural arts fund. Their budget is
12 about 4.1 million. I'm wondering if we
13 could have some type of compromise
14 where we possibly look at bringing them
15 down to maybe 1.1 million instead of
16 zeroing them out. I understand that
17 the staff (inaudible) but I'm hoping
18 that we can send a message to the
19 community by keeping the department in
20 place so that we can assure that we're
21 providing activities and decisions
22 that's in the best interest of all
23 Philadelphians. So those are my
24 questions for the record and I'm
25 looking forward to getting answers.

1 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
2 you so much, Councilman Thomas. And
3 again, those questions will be
4 answered.

5 The Chair recognizes
6 Councilman Domb.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
8 Madam Chair.

9 And Leslie, thank you and the
10 SEPTA team for the great job you're
11 doing. Brian, as our Managing
12 Director, thank you to your team also.
13 You guys are doing a really good job.
14 I have a few quick comments. In
15 efforts to attain a smart restart,
16 myself and several colleagues have a
17 hospitality and restaurant hotel group,
18 and I'd like to be able to connect with
19 somebody in your office to accomplish
20 some of the goals they would like to
21 see happen and that could happen
22 offline.

23 The main point of what I
24 wanted to speak to is for the last four
25 years I've been concerned and very

1 vocal about the increased spending of
2 this Administration. Let me share the
3 facts: Under the Nutter
4 Administration, our budget increased 80
5 million over eight years or 10 million
6 a year. Under the Kenney
7 Administration, our budget has
8 increased 900 million over five years.
9 That's 180 million a year. We're 18
10 times higher per year than the Nutter
11 Administration. In the past, I was
12 told that Mayor Nutter's minimal
13 spending increases were result of the
14 previous recession. But today we're
15 faced with a recession two to three
16 times greater than we've experienced in
17 '08 and '10, and yet we still have a
18 budget that's spending almost three
19 times higher than the rate of inflation
20 over the past five years.

21 To avoid a tax increase, this
22 is constructive and I mean this
23 constructively, to avoid a tax increase
24 and to continue to reduce City wage
25 business taxes, I ask that we use as a

1 guideline Fiscal Year 18's budget
2 spending to develop our operating
3 budget. Fiscal Year 2018's budget was
4 4.4 billion, which is 500 million lower
5 than today's 4.9 billion proposed
6 budget.

7 For having making drastic
8 cuts to programs that have value in our
9 economy like Workforce Development,
10 Arts and Culture key spots, with the
11 freezing of business and wage taxes, we
12 must roll back spending to Fiscal Year
13 18 expenses. Based on today's
14 environment, we have to prioritize
15 jobs. By going back to '18 spending,
16 we can continue to invest in job
17 creation programs and policies that are
18 desperately needed.

19 I can tell you any individual
20 in the City or any business or any
21 organization would be ecstatic, would
22 be happy, to achieve 2018's finances in
23 2021 or even 2017's finances today.
24 Given all of that, I'd like you to
25 follow up with Council regarding how

1 they could use 2018 as a guideline and
2 report back to us.

3 The other questions I have I
4 will ask -- put them in writing and
5 will ask for an answer. One, what
6 operation, innovations or efficiencies
7 have you put in place to reduce cost
8 and improve services in this budget?
9 Two, how would you regulate overtime
10 spending in especially your major
11 operating departments? And three, what
12 goals and measurements do you use to
13 evaluate all of your departmental
14 commissioners and office leaders.

15 And again, Brian, I want to
16 thank you for everything and I'm
17 prepared to work with you and try to
18 solve this in a way that we don't have
19 to have a tax increase and we can cut
20 our overhead. Thank you.

21 Thank you, Madam Chair.

22 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
23 you, Councilman Domb.

24 And again, because we want to
25 make sure we get through all three of

1 our last Councilmembers, Councilman
2 Henon.

3 Brian, I know you'll respond
4 to that on the record with the other
5 questions.

6 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
7 Madam Leader.

8 And I'll just make a
9 statement instead of asking a bunch of
10 questions because I'll put them in
11 writing as we have been throughout this
12 whole process. But I do want to first
13 start off by saying thank you and good
14 job to our Managing Director Brian and
15 your team that's handling the crisis
16 and putting together all the
17 departments as we have a plan working
18 with Council, and working with Council
19 being key to the road to recovery.

20 So, one, Councilman Domb,
21 talking about the hospitality and the
22 road to recovery there, been speaking
23 with the Deputy Managing Director
24 Michael Carroll and he has been
25 speaking with multiple departments.

1 Hopefully when permitted, when the
2 Governor allows, we can have a
3 reopening and recovery permit for
4 sidewalk cafes, however that shapes
5 out.

6 And my questions and comments
7 will be towards L&I Commissioner. I
8 know the Commissioner has been doing a
9 fabulous job trying to make sure that
10 woodwork is coming back and the
11 construction industry seems to be the
12 first road of recovery, an industry
13 that is coming back to work and putting
14 back into our economy and I think
15 that's important.

16 There are some unintended
17 consequences. I think I'm going to
18 stick to our mission to making sure
19 that we have a department that has the
20 tools and the resources to keep our
21 property and our people safe in every
22 neighborhood in our city. In FY19, it
23 generated \$73.6 million. In FY20, \$68
24 million. And in this revised budget,
25 even in this revised budget there's \$64

1 million-plus going to a department of
2 L&I that only has a budget of operating
3 cost of \$31 million.

4 Our L&I inspectors are our
5 first responders when it comes to our
6 public health and safety and our
7 neighbors when it comes to
8 construction. So during this time of
9 crisis, the underground economy has
10 been booming because they're not paying
11 taxes, they are not pulling permits and
12 they do not have licenses. During this
13 crisis, in the apocalypse of the
14 construction industry at this time,
15 they have been surviving and that is
16 unacceptable. So I am going to work
17 with the Department and the
18 Administration to give back the cuts to
19 L&I so we can have the rate of return,
20 which has been proven over the past
21 five years as always, the resources and
22 the tools to keep us safe and to make
23 sure that we generate the revenue that
24 is undercollected and unseen. So thank
25 you very much.

1 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
2 you so much, Councilman Henon.

3 Councilwoman Squilla.

4 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank
5 you, Madam Chair.

6 Quick question for SEPTA is,
7 what is your outlook for ridership and
8 return to pro-COVID levels? And then
9 what's SEPTA's plan to appeal to riders
10 as we go through this restart? It's
11 really important to have an idea of how
12 we're going to get people to use our
13 public transportation instead of
14 getting everybody when we do restart go
15 back to vehicles and trying to get to
16 work through more crowded streets.

17 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: So
18 thank you, Councilwoman Squilla. And
19 we're going to ask you to respond in
20 writing, Leslie. Thank you so much.

21 And the last person is
22 Councilwoman Gauthier who is also just
23 putting this question on the record.

24 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: One
25 other question just for the Managing

1 Director's Office. I know it's been
2 mentioned several times about arts and
3 culture and the museums, about zeroing
4 out people that we're really going to
5 need to restart our economy. So I just
6 wanted to get that on the record also.
7 Thank you.

8 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
9 you, Councilman Squilla.

10 Councilwoman Gauthier.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
12 you, Leader Parker.

13 This question is for
14 Commissioner Ott Lovell and Siobhan
15 Reardon. For parks, recreation centers
16 and libraries, I wanted more detail on
17 how many days or hours these
18 neighborhood hubs will no longer be
19 operating because of proposed budget
20 cuts. I think we can all agree that
21 these are essential facilities for food
22 and work and play, but the budget
23 doesn't necessarily reflect that. So
24 I'd love to see further detail.

25 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank

1 you so much, Councilwoman Gauthier.

2 And it is 12:29. Let me
3 thank each and every one of you for
4 your testimony. We will have callbacks
5 and we will send all of the questions
6 that Councilmembers had that you did
7 not get a chance to verbally respond to
8 in writing.

9 If there being no one else
10 here to testify, any other questions or
11 comments?

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: There
14 being none, this Committee will stand
15 in recess until Wednesday, May 27, 2020
16 at 9:30 a.m., at which time we will
17 reconvene on Microsoft Teams. I want
18 to say thank you to each of you.

19 And 30 seconds, hey, Brian
20 Abernathy and City Administration,
21 intergovernmental cooperation is
22 extremely important. We are going to
23 move this City forward together as the
24 Council President mentioned and we
25 can't do it with Council being an

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1 afterthought. We have to work together
2 hand in hand. Thank you so much and
3 have a good day.

4 MR. ABNERNATHY: Thank you.

5 MS. RICHARDS: Thank you.

6 (Committee of the Whole
7 adjourned at 12:30 p.m.)

8
9 - - -

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I, hereby certify that the
proceedings and evidence noted are contained
fully and accurately in the stenographic
notes taken by me in the foregoing matter,
and this is a correct transcript of the
same.

Court Reporter - Notary Public

(The foregoing certification of
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