

COMMITTEE ON FISCAL STABILITY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
September 29, 2021

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON FISCAL STABILITY AND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Wednesday, September 29, 2021
10:00 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL, VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILMAN DEREK S. GREEN
COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA QUINONES-SANCHEZ
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA

RESOLUTION: 200406

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2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I just want
3 to first give a shout-out to Modesto and
4 the Tech team and the City for making
5 all of these things possible these last
6 18 months. Without you guys, we
7 wouldn't be having these hearings. So
8 thank you so much for all your work.
9 It's great.

10 So good morning, everyone.
11 This hearing is called to order. I
12 recognize the presence of a quorum of
13 Committee members, members of the
14 Committee in attendance. I know there
15 will be some of them coming on board.
16 This is a public hearing on the
17 Committee on Fiscal Stability and
18 Intergovernmental Cooperation. And the
19 purpose of this public hearing is to
20 hear testimony on Resolution 200406.

21 I understand that state law
22 currently requires that the following
23 announcement be made at the beginning of
24 every remote public hearing as follows:
25 Due to the current public health

1 emergency, City Council Committees are
2 currently meeting remotely. We are
3 using Microsoft Teams to make these
4 remote hearings possible.

5 Instructions for how the public
6 may view and offer public testimony at
7 public hearings of Council Committees
8 are included in the public hearing
9 notices that are published in the Daily
10 News, Inquirer and Legal Intelligencer
11 prior to the hearings and can also be
12 found on PHLCouncil.com.

13 The Clerk will now please read
14 the title of the resolution before the
15 Committee today.

16 THE CLERK: Good morning. The
17 resolution being heard today is
18 authorizing the Committee on Fiscal
19 Stability and Intergovernmental
20 Cooperation to hold quarterly hearings
21 that include monthly reporting
22 requirements to discuss the fiscal
23 position and overarching social impact
24 goals of the City, including and as
25 related to the Five Year Plan and the

1 reporting requirements set forth in the
2 Quarterly City Manager's Report as
3 submitted to the Pennsylvania
4 Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority.

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.
6 I'd like to recognize also Councilman
7 Jones who has joined us. Good morning,
8 Councilman Jones.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good
10 morning. How are you, Chairman?

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Good. Thank
12 you for being here.

13 And also Councilmember Maria
14 Quinones-Sanchez has joined us. Thank
15 you, Councilmember.

16 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:
17 Good morning.

18 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And,
19 Councilman Mark Squilla, thank you for
20 joining us.

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Good
22 morning.

23 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.
24 Good to see you.

25 I want to thank everybody for

1 being here. I'm not going to give any
2 kind of speech. I believe we can get
3 right to the heart of the topic. So
4 let's start with our first panel, which
5 I believe is Harvey Rice and Rob Dubow
6 and Marisa Waxman.

7 MR. RICE: Good morning,
8 Councilman Domb and members of the City
9 Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental
10 Cooperation Committee. As you know, my
11 name is Harvey Rice. I'm the Executive
12 Director of Pennsylvania
13 Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority,
14 which is a state oversight agency for
15 the City of Philadelphia.

16 Again, I appreciate you giving
17 me the opportunity to testify today and
18 to speak about PICA's report in the
19 Quarterly City Manager's Report for the
20 fourth quarter of Fiscal Year 2021,
21 which encompasses the April, May and
22 June months as well as PICA's recent
23 reports on City revenues, obligations
24 and overtime through August and also,
25 our recent comparison of the reserve of

1 fund balance with other cities
2 throughout the United States. I have
3 prepared -- because of time constraints,
4 I have a short PowerPoint presentation
5 with the highlights of the reports that
6 I just mentioned.

7 Okay. The numbers, this is for
8 the last quarter of FY2021: The fund
9 balance was projected in the Five Year
10 Plan of 51.3. It's projected for the
11 last quarter to rise to 78.8 million.
12 And if you look at compared to last
13 year, how significantly lower it is, it
14 was almost 300 million projected, the
15 actual of FY2020.

16 And also, it must be noted that
17 out of that 78.8 million, 26.5 million
18 is the ARP money from the federal
19 government. Revenues was projected at
20 4.615 billion. The actual is 4.833
21 billion, so that was higher. But also,
22 that includes federal money in those
23 numbers.

24 Obligations was projected at a
25 little under 5 billion. And the actual

1 is just a little over 5 billion. These
2 are just another slide on the revenues
3 and obligations.

4 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Mr. Rice, can
5 you go back to your first slide to make
6 sure we all understand. Yeah, that one.
7 In this slide, it's saying the revenues
8 are projected for '21 of 4.6?

9 MR. RICE: Right.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Is the
11 actuals for '20 --

12 MR. RICE: '20, I misspoke,
13 yes.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Just
15 want to make sure. So just to be clear
16 from this slide so I'll make sure I
17 understand this, the fund balance this
18 year is almost 212 million lower than it
19 was last year?

20 MR. RICE: Yes.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And revenues
22 will be almost whatever that
23 differential is, like 150 million --

24 MR. RICE: Right.

25 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So just doing

1 the math in my head, 220 roughly less
2 than revenue?

3 MR. RICE: Yes.

4 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And the
5 obligations though are lower by about
6 119, 118, 117 million roughly?

7 MR. RICE: Roughly, yes.

8 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So I just
9 want to make sure I got that. Thank
10 you. I'm sorry to interrupt you.

11 MR. RICE: You're welcome.
12 This slide shows a projected revenues
13 and obligations not only compared to
14 last year, but compared to the Five Year
15 Plan. So you can see that in revenues,
16 the Five Year Plan projection was 4.5
17 billion. And the Q4 projection rose to
18 4.6 billion.

19 And same with obligations, we
20 see the actual of FY20 at a little over
21 5 billion. The five year projection for
22 FY21 was lower at 4.8 billion, but it
23 comes in at the fourth quarter
24 projection higher than the Five Year
25 Plan projection by what we just

1 discussed, by \$120 million.

2 This just shows that -- this
3 slide, that the revenues were projected
4 to increase by 33 million from the Five
5 Year Plan for the last quarter of FY21.
6 Obligations almost 115 million from the
7 Five Year Plan for the last quarter.
8 And the fund balance, as I discussed, is
9 78.8 million projected for the last
10 year, an increase of over 27 million
11 from the Five Year Plan, as I also
12 mentioned due to the influx of the ARP
13 funds.

14 And this slide just shows you
15 revenues by type of the different
16 categories of revenues. And as you can
17 see, the revenues that took a hit during
18 the fourth quarter and during actually
19 the whole year of FY21 were parking,
20 amusement, beverage, wage and earnings.
21 And wage and earnings took the biggest
22 hit, and that's mostly due to the
23 refunds for non-Philadelphia employees
24 that work for companies in the City.

25 And then we look at staffing,

1 and it's continuing to decline through
2 the months and the year-and-a-half of
3 the pandemic. And then overtime
4 declined also by about 11 percent over
5 FY21 over FY20. And then this just --
6 this slide shows you by department
7 overtime for '21 compared to overtime
8 for FY2022 through August. So these are
9 more updated numbers on overtime. This
10 is August of FY22. This is the fiscal
11 year that we're currently in.

12 And then we look at --

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I --

14 MR. RICE: I'm sorry,
15 Councilman.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I have a
17 question from Councilmember Jones. You
18 want to ask a question on one of the
19 slides?

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: I would
21 rather wait until the end of his
22 presentation, Mr. Chairman.

23 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay.

24 MR. RICE: And then we look at
25 performance targets and measures. Since

1 the pandemic, it's been very hard
2 because targets and performance measures
3 are changing a lot because of the
4 pandemic and to fulfill the needs and
5 the services that were needed during the
6 pandemic, but we're still looking at
7 them and we're looking forward to when
8 the City gets back through the pandemic
9 and then we can better assess the
10 targets and the performance measures
11 that each department puts forward in the
12 plan and in the quarterly reports.

13 We followed the tax revenues
14 monthly, so we wanted to give you an
15 update through August which is the last
16 ones that we reported on. And as you
17 can see, we're slightly below in
18 revenues collections from August of '21
19 to August of '22. Through year-to-date
20 we're -- year-to-date we're about 10
21 percent lower, about \$44 million.

22 And then obligations, again we
23 report through August. If you look at
24 FY22 which is the current year we're in,
25 we're slightly above FY22. But as we've

1 noticed since we've been monitoring the
2 budget obligations since the beginning
3 of the pandemic, that the early months
4 you'll see more obligations and more
5 payments because of debt service and
6 encumbered contracts.

7 And then at our annual meeting
8 in July when the Board considered and
9 approved the plan, it was requested by
10 the Board to -- they were concerned
11 about the low fund balance and the very
12 few reserve contributions over the
13 course since the Budget Stabilization
14 Reserve Fund was established.

15 So PICA's staff reviewed 18
16 cities that have reserve funds in the
17 United States. So we looked at the
18 reserve funds, how they come to the
19 reserve fund, how they contribute to the
20 reserve fund. And we also looked at
21 their fund balances. And what we
22 found -- and this is just one slide of
23 our report that we issued last week --
24 that Philadelphia is both near the
25 bottom, and to get the best way to

1 compare because it's not apples to
2 apples, each city has a different way of
3 coming to their fund balance and also
4 different ways of contributing or
5 criteria for the reserve funds or rainy
6 day funds.

7 So we looked at their -- we
8 went to every City's Comprehensive
9 Annual Financial Report, the CAFR
10 report, and looked at the unaudited
11 numbers that were left for the fund
12 balance and compared that to other
13 cities. And then as a percent of
14 obligations for both the fund balance
15 and the budget stabilization reserve or
16 rainy day fund, different cities call it
17 different names, and that's how we came
18 up with this data and this information.

19 Some as you can see on the
20 reserve funds -- and we looked at three
21 years, '18, '19 and '20. They were very
22 similar in each of the three years.
23 This slide is for FY20. As you can see
24 in the reserve funds, the City is low,
25 third at the bottom of the 18 cities.

1 And the fund balances were also low,
2 No. 5 on fund balances.

3 So what we reported is that
4 where other cities had very high fund
5 balances or they had criteria measures
6 to put for a reserve fund, that when
7 tough times hit, they can go and have
8 something to fall back on to get them
9 through that event. Whether it's the
10 pandemic, whether it's New Orleans, they
11 had a rainy day fund for the hurricanes,
12 like Portland has it for high
13 unemployment.

14 So as we've been saying all
15 along in our annual reports, the need
16 for the City to have a rainy day and
17 commit to contributing that fund so that
18 when events such as this pandemic hits,
19 which we at that point had over \$34
20 million which was used the following
21 year to help us through the pandemic
22 event.

23 So that's my presentation. I'm
24 free to answer any questions that you
25 may have.

1 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank
2 you very much, Mr. Rice. Can we go back
3 to -- I want to make sure I'm clear.
4 There was a chart you showed of revenues
5 and expenses, how we're doing this year.
6 And I think our revenues were up 33
7 million on the chart, and the expenses
8 were up like 80 or 85 million.

9 I think it's before this one,
10 before that one too, before that one,
11 before that one, before that one --
12 there you go. I just want to make sure
13 I understand. The -- I don't think this
14 was it. There was a chart that showed
15 that for this year on a projection for
16 '21 -- this chart is not showing the
17 projection or the actual for '21, right?
18 This is just showing the projection.

19 Do you have the actuals for '21
20 of income and expenses? If you don't --

21 MR. RICE: We can go through
22 August.

23 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Yeah, that's
24 fine. If I recall, it's 33 million or
25 so, income is higher than what we

1 projected. But the expenses were 85 or
2 80. Does that sound right and accurate?

3 MR. RICE: Here's the expenses,
4 so the expenses are also higher.

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Is that
6 getting covered by the federal funds?

7 MR. RICE: It's too early to
8 tell because it's early in the year. As
9 we go through each month, then we can
10 have a better sense.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. And
12 then the other question I had is the
13 reserve fund, what's PICA's
14 recommendation in this environment on
15 how we can build up that reserve fund?
16 What does PICA recommend we do? What's
17 the --

18 MR. RICE: Well, I think what
19 we found was like certain cities such as
20 Houston and I believe LA, they have it
21 where if they dip into their fund,
22 then -- so Houston I think has 15
23 million or 25 million they have to have
24 in that fund. So if they dip into that
25 let's say in '21 and they take 10

1 million out of that, then in FY22 their
2 budget, they have to put that money
3 right back in there, so they have to
4 keep it at that level. That's one idea.

5 Some cities look at the rate of
6 revenue growth so that if it's over a
7 certain percentage and they all have
8 different percentages, some at 2.5 up to
9 I think 4.5, so that if their revenues
10 come in or they're projected to come in
11 over that or come in over that, then a
12 percentage of that overflow is then put
13 into a reserve fund. So that basically
14 goes to the point when in good times,
15 you want to save and prepare for the
16 times that aren't going to be so good or
17 that events will come into play that you
18 might need extra funds to get through
19 that period.

20 So they're just some examples
21 of how the other cities contribute or
22 have the criteria for their so-called
23 rainy day funds, reserve funds. And I
24 would recommend that the City look at
25 our report and some of the recom -- we

1 don't have recommendations in there, but
2 some of our findings and our conclusion
3 and see if it's in the City's interest
4 right now to tweak or change some of the
5 criteria to ensure that since the BSR
6 has been placed since 2011, only made
7 one contribution in 10 years, and that
8 may be these new ways or ways of the
9 other cities looking at it, we might be
10 able to increase that contribution over
11 the next 10 years.

12 COUNCILMAN DOMB: All right.
13 The Chair would like to recognize
14 Vice-Chair Brian O'Neill joining the
15 meeting, Councilmember Kathy Gilmore
16 Richardson, Councilmember Derek Green,
17 Councilmember Kendra Brooks and
18 Councilmember Jamie Gauthier too. Thank
19 you very much.

20 I do have a question for you,
21 Mr. Rice, the second one, and then we
22 will go to Councilman Curtis Jones.
23 These reserve funds that we're talking
24 about are all cash reserve funds,
25 correct?

1 MR. RICE: No, it's fund

2 balance so --

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Liquid assets
4 basically?

5 MR. RICE: Right, the reserve
6 fund is. If you're putting money into
7 the reserve fund, yes, that's liquid.
8 That's money that's put into that
9 separate fund that the City following
10 their criteria can pull out either all
11 of it or whatever fits in the criteria,
12 yes.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Is there any
14 value to assets the City owns that are
15 not liquid such as real estate and other
16 assets? And I would be curious to know
17 how Philadelphia compares to other
18 cities as far as owning those types of
19 as assets. Because when you look at the
20 financial worth of the City, it's not
21 just the cash and the reserves. It's
22 also the assets the City has.

23 MR. RICE: As part of our
24 review, we did not look at that. It may
25 be a possibility that we could look at

1 if that data is available.

2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank
3 you.

4 Councilman Jones, I know you
5 had a question. The Chair would like to
6 recognize you.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
8 much, Mr. Chairman. And thank you for
9 staying focused on our fiscal stability
10 in these times. I cannot imagine a
11 greater time that we should be
12 laser-focused on revenues and
13 obligations as we are right now in this
14 point in time.

15 My question would be we would
16 be having a very different conversation
17 right now but for the federal bail-outs
18 that we had. I want to recognize that
19 we did receive them and that it has
20 helped us out. How would you say the
21 bond ratings will be impacted by our
22 current snapshot status fiscally?

23 MR. RICE: One of the things
24 that the bond rating agencies look at
25 when they're making their grade for the

1 City is the amount that's in the fund
2 balance. So low fund balances are not
3 good. They're not looked at kindly by
4 the bond rating agencies. So that's why
5 we -- every year in our annual staff
6 reports on the Five Year Plan we mention
7 that, that if the fund balances are low,
8 what effect that might have on the
9 City's bond rating.

10 As you saw right before the
11 pandemic, the City was doing really
12 well. Maybe not meeting the GFOA
13 recommendation 17 percent of
14 obligations, but the City's own -- they
15 were meeting for a few years their own 6
16 to 8 percent targeted revenue, so their
17 fund balances right before the pandemic
18 were very high, over 400 million.

19 So now when we received the
20 Five Year Plan in July, the numbers were
21 significantly lower. And as in
22 discussions with bond ratings agencies,
23 they look at, as I said, the amount
24 that's in the fund balance for the City,
25 because that shows the financial

1 consistency of the City going forward
2 just in case some events happen, that
3 they have a fund balance that they can
4 use to adjust to those events.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: Second thing
6 I would ask about in your report is the
7 overtime utilization chart. In light of
8 a pandemic and in light of departments
9 that I know had large shortages of
10 workforce, whether we're talking about
11 the police department, whether we talk
12 about the prisons in particular, they're
13 undergoing severe outages and therefore
14 reliant in order to maintain operations
15 overtime. So is that being considered
16 and adjusted for due to COVID and --

17 MR. RICE: Yes, it is,
18 Councilman. We're just reporting what
19 the numbers are, but we understand. And
20 as I had mentioned with the performance
21 measures, this is not a typical year or
22 a typical year-and-a-half. We're just
23 reporting to Council and to the public
24 what the numbers are. But yes, when you
25 have in the prisons for example where

1 you have many of the employees who are
2 sick and not coming in and then to make
3 sure that you have enough staffing to
4 fulfill the mission and the federal
5 mandates on the prison, yes, you need
6 overtime.

7 You need overtime in other
8 departments such as the Police. So
9 we're well aware of that, and the Board
10 is well aware of that. They've
11 mentioned that at Board meetings also,
12 that while we're concerned and we were
13 concerned prior to the pandemic about
14 rising overtime costs, we're right now
15 at the stage where we're just reporting
16 the numbers. And then as we get through
17 the pandemic, then we'll see whether
18 those overtime numbers decrease.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: This final
20 question, and I don't know if I'm -- so
21 other cities are all different. They
22 calculate differently as you mentioned.

23 MR. RICE: Yes.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: But how many
25 of them comparable, I'm going to say

1 from New York to LA, the top 10, how
2 much relief did they get from the feds
3 compared to us?

4 And then I want to zero in on
5 our state relief. The Commonwealth of
6 Pennsylvania currently has a \$5 billion
7 surplus. And if you were asking on our
8 behalf how they could help us, what
9 would be your recommendation for that
10 kind of assistance? Would it be in a
11 fund balance? Would it be in our School
12 District's needs? Would it be job
13 creation tools? What would you
14 recommend?

15 MR. RICE: Well, the two areas
16 I would recommend. One is that if they
17 could make contributions to the City's
18 General Fund to cover the cost of needed
19 services that the citizens of
20 Philadelphia expect and deserve, then
21 therefore if they can cover some of
22 those costs, then City funds could go
23 into either a higher fund balance or
24 they could meet the criteria for a
25 contribution to the Budget Stabilization

1 Reserve Fund.

2 And then secondly, I think what
3 you alluded to, Councilman, about the
4 contribution of the School District.
5 Because if the state gives more funding
6 to the School District -- because the
7 City has made a commitment and they have
8 increased funding over the last three to
9 four years to the School District since
10 it's been in local control -- then maybe
11 either the state can still contribute
12 and it would go to needed services at
13 the School District or they can withhold
14 some of that money and put it into a
15 fund balance and/or a rainy day fund or
16 put that money to other City services
17 such as recreation centers, job
18 training, afterschool programs, rent
19 assistance.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: So I don't
21 know, Mr. Chairman, and I guess our
22 Finance Department will probably have
23 greater information if those kinds of
24 discussions, negotiations, requests are
25 being made of the state in a way that

1 can be helpful and actually stabilize
2 our budget not just this year, but for a
3 couple of years to come. With \$5
4 billion in surplus, we can give them
5 some ideas on how to spend it.

6 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
8 Councilmember Jones. Very good point.
9 Thank you for bringing that up. I do
10 have another question, Mr. Rice, for
11 you. And that is, it looks to me like
12 the wage taxes are the biggest problem
13 we're having in the lower revenue. It's
14 about 118 million short?

15 MR. RICE: Yes.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And I think
17 you outlined that it was parking and
18 amusement. Maybe I missed something. I
19 think that was the order.

20 MR. RICE: Right.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So parking
22 and amusement, if I recall from memory,
23 was 25 and 18 million short, but the
24 wage was 118 million.

25 MR. RICE: Right. I think when

1 the final numbers come in on wage you're
2 going to see that lower, because I think
3 the refunds are lower than what the City
4 projected the refunds would be. I don't
5 know what that number is yet. We will
6 know that when we see the final for
7 FY21.

8 But also if you look at the
9 revenues through August, there is some
10 good news. You can see that the parking
11 tax, the amusement tax, City sales tax,
12 they are all increasing. So that shows
13 that the City is slowly getting back
14 from the pandemic, especially if you
15 compare them to last year at this time.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I think even
17 the City parking tax will pick up
18 dramatically because anybody coming into
19 the City right now probably wants to
20 drive in their car versus unfortunately
21 taking SEPTA --

22 MR. RICE: Absol --

23 COUNCILMAN DOMB: -- how we can
24 get Septa back up and running.

25 MR. RICE: Absolutely. We see

1 that with our own staff here.

2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Let me ask
3 you this question: Back in I think
4 March, Pew did a report that showed --
5 and I think you're all familiar with the
6 report -- it showed our volatile tax
7 structure report basically and it showed
8 our budget shortfall for 2021.

9 And it showed the projection
10 that Detroit was the worst city in the
11 country at 17 percent budget shortfall,
12 and Philadelphia was the second worst at
13 14.7. And what we're talking about
14 today is how to band-aid patch and get
15 through the next few years. And my
16 question to you is this chart said from
17 Pew that our reliance on wage tax
18 revenue was our major issue here. In
19 the long run, 5, 10 years from now, how
20 do we fix this problem?

21 So there will be another
22 pandemic, another problem, there will be
23 another crisis. We all know that. But
24 how do we fix the problem from the
25 City's perspective so we can deal with

1 the next crisis in a better way?

2 MR. RICE: I think two ways.

3 One is, and I think the City and
4 Administration is preparing this, that
5 they're going to look at the whole City
6 tax structure. And I think they need to
7 start doing that now, so they can get it
8 underway once this pandemic ends and
9 we're at some sort of a stable with each
10 tax revenue.

11 And then I think the second
12 area is they need to prepare for such
13 events such as this, they need to look
14 at the Budget Stabilization Reserve Fund
15 and why over in 10 years was there only
16 one contribution made of a little over
17 \$34 million, so they are two areas. I
18 think the City is looking at the first
19 area and talking with Budget, that they
20 do want to look at the tax revenue
21 structure. They might have to adjust it
22 because of the pandemic. And the way I
23 hate to say a new normalcy will be for
24 employee, employers, but I would urge
25 the City's Administration and Council to

1 look at the Budget Stabilization Reserve
2 Fund and see what could be done to
3 increase contributions to that over the
4 future years.

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Is it
6 possible for PICA to send to us
7 recommendations for over the next 5, 10
8 years of what they would like to see
9 happen in order to avoid the position
10 we're in now going forward, specific
11 recommendations?

12 MR. RICE: Sure. We will look
13 into that, Councilman, and get something
14 to you.

15 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank
16 you. I think my colleague Councilmember
17 Sanchez has a question. Councilmember
18 Sanchez.

19 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:
20 Good morning. Thank you, Councilmember.

21 And thank you, Harvey. Back in
22 the spring, I think my office had
23 forwarded over a letter. We were having
24 a conversation about the fact that
25 because of the pandemic and the recovery

1 there was a cost of government doing
2 business and how that had changed, and I
3 asked specifically of PICA, as I did for
4 City Controller Rebecca Rhynhart, what,
5 if anything, PICA could do to compare
6 what were some of our fixed costs and
7 how it related to other cities.

8 I think one of our challenges
9 and the savings component is what the
10 cost of doing business has changed under
11 COVID and what does that all mean and
12 how do we align with other cities in our
13 expenditure and our ability to deliver
14 some general services, right. There's a
15 capital component. There's an
16 operational component. We see it on
17 trash and others.

18 Have you guys looked at that at
19 all? And what do you suggest and how do
20 you suggest --

21 MR. RICE: I recall you
22 mentioning that, Councilwoman, but we
23 never received a letter. And we would
24 need to know exactly --

25 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:

1 I sent a letter over, and I'll forward
2 it again because it was --

3 MR. RICE: And then we'll
4 review that letter. Any questions we
5 have, we'll contact you and your staff
6 so we can get a definitive structure of
7 what you want us to look at, and then we
8 can do that. I just want to make sure
9 that I'm looking at exactly what you
10 want us to look at.

11 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:
12 Okay. Will do. I think it's an
13 important context around the reality of
14 how we're operating, right. We all want
15 to save money. No one wants to save
16 more money than Rob. He'd stash it all
17 away if he could. But I think there's
18 some realities that we need to come to
19 terms with. Some which are short-term.
20 Others require us to build in more
21 efficiencies, but that's going to be the
22 reality for the next 18 months and we
23 should be aware of them. Thank you so
24 very much and --

25 MR. RICE: You're welcome.

1 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:

2 And thank you, Chair.

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
4 Councilmember Sanchez.

5 Any there other questions for
6 Mr. Rice?

7 (No response.)

8 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank
9 you, Mr. Rice. Thank you for your
10 testimony.

11 MR. RICE: Thank you.

12 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Finance
13 Director and our Budget Director Marisa
14 Waxman.

15 MR. DUBOW: Thank you and good
16 morning, Councilmember Domb and members
17 on the Council Committee on Fiscal
18 Stability. As you said, I'm Rob Dubow
19 and I'm here with Marisa Waxman, the
20 Budget Director, to testify on
21 Resolution 200406. Thank you for giving
22 us this opportunity.

23 We have a short PowerPoint that
24 we'll go through. Some of it goes over
25 the same ground that Harvey went over so

1 we won't repeat the numbers, but we will
2 go through it really quickly. One thing
3 we wanted to emphasize -- and at the
4 end, we'll give more detail on this --
5 is the numbers that were in the
6 quarterly report aren't the final
7 numbers for FY21. Those come out at the
8 end of May. Well, those preliminary
9 actuals come out at the end of -- did I
10 say May? It's the end of October in our
11 annual financial report, and then those
12 are audited and the final numbers come
13 out in February.

14 So you'll see different numbers
15 when those come out, and we will talk
16 later about how they may change. And
17 then we also have to do an updated Five
18 Year Plan because of our collective
19 bargaining agreements, so you'll see
20 some numbers in there.

21 I think most of the rest of the
22 numbers on this page, Page 2, Harvey had
23 gone through. To give some context,
24 obviously one of the reasons that
25 revenues are down 200 million from FY20

1 is the pandemic. That changed our
2 revenue structure dramatically. It also
3 changed how we spend money and it
4 required us to reduce that spending, so
5 that's down about 117 million from FY20.
6 Those numbers resulted in a fund balance
7 that is much lower than where it had
8 been at the start of the pandemic. The
9 next graph we will go through exactly
10 what that looks like, and much lower
11 than where we would want it to be.

12 As you can see in FY19, our
13 fund balance was about \$439 million. So
14 actually even a little higher than our 6
15 to 8 percent goal, which would be at 382
16 million, but still well below where the
17 GFOA recommendation is at 17 percent.
18 And we realize that as a city and a
19 county, we have a different set of needs
20 from a lot of cities, as a city with a
21 high poverty level. We also have a
22 different revenue structure and that
23 also means we have a different set of
24 needs. So we don't think that we're
25 going to get to the 17 percent, but we

1 do think getting to a slightly lower
2 number that ranges between 6 and 8
3 percent is what our goal should be.

4 With that, I'm going to flip it
5 over to Marisa to walk you through the
6 next few slides.

7 MS. WAXMAN: Thank you. So I
8 wanted to talk a little bit more about
9 the revenues and how they came in, in
10 FY21. Again as Rob mentioned, we will
11 be updating these and we'll talk in the
12 end about the 60-day accrual and what
13 that means. But basically our revenues
14 came in about 210 less than the prior
15 year, but they were a little bit more
16 than the target budget, so we adjusted
17 those upwards a bit.

18 And as Harvey mentioned, that's
19 really driven by a few things. One,
20 that we started to draw down funds from
21 the American Rescue Plan that's based in
22 there, and then also this is updated
23 based on actual experience. We had some
24 taxes that performed a bit better,
25 particularly the sales tax performed a

1 bit better than we expected.

2 We did talk a bit about the
3 wage tax is still really weak compared
4 to where we once were. As Harvey
5 mentioned, the picture may look a little
6 rosier because as we were projecting and
7 estimating how many refunds commuters
8 who didn't have to pay because they
9 weren't coming in requested, that's a
10 little lower than what we thought. By
11 the same token, at this point we are
12 still waiting with bated breath to see
13 what it means that our universities have
14 come back in terms of faculty and staff.

15 And so, we sort of lagged the
16 rest of the country because we are so
17 concentrated in meds and eds. And if
18 the eds don't come back until basically
19 this month, we're not seeing the same
20 sort of growth that other cities may
21 have saw starting in the summer, but we
22 did start to see recovery based on some
23 of the hospitality industry.

24 So just to break down our taxes
25 a little bit better, as I said really

1 driven by the sales tax. Locally
2 generated non-tax revenues are a little
3 worse than we had projected and really a
4 mixed bag there. Things were actually
5 looking pretty good from our business-
6 driven things, permits, licenses. But
7 we fell short particularly around our
8 revenues related to the Philadelphia
9 nursing home where the census is
10 significantly lower and has been
11 historically, as well as some delays and
12 asset sales.

13 Some properties we thought we
14 would sell in FY21, those deals are
15 taking longer and we expect them in FY22
16 or later, so that's more of a delay as
17 opposed to a permanent loss related to
18 those. Not much variation in terms of
19 when our early spring, March projections
20 were and at the end of the fourth
21 quarter for some of our other accounts.

22 In terms of the spending, again
23 this will adjust a bit as we figure out
24 grant funds and adjustments there. In
25 general, we wound up spending a bit less

1 than we expected than our earlier
2 projection. In large part, that's
3 because part of the new normal funds for
4 City Council. Those programs sort of
5 were not able to be stood up at the end
6 of '21. We did roll those forward so
7 that those programs can start in FY22,
8 so that was about \$11 million. So
9 that's why the spending is about \$10
10 million less than we thought.

11 With that said, partway through
12 the year our initial projections for
13 spending for FY21 those got increased,
14 and you guys may recall the midyear
15 transfer ordinances doing that. A
16 couple of things that had driven that:
17 One, was the decision to maintain fire
18 service at the current prepandemic
19 level. That required an additional \$24
20 million. The additional 10 million that
21 went in to make sure we can do the
22 Presidential election as well as there
23 was 8 million because trash tonnage
24 increased, so the waste disposal costs
25 went up, so those were some of the big

1 drivers.

2 Also, we put into place a \$50
3 million COVID expense fund. And that
4 was a reserve so that if federal, state,
5 whatever dollars didn't show up for
6 COVID costs, we wouldn't have to go
7 without doing what we needed to do in
8 terms of testing vaccination, but we had
9 our own reserve. Some good news is, is
10 that a lot of FEMA dollars have come
11 through, so we'll be updating and
12 actually probably won't need to spend
13 that \$50 million of General Fund dollars
14 that we set aside for COVID.

15 And so, the last time we talked
16 a bit about the interplay between
17 staffing levels, overtime and leave
18 usage. So as Harvey mentioned,
19 generally overtime is actually down.
20 But again, that reflects a mixed bag.
21 We had some departments that weren't
22 operating at all or at significantly
23 reduced levels so they didn't need the
24 overtime they would typically use in a
25 year. But then obviously, we have a

1 number of public health, public safety
2 departments where the strain was even
3 greater in the pandemic. But on
4 balance, it led to a bit less.

5 So part of this again is the
6 leave usage. Because when you're
7 thinking about if we want to provide a
8 certain service level, you need a
9 certain number of staff to do that. And
10 if you don't have the number of full-
11 time positions and if you don't have
12 folks who are there because they are out
13 for health reasons or other reasons,
14 then that's when you lean to the
15 overtime. And so, leave usage is part
16 of this picture.

17 If the staff you have on the
18 books isn't there on a particular day,
19 then they can't do that work and in
20 certain departments, you can't wait.
21 You can't do it the next day.
22 Obviously, overtime comes in. And so,
23 there are areas where we're seeing
24 ongoing concerns with the leave usage,
25 Streets, Sanitation, the Sheriff,

1 Prisons. Some of that's driven by
2 COVID-19. Some of it's driven by
3 non-COVID factors and continuing to work
4 through those.

5 And really the overtime and the
6 leave usage plugs into what I'm showing
7 here, which is the number of filled
8 positions. During FY21, we put a hiring
9 freeze into place because we knew that
10 we may still have to save some costs.
11 For the most part -- and sometimes I
12 talk about it as a hiring cold snap
13 because what we did was we evaluated
14 requests for filling positions,
15 backfilling positions, typically
16 approving those related to public health
17 and public safety. But ones where we
18 could wait, we would wait.

19 And where that leaves us is in
20 the General Fund or actually across all
21 funds, about 3400 positions less than we
22 had budgeted for are filled. And so,
23 that's about 10 percent. We've got 90
24 percent of the people resources that we
25 would need to do the jobs we had planned

1 to do.

2 So all of this obviously is
3 also impacting performance measures, how
4 many folks we have available to do the
5 work and then everything related to
6 COVID. So about 60 percent of our
7 performance measures were still on
8 track. About 40 percent were not. And
9 again, different things were able to
10 happen.

11 CLIP managed to do more city-
12 wide clean-up projects than normal than
13 they had projected. The Free Library
14 had more digital visits than they had
15 initially projected, but in some areas
16 things were falling short. The Free
17 Library, not surprisingly, had far less
18 inperson visits than they thought they
19 would have as COVID caused us to reduce
20 the number of hours that the libraries
21 were open.

22 Other variations not so much
23 COVID-related, but Licenses and
24 Inspections, they have a set budget for
25 doing demolitions and then they have a

1 target for the number of demolitions
2 they will complete. In the past year,
3 they had several large commercial
4 demolitions. Those are much more
5 expensive. So if you have a couple of
6 really expensive ones, it means the
7 total volume you can do is reduced. So
8 that's pretty much how things were
9 turning out in FY21.

10 I wanted to turn to a little
11 bit about how things are going in terms
12 of spending through the first two months
13 of FY22. Two months is 16.7 percent of
14 the year. And if we had no seasonal
15 variation, you would say, well, we
16 should have spent 16.7 percent of our
17 money so far.

18 But as Harvey mentioned,
19 there's a lot of departments that either
20 spend stuff early in the year or
21 encumbrance which we consider it spent.
22 For example, City Council encumbers all
23 of the funds for 12 months' worth of
24 court reporters in July. So it looks
25 like you've spent all that money, but

1 you've just encumbered it.

2 And as Harvey mentioned,
3 there's some other big ones but Commerce
4 Department pays the Convention Center
5 subsidy which is 15 million. A lot of
6 our debt services paid early in the
7 year, so it's not surprising that we're
8 a little ahead of that 16.7 percent.

9 But what is really important these days
10 is we're not ahead in Class 100. That
11 one, other than some seasonal variations
12 is where we get concerned if we were
13 well ahead. There'd be a hard time
14 togglng back without layoffs or
15 something traumatic.

16 And so, what you can see here
17 is this is the spending across all
18 categories. And as I mentioned you see
19 Commerce, by time they've already paid
20 the Convention Center subsidy. DBHIDS,
21 they encumber a significant amount of
22 the dollars that go to their providers
23 early in the year. Similar
24 conversations, as I mentioned Sinking
25 Fund, that's where the debt service is,

1 so this is up and above.

2 Where I would be worried is if
3 on this slide which just looks at
4 payroll cost, if this was running ahead
5 of where we should be two months in.
6 And so, by looking at Class 100 our
7 salaries and isolation, this lets us
8 know, okay, we are still within budget,
9 we are on track. Obviously, things can
10 throw us off, particularly in those
11 public safety, public health areas where
12 if something happens, overtime might be
13 needed. But generally, this shows that
14 we're doing pretty well so far. So this
15 is where we are two months into the
16 fiscal year.

17 But as we mentioned and Rob
18 started by saying, we're still
19 finalizing the books for '21 and that's
20 going to let us know exactly how much
21 cushion and room we have for the rest of
22 this year. There's going to be a number
23 of different drivers that change the
24 numbers we presented today, the
25 preliminary ones before the next time we

1 present numbers in late October and that
2 annual financial report.

3 First of all, the revenues are
4 going to reflect the collections from
5 60-day accruals. Basically anything
6 that we get during July and August that
7 should have been paid in June, we get to
8 count towards last year so we do. We'll
9 also get updated information about tax
10 credits and how those are being
11 utilized. With the BIRT tax, those can
12 swing millions and millions of dollars.

13 We'll also be finishing up
14 figuring out how we are transferring
15 funds between our departments, how much
16 does the General Fund have to pay the
17 Water Department for its water bills.
18 This year is actually likely going to be
19 less because with fewer pools open, we
20 billed less pools. That actually is a
21 material impact on our water bill.

22 We'll also be looking to see
23 how much grant dollars we can use to
24 cover expenses. I mentioned that we had
25 set aside and been charging against a

1 \$50 million COVID reserve that was
2 housed in the MDO budget, but we are
3 really chugging to get other folks to
4 pay for that. And so, we continue to
5 try and make sure we get grant dollars
6 to cover as much as possible.

7 And then we'll also be looking
8 at what just wound up being underspent.
9 And I already mentioned the new normal.
10 There's other things where projects just
11 sometimes towards the end of the year
12 don't get off the ground or there's
13 other delays, so we'll be seeing where
14 those are. So all of those are what's
15 going to influence about a month from
16 now the next set of numbers you see and
17 why they'll be variation from the ones
18 we present today about the fourth
19 quarter of FY21. So that's where we
20 are, and obviously we are happy to
21 answer any questions that you have.

22 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
23 Marisa. Thank you, Rob. I have a few
24 questions for you. Let me start by just
25 asking the question: It seems like

1 you're up about 3400 employees in the
2 City overall. And I know there's
3 overtime to make up for their lost
4 shifts. But do you have any idea where
5 you think savings might be in the
6 budget?

7 MS. WAXMAN: So that's
8 something that we are working on now and
9 we'll get netted out so there'll be some
10 increased overtime costs in some areas,
11 but also some underspends in terms of
12 flat salaries. But a lot of the larger
13 departments where it's fairly normal to
14 have vacancies, that's already built
15 into their budget. So it's something
16 that we always build in or typically
17 build in, particularly larger, but it's
18 called a vacancy allowance. So it's
19 already often built into our
20 assumptions, but not 100 percent of
21 positions are billed 100 percent of the
22 year. But in the next month, we'll
23 tighten up where the pluses and minuses
24 are overall.

25 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Just in

1 general, if we pay a dollar in labor --
2 I know I've asked this question over the
3 years -- I know it's different for
4 different departments, but what is the
5 actual total cost for every dollar of
6 labor we pay?

7 MR. DUBOW: Not only is it
8 different by departments, but it's
9 different by employee depending on what
10 pension plan they're in, you know, what
11 kind of other equipment they need, so it
12 can be anywhere from 40 percent to over
13 100 percent depending on all those
14 factors, so it really varies.

15 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Is the
16 overtime typically time-and-a-half would
17 be \$0.50 on the dollar?

18 MS. WAXMAN: I would say
19 typically, but there are some variables
20 depending upon is it overtime on a
21 Sunday that's also a holiday that you
22 can get more, so there are variations.
23 But generally, yes, it's
24 time-and-a-half.

25 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Can you let

1 us know about that analysis when you
2 have it ready? And the other question,
3 I know that recently you had some
4 contract negotiations or contract
5 agreements that were signed for the
6 Class 100 budget for Fiscal Year '22.
7 How does that impact the labor reserve
8 we budgeted and how will it impact our
9 department budgets, if at all?

10 MR. DUBOW: So when we enter
11 into collective bargaining agreements,
12 we have to submit a new plan to PICA.
13 So what you'll see some time in the next
14 month is a new Five Year Plan that will
15 build in all the changes that we have to
16 make as a result of those contracts, so
17 we're going through that process now.
18 It will definitely have an impact really
19 throughout the budget and throughout the
20 Five Year Plan. We're in the process of
21 developing that.

22 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So we don't
23 know the actual impact yet?

24 MR. DUBOW: We know the cost
25 per contract for the three years of

1 those contracts, and I can give you that
2 in a second.

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Was the cost
4 what you projected or different?

5 MR. DUBOW: So the cost is
6 higher than what was in the labor
7 reserve, so we'll have to figure out
8 kind of how to make up that difference.
9 I think the total cost over the three
10 years of the three contracts is in the
11 \$330 million range. And as you know, we
12 hit 200 over five years, so there's a
13 gap there.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: It's 130
15 million or so over five years?

16 MR. DUBOW: That 330 is a
17 three-year cost and we hit 200 million
18 over five years, so it's slightly larger
19 than that.

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Yeah, that
21 sounds like a big potential deficit for
22 us.

23 MR. DUBOW: Yeah, that's what
24 we're figuring out as we redo the Five
25 Year Plan.

1 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Next
2 question, and I don't know if it's
3 possible, but I look at fiscal
4 stability. I know we're talking about
5 the reserve funds and our budgets, but
6 we also have assets. I haven't seen it
7 but maybe you have it. Is there some
8 sort of financial statement balance
9 sheet for the City of Philadelphia that
10 we can look at as Council that shows,
11 for example, this is what pension should
12 be funded at this level, this is what we
13 have in there, our liquid assets are
14 this, this is where our budget stands,
15 this is where our real assets, what
16 their values are net of debt?

17 MR. DUBOW: So the Annual
18 Comprehensive Report has that
19 information.

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: If I ask you
21 this simple question today, Rob, because
22 individuals when they go for loans,
23 they'll say it's not just their cash,
24 it's their financial assets, right.
25 What is the City's financial value as we

1 sit here today?

2 MR. DUBOW: I can get you that.

3 It's in the ACFR. I'm just not looking
4 at it right now.

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I'm talking
6 about counting the real estate assets
7 less the debt.

8 MR. DUBOW: Yes.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: All right. I
10 look forward to that.

11 And I think Councilmember Jones
12 has a question.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
14 Mr. Chairman.

15 By way of a recovery, my
16 concern is use and occupancy and as
17 companies that have large labor pools
18 have discovered that they can survive
19 and work from home. How is that dealing
20 with our occupancy of commercial assets,
21 office buildings and to a degree
22 restaurants that can't find staffers
23 and, therefore, aren't at full
24 occupancy? How is that being factored?

25 MR. DUBOW: So for the City,

1 that would affect our property tax and
2 for the School District, it would hit
3 the use and occupancy tax. So as part
4 of when we put together our projections,
5 it's one of the things we talked about
6 with outside economists where they
7 thought markets would go. And so, we
8 billed it in that way. Marisa may have
9 some more details on specifically how it
10 was billed.

11 MS. WAXMAN: Yeah. We work
12 with IHS, our outside economists, to
13 understand each of our tax types and
14 what the various drivers are. And so,
15 we've toggled those into our growth
16 rates. Some of them are driven by sort
17 of regional economic activity because of
18 the region's doing well and suburbanites
19 will come in and have dinner. That's
20 one thing. The other things that really
21 are just city, county borders and that's
22 what's going to influence.

23 We are, however, meeting with
24 them actually next week to see if they
25 have any updated thoughts because one, a

1 couple of different things going on.
2 The end of the unemployment benefits, we
3 want to try and understand whether or
4 not that's going to be affecting the
5 labor market. There are some sort of
6 natural experiments from the states that
7 didn't accept those extended benefits
8 and trying to understand what that's
9 going to do to labor availability and
10 whether or not that's going to have an
11 impact, a lot of what you're saying, the
12 restaurants not finding staff, so can we
13 expect a shift there. But obviously, do
14 we also need to update based on the
15 Delta variant.

16 And I also mentioned that some
17 of our lag compared to other
18 jurisdictions is that our economic
19 reopening, while we sort of lifted the
20 last of our restrictions in June, so
21 much is driven by activity on our
22 university campuses that we're not going
23 to necessarily see what that bounce-back
24 looks like until we get into right where
25 we are now.

1 So we're in an interesting time
2 to incorporate all of that into what we
3 think it means in terms of the occupancy
4 and commercial real estate and what
5 folks are doing. Some of that is an
6 even longer time horizon. As leases are
7 coming up to be renewed, you know,
8 there's folks who are locked into a
9 lease for another two years. That's
10 when they're going to make the decision
11 about do we need the same square
12 footage, do we need a different type of
13 space.

14 So unfortunately, there's no
15 point at which we're going to have all
16 of the answers. We have to sort of be
17 comfortable living in the questions for
18 a bit, so that's a lot of what we're
19 looking at and constantly updating.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Are you
21 working with commercial realtors and
22 Chamber of Commerce types that, say,
23 hypothetically Blue Cross, they used to
24 have 10,000 square feet in this building
25 and now looking at operating half that.

1 And when that lease comes up, they're
2 not going to renew it for that amount
3 and might only instead of cubicles just
4 go with meeting space when needed, where
5 necessary, shared.

6 So are we kind of looking to
7 that to then say can this building be
8 converted to residential? Are we
9 looking at those kinds of trends?

10 MS. WAXMAN: Definitely on the
11 economic projection side, we're
12 definitely trying to keep our ear to the
13 ground on what's happening in commercial
14 real estate, what's happening in
15 transactions because that drives our
16 realty transfer tax.

17 I think what you're suggesting
18 is a really interesting question that
19 will be sort of budget moving into
20 Planning and Development thinking about
21 Zoning and Commerce thinking about what
22 we want to do. I think that's going to
23 raise some really interesting questions,
24 not just for us but how do folks use
25 space.

1 I was talking to a consultant
2 that specializes in tech industry in big
3 cities and also high commercial office
4 buildings and just how there may be a
5 segregation between where outside folks
6 are allowed in versus areas of spaces
7 that only the (inaudible) staff can get
8 into and that being a lot more
9 segregated, so it may be the same amount
10 of space but really different
11 configurations.

12 I think there's a lot of good
13 questions there. I can say even my
14 staff, we haven't -- people have not yet
15 decided are they coming back to the
16 Municipal Service Building or not, and
17 that's the decisions that are just --
18 thousands and thousands of individual
19 decisions are going to then lead to what
20 does the shift in the real estate market
21 look like. And then as a result, what
22 do we want to shift with in terms of our
23 planning and zoning and things like
24 that. So it's going to evolve, but
25 those are the right questions to be

1 looking at.

2 COUNCILMAN JONES: And it has a
3 rippling effect. Because if I run the
4 luncheonette or shoe repair shop that's
5 adjacent to the big office building,
6 then maybe I don't need to be there
7 anymore. And we need to kind of look at
8 where that's going but how do we adjust
9 and if nothing more than our finances,
10 but we really need to take a look at
11 where things are going.

12 If I'm a company and I work 25
13 percent more efficient with 50 percent
14 less cost because I don't have a
15 physical office, how do I entice that
16 company to revisit the real estate
17 usage.

18 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

19 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
20 Councilmember Jones. You raise a very,
21 very important issue. And I'll just
22 share with you what I've been seeing and
23 then I have a few more questions.

24 I'm seeing people in the
25 commercial market not really knowing

1 what's going to happen. And most of
2 them when their leases are coming up are
3 taking one-year extensions and waiting
4 to see what happens, when will the City
5 reopen, when will these offices open up,
6 is it going to be November 1st, is it
7 January 1st. You know, we had that
8 temporary setback with the variant, so
9 they don't really know. But I do think
10 we need to be prepared on all fronts,
11 and you bring up some excellent points.

12 And I think we need to focus on
13 two areas big time, life sciences and
14 tech. Those are the growth industries
15 for Philadelphia, life sciences and
16 tech. When I say life sciences, I'm
17 talking about cell therapy and what goes
18 on at University of Penn. Seeing that
19 lease get signed out in King of Prussia
20 was like putting a knife in our heart.
21 That's not what we want to see. We want
22 to keep them here.

23 When you have life sciences and
24 you have cell therapy, other companies
25 want to join them and they'll come here

1 because they want to be around them for
2 that connectivity.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: To your
4 point, Mr. Chairman, Budd Biotech up at
5 the old Budd plant, they're reinvesting
6 in that and repurposing those buildings
7 to focus on biotech firms that want and
8 seek this region because of the eds and
9 meds, because of the lifestyle that they
10 can have in Philadelphia. So we need to
11 kind of move away from certain
12 industries.

13 I don't know if we'll ever get
14 the call center back where they're
15 calling and dialing for dollars, but we
16 may get the biotech firms that are
17 hands-on and producing product and kind
18 of sharpen our telescopes to try to land
19 those kinds of deals.

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: All of what
21 we talked about, Councilman Jones, is
22 going to how do we get our Philadelphia
23 residents those jobs and training in
24 those fields so they can get those good
25 paying jobs. We need those good paying

1 jobs. A lot of it is our tax structure
2 that's prevented us from doing that. I
3 know we're working on that now.

4 I have another question and
5 maybe it's for Rob. When we are
6 searching for money and governmental
7 business, you look at every corner and
8 crevice. So I wanted to talk about
9 delinquencies for a minute. And I will
10 say this, I believe the Revenue
11 Department under the current Chairperson
12 Frank Breslin is doing a great job. And
13 we have about \$309 million in principal
14 of delinquent taxes across the board.

15 Half of it roughly is in real
16 estate taxes. And the other two big
17 pieces, it's 146 million in real estate,
18 42 million in wage and 66 million in
19 BIRT tax, so there's three taxes that
20 maybe we can take a little extra focus
21 on to figure out is there more money
22 there that we can collect to help close
23 some of these gaps that we're
24 experiencing. So I don't know if you
25 want to address that.

1 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. I think
2 Revenue is sharply focused on all three
3 of those. The last year-and-a-half has
4 obviously been hard. We've scaled back
5 on enforcement for obvious reasons.
6 We're gradually starting to go back to
7 enforcement, but we have to be mindful
8 of how we do that that to kind of fit
9 the situation people are in.

10 With that said, the property
11 tax collection percent has remained
12 really high and we think we're probably
13 still at 96 percent, which given
14 everything that happened I think is
15 really amazing, but it's obviously
16 something that we'll continue to look
17 at. And as the economy opens back up,
18 we'll be more focused on it.

19 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Let me just
20 say the Revenue Commissioner and you,
21 Rob, and Marissa and the whole Finance
22 Department, we owe a debt of gratitude
23 because I remember six years ago it was
24 like at 90 percent. So to go from that
25 level to 96 and maintain it at 96 in

1 today's environment is great. Of
2 course, I'd like to see it get to 98,
3 but 96 is really good.

4 MR. DUBOW: I know Frank and
5 his folks have done an amazing job.
6 They've been great.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Yeah,
8 excellent.

9 I would like to recognize my
10 colleague Councilmember Kathy Gilmore
11 Richardson for questions.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

13 RICHARDSON: Thank you so much,
14 Mr. Chair and to all of you, for all of
15 your work and for the information that
16 has been provided thus far. I've been
17 listening, and I apologize, I've had
18 tech delays with the chat feature this
19 morning.

20 But I wanted to ask a quick
21 question, and I apologize if I missed
22 this, but how many requests have you all
23 received thus far from individuals who
24 work in the City and may not reside in
25 the City seeking wage tax refunds and

1 how much?

2 MS. WAXMAN: So I can tell you
3 the number I know off the top of my head
4 in terms of dollars is in the mid \$90
5 million range. That's from sort of the
6 start of that opening up to earlier this
7 month, so some of that will be
8 attributable to FY21. Some will be
9 attributable to FY22. But, one, that's
10 only part of the story.

11 There's the people who have
12 that wage tax withheld and then need to
13 come to us now for a refund, and that's
14 that 90 million. What's harder to
15 disaggregate, and I'll be honest, I
16 don't know if we will ever be able to
17 what's going to be fodder for Ph.D.
18 students for decades, is where some of
19 our larger employers very early in the
20 pandemic stopped withholding, so there's
21 no need to ask us for a refund. So
22 those are the two pieces about how the
23 change for commuters who are working
24 from home. And keep in mind, that's
25 only allowed when it is directed by the

1 employer. Not so if the office is
2 closed they can't come in, great, no
3 money due to us.

4 It's going to be interesting as
5 we move forward when it becomes more of
6 a choice of the employee. And we can
7 get you the number. I want to say it's
8 in the 30,000 range. Rob, did you get
9 it?

10 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. It's roughly
11 35,000 so far.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

13 RICHARDSON: Okay, 35,000 so far.

14 MR. DUBOW: That was as of
15 September 8th.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

17 RICHARDSON: Okay, so as of September
18 8th. And so, how are you all factoring
19 that into how you're looking at the
20 budget moving forward and some of the
21 work that you'll do to modify the budget
22 based on the revenue actuals? How are
23 you modifying that moving forward?

24 MS. WAXMAN: So what we are
25 doing within the next month is we've

1 tightened up the FY21. We're going to
2 update the -- we had initially thought
3 we'd have about \$120 million worth of
4 those refund requests in the late
5 spring. We had dialed that back to 105.
6 It looks like now we'll probably dial
7 that back to about 90.

8 The trick here is that folks do
9 have three years to request those
10 refunds, so there's still some risk.
11 It's not like we can say, boom, boom,
12 boom, \$95 million and we're done.
13 There's still some exposure that maybe
14 the rest of those requests just come in
15 later.

16 We had built into our Five Year
17 Plan a reduced level for FY22, so about
18 \$70 million worth of refunds. And then
19 basically what we had done working with
20 the City's economist was an assumption
21 that about 15 percent of those commuter
22 wage tax dollars never come back, and
23 obviously that's a mix of some folks
24 never setting foot in the City to work
25 at all again as well as some folks

1 working a couple of days a week. But
2 overall, 15 percent of those commuter
3 wage tax dollars we think are
4 permanently gone.

5 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

6 RICHARDSON: Okay. But to that point
7 and to the point of Councilmember Jones
8 talking about all of our commercial real
9 estate and office space and the
10 conversations you say that you've been
11 having with individuals in that sector,
12 do you think that 15 percent number is
13 realistic depending on the other
14 revenues for some of the secondary
15 businesses around office buildings or do
16 you think that projection should be
17 changed as well?

18 MS. WAXMAN: So that was the
19 projection that we made with our
20 economist when we made it in May. We'll
21 continue updating. But obviously, as
22 we've been talking about, people have
23 not yet settled on what they're going to
24 be doing three years from now. So we
25 continue to regularly refine. We get

1 monthly reports from our economists. We
2 update our revenue projections usually
3 about twice a year. And so, it's
4 something that because it has such a
5 material impact on the budget, we're
6 obviously going to continue to update.
7 And we use a lot of really interesting
8 data sources.

9 One of the ones that I find
10 most interesting that our economists
11 look at is the number of building
12 security card swipes in downtown
13 commercial office buildings and how many
14 of those we have compared to
15 prepandemic. And that doesn't give you
16 the exact split of residents versus
17 nonresidents, but it lets you sort of
18 see how things are going, we were
19 inching back up and we've got more folks
20 coming in than San Francisco or New
21 York, but we're well below Dallas and I
22 think Chicago. So there's different
23 trends in different cities, and that's a
24 lot of what we're looking at.

25 And again, for us since we're

1 so heavily concentrated in meds and eds,
2 a good chunk of this we're going to know
3 a lot more once we see how the
4 universities, the staff, the faculty,
5 how that plays out. And that's probably
6 going to really influence what we see
7 going forward. And obviously, as we
8 move through this year with the Delta
9 variant, does everything stay open or do
10 we see shutdowns again.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

12 RICHARDSON: Sure. Again to your point
13 though, I'm just curious on how you all
14 are looking at or analyzing any
15 secondary tax collection information for
16 businesses that are sort of around the
17 eds and meds or around the Center City
18 downtown area as an indication of that
19 percentage, the 15 percent of folks not
20 coming back?

21 MS. WAXMAN: So there's going
22 to be a lot of different things that we
23 look at, and particularly geographically
24 is what's interesting. Some of those
25 taxes are parking tax, we see that. And

1 there's a lot of different things. Our
2 parking tax comes in sort of three big
3 areas, University City, which is
4 definitely real heavy meds and eds and
5 we'll see if that will change.

6 A huge amount comes from the
7 airport. And so, on the one hand it
8 looks like there's changes in what's
9 allowable for international travel, but
10 really how long until business travel,
11 you know, does it come back, does it
12 ever come back. And then layer that on
13 top of trends around park-sharing
14 services and how folks use those to get
15 to the airport.

16 So we do look at also say our
17 use and occupancy tax. We break down by
18 neighborhood our realty transfer tax, so
19 we do get to see different windows into
20 what that means. One of the questions
21 or things we've been talking about is,
22 yes, maybe if there's reduced amount for
23 the lunch counter in Center City, are
24 things changing, commercial corridors
25 when folks are up in the Northwest and

1 working from home and are they running
2 errands that they used to do downtown at
3 the Macy's or are they doing that in the
4 neighborhood. And so, is this going to
5 be a geographic reshuffling versus just
6 an overall decline or increase. So a
7 lot of questions, we're looking at all
8 of that. I don't think we have
9 definitive answers on anything really
10 yet.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

12 RICHARDSON: Okay. Thank you.

13 And thank you very much,
14 Mr. Chair.

15 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
16 Councilmember. Thank you.

17 These statistics I'll just
18 share as I was listening. I think in
19 the core of the City right now, the
20 traffic flow, pedestrian count of 2019
21 is down about 35 percent. And I also
22 think that the office worker market
23 right now is between 30 and 40 percent
24 occupied.

25 So we need to figure out a way

1 to get office employers, the top 25 or
2 50 employers, we should speak to them,
3 tell them get their vaccinations done
4 and bring their people back to work.

5 I'm hearing more and more people do want
6 to come back to work, and it's probably
7 also good for people's marriages to get
8 back to work. I'll just mention that.

9 Not that I'm married, but that's what I
10 hear.

11 So last question for you, Rob,
12 and Marisa. I know we had spent, or we
13 invested I should say, \$155 million this
14 year on the violence prevention budget.
15 We're very committed to that. That's
16 our number one issue, I believe. We're
17 trying to figure out the roadmap
18 regarding a plan for this set of goals
19 and how we're going to evaluate and
20 monitor the investments we're making so
21 we know what's making a difference,
22 what's working, what isn't, so we can
23 shift quickly and put the money into
24 those programs that are working.

25 I think in the budget it was

1 about 1.7 million that was set aside for
2 evaluation. How are we going to go
3 about evaluating it and using that
4 money?

5 MS. WAXMAN: So I'll be honest,
6 I don't have all the details at the tip
7 of my tongue. But the Managing
8 Director's Office was standing up
9 mechanisms. Some of that is bringing in
10 consultants and evaluators. Some we
11 have resources within City government,
12 the GovLabPHL which sits within the
13 Mayor's Office often sets up sort of
14 problematic approaches to evaluation.

15 And so, both of those will be
16 built in some of our internal reviews
17 which we always do, but also outside
18 evaluators. These sometimes happen with
19 larger grant programs, but we can get
20 back to you with additional information
21 on how that's going to be structured.

22 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I think it's
23 very important that we monitor that very
24 closely. I know we have a committee
25 from Council looking at it. I hope they

1 get all the information they need in
2 order to do that. But that's a big
3 investment and we want to make sure that
4 we're being productive with that
5 investment and making a difference, so
6 thank you.

7 All right. I want to thank all
8 the witnesses from this first panel.
9 Thank you for being here today, and
10 thank you for your testimony and we
11 really appreciate all your efforts, very
12 informative.

13 I would like to ask the Clerk
14 to call the next panel.

15 THE CLERK: Our second panel
16 today is Christine Coulter, Adam Thiel,
17 Christopher Newman, Ralph DiPietro, and
18 for the Department of Prisons, we have
19 Deputy Commissioner Beauford.

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank
21 you very much. I'd like to ask if the
22 first panel wants to stay on, that would
23 be great. We might have some additional
24 questions, if you can.

25 Let's start with our Deputy

1 Police Commissioner Christine Coulter,
2 and thank you for being here.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:

4 Good morning, Councilman Domb and
5 members of Council. I'm Christine
6 Coulter, the Deputy of Organizational
7 Services in the Police Department. I'm
8 here today to testify on Resolution
9 200406, which calls for a hearing to
10 discuss the fiscal position and
11 overarching social impact goals of the
12 City included and related in the Five
13 Year Plan and the reporting requirement
14 set forth in the Quarterly City
15 Manager's Report.

16 The Quarterly Manager's Report
17 for the fourth quarter which has ended
18 6/30/21 shows the projected PPD spending
19 is 727 million, which is the same amount
20 that was budgeted and is unchanged from
21 the projection last quarter. Thank you
22 for allowing me to be here today, and
23 I'm happy to answer any questions at
24 this time.

25 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you. I

1 do have a couple of questions for you.
2 What changes has the Department made to
3 try to align with the City's Violence
4 Prevention Program?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:

6 The Department is very much part of the
7 roadmap in working with the City in the
8 areas that the police are responsible
9 for changing. Whether it's adding
10 pinpoint locations or working on
11 different community events and working
12 with our community partners, I believe
13 that we're lockstep with the plans as we
14 move forward. Commissioner Outlaw along
15 with Vanessa, Chair of that panel,
16 everything that is discussed and we
17 bring forward comes back to both and all
18 of our external partners as well.

19 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.
20 And I just want to recognize
21 Councilmember Gym who's joined. Good
22 morning, Councilmember Gym.

23 The next question is percent
24 vaccinated on the police force. What is
25 our percentage right now?

1 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:

2 The best guess I could give you because
3 we don't have a mandate to report,
4 obviously in individual units we have
5 people operating under City guidelines,
6 which means they must be double-masked
7 if they're not vaccinated when in public
8 space. But I believe we're about 80
9 percent based on what was done through
10 LEHB as well as those that we knew were
11 done by the Black Doctors Consortium and
12 some of the other counties surrounding
13 Philadelphia. When we did not have it
14 available yet, some folks eligible in
15 other counties received it there.

16 So it's encouraging talking
17 with our partners at LEHB. Every day a
18 few more employees call there and say,
19 hey, I'm ready. Obviously, they're not
20 vaccinating, but they can tell them
21 exactly where to go same day before
22 anybody changes their mind. So I think
23 our numbers are going to continue to
24 rise. And as we move forward in
25 accordance with the City policy, all of

1 our new hires will be vaccinated, so
2 that will only bring our percentage up.

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you. A
4 question on your budget: It looks like
5 your Fiscal Year '21 actual budget and
6 target budget, it didn't change at all
7 between adoption of June 2020 and the
8 end of Fiscal Year June 2021. When was
9 the last time that happened, numbers are
10 identical? And how is that even
11 possible?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:
13 If you don't mind, I'm going to kick it
14 to Scott Cadden because he's been doing
15 the budget a lot longer than I've been
16 here since it's obviously open-ended
17 going back to the past question.

18 MR. CADDEN: Can you repeat the
19 question, Domb?

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Yes. It
21 looks like your Fiscal Year '21 adopted
22 budget and target budget didn't change
23 at all between the adoption in June 2020
24 and the end of the fiscal year in June
25 2021. My questions are when was the

1 last time that happened and what made
2 that possible? And also, how should
3 Council interpret that and does it mean
4 that there weren't any unexpected costs
5 this year, it was right to the penny?

6 MR. CADDEN: As far as Class
7 100, we had overtime costs that
8 increased, but the amount of our
9 staffing was decreased because we didn't
10 have no hires in '21, so that kind of
11 balanced out. And as far as needs and
12 the other classes, we did transfer money
13 from 300 to 400 Class to 200 Class to
14 take care of some needs there, so we
15 were able to just balance out what was
16 needed in the budget.

17 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:
19 Scott, can you remember if that's ever
20 happened in the past that we came in
21 that exact?

22 MR. CADDEN: I don't believe it
23 has. I think we've always got changes
24 in the target budget.

25 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Scott, do you

1 think you will see any large adjustments
2 from the Q4 numbers in the annual
3 report?

4 MR. CADDEN: For the actual
5 numbers compared to what's --

6 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Yes.

7 MR. CADDEN: I think we're
8 going to be a little above what our
9 budget was, the adopted budget. It came
10 in -- I think our abatements were a
11 little lower than we anticipated.

12 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank
13 you. Commissioner Coulter, I guess this
14 last question is for you. I guess it's
15 a Department question. Will the
16 Department consider setting new
17 performance goals? For instance, rather
18 than say we have a goal of less than 400
19 homicides this year, do we think maybe
20 reducing the levels by we want 5
21 percent, 10 percent, 25 percent less and
22 over what time period? And then what
23 would our aspirational goal be here and
24 what's the plan to get us there? At
25 least with something like this in place,

1 like Council and the public will have a
2 better sense of whether or not we're on
3 track to achieving those goals, and I
4 think it would be more meaningful and
5 manageable for everyone.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:

7 It's certainly worth considering because
8 I do understand that it's very easy,
9 especially in a tumultuous year to wind
10 up already not at your goal. When you
11 set a goal that you've already not
12 reached and it's October, it's
13 impossible to roll any of that back.

14 So in many of our performance
15 areas, we do utilize a 2 percent
16 increase, 2 percent decrease which makes
17 it easier to attain. It's not really a
18 stretch goal, and sometimes we become
19 victims of really wanting it to happen
20 because at the end, our goal would be
21 eventually to reduce it to 0. That's
22 not realistic, so we have to make sure
23 what we put in.

24 But we will certainly discuss
25 it with our executive team to look at a

1 different way to present our goals,
2 still looking towards that same eye of
3 reducing, but maybe not locking into a
4 number but just showing that slow steady
5 progress. Because as we look at not
6 only our City but every other city, you
7 hate to gain success, but by other
8 cities are up 40 percent and we're up
9 18, because in the end there's still
10 people who were murdered and there are
11 still families that lost that person.

12 So to find I guess a way to not
13 be disingenuous because if you come to
14 395, it's still not a success. Even
15 though we met our goal, there's still
16 terrible violence that's been
17 perpetrated against people. But I'll
18 bring it back to Commissioner Outlaw and
19 we'll sit down and talk about maybe a
20 better way of making some goal that's
21 easily to digest by the public and still
22 something that we can keep working
23 towards.

24 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And I think
25 if you do set that kind of goal, you

1 know, one homicide is too many, but if
2 we set that goal, if you have the
3 ability to manage it and track it and
4 monitor it and look at it constantly,
5 you'll be more likely to achieve it than
6 if we do not do that.

7 There was a Harvard study done
8 many, many years ago that said when you
9 set a goal and you write it down, you
10 have a higher chance of achieving it by
11 50 percent versus if you don't. If you
12 look at it monthly, it increases another
13 50 percent. And if you look at it
14 weekly, another 50. And if you carry it
15 around in your pocket written and you
16 look at it daily, you are likely to
17 achieve it.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:
19 Councilman, I agree. I can assure you
20 when it comes to murders and shooting
21 violence, we look at it daily. We don't
22 wait for a week or month. But years
23 back, we did crime plans in the
24 Department. And I gave every officer in
25 my command in West Philly a copy of that

1 plan, and they were required to have it
2 in their pocket so nobody could say I
3 wasn't sure that's what we were trying
4 to do.

5 I agree that if it's something
6 you -- you have to change your shirt
7 every day, you change it, you look at
8 it, and I believe that that study is
9 probably accurate. But honestly,
10 there's not a morning that we don't talk
11 about gun violence, deployment,
12 strategies because it's obviously very
13 important to us but even more important
14 to those who are impacted by it daily.

15 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you
16 very much.

17 Are there any questions for the
18 Deputy Police Commissioner?

19 (No response.)

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Seeing none,
21 thank you very much for your testimony.
22 I would like to ask our Fire
23 Commissioner Adam Thiel. Good morning,
24 Commissioner Thiel.

25 COMMISSIONER THIEL: Good

1 morning, Councilmember Domb and members
2 of City Council. My name is Adam Thiel
3 and I am the Commissioner for the
4 Philadelphia Fire Department and the
5 Office of Emergency Management Director.
6 I'm here today to testify on Resolution
7 No. 200406, which calls for hearings to
8 discuss the fiscal position of
9 overarching social impact goals of the
10 City, including and as related to the
11 Five Year Plan and reporting
12 requirements set forth in the Quarterly
13 City Manager's Report and as submitted
14 to the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental
15 Cooperation Authority.

16 The Quarterly City Manager's
17 Report for the fourth quarter of FY21
18 which ended on 6/30/21 shows the
19 projected PDF spend is \$339 million, the
20 same level projected last quarter.
21 Thank you and I am happy to answer any
22 questions you have at this time.

23 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
24 Commissioner. I guess I have a few
25 quick questions. Do we anticipate any

1 additional appropriation requests this
2 fiscal year?

3 COMMISSIONER THIEL:
4 Councilmember, I think at this point in
5 time it will be hard for me to answer
6 that just a couple of months in the
7 fiscal year, given the fact that we are
8 working several concurrent disasters.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. And I
10 know that right now we're not at the
11 desired number of full-time employees.
12 How short are we in the Fire Department
13 right now?

14 COMMISSIONER THIEL: We are
15 about 600-filled positions off our
16 budgeted position count.

17 COUNCILMAN DOMB: What can we
18 do to help you to accrue more people in
19 the Fire Department?

20 COMMISSIONER THIEL:
21 Councilmember, we're doing a lot of work
22 on recruitment. I'm glad you said that.
23 The deadline for firefighter EMTs is on
24 October 1st. So if you're watching this
25 out there and you're interested, please

1 go to phila.gov/fire. You can find all
2 the information.

3 The challenge really for us, as
4 we talked about before, it's a nine-
5 month academy process and it takes us
6 about two academies a year to cover
7 attrition and then start to get into
8 that approximately 600-person gap that
9 we have between our full authorization
10 and where we are today. So it's really
11 a matter of timing and throughput versus
12 anything else.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Commissioner,
14 I remember visiting a program in
15 Councilmember Jones' District. I think
16 it's at Randolph High School for
17 firefighters. Do they get hired right
18 from school or how does that work
19 exactly?

20 COMMISSIONER THIEL: No, sir,
21 they still go through the civil service
22 process in accordance with all the City
23 regulations for that, although they do
24 get some points for participating in
25 that program and there are some other

1 ways to get points. As we talked about
2 before, we have our facility now at 7800
3 Ogontz fully operational, so we have
4 about double the amount of Explorers
5 that we've had in the past. We were
6 able to accommodate them in that
7 facility, so we hope that's going to
8 really help us in the future.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Commissioner,
10 since we're doing some marketing today
11 for getting more people in the Fire
12 Department, what's the average starting
13 salary for somebody that might be
14 interested?

15 COMMISSIONER THIEL:
16 Councilmember, I actually don't know the
17 answer to that. And of course, it will
18 be subject to the current negotiations
19 in the contract. But all that
20 information when that's done will be on
21 that website at phila.gov/fire. I can
22 say it's certainly a very reasonable
23 wage. And more importantly, it's the
24 toughest job you'll ever love.

25 COUNCILMAN DOMB: That's a good

1 one. And the percentage of vaccinated
2 on your staff?

3 COMMISSIONER THIEL:

4 Councilmember, we don't know. We've
5 vaccinated approximately 50 percent of
6 our staff in our own clinics, but that
7 was months ago. Same issue you heard
8 from PPD, folks are still uploading
9 their vaccination cards. I would
10 hesitate to give an estimate at this
11 point, but we know the number is higher
12 than that 50 percent that we've
13 vaccinated on their own because people
14 have been going out and getting
15 vaccinated at other locations.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Any
17 questions for Commissioner Thiel?

18 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

19 RICHARDSON: Yes, Mr. Chair. This is
20 Councilmember Gilmore Richardson.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Chair would
22 like to recognize Councilmember Gilmore
23 Richardson.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

25 RICHARDSON: Thank you. I'm having

1 trouble with the chat this morning.

2 So at any rate, Commissioner,
3 good morning. It's good to see you and
4 thank you again for your service. I'll
5 just say no matter where I am in the
6 country, you are highly regarded. And I
7 was even at the Coast Guard Academy this
8 weekend and met someone who said they
9 worked with you in the past, so I just
10 want to again thank you for your
11 service.

12 I have one question just for
13 the record. If you could detail your
14 overtime cost so far for this fiscal
15 year?

16 COMMISSIONER THIEL:
17 Councilmember, I don't have detail on
18 that. We'd have to get back to you.
19 You saw on the prior slides from PICA
20 we're under our spend from last year.
21 It would be hard to project that though
22 with the kind of unknown impact of COVID
23 going forward, plus all the other
24 disasters. And of course, our core
25 mission continues.

1 Unfortunately, we've already
2 had 25 fire deaths this year, 152
3 injuries and more than 1600 individuals
4 displaced by home fires here in
5 Philadelphia, so our core mission
6 continues even as we deal with those
7 other things, but we can get you those
8 numbers unless one of the Budget folks
9 has that immediately at hand.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

11 RICHARDSON: Sure. I know you all had a
12 17.1 percent reduction thus far. I just
13 wanted you to sort of notate for the
14 record some of the strategies you all
15 are utilizing to sort of keep overtime
16 costs low knowing that we have a number
17 of significant challenges that you all
18 are facing, particularly as it relates
19 to the staffing challenges?

20 COMMISSIONER THIEL:

21 Councilmember, I appreciate that. I
22 frankly would not expect that to stay
23 under candidly because most of our
24 overtime, more than 80 percent of our
25 overtime, goes to fill minimal staffing

1 frontline service positions on fire
2 engines, ladders, trucks, ambulances, et
3 cetera.

4 So as long as we have that
5 deficit in personnel from our authorized
6 strength -- and our authorized strength
7 also includes, again thanks to Council
8 and our colleagues in Budget and others,
9 that incorporates a relief factor so we
10 don't have to use overtime immediately
11 if somebody is using their earned leave
12 benefits or is otherwise off. Because
13 we have not reached that level, right
14 now if a frontline firefighter EMT,
15 medic or dispatcher uses their earned
16 leave benefit or becomes sick or
17 something else happens, we have to use
18 overtime to fill that position.

19 We cannot operate a fire engine
20 with any less than four people on board,
21 so we're constantly using overtime to
22 fill those positions. So I'm not sure I
23 would expect that to stay under,
24 although I'm hopeful. Of course, we've
25 really spiked it over the past year plus

1 with the impact of COVID on our
2 workforce. So I think what that is,
3 probably we're seeing less of an impact
4 on the workforce every day. I'm
5 certainly hopeful, but I don't know that
6 I would expect that to continue.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

8 RICHARDSON: Understood. I just wanted
9 to quickly highlight the deficit in
10 personnel versus the authorized strength
11 that you all have in the Fire Department
12 to talk about recruitment and retention
13 strategies, but particularly around how
14 we can work with schools like Randolph
15 and others to create a pipeline for the
16 Fire Department.

17 Can you just talk about that
18 work a little more? I think it's a real
19 opportunity for us to continue to
20 decrease overtime by recruiting and
21 getting more young people into these
22 positions, and I don't know that we're
23 doing all that we can at this point to
24 do that, even from a Council
25 perspective. So I just wanted to ask

1 you about that.

2 COMMISSIONER THIEL:

3 Councilmember, I appreciate that. One
4 quick follow-up for your prior question.
5 It's important for folks to understand.
6 We control when our employees are able
7 to use their earned leave benefits. So
8 by contrast to many other businesses or
9 even some of our other agencies, if you
10 want to take off tomorrow and there's
11 already so many people who are scheduled
12 to be off, we don't allow you to take
13 vacation or take annual leave. So we do
14 control sort of, you know, slot limited
15 if you're able to take off, so we do
16 have some fairly robust controls. At
17 the end of the day as long as we're
18 filling minimal staffing positions,
19 that's the situation.

20 We actually -- we don't have
21 any lack of interest in the Fire
22 Department. We already have thousands
23 of applications through the door for
24 this current process so we really have
25 no lack of interest in firefighter EMT

1 positions. We're hopeful that will
2 continue.

3 We are still building our
4 pipeline everywhere we can. That's one
5 reason why we again with support from
6 Council and certainly the Mayor's Office
7 opened the 7800 Ogontz facility so we
8 can be recruiting right at street level
9 in neighborhoods. We expect to be
10 offering community EMT classes again.

11 We've piloted a couple of those
12 classes, one in West Philly and one with
13 the 1199c organization. So we expect to
14 continue to do that. Our real shortage
15 right now, the place where we're not
16 seeing a lot of interest is for
17 dispatchers, so this is another one. I
18 know our colleagues at PPD, we really
19 want to encourage folks to think about
20 that, so you can go to phila.gov and
21 find the resources page and check out
22 being a dispatcher, very rewarding
23 career.

24 The other place that we have
25 real challenges is with paramedics,

1 advance life support providers. There
2 is a national and state shortage of
3 advance life support providers, so we're
4 not alone. And also keeping in mind,
5 the challenge that we have is we have
6 the busiest ambulance in the entire
7 nation here in Philadelphia. It's not
8 in New York. It's not in LA. It's not
9 in Houston. And by the way, we're the
10 second busiest fire department overall
11 of any city in the nation after New
12 York, not Houston, not LA. Even the
13 cities that have populations that are
14 greater than we are don't have the same
15 workload that we have.

16 So it is a challenge for us to
17 recruit advance life support providers,
18 which is why a lot of our efforts are
19 focused on EMT programs, community EMT
20 programs, fire and EMS and Randolph
21 Skills Academy. We have an advanced EMT
22 pipeline that we created with Civil
23 Service Commission, so it's not as big
24 of a jump from basic EMT to paramedic,
25 so I think we're doing everything we can

1 to address the shortfalls in those
2 positions while we continue to make sure
3 that we're getting as much out there as
4 possible to have young people think
5 about the Fire Department as a career as
6 well as the Office of Emergency
7 Management.

8 We just had our Hurricane
9 program. The first national offering of
10 the Hurricane Program was right here in
11 Philadelphia so that's another area of
12 our workforce where we're doing
13 everything we can. That was really
14 targeted at young women. And also, I
15 want to remind everybody that
16 firefighter EMTs, paramedics, EMTs,
17 dispatchers, very dedicated women and
18 men working here 24/7 365 for the Fire
19 Department, Office of Emergency
20 Management.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

22 RICHARDSON: Okay. Thank you. Thank
23 very much, Commissioner.

24 And thank you, Mr. Chair.

25 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,

1 Councilmember.

2 And, Commissioner, I had a
3 question for you. It's kind of a
4 follow-up to my colleague Councilmember
5 Gilmore Richardson's question. Over the
6 next four yours, do you have any idea
7 how many firefighters, EMTs are in drop?

8 COMMISSIONER THIEL: We know
9 how many are in drop today, but we don't
10 know what the impact is of the long-term
11 impact of COVID on our workforce might
12 be. Of course, some of you may have
13 heard of this, long COVID. Even folks
14 who had COVID and recovered from it have
15 longer term signs and symptoms and
16 things that frankly might be incapable
17 with the physical demands of our work,
18 so we are concerned about what it looks
19 like going forward.

20 From drop and other types of
21 retirement and separation, we lose
22 somewhere between 70 and 80 personnel
23 uniform staff every year, which is why
24 it takes one class of 100 just to cover
25 that attrition and then as we try to

1 build up to that ultimate authorized
2 position strength, so we're not always
3 using overtime to fill the very
4 reasonable and anticipated daily
5 vacancies that occur for us on a 24/7
6 365 basis.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Have you seen
8 any increase in the retirement over the
9 last two years?

10 COMMISSIONER THIEL: No, it's
11 stayed pretty steady. But I am
12 concerned about the future just given
13 our folks really worked -- they always
14 work hard. Our core mission obviously
15 as you heard me say, the second busiest
16 Fire EMS Department in the nation with
17 COVID and the additional missions and
18 with the disaster responses, and it's
19 just incredible to me that our folks are
20 still doing what they're doing, which is
21 out there serving without fail 24/7. I
22 am concerned about how long we can do
23 this at the current pace without
24 additional resources.

25 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you

1 very much.

2 Any other questions for
3 Commissioner Thiel?

4 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

5 RICHARDSON: Yes. Mr. Chair.

6 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Chair
7 recognizes Councilmember Gilmore
8 Richardson.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

10 RICHARDSON: Thank you so much. I have
11 one additional question just to
12 piggyback off of your question.
13 Although you may not know how many are
14 signed up for drop --

15 (Background interruption.)

16 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

17 RICHARDSON: -- do you know how many of
18 your employees are eligible for
19 retirement within the next five years?

20 COMMISSIONER THIEL:

21 Councilmember, I don't have that number,
22 but we can certainly get it to you.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

24 RICHARDSON: Okay. That will be
25 helpful. Thank you.

1 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
3 Councilmember.

4 Commissioner Thiel, thanks for
5 your testimony today. Seeing no further
6 questions, we appreciate your being here
7 and thank you very much and stay safe
8 out there, and thank your department. I
9 will say this, every interaction I've
10 had with the members of EMT and Fire,
11 they're the best. They're really good
12 people and they're doing a great job
13 helping us and thank you so much.

14 COMMISSIONER THIEL: Thank you,
15 and check your smoke alarms.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay.
17 Thanks. Before we get to Prisons, I
18 wanted to ask Commissioner Coulter the
19 same I asked Commissioner Thiel. Is
20 Commissioner Coulter still on?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:
22 Yes, sir, I'm still here.

23 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. I
24 think you mentioned, if I recall, like
25 384 positions are open in the Police

1 Department?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:

3 It's higher than that. We're at about
4 500.

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: 500, okay.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:

7 That's our sworn positions and we have
8 additional issues like Commissioner
9 Thiel mentioned in dispatch and a lot of
10 our civilian positions as well.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I am as I'm
12 sure my colleagues are concerned, going
13 forward in the next four years what are
14 we looking at, for example, how many are
15 in drop and as my colleague Councilwoman
16 Gilmore Richardson said, how many are
17 eligible for drop? What is that going
18 to look like and how do we make sure we
19 have a pipeline to fill all of these
20 great jobs in the City?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:

22 Well, our numbers are on average about
23 120 a year. They're the ones that we
24 know are leaving, moving forward for the
25 three years. We did the four years, but

1 this year we're already in progress. So
2 this year we had about 118 that were in
3 the drop.

4 When it comes to drop
5 eligibility, more than 50 percent of our
6 department would be drop eligible
7 depending on what contract you're in
8 because we have different pension plans
9 and some are 45 and some are 50, but we
10 have a large number who won't be
11 eligible for years but a large number
12 who's eligible today, and it's just a
13 decision as to when they decide to
14 leave.

15 The drop's a great indicator to
16 give you what you know you're going to
17 lose. But arguably every year that
18 number is probably doubled what's in the
19 drop, where people either take other
20 employment, they have an illness, you
21 know, they move for different reasons,
22 whether it's a family illness or
23 relocation. So the drop number to me is
24 scary enough. The real number, you
25 know, scares you even more because it's

1 the unknown that you really try to plan
2 for because on average years, we used to
3 attrit about 12 people a month and those
4 numbers have grown significantly in the
5 last two years.

6 And not attributed to any one
7 source, but it's been a rough time in
8 policing. There's been a pandemic. Our
9 cops and supervisors are people. They
10 have the same family issues that
11 everybody has, so we have seen greater
12 numbers of younger and older employees
13 leave the employment here to take either
14 other jobs or early retirements.

15 So we are robustly recruiting.
16 We are obviously limited to the City of
17 Philadelphia, so we are working hard to
18 make sure that we make this job
19 appealing and get into the communities
20 and actually meet people where they are
21 and let them see that this is -- despite
22 what Commissioner Thiel says -- the
23 greatest job in the world.

24 So I think policing has so many
25 rewards available, so many opportunities

1 for folks, but to just get them in the
2 door to get them to see what many of us
3 have gotten to see over the years. But
4 my lieutenant just gave me my number for
5 the drop for the five years. It's 929
6 for the next five.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Wow. And so,
8 I guess the question is how do we
9 prepare ourselves, how do we recruit
10 more, what can we do to help you because
11 it's not just Fire, it's also Police
12 that I think we're all concerned about
13 are we going to have enough people in
14 that pipeline to fill those jobs?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:
16 Well, I think it's everybody's
17 responsibility, obviously police and
18 police recruitment, but it's also
19 everybody that sits in a seat in Council
20 and anywhere in City government and in
21 our families. Policing despite what
22 some people hear how the climate is
23 right now is a very noble profession if
24 you do it honorably, and to encourage
25 our sons and daughters and nieces and

1 nephews to become part of this is to
2 expect a small unit to recruit those
3 folks, especially if there's not that,
4 hey, we support you in it.

5 I didn't tell my family I was
6 becoming a cop until the night before I
7 went into the police academy because I
8 really did not believe that they would
9 accept it or be happy about it. Turned
10 out they were way better about it than I
11 had given them credit for. But in the
12 end, I think our young folks need to
13 know that their families support them.
14 We're all working towards necessary
15 change. To encourage people to be part
16 of that change, I think is the
17 responsibility of everybody who wants to
18 make sure that Philadelphia gets safer
19 and then stay safer.

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Do we have
21 any kind of written plan as to how we're
22 going to backfill all of these positions
23 that are open now and over the next four
24 or five years, because it sounds to me
25 that this could be a real issue for us?

1 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:

2 It could be and it could be for quite
3 some time. Now, we currently and have
4 ongoing recruitment drives. We keep our
5 situation open that we're getting people
6 in. And we're getting candidates. I
7 don't know that we will get the number
8 of qualified candidates in those years
9 because there's a lot of state rules and
10 regulations that are beyond the control
11 of the police department that would
12 prohibit somebody from becoming a cop.

13 One of our larger concerns and
14 we are working with the Police
15 Foundation and some other folks to
16 evaluate the test to come on, which is
17 the Nelson-Denny test, that we believe
18 that test could be biased. We think
19 we're going to be turning away City kids
20 because they may not be that familiar
21 with Chaucer, but at the end of the day,
22 they can certainly provide a good
23 service. So we have folks that are
24 working on that now.

25 There's rumors that the state

1 will raise the reading level to 11th
2 grade, and we have a lot of folks who
3 have graduated from high school
4 struggling to read at a 9th grade level,
5 so those are the things and barriers
6 that we can't control because it's a
7 state requirement that they must pass
8 the test to enter into the next phases,
9 but we're looking at it from every angle
10 to say how can we make that test fair
11 and then by doing so, we will have more
12 people that will qualify and come in.

13 But at the end of the day, we
14 have a population of 1.5 million and
15 those positions must be filled by people
16 who live here and have lived here for a
17 year, so there will be challenges. But
18 I know that Deputy Wimberly and our
19 recruitment section and every one of us
20 takes that plan to say, hey, how many do
21 we need in the next class and the next
22 class.

23 Also a challenge just like
24 Fire, it takes nine months to get out of
25 the academy. So once we hire them, we

1 don't get that relief immediately and we
2 use our Class 100 which is our lap
3 salary to make up those vacancies for
4 bodies that we don't have to put on the
5 street. But even that after some time
6 has a diminishing return because you can
7 only ask cops to work so many extended
8 shifts and days off before that fatigue
9 sets in and then they're not able to do
10 it seven days a week.

11 So we do need to fix it. We're
12 obviously working in City government to
13 find a way to get people hired quickly,
14 and it's a full commitment but it's not
15 something that you can make somebody do.
16 They have to want to be a cop. And our
17 job is to make it visible to the public
18 that this is a great job and it's a
19 great opportunity for them to make a
20 difference in their City.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Do you think,
22 Commissioner Coulter, at some point we
23 should consider as a City dedicating
24 one, two, whatever number of high
25 schools we need, 9th to 12 grade, for

1 Police, Fire, Emergency training, EMTs
2 and just have a total dedication in
3 those schools for those positions, even
4 understanding that I think -- is the
5 minimum age for Police 21?

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:
7 It's 22, sir.

8 COUNCILMAN DOMB: 22, so we
9 would have to have some sort of program
10 that goes from 18 to 22. Also, maybe we
11 create a new category, but where we
12 actually offer people a career path and
13 a track so that we make sure that they
14 can qualify for these jobs and we train
15 them because these are good jobs. They
16 have a lot of pride to them. They have
17 good pay and they're sustaining jobs.
18 But I just want to see that we can make
19 sure that pipeline comes out of the City
20 because without doing that, it's going
21 to be a struggle.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:
23 And I think having that dedication, and
24 I'm saying probably by the 8th grade
25 level, because a lot of our folks just

1 make mistakes at young ages that the
2 state is very unforgiving. Like there's
3 rules about carrying a firearm and
4 things like that, that you can never be
5 a cop no matter how much you turned your
6 life around, that if we get to that at
7 an early point and show them the pathway
8 to this opportunity, we may be able to
9 keep them from ever making those
10 mistakes that would keep them out of
11 arguably the greatest profession in
12 America.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: If you could
14 just right now for us let us know if
15 there are any other municipalities,
16 cities, that actually have that type of
17 situation, 9th, 12 grade? I'm curious
18 to know how to do it.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER: I
20 believe I saw one at Major Cities Chiefs
21 and maybe San Diego, but I will look up
22 to see the ones that have them to see
23 how successful they are in keeping those
24 children in the pipeline. Because at
25 the end of the day, it's still their

1 choice. And what we do for that gap of
2 four years as to whether there's some
3 type of auxiliary position or something
4 that we can move them into City
5 employment before they're eligible to
6 join the Department.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you
8 very much.

9 Are there any other questions
10 at this point?

11 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

12 RICHARDSON: Mr. Chair.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Yes.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

15 RICHARDSON: I apologize. I have to get
16 the chat feature working today. But I
17 just wanted to go back, Christine
18 Coulter, first to thank you for sharing
19 your story about how you applied for the
20 police department. It's a little known
21 story, and I don't think I've ever told
22 this publicly, that I considered being a
23 police officer very early in my career.
24 And I went back and told my mom. And
25 she said, listen, I also took the test

1 and went through the process and did the
2 psychological exam, and your father
3 asked me not to move forward in the
4 process because he was afraid of his
5 wife being a police officer. But I also
6 considered that as a career very early
7 in my career. So thank you for sharing
8 your story because it's stories like
9 that that will help young people want to
10 go into a career in law enforcement.

11 You stated 929 police officers
12 are eligible or are already enrolled in
13 drop over the next four years?

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:
15 Next five years.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
17 RICHARDSON: So how many are eligible
18 for retirement? That's my question.

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:
20 Probably another 2,000 more. That's an
21 approximate. I can get that exact
22 number because we really have to go
23 through each individual contract that
24 they were hired under because there's
25 different ages, whether it's 45, 50 or

1 55 depending on what point you were
2 hired by the City.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

4 RICHARDSON: And I recently visited this
5 summer with the Police Explorers and I
6 visited with the young people who are a
7 part of the program. And I understand
8 that they do receive a point preference
9 when they apply and --

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:
11 They do.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

13 RICHARDSON: But it's a several year
14 sort of break in there because they're
15 in the program potentially when they're
16 in high school, but they can't apply
17 until a certain age. So how are you
18 sort of keeping track of those young
19 people?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:
21 Well, we allow them to stay in Explorers
22 until they're 21, so we keep that kind
23 of connection and hold until they can
24 apply. But it is challenging because at
25 the end of the day if you don't go to a

1 four-year college, you need a job. So
2 whether you go work for PECO or the
3 Water Department or Comcast or somewhere
4 that doesn't require you to be 22 years
5 old, it creates that. And then you have
6 two, three years with a company, do we
7 get them back.

8 Only about -- I think the last
9 time we looked it was only about 20
10 percent of our Explorers do become
11 police officers. A lot of them choose
12 military careers, firefighter, other
13 noble things. It's not like there's a
14 commitment that you must stay with us.
15 The ultimate goal of Explorers, although
16 it is a great feeding tool, is to help
17 create young men and women who will do
18 great things no matter what job they
19 take. But even the number of Explorers
20 could never support the number of
21 vacancies that we have.

22 We have so many folks, a couple
23 hundred people involved in our Explorer
24 program. They're not going to be able
25 to take that whole lion's share that we

1 have to find a way to get other folks
2 and get them involved early on and then
3 keep them involved until they're of age.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

5 RICHARDSON: I wanted to really
6 double-down on the comments that my
7 colleague Councilmember Domb made around
8 our overall readiness for any potential
9 employment shortage, particularly in
10 this department so that we ensure on the
11 front end we're doing all that we can
12 around recruitment and ensuring that we
13 can get young people who live in the
14 City of Philadelphia and others in the
15 pipeline for this position knowing that
16 there is a potential for a number of
17 individuals to retire or leave all at
18 the same time.

19 And in addition to that, I
20 think the overall concern is that are we
21 doing enough, are we doing enough
22 currently. Meaning, how are we all
23 supporting the Police Explorers program
24 in this particular budget, what
25 additional things can we do for that

1 program, how are you all interfacing
2 with the School District knowing that
3 the resident requirement is in now. How
4 are you supporting the School District
5 to create this pipeline of young people
6 as well.

7 So I'm just very concerned
8 about that because we know that a number
9 of vacancies are pending or could be
10 pending and we need to be ready on the
11 front end versus scrambling for staff on
12 the back end.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:

14 And it's something that keeps me up at
15 night, Councilwoman. So I can tell that
16 it's a real concern because it's not --
17 it's not a job that appeals to
18 everybody, so you really have to look to
19 find those that may have an interest and
20 then get them to be wanting to be part
21 of the team.

22 But when you're dealing with
23 the School District, it's that four-year
24 gap once they leave. There's people we
25 can meet in 11th grade at Ben Franklin

1 and have them on board. But at the end,
2 they have to do something else for those
3 four years if they don't go to a
4 four-year college.

5 So we're looking to do some
6 work with Community College to get some
7 folks there in their criminal justice
8 program as a feeder because now they're
9 closer in age. And we may have to look
10 at some point to a Charter change to
11 dial back that age a little. One of the
12 things that we compete with is the State
13 Police that's 21, so we have some folks
14 in both pipelines but they can get hired
15 sooner somewhere else.

16 The Civil Service right now is
17 22. That may be something -- and I have
18 to be honest, I'm not really certain how
19 I feel about it because it's an awesome
20 responsibility to give somebody with
21 very little life experience a gun, the
22 ability to take somebody's life or their
23 freedom without having other things to
24 draw from, so you have to be careful how
25 low you go to ensure that there is some

1 type of life and work experience before
2 we put folks like -- yes, they're
3 trained for nine months, but the
4 training is just the tip of the iceberg.
5 Once you're out there in the real world
6 dealing with real issues, it helps to
7 have life experience to draw on and not
8 just having come out of high school and
9 join the ranks of policing.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

11 RICHARDSON: No, I completely
12 understand. I also just wanted to
13 mention that this impacts our overtime
14 though, because the staffing ratios will
15 impact overtime over time, so we have to
16 plan for that. And I'll be more than
17 happy to explore any potential changes
18 with you around the age requirement and
19 anything more we can do to help our
20 young people get in the pipeline, which
21 is why I'm going to put in a plug for
22 this bill.

23 I introduced the bill to give
24 young people who are graduates of the
25 School District a point preference when

1 they apply for positions with the City
2 of Philadelphia. And I know we received
3 a lot of pushback on that bill, but it's
4 important for us to ensure that we can
5 create a pipeline and a pathway to City
6 employment for all of our young people
7 here in the City of Philadelphia. So
8 thank you very much, Deputy Commissioner
9 Coulter.

10 And thank you, Mr. Chair.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
12 Councilmember.

13 Commissioner Coulter, thank you
14 for being here again. And on behalf of
15 everybody, we want to thank you for your
16 service, thank Commissioner Outlaw and
17 the whole department. We appreciate the
18 police and we need the police and very
19 appreciative. And the more we can do to
20 support you, let us know. We want to
21 make sure that you have enough people to
22 staff the City correctly. So thank you
23 very much for being here today.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:
25 Thank you, Councilman.

1 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Let's go to
2 our next panelist, which I believe is
3 from the -- Commissioner of Prisons had
4 to leave, Blanche Carney, but the Deputy
5 Commissioner is here for the testimony.
6 So I would like to call on the Deputy
7 Commissioner. Is that Xavier Beauford
8 to give the testimony?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEAUFORD:
10 Yes, Councilmember Domb. Good -- well,
11 now good afternoon, Councilmember Domb,
12 other Councilmembers and colleagues that
13 are on this hearing. I am Xavier
14 Beauford, Deputy Commissioner for the
15 Prisons, here to speak on Resolution
16 200406, the resolution authorizing the
17 Committee on Fiscal Stability and
18 Intergovernmental Cooperation to hold
19 quarterly hearings and include monthly
20 reports reporting requirements to
21 discuss the fiscal positioning
22 oversearching -- overarching social
23 impact goals of the City, including as
24 related to the Five Year Plan.

25 The Prisons had an adopted plan

1 of 220 million, and we came in at 218.
2 Some of that savings was due to
3 attrition of staff that have retired,
4 resigned, just went to other places.
5 And also, some of the savings were done
6 on our cut of inmate work plans due to
7 COVID mitigation practices. I'm here to
8 answer any questions that you may have.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
10 Deputy Commissioner. I do have two
11 quick questions for you. I think in
12 August the Department received a letter
13 from the Pennsylvania Prison Society
14 raising some big concerns about the
15 management of the prisons and the
16 conditions of the people that were
17 working and living there.

18 Can you talk about the
19 Department's management and performance
20 in the wake of that letter and give us a
21 sense of the next steps and what can our
22 Council do to help you here?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEAUFORD:
24 Currently, Councilmember Domb, the
25 conditions of the prisons are that we

1 continue with our COVID mitigation
2 efforts of keeping the prisons as clean
3 as possible. We run cleaning regimens
4 throughout the entire day and evening to
5 try to keep our cases down, and we will
6 continue with that. That is something
7 that we've always done, but we have just
8 stepped up the efforts due to COVID-19.

9 With that being said, at times
10 due to our staffing problems, the
11 inmates were not getting out as much as
12 they should have been so we have come up
13 with a plan to work on that to make sure
14 that they get the time out. As many
15 people know, we are under some court
16 litigation right now that calls for
17 that. So that also getting the inmates
18 out of the cells to clean their living
19 spaces also helps with the mitigation
20 practices. We just ask that Council
21 still just keep supporting us in what
22 we're doing to keep the jails running
23 safely.

24 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I know what
25 you're referencing. I think it was a

1 federal judge maybe two weeks ago. In
2 the order they filed, they required the
3 prisons to ramp up hiring, ease the
4 pandemic lockdowns, institute staff
5 COVID-19 testing and try to get back to
6 more normal operations. Are we in
7 compliance with that court-mandated
8 requirement?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEAUFORD:

10 Well, we ramped up our hiring efforts.
11 As a matter of fact, just two days ago I
12 was on a virtual hiring bazaar with the
13 Community College of Philadelphia. And
14 we have OHR, we're partnering with
15 several agencies throughout the City
16 just basically piggybacking on some of
17 their hiring bazaars that we may be able
18 to get in and help with us getting staff
19 on board also. So we have an all-out
20 blitz going on.

21 And if I can plug as
22 Commissioner Thiel did, currently the
23 Prisons has openings on the phila.gov
24 website. It doesn't close until October
25 15th. So please if you know anyone that

1 is interested, we encourage them to sign
2 on for the Prisons.

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: How many
4 openings do you have right now?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEAUFORD:
6 Currently for uniform positions, there's
7 about 400.

8 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Unbelievable.
9 It sounds to me between Prisons, Fire
10 and Police we could have close to 1500
11 positions available.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEAUFORD:
13 Yes. And we all know historically, the
14 Prisons is like the steppingstone of law
15 enforcement. Once people get in, they
16 use that pipeline to -- some people, not
17 all because I stayed for 27 years. But
18 they use that pipeline of course to
19 morph into the Police Department, morph
20 into the Sheriff's, morph into State
21 Police or even the Fire Department, and
22 that's historically been the track of
23 the Prisons. So we try to keep the
24 position as attractive as possible and
25 get as many people as we possibly can.

1 COVID has made it very difficult.

2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So thank you.

3 And just to go back to my question, are
4 we in compliance with the court-mandated
5 operations? Would you say yes or no or
6 working towards it?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEAUFORD:

8 We are definitely partially in
9 compliance with most of the
10 court-mandated operations and we're
11 working towards the other items that
12 need to be done that the plaintiffs'
13 counsel have been asking for. So we are
14 definitely working towards everything
15 that they're asking for.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: One last
17 question for you: Is there any way to
18 include new measures in the QCMR that
19 address the conditions for workers and
20 the inmate population going forward? Is
21 that possible?

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEAUFORD:

23 I think it is. I believe it is
24 possible. Just for all transparency
25 that it can be shown and seen, I believe

1 we can put that in to show what we are
2 doing.

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: That would be
4 very helpful to see that. Thank you
5 very much. Thank you for your testimony
6 today, and please pass on to the
7 Commissioner and the whole department
8 our appreciation for all the work you
9 guys have been doing. And I know this
10 has not been easy during COVID. This is
11 really challenging so we do appreciate
12 all of you, so thank you very much.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEAUFORD:
14 Thank you.

15 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Next we would
16 like to call Deputy Director for
17 Streets, Chris Newman.

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
19 Good afternoon, Councilman Domb and
20 members of City Council. My name is
21 Christopher Newman. I'm Deputy
22 Commissioner for Administration for the
23 Philadelphia Streets Department. I'm
24 here today to testify on Resolution
25 No. 200406, which calls for hearings to

1 discuss the fiscal position and
2 overarching social impact goals of the
3 City, including and as related to the
4 Five Year Plan and the reporting
5 requirements set forth in the Quarterly
6 Manager's Report and PICA.

7 The Quarterly Manager's Report
8 for the fourth quarter of FY21 which
9 ended 6/30/21 shows the Streets
10 projected spend at 163.5 million, which
11 is unchanged from the projection of last
12 quarter. Thank you and I'm happy to
13 answer any questions that you have at
14 this time.

15 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
16 Deputy Commissioner, and I actually do
17 have a few questions for you. Thanks
18 for giving me the time to do that. I
19 want to talk to you for a minute about I
20 know we have to install these ADA ramps
21 all over the City to get into compliance
22 with the law. But it looks like we've
23 paved 0 miles in the fourth quarter of
24 Fiscal Year '21 according to the report.

25 Isn't that typically the peak

1 paving season? And I just want to make
2 sure that we're not deferring so much to
3 the maintenance that we end up causing
4 more infrastructure and budgeting issues
5 down the road.

6 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:

7 Yeah, so that's part of our peak paving
8 season. It goes from April all the way
9 through November every year, so that
10 fourth quarter would have represented a
11 good chunk of what we would have
12 normally done for paving. The ADA ramp
13 situation held us back and some funding
14 issues also held us back for the fourth
15 quarter.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So we didn't
17 pave any streets in the fourth quarter?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: I
19 don't -- I think we did pave some, but I
20 don't have a number for you today. We
21 ended up doing about 56 miles for the
22 whole fiscal year of FY21 -- I'm sorry,
23 it was 52 miles and we had a 56-mile
24 target for that fiscal year. So we came
25 under, but it wasn't that low under.

1 And the reason why we came under was
2 because of the ADA issues that we have
3 talked to you about several different
4 times.

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Understood.
6 Was there any opportunity for federal
7 infrastructure dollars to help us here?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
9 There is the infrastructure bill. So
10 we're hoping that we get a lot of money
11 in that regard to actually help us out
12 and a lot of what we're asking for and
13 we're hoping to get is a lot more money
14 for that purpose.

15 COUNCILMAN DOMB: What do you
16 think our chance of getting the money
17 and how much potential money is there if
18 we get it?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
20 That's above my pay grade, Councilman.
21 I don't know. I'm not really sure how
22 much we can get.

23 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Is it
24 millions or less or what are we looking
25 at?

1 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: I
2 would imagine it would be in the tens of
3 millions, yes.

4 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So we have to
5 put whatever resources we can towards
6 that application process and push
7 whatever we can to get that money
8 because that will be a nice benefit for
9 us.

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
11 Yes, it would.

12 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Second
13 question, are we seeing -- I know last
14 year we talked about this, the refuse,
15 tonnage that people were continuing to
16 work from home and our refuse, tonnage
17 picked up. Has that leveled out? Has
18 it gone down? Where do we stand with
19 that?

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
21 That's an interesting start because we
22 actually thought it would start leveling
23 out when people started going back to
24 work last winter, last spring. It
25 actually didn't. If you look at the

1 peak season for Fiscal Year FY21 and
2 compare it to peak season for FY20, it
3 actually went up a bit.

4 However, since July -- we have
5 some good news -- it looks like it's
6 trending down. Over the last two
7 months, July and August, it's gone down
8 6 percent. So we're hoping that that
9 trend continues. And if it does, it
10 will actually reduce about a little
11 under 44,000 tons of trash, which
12 represents about \$3 million to \$4
13 million in savings which would be
14 significant for us.

15 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Refresh my
16 memory, what was the total increase from
17 '19 to '20 because of the pandemic?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN: We
19 went from 610,000, I believe, to a
20 little over 700,000. And then this past
21 fiscal year FY21, we hit 741,000 tons.

22 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So
23 theoretically we can say as people go
24 back to work, this trash should go down
25 because the trash will be in their

1 office buildings which their commercial
2 trash holders?

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:

4 Yes, we've been waiting for that to
5 occur. Like I said, we actually thought
6 it was going to start earlier last
7 fiscal year. It did not. We're hoping
8 the trends that we're seeing now are
9 constant. My own personal opinion is
10 it's positive and I think it's going to
11 continue because people are back to work
12 and back to school, so we should see
13 that have some sort of impact.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Next question
15 is, no pun intended here, but as this
16 body, Council I'm referring to, paved
17 the way for outdoor dining about 18
18 months ago, I just want to thank you,
19 the Department, everyone at Streets, you
20 guys did an excellent job in helping the
21 City get through this.

22 And it's really important as we
23 advance this year, that we discuss your
24 needs to implement a successful
25 enforcement program. And we're going to

1 be talking about more of that in the
2 near future, but I just want to thank
3 you on behalf of my staff and everyone
4 in the Hospitality Work Group and all my
5 colleagues for the tremendous
6 cooperation and work you all did to make
7 that outdoor dining possible. You guys
8 did a great job, so thank you very much.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:

10 Thank you for saying that, Councilman.
11 And I'll convey that to the Deputy
12 Commissioner for Transportation and his
13 team because they did, they worked
14 really hard over a short period of time
15 to get that moving.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: That was a
17 lifesaver for the City. I always say
18 it's been 18 months that we've been in
19 this pandemic. It was very few things
20 that we all did that were fun, but
21 eating outside gave us a little fun in
22 this pandemic, so thank you.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:

24 Thank you for saying that.

25 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Sure. I

1 don't see any more questions, so thank
2 you for your testimony today and please
3 thank everyone in the Department for all
4 their great work. Thank you.

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER NEWMAN:
6 Thank you.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Next up is
8 the Acting Commissioner of the
9 Department of Licenses and Inspections
10 Ralph DiPietro.

11 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Good
12 afternoon, Councilmember Domb and
13 members of City Council. My name is
14 Ralph DiPietro. I'm the Acting
15 Commissioner of the Department of
16 Licenses and Inspections. I'm here
17 today to testify on Resolution No.
18 200406, which calls for hearings to
19 discuss the fiscal position and
20 overarching social impact goals of the
21 City, including and as related to the
22 Five Year Plan and reporting
23 requirements set forth in the Quarterly
24 City Manager's Report and as submitted
25 to the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental

1 Cooperation Authority, PICA.

2 The Quarterly City Manager's
3 Report for the fourth quarter of FY21
4 which ended on June 30, 2021 shows a
5 projected L&I spend of 38 million, which
6 aligns with what was budgeted and is
7 unchanged from last year. Thank you for
8 the opportunity. I'm happy to answer
9 any questions.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
11 Commissioner. And I just have a few
12 comments, not many. It's kind of
13 amazing. It looks like you managed to
14 triple the rate of your approval of
15 residential permits which is phenomenal.
16 I'm just wondering how you did that
17 because you tripled it which was amazing
18 to me. So how did that happen?

19 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Part of
20 that is, believe it or not, some of the
21 working from home for the plan examiners
22 was actually beneficial. We've seen
23 (inaudible) increases, which sort of
24 seem contrary, right, you would imagine
25 they would be less productive. But it

1 was sort of a slow start, so we've seen
2 some increased production there. But
3 we've also seen a lot of that due to the
4 ability to shorten the time frame of
5 interaction.

6 Very typically, plans and
7 permits fail their first review, very
8 common. What would normally happen is
9 that would create a lengthy resubmission
10 process. We would notify the applicant.
11 They would gather the documents. They
12 would come to MSB and all of that. With
13 our system eCLIPSE, they're available
14 24/7. We email them their requirements.
15 It's on their online portal. They can
16 submit it in the middle of the night if
17 they happen to be up, and it shortens
18 that time. So I think those two things
19 really helped to shorten that.

20 And I think there's some more
21 that we're able to do with some of the
22 new functionality. We're bringing the
23 chat function online, and that's really
24 helpful for folks. And this is really
25 residential permitting that don't apply

1 for permits regularly. They may get one
2 or two a year and they're not quite sure
3 how to go through the process. So the
4 chat function will help to shorten that
5 time frame even further.

6 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. That's
7 great. Second question is from your
8 success on approving the residential
9 permits. What are the lessons we can
10 learn from that to improve the
11 commercial permitting? It doesn't look
12 like it's as much progress in that area
13 as residential.

14 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Yeah.
15 Typically commercial gets to be a little
16 more complicated simply because there's
17 zoning implications and much larger sort
18 of projects. I think one thing that
19 we've learned, transparency is really a
20 helpful tool in terms of making our
21 process more easily understood.

22 The goal of L&I is to encourage
23 people to get building permits. We want
24 people to get permits. There's all
25 kinds of estimates about how much work

1 sort of goes on without permits, and
2 certainly much of that is true. But we
3 really do want to encourage people to
4 get permits. It's the safest way to
5 ensure that the construction is done
6 safely.

7 So I think we need to look at
8 ways we are more transparent in terms of
9 the requirements. I think there's some
10 technology upgrades. We've committed to
11 investing as much as possible in our
12 technology upgrades, improvements to the
13 website. I think that will help with
14 commercial permitting.

15 I think predictability as we've
16 talked about before is typically not a
17 good word, but for us it's a really good
18 word. Folks will understand that the
19 process will be a certain way. I think
20 that also helps. It's kind of a --
21 commercial permit applications, you have
22 to approach it from a bunch of different
23 perspectives because they really run the
24 gamut From renovating a small restaurant
25 to building a high-rise building. So

1 certainly not one solution will fit all
2 of those possibilities, but I think that
3 coupled with some increasing in our
4 plans examination staff will go a long
5 way towards cutting down the commercial
6 permitting time.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.
8 Last question I have for you: I know
9 that the abatement is changing this
10 year, I believe. I think starting
11 January 1st. So do you expect a ramp-up
12 in permit requests as we get closer to
13 the abatement changes taking effect in
14 January, how are you preparing for it
15 and is there anything you want to share
16 with the public? Because I had heard at
17 one point that we wanted people to file
18 their permits by, is it October 1st?
19 Share that information if you could.

20 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: The
21 goal there is to ensure that their
22 project is completed in time to qualify
23 for the abatement. We have seen some
24 increased -- there was a couple of
25 things happening here. If you look at

1 our overall reporting, the actual number
2 of permits is there even though revenues
3 are higher than they've ever been. Part
4 of that's because we've done some work
5 to combine permitting so we reduced the
6 need to issue additional permits.

7 So I think in terms of sort of
8 we were expecting some level of
9 increased activity, and that's come true
10 to some extent, but I think it's
11 certainly within her capability to
12 handle, although I do encourage folks to
13 get their applications in sooner in the
14 event that there is some kind of
15 last-minute push.

16 Based on what we're seeing --
17 zoning permits are usually a good
18 indicator of what's going to happen
19 here. We look at zoning permits as a
20 real good indicator of constructive
21 strength overall. And they're up
22 overall, but they've certainly been
23 stable. So I think while we do expect
24 some level of increase, I don't think
25 it's anything that we can't handle. But

1 again, just because the process can be
2 lengthy for commercial projects, it's
3 probably better to submit their permit
4 applications sooner rather than later.

5 The other thing is the end of
6 the year you always wind up with leave
7 issues and personnel issues, and our
8 folks have been working as I mentioned
9 during our last meeting throughout the
10 pandemic. They're certainly stressed.
11 We're seeing that a little bit in our
12 leave usage. There's certainly some
13 stress to that.

14 I think that's also coupled
15 with working from home which is good in
16 many ways, but it's also -- we've seen
17 it can have a drawback. For example,
18 when your workplace and your home become
19 the same, that's a lot for people to
20 handle. You have no place to go to hide
21 from your work. So we sort of have to
22 factor that in when we think about how
23 much more capacity we'll have available
24 for additional applications, but I'm
25 confident we can pull it off.

1 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Well, thank
2 very much and keep up the great work.
3 Thank you and thank the Department for
4 all of their great work. This is all
5 positive things, so thank you very much.

6 COMMISSIONER DiPIETRO: Thank
7 you.

8 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I don't see
9 any other ques -- oh, I do see a
10 question of Councilmember Gym for our
11 Prisons. Good afternoon, Councilmember
12 Gym.

13 I think the Acting -- not
14 Acting, the Deputy Commissioner from
15 Prisons, is he still -- there he is,
16 yes. Xavier, yes. Okay. I think
17 Councilmember Gym has a question for
18 you.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you so
20 much, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it.

21 I just wanted to follow up on
22 Chairperson Domb's inquiry about
23 compliance on the federal order. You
24 said that your department is in partial
25 compliance. Could you clarify that a

1 little bit more?

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEAUFORD:

3 Yes. What I mean by that, the time out
4 of cell, we try to maintain the time out
5 of cell for the inmates. And what that
6 means is the actual time that they get
7 out to get phones, showers, recreation
8 in the yards weather-permitting, things
9 like that.

10 When we are short of staff,
11 sometimes that gets impacted and the
12 time out of cell is not as long as
13 required by the courts. Right now the
14 requirement is at least three hours.
15 There are days that we don't make that
16 at some of the facilities, but they at
17 least get the hour out to do what they
18 need to do. That's what I mean by the
19 time out of cell.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. And
21 then are there areas where the
22 Department is still working on -- is
23 that the primary area, honoring the full
24 length of time out of cell?

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEAUFORD:

1 Yes, that is the biggest goal because --
2 well, if everyone doesn't know, when we
3 do have the inmate population out, it
4 just makes the day easier for everybody
5 because all the scheduled activities,
6 programs and things like that that could
7 be running are running without a hitch,
8 of course, official visiting, regular
9 visiting when it was available, things
10 like that. So that's our biggest goal.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Does the
12 Department have a timeline about what
13 you are expecting? I know a lot of this
14 has to do with your staffing issues and
15 all of that. But is there a timeline
16 that you have?

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEAUFORD:
18 We can't put a timeline on it, but what
19 we can say is that currently we just
20 graduated a small class roughly
21 two-and-a-half weeks ago. We have a
22 class in the academy right now and we're
23 going to keep running classes as much as
24 we can to get our numbers up. Getting
25 the numbers up in the staffing will of

1 course aid us in making sure that we are
2 in compliance with the federal order.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And there
4 are allegations that some individuals
5 have not been let out of cells for days.
6 Is that something that you can confirm
7 or contest?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEAUFORD:
9 Any time we hear that, the first thing
10 we do is investigate to make sure that
11 that is not happening. If anyone does
12 have that, we usually go back to our
13 logs to make sure that they have -- we
14 log showers, we log phone calls, we log
15 recreation, to make sure that this did
16 happen. So anybody that we get -- the
17 complaints we get from family members or
18 whoever, we jump right on it when we do
19 get those complaints.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And then my
21 final question is I know that there's
22 been efforts around staffing. Do you
23 know what efforts have been made about
24 reducing the number of individuals that
25 are currently being held, whether it's

1 through increased bail, has your
2 department or division been active in
3 working with the municipal courts to
4 speed things up through alternative
5 measures and make sure people get their
6 initial hearing so that they can be out?
7 I mean obviously the vast majority of
8 individuals are pretrial. They have not
9 been convicted.

10 So are you working closely
11 with -- what are you aware of in terms
12 of efforts being made to reduce the
13 number of people who are in your
14 facilities?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEAUFORD:

16 Yes, working with the criminal justice
17 partners and we just had some meetings
18 on it just making sure the big three,
19 which helps get inmates out of custody,
20 the bench warrant hearings, the early
21 bail releases and the Gagnon 1 hearings,
22 making sure that they get heard.

23 A lot of them can be heard
24 virtually. We have stood up virtual
25 capabilities throughout all of the

1 facilities so the courts can work in
2 getting these guys out. Those have all
3 been big factors in trying to reduce the
4 inmate population.

5 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay.

6 Obviously, we are tracking this because
7 it's an important issue for us and it
8 does have financial implications because
9 of the court mandate. So thank you very
10 much, Mr. Chair. Thank you very much,
11 Deputy Commissioner Beauford.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BEAUFORD:
13 Thank you.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
15 Councilmember Gym. Great questions.
16 Thank you.

17 And so, I don't believe there's
18 any other questions. I want to thank
19 all the witnesses for being here today
20 and for your insight. We appreciate
21 your testimony today and look forward to
22 working with you in the future. And
23 again, I want to say we're going to be
24 hearing the report out on our financial
25 position performance again.

1 I know one of the more
2 important things that I like to see
3 happen from this meeting today is that
4 plan for the violence prevention and how
5 we are going to evaluate and measure it.
6 Because clearly right now the number
7 issue for all of us in the City is
8 violence prevention, do I feel safe
9 being in the City, and we need to make
10 sure that that happens. That is key for
11 all of us. So we're committed to it.
12 We're going to make it happen.

13 Thank you all for being here
14 today, and I look forward to seeing you
15 soon hopefully in person. Thank you
16 very much. Take care.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:
18 Take care. Thank you.

19 (Committee on Fiscal Stability
20 and Intergovernmental Cooperation
21 concluded at 12:35 p.m.)
22
23
24
25

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 that
this is a correct transcript of the same.

TANEHA C. CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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COMMITTEE ON FISCAL STABILITY AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION
September 29, 2021

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