

1 COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

2

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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City Hall, Room 400
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, March 25, 2025
10:00 a.m.

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PRESENT:

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10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILWOMAN NINA AHMAD
11 COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILMAN MICHAEL DRISCOLL
12 COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
13 COUNCILMAN JIM HARRITY
COUNCILMAN CURTIS J. JONES, JR.
14 COUNCILWOMAN RUE LANDAU
COUNCILWOMAN QUETCY M. LOZADA
15 COUNCILMAN NICOLAS O'ROURKE
COUNCILMAN ANTHONY PHILLIPS
16 COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS
COUNCILMAN JEFFREY YOUNG, JR.

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HELEN LOUGHEAD, INTERIM CHIEF CLERK

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

3 Good morning, everyone. Good
4 morning.

5 This is the public hearing
6 and public meeting of the committee
7 of the whole regarding bills number
8 250195, 250196, 250197, 250198,
9 250199, 250200, 250201, 250202,
10 250210, 250211, 250212, and
11 resolution number 250214.

12 Ms. Loughhead.

13 Can you please take the roll
14 for attendance?

15 CHIEF CLERK: Councilmember
16 Squilla.

17 COUNCILMEMBER SQUILLA:
18 Here.

19 CHIEF CLERK: Councilmember
20 Gauthier.

21 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:
22 Present.

23 CHIEF CLERK: Councilmember
24 Jones.

1 COUNCILMEMBER JONES:

2 Present.

3 CHIEF CLERK: Councilmember

4 Young? Councilmember Driscoll?

5 COUNCILMEMBER DRISCOLL:

6 Present.

7 CHIEF CLERK: Councilmember

8 Lozada.

9 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

10 Present.

11 CHIEF CLERK: Councilmember

12 Bass? Councilmember Phillips?

13 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:

14 Present.

15 CHIEF CLERK: Councilmember

16 O'Neill? Councilmember Gilmore-

17 Richardson?

18 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

19 RICHARDSON: Present.

20 CHIEF CLERK: Councilmember

21 Thomas.

22 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS:

23 Present.

24 CHIEF CLERK: Councilmember

1 Harrity.
2 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:
3 Present.
4 CHIEF CLERK: Councilmember
5 Ahmad.
6 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD:
7 Present.
8 CHIEF CLERK: Councilmember
9 Landau.
10 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:
11 Present.
12 CHIEF CLERK: Councilmember
13 Brooks.
14 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:
15 Present.
16 CHIEF CLERK: Councilmember
17 O'Rourke.
18 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:
19 Present.
20 CHIEF CLERK: Council
21 President Johnson.
22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
23 Present. Thank you.
24 A quorum of this committee

1 is present and this hearing is now
2 called to order. Ms. Loughhead, will
3 you please read the title of the
4 resolutions, please.

5 CHIEF CLERK: Bill No.
6 250195, an ordinance amending
7 Chapter 191500 of the Philadelphia
8 Code entitled Wage and Net Profits
9 Tax by revising certain tax rates
10 under certain terms and conditions.
11 Bill No. '24 -- 250196, an ordinance
12 adopting the operating budget for
13 fiscal year 2026. Bill No. 250197,
14 an ordinance to adopt a fiscal 2026
15 capital budget. Bill No. 250198, an
16 ordinance to adopt a capital program
17 for the six fiscal years 2026
18 through 2031 inclusive. Bill No.
19 250199, an ordinance amending
20 Chapter 192600 of the Philadelphia
21 Code entitled Business Income and
22 Receipts Taxes to revise tax rates
23 and end certain exclusions from the
24 tax on receipts in all under certain

1 terms and conditions.

2 Bill No. 250200, an
3 ordinance amending Chapter 12100,
4 the Philadelphia Code entitled
5 Traffic Code to revise the fee for
6 the use of the parking meters all
7 under certain terms and conditions.

8 Bill No. 250201, an
9 ordinance amending Chapter 191800 of
10 the Philadelphia Code entitled
11 School Tax Authorization to provide
12 for an increase in the tax of the
13 Board of Education of the School
14 District of Philadelphia, is
15 authorized to impose on real estate
16 in amending Chapter 191300 entitled
17 Real Estate Taxes to establish an
18 equivalent reduction in the tax rate
19 for the city real estate tax all
20 under certain terms and conditions.

21 Bill No. 250202, an
22 ordinance amending Section 191806 of
23 the Philadelphia Code entitled
24 Authorization of Realty use in

1 Occupancy Tax to eliminate certain
2 exemptions, all under certain terms
3 and conditions.

4 Bill No. 250210, and
5 ordinance amending Section 101101,
6 the Philadelphia code entitled Fees
7 of Commissioner of Records to
8 increase the portion of fees for the
9 recording of deeds, mortgages and
10 relating documents to be used for
11 housing trust fund purposes, under
12 certain terms and conditions.

13 Bill No. 250211, an
14 ordinance amending Chapter 191400 of
15 the Philadelphia code entitled
16 Realty Transfer Tax by revising the
17 rate of the tax all under certain
18 terms and conditions.

19 Bill No. 250212, an
20 ordinance to amend Chapter 194400 of
21 the Philadelphia of code entitled
22 Development Impact Tax to end
23 imposition of the tax under certain
24 terms and conditions.

1 And finally, resolution No.
2 250214, resolution providing for the
3 approval by the Council of the City
4 of Philadelphia of a revised five-
5 year financial plan for the city of
6 Philadelphia covering fiscal years
7 2026 through 2030 and incorporating
8 revisions with respect to fiscal
9 year 2025, which is to be submitted
10 by the Mayor to the Pennsylvania
11 Intergovernmental Cooperation
12 Authority pursuant to the
13 Intergovernmental Cooperation
14 Agreement by and between the city
15 and the authority.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

17 Thank you very much.

18 Today, we begin the public
19 hearing of the Committee of the
20 Whole to consider the bills read by
21 the clerk that constitute proposed
22 operating and capital spending
23 measures for fiscal year 2026, a
24 capital program and a forward

1 looking capital plan for fiscal year
2 2026 through fiscal year 2031.

3 Today we'll hear testimony
4 from the administration on the five-
5 year plan. We also have the
6 Department of Labor on standby for
7 questions as well. They will not
8 read their testimony but they will
9 be available for questioning. I
10 want to also welcome the
11 administration as well as the
12 departments who will be joining us
13 for this testimony today.

14 Ms. Loughhead, would you
15 please call the first witness to
16 testify from the administration?

17 CHIEF CLERK: Tiffany
18 Thurman, Chief of Staff to Mayor
19 Parker.

20 MS. THURMAN: Good morning,
21 Council President Johnson and
22 members of City Council. My name is
23 Tiffany Thurman and I have the honor
24 of serving as Chief of Staff to

1 Mayor Parker. I'm honored to
2 testify in support of the Mayor's
3 operating budget for fiscal year
4 2026. Bill No. 250196 and the
5 proposal FY 2026 through 2030, five-
6 year plan resolution number 250214
7 along with the supporting budget and
8 revenue bills introduced on March
9 13th.

10 Joining me today are my
11 colleagues, Chief Deputy Mayor
12 Sincere Harris and Vanessa Garrett
13 Harley, Finance Director Rob Dubow,
14 Budget Director Sabrina Maynard,
15 cabinet members and department heads
16 from across the administration. The
17 proposed five-year plan builds on
18 the historic investments we made
19 together in the fiscal year 2025,
20 One Philly Budget, to pursue our
21 shared vision of Philadelphia and
22 delivering tangible results that
23 residents and businesses can see,
24 touch and feel. The proposed five-

1 year plan includes \$2.3 billion in
2 new operating investments and almost
3 1.5 billion in new capital
4 investments over six years.

5 This is an ambitious
6 proposal that will continue to
7 advance key initiatives underway,
8 elevating five critical priorities
9 around housing, fair and fiscally
10 responsible multi-year contracts for
11 city workers, tax reform, the
12 wellness ecosystem, and preparing
13 for special events in FY 2026. The
14 proposed plan also balances the
15 major investments in these
16 priorities with an ongoing
17 commitment to the city's fiscal
18 stability.

19 Despite the end of the
20 American Rescue Plan Act funds last
21 calendar year and a legacy pension
22 obligation bond balloon payment due
23 in fiscal year 2029, the plan builds
24 reserves that meet our internal goal

1 of at least 6-8 percent in each of
2 the next five years. This is an
3 improvement over last year's plan.

4 All of these steps have been
5 carefully measured amid an uncertain
6 federal and economic environment.
7 As with everything we've
8 accomplished together so far,
9 collaboration with this Council,
10 state and federal partners,
11 organized labor, businesses and
12 neighborhood and community leaders
13 will be paramount. Only as One
14 Philly, a united city will we be
15 successful.

16 As Mayor Parker laid out in
17 yesterday's housing address, this
18 five-year plan includes two \$400
19 million borrowings as part of an
20 overall \$2 billion financing
21 strategy for the Housing
22 Opportunities Made Easy or HOME
23 initiative. As every member of the
24 body knows well, access to safe

1 quality housing that is affordable
2 and meets an urgent need for
3 thousands of residents, both
4 homeowners and renters and for
5 Philadelphians across income bands is
6 important. This is why prior
7 approaches to housing, the standard
8 of -- the standard operating
9 procedure will not suffice to meet
10 the need.

11 We have with us today Chief
12 Housing and Urban Development
13 Officer Angela Brooks, Director of
14 Planning and Development, Jessie
15 Lawrence, and Chief of Staff John
16 Mondlak who would be happy to
17 discuss further the details of the
18 proposed housing plan. During this
19 budget process, we cannot stress
20 enough how intergovernmental and
21 cross-sector collaboration will be
22 instrumental, dare I say, paramount
23 in reaching the 30,000 housing units
24 that need to be built or preserved

1 across the city.

2 City workforce. With
3 regard to the city workforce, Chief
4 Administrative Officer Camille
5 Duchaussee and Chief Human Relations
6 Officer Candi Jones have been
7 working intensively with departments
8 to change the way we recruit, train,
9 and retain public employees. This
10 work will continue until we've
11 addressed the vacancy rates that
12 have been -- that have persisted for
13 years in the city. That said, the
14 city's head count has increased from
15 the end of fiscal year 2024, marking
16 a continued departure from the
17 decreasing head counts in recent
18 years.

19 From the end of June
20 through December, the city's general
21 fund head count increased by 573
22 people suggesting that the targeted
23 investments we're making in
24 recruitment and retention are paying

1 off. We've also made this progress
2 as several thousand employees return
3 to office creating better
4 opportunities to collaborate and
5 innovate together. We're especially
6 grateful to Commissioner Joe Brodsky
7 and the team at public -- at Public
8 Property who supported this
9 transition so effectively and
10 continue to upgrade city workplaces.

11 Meanwhile, Chief Deputy
12 Mayor Sincere Harris and our labor
13 team are working to negotiate fair
14 fiscally responsible multi-year
15 contracts with the Fraternal Order
16 of Police Lodge 5, International
17 Association of Firefighters Local 22
18 and AFSCME District Councils 33 and
19 47. The five-year plan includes a
20 \$550 million labor reserve as the
21 administration continues to work
22 through negotiations. This is the
23 largest labor reserve in the city's
24 history.

1 Turning now to tax reform.
2 Tax investments and job creation is
3 important to Mayor Parker and our
4 team, and we're also grateful for
5 the leadership of President Johnson
6 and this body and the members of the
7 Tax Reform Commission for their
8 efforts in recent months. Following
9 the guidance of the commission, this
10 administration is proposing historic
11 changes to the city's business and
12 wage taxes with dramatic savings on
13 the horizon from a pension fund that
14 will fully fund -- that will be
15 fully funded in fiscal year 2033.

16 We're in an unprecedented
17 position to significantly decrease
18 both the gross receipts and net
19 income portions of the business
20 income and receipts tax over the
21 next five years, while codifying
22 further reductions to eliminate the
23 former and cut the latter in half by
24 fiscal year 2039, seven years after

1 the pension fund reaches full
2 funding, which is important to our
3 administration.

4 At the same time, we'll
5 restart steady decreases in the wage
6 tax from fiscal year 2026 through
7 fiscal year 2030. This would be the
8 first time in 17 years that a Mayor
9 and City Council have concurrently
10 reduced all these rates in the same
11 year and with the long-term
12 certainty that businesses need.
13 This is a key priority to increasing
14 access to economic opportunity by
15 attracting, retaining and growing
16 businesses that will create jobs
17 with family sustaining wages.
18 Boosting the city's competitiveness
19 in today's economy through tax
20 investments is a major lever to
21 growing the economic pie and putting
22 more Philadelphians on a path to
23 self-sufficiency. Now is the time
24 to jump start business growth and

1 job creation for Philadelphians.

2 Turning now to Wellness

3 Ecosystem. For those Philadelphians
4 who are among the most vulnerable,
5 the new Riverview Wellness Village
6 is already providing comprehensive
7 care, treatment and supportive
8 housing, thanks to the \$100 million
9 approved by City Council in fiscal
10 year 2025.

11 The Wellness Village is a
12 centerpiece of a campus that will,
13 with the investments in the proposed
14 plan, eventually be able to host 640
15 residents and support them with
16 medical care and clinical support,
17 as well as education, workforce
18 development and other onsite
19 programming. Staff in the Managing
20 Director's office including the
21 Capital Program's office,
22 Procurement Department, Department
23 of Behavioral and Intellectual
24 Disability Services and other

1 agencies have worked tirelessly
2 including L&I to create this new
3 capacity.

4 The fifth of the new major
5 investments areas lifted up in the
6 proposed plan is the acceleration of
7 preparations for 2026. This Council
8 and numerous other key stakeholders
9 have diligently kept this work in
10 the forefront of our minds as the
11 first of the major events begin
12 later this year. This fiscal year,
13 2026 budget, puts forth another \$40
14 million on top of the nearly \$60
15 million already committed to ensure
16 Philadelphia realizes the full
17 potential and benefits of the
18 special events in 2026, and bringing
19 the total investments for
20 preparations to \$100 million. And
21 this is part of the \$500 million put
22 forth together to work at the
23 Philadelphia International Airport
24 with travelers at -- in waiting

1 areas, roadways and signage, SEPTA
2 platforms, video surveillance, and
3 other improvements to ensure a top
4 class guest experience.

5 Our thanks go out to City
6 Representative and Special Events
7 Director Jazelle Jones, 2026,
8 Director Michael Newmuis and so many
9 others who are working the long
10 hours to ensure we're making history
11 yet again. These major investments
12 in housing, labor, tax reform,
13 wellness and 2026 preparations will
14 help shape our city's future. At
15 the same time, we're pressing
16 forward hard on key initiatives and
17 programs across our mainstay
18 priority pillars, public safety,
19 clean and green, economic
20 opportunity, education and core
21 support, each of which have new
22 targeted investments in the five-
23 year plan.

24 We also have with us today

1 Managing Director Adam Thiel, City
2 Solicitor Renee Garcia, Chief Public
3 Safety Director Adam Geer, Public
4 Police Commissioner Kevin Bethel,
5 Director Carlton Williams of the --
6 Office of Clean and Green
7 initiatives, Director Alba Martinez
8 from the Commerce Department, Chief
9 Administrative Officer Camille
10 Duchaussee, Chief Education Officer
11 Dr. Debora Carrera, and other senior
12 administration leaders who look
13 forward to discussing further with
14 you the massive amount of exciting
15 work underway.

16 Our shared vision remains
17 steadfast to make Philadelphia the
18 safest, cleanest and greenest big
19 city in the nation with access to
20 economic opportunity for all. On
21 behalf of Mayor Cherelle Parker and
22 our entire team, thank you for your
23 partnership and the opportunity to
24 present our testimony. We have also

1 submitted testimony for the Mayor's
2 office and the Department of Labor.
3 Council President, I'd like to ask
4 Octavia Howell to provide testimony
5 on the fiscal year 2026 capital
6 budget and FY '26 through 30 capital
7 program, after which we and our
8 colleagues are here today and are
9 available to answer any questions
10 you may have.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

12 Thank you very much.

13 MS. HOWELL: Good morning,
14 Council President Johnson and
15 members of City Council. I am
16 Octavia Howell, Executive Director
17 of the Philadelphia City Planning
18 Commission. I'm joined by my
19 colleagues from finance and from
20 departments across the city. We're
21 here to present, for your review and
22 consideration, the recommended
23 capital program for fiscal years
24 2026 to 2031 and the capital budget

1 for fiscal year 2026. These
2 budgetary proposals were approved by
3 the Planning Commission on March
4 11th, 2025.

5 The Parker Administration's
6 inaugural recommended capital
7 program and budget strove to make
8 Philadelphia the safest, cleanest
9 and greenest big city in America
10 with access to economic opportunity
11 for all. The recommended fiscal
12 year '26 to '31 capital program and
13 the fiscal year '26 capital budget
14 represent the administration's
15 continued commitment to advancing
16 that vision. The recommended
17 program is a six-year plan for
18 investing in neighborhood and
19 community facilities like parks,
20 libraries and recreation centers,
21 specialized vehicles including
22 medical units and trash compactors,
23 repairs to city streets and
24 sidewalks, maintenance of city owned

1 buildings and technological
2 infrastructure.

3 The recommended budget
4 reflects the spending appropriations
5 for the first year of the six-year
6 program as both the program and
7 budget are key instruments of
8 planned physical development by city
9 agencies and institutional partners.
10 The Philadelphia Home Rule Charter
11 directs that their initial
12 preparation and submission to the
13 Mayor be a function of the
14 Philadelphia City Planning
15 Commission.

16 Beginning in October, 2024,
17 planning commission and budget
18 office staff receive an evaluated
19 funding request from 22 city
20 departments. We then work with each
21 of these departments to produce a
22 capital program and budget that
23 aligns with the administration's
24 priorities, addresses the city's

1 capital needs and long-term goals,
2 and reflects the city's financial
3 resources and spending capacity.
4 The resulting six-year capital
5 program recommends over \$1.4 billion
6 in new city tax supported general
7 obligation bond funding to support
8 public improvements throughout
9 Philadelphia.

10 When possible, city funds
11 are used to leverage additional
12 resources provided by regional,
13 state, federal, and private
14 partners. Considering all sources
15 of funding, including self-
16 sustaining aviation or water funds
17 and carry forward appropriations
18 from prior years, the recommended
19 capital program proposes \$17.8
20 billion in total improvements. For
21 fiscal year 2026, the recommended
22 capital budget calls for \$337
23 million of new general obligation
24 bond funding. The recommended

1 budget makes critical infrastructure
2 investments while reflecting the
3 city's financial constraints and
4 ability to support new debt service.

5 For fiscal year 2026, the
6 recommended capital budget -- excuse
7 me -- excuse me. The fiscal year
8 2026 to '31, recommended capital
9 program and budget include \$122.1
10 million in fiscal year '26 and
11 \$752.9 million over the full program
12 for clean and green. This funding
13 area prioritizes energy efficiency
14 retrofits, sanitation facilities and
15 equipment, improvements to city
16 parks, trails, pools, and
17 playgrounds, and investing
18 investments at Lemon Hill in
19 anticipation of the FIFA World Cup
20 fan fest.

21 Funds for street paving,
22 ADA ramps, traffic calming, and
23 Vision Zero are also recommended to
24 ensure the residents can safely

1 access these amenities which improve
2 the quality of life in Philadelphia
3 and make all neighborhoods cleaner,
4 greener, and more vibrant.

5 We recommend \$119.2 million
6 in fiscal year '26 and \$288 million
7 -- excuse me, \$288.7 million over
8 the full program for public safety.
9 These include investments in the
10 Riverview Wellness Center to
11 complete a new tower, a multi-year
12 project to renovate the fire
13 academy, critical improvements to
14 the city's prisons, fire and police
15 facilities and replacements of fire
16 vehicles. These recommended
17 investments will increase public
18 safety across the city.

19 \$47.1 million in fiscal
20 year '26 and 180.7 million over the
21 full program for core support.
22 Recommended capital investments for
23 core support include information
24 technology upgrades to optimize and

1 streamline the city's financial and
2 procurement systems, improvements to
3 city owned vehicle fueling and
4 electric charging stations and
5 safety improvements to municipal
6 buildings.

7 \$29.2 million in fiscal
8 year '26 and \$145 million over the
9 full program for economic
10 opportunity. To expand access to
11 opportunity for all, the planning
12 commission recommends capital
13 investments and neighborhood
14 commercial corridors throughout the
15 city, critical repairs and
16 maintenance of improvements to local
17 public, transit infrastructure,
18 unlocking state and federal grants
19 and matching funds, industrial and
20 waterfront land redevelopment
21 including the continuation of the
22 I-95 CAP project.

23 And \$19.7 million in fiscal
24 year '26 and \$98.7 million over the

1 full program for education. This
2 priority advances investment in
3 city-owned facilities at the Zoo,
4 free library, African American
5 Museum, as well as cultural
6 institutions including the Mann, the
7 Dell, the Please Touch Museum and
8 the Art Museum.

9 We are pleased to propose
10 these investments, which balance
11 fiscal constraints of the city with
12 the immense needs of its physical
13 plant. The recommended city new CN,
14 general obligation bond funded
15 spending and our recommended capital
16 program and budget is higher than in
17 previous years, reflecting the
18 city's efforts to invest in its
19 aging infrastructure while also --
20 while also -- excuse me, while also
21 investing in infrastructure for new
22 initiatives.

23 Thank you for the
24 opportunity to testify. We would be

1 happy to address any questions that
2 you may have regarding the
3 recommended fiscal year '26 to '31
4 Capital Program and the fiscal year
5 '26 Capital Budget.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

7 Thank you very much for
8 your testimony, and also, we will be
9 doing three minutes per member each
10 round just to make sure everybody
11 gets their questions in. First
12 question, I want to start off with
13 -- is regarding the five-year plan
14 and the question is to Mr. Rob Dubow
15 regarding job growth and development
16 as a part of five-year plan. How
17 are you doing, Rob? How are you?

18 MR. DUBOW: Doing well, how
19 about you?

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

21 I'm doing fantastic. Can't
22 complain. So I remember, during our
23 fiscal stability hearing, we talked
24 about how last year's five-year plan

1 gave a forecast of negative job
2 growth, right, based upon S&P Global
3 Market intelligence, the consulting
4 firm that we use. And so I just
5 want to get an idea as we move
6 forward, kind of, you talked about
7 that will be adjusted -- that
8 approach will be adjusted. What are
9 we doing, as a city, to attract more
10 jobs as relates to us eliminating
11 poverty through job creation and
12 development?

13 MR. DUBOW: I'll take the
14 "what we project part, and then
15 hand it back over to the chief of
16 staff or the commerce director to
17 talk about what we're doing to try
18 to attract jobs.

19 So in the five-year plan,
20 we -- based on what we -- feedback
21 we got from our econometric firm,
22 IHS Global Insight, and a meeting we
23 had down at the Fed economists,
24 we're projecting relatively flat

1 growth for jobs over the five years.
2 For the five years, have small
3 growth, and one year has a small
4 decline. So, kind of, based on all
5 the economic uncertainty that we're
6 seeing and the feedback we got,
7 those are the projections in our
8 plan. I see the commerce director
9 coming up to talk about what we're
10 doing.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

12 Good. Thank you. Thank you.
13 Ms. Martinez?

14 MS. MARTINEZ: Good
15 morning.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

17 Good morning.

18 MS. MARTINEZ: It's an
19 honor to be here. So on the
20 question of job growth, I'll start
21 by saying that the commitment of
22 this administration and Council to
23 do something around tax
24 competitiveness is going to be

1 really critical to stimulate and
2 spur growth. And the fact that
3 businesses will be able to project
4 their obligations is extraordinarily
5 important. And, you know, I
6 personally, this is a commerce
7 director speaking, if we can
8 accelerate the rate of growth of
9 revenue in jobs and wages, we can
10 always look at accelerating the
11 speed at which we fund -- you know,
12 fully fund our pension fund and
13 reduce taxes, you know, more
14 quickly. So I'll start there.

15 The second thing I'll say
16 is that our investments in workforce
17 are really critical and this budget
18 makes a big commitment to the
19 workforce space. And it is also --
20 this budget -- this five-year plan
21 and this coming budget also will
22 make an extraordinary commitment to
23 the idea of positioning Philadelphia
24 as a business hub, as a world class

1 business hub. It'll be the first
2 time where we're proactively
3 marketing Philadelphia as a business
4 hub. This work is underway, we call
5 it the Brand Attraction campaign and
6 I look forward to sharing more
7 details about our aggressive work
8 across the board in commerce
9 testimony. Thank you.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

11 All right. Thank you very much. I
12 want to do an overview of when you
13 take into account part of your
14 testimony, Tiffany, you talked about
15 the work that has been done, the
16 investment around the recruitment
17 and of retention of filling out
18 vacancies. Most folks may or may
19 not know that the vacancies play a
20 major role in terms of how much we
21 take in, in terms of our overall
22 budget and is calculated in terms of
23 how much we have available.

24 I know two members in this

1 body particularly Councilwoman,
2 Majority Leader Gilmore-Richardson,
3 the Majority Leader - Majority
4 Leader, Gilmore-Gilmore-Richardson
5 and Majority Whip Isaiah Thomas,
6 worked on a -- worked on a working
7 group to address the vacancy issue
8 and so just do a double back on what
9 that looks like, you talked about
10 some growth in that area and maybe
11 put some dollars and cents around
12 that figure.

13 MS. THURMAN: Absolutely.
14 And so, I'll give the top line and
15 then I'm going to ask our new Chief,
16 HR Officer Candi Jones, to come up
17 as well as Camille Duchaussee who
18 heads our CAO unit. So --

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
20 And one additional follow-up, and
21 just give me an idea of also we know
22 what the federal government laying
23 off a lot of individuals in the city
24 of Philadelphia, and the Mayor

1 stepped up and said, well, we have
2 vacancies and went on and did a
3 recruitment tour. I want to get an
4 idea of -- also how did that work in
5 terms of -- because I had several
6 constituents who called me who lost
7 their jobs, and so that particular
8 initiative gave people a safety net,
9 one opportunity to come work for the
10 city of Philadelphia. So please
11 give us an update on that as well.

12 MS. THURMAN: Absolutely.
13 So we are -- we've been very, very
14 intentional over the last year in
15 our recruitment efforts, not just in
16 the traditional sense of posting on
17 the traditional platforms like
18 LinkedIn and through social media.
19 We've also been very intentional on
20 using -- doing ad buys and deploying
21 radio station ads talking about, you
22 know, the opportunity to come and
23 join the workforce.

24 We also have a mobile unit

1 that goes out and does hiring fairs
2 where people can go onto this bus of
3 sorts and apply, in real time, for
4 critically needed positions, hard to
5 -- hard to fill positions. So we've
6 been really intentional in that.

7 We've seen a decrease in
8 our vacancy rates overall and we've
9 also been intentional seeing what's
10 happening at the federal level doing
11 recruitment fairs. We've done a
12 recruitment -- we had a recruitment
13 initiative, a fair that we did down
14 in DC earlier this year, and then we
15 had another one that occurred just
16 last week. Candi Jones will now
17 take over and talk about the number
18 of job fairs that we've had to date
19 and where those numbers are.

20 But I will say, I'm proud
21 to share that we've hired a
22 significant amount of people over
23 the last year, closing that vacancy
24 rate.

1 MS. JONES: Good morning.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

3 Good morning.

4 MS. JONES: So I'll start,
5 just generally, about the vacancy
6 rates. So as of March, 2025, we
7 have about 5,700 vacancies, so that
8 closes the gap to about 17 percent,
9 whereas the prior vacancy rate was
10 about 19 percent. Our application
11 numbers are increasing
12 significantly, partially due to the
13 "Philly On The Move" campaign with
14 the hiring bus and also our
15 recruitment efforts, and billboards,
16 and digital advertising at the
17 airport and at the stadiums. We've
18 increased our application count from
19 53,000 applications in 2023 to about
20 -- to over 60,000 applications in
21 2024.

22 In 2024, we've attended
23 over 155 events and engaged over
24 3,000 candidates. And since January

1 of 2025, we've already attended over
2 25 events also in partnership with
3 some of the Councilmembers, to do
4 very targeted recruitment in some of
5 the districts. Sorry. For the
6 federal recruitment events, we've
7 had two events, one in January and
8 just one this past week. We've
9 engaged over 250 potential employees
10 that are either in transition or
11 looking to transition in from the
12 federal government.

13 So at this time the Office
14 of Human Resources is kind of
15 intentionally creating partnerships
16 with those candidates who've come
17 out to our events and some of those
18 who have not made it to align them
19 with City Department heads and
20 leaders so that we can make
21 intentional connections and fill
22 some of those vacancies.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

24 Thank you. I'm going to follow-up,

1 but The Chair at this moment
2 recognizes Majority Leader Gilmore-
3 Richardson.

4 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
5 RICHARDSON: Thank you. I don't
6 know what's wrong with this thing.
7 Thank you. Thank you very much,
8 Council President. I just had a
9 point of clarification. I was
10 trying to take notes on what you
11 were stating. If you could just
12 repeat for me the amount of
13 vacancies and then repeat for me the
14 actual percentage that you notated.
15 And based on what I thought I heard,
16 if you could just, for the record,
17 tell us for FY '24 and '25 the
18 budgeted vacancy rate versus the
19 actual vacancy rate. Thank you,
20 Mr. President.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
22 You are welcome.

23 MS. JONES: So for -- as of
24 March of 2025, there are 5,791

1 vacancies which is approximately 17
2 percent of the vacancy rate. I
3 apologize, I missed the next
4 question.

5 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

6 RICHARDSON: Yes, based on what I
7 thought I heard you state, if you
8 could just, for the record, notate
9 what the budgeted vacancy rate and
10 the actual vacancy rate is for FY
11 '24 and FY '25?

12 MS. JONES: I don't have
13 those numbers in front of me, but I
14 can certainly follow-up with those.

15 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

16 RICHARDSON: Thank You.

17 MS. JONES: You're welcome.

18 MS. THURMAN: And I do know
19 that we have a hearing coming up
20 with CAO and OHR so we can -- we're
21 prepared to certainly follow-up in
22 writing, but then answer any further
23 questions you have during that
24 hearing as well. But really proud

1 that we were able to decrease the
2 vacancy rate by to 17 percent, and
3 that number will continue to decline
4 as Candi Jones and her team continue
5 to be intentional about our
6 recruitment efforts here locally.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

8 Can we expand that mobile
9 bus? Like, we have one, but based
10 upon the central urgency and
11 addressing the issue of poverty
12 through job creation, could we
13 possibly maybe get two, three, maybe
14 four, five, maybe one per Council
15 district?

16 MS. THURMAN: Listen, the
17 demand calls for that. The demand
18 calls for that so we will not -- we
19 will not say no to that, absolutely.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

21 Because -- so there's a \$10 million
22 investment for workforce. Could
23 somebody give a detail on what that
24 \$10 million in this budget are going

1 to be for?

2 MS. THURMAN: Absolutely.

3 I'll call on now Camille Duchaussee,
4 our Chief Administrative Officer.

5 MS. DUCHAUSSEE: Good
6 morning. Camille Duchaussee, chief
7 Administrative Officer. The \$10
8 million allocation or ask is
9 relative to this considerable work
10 that we're doing in terms of
11 workforce development. The City
12 College for Municipal Employment,
13 while it is a bespoke program that
14 has partnerships with the Community
15 College of Philadelphia, it's also
16 the umbrella for our workforce
17 development efforts. So this is
18 making sure that we have
19 partnerships with all of the
20 stakeholders throughout the city,
21 our labor partners, the
22 philanthropic community, the School
23 District of Philadelphia as well as
24 CCP.

1 This -- we really have a
2 comprehensive plan for ensuring that
3 we are not leaving any stone
4 unturned and that we are leveraging
5 the talent within the city of
6 Philadelphia to fill our workforce
7 needs. In combination with the work
8 of CCME, we are working very closely
9 with the Office of Human Resources,
10 the Commerce Department, to leverage
11 all of the existing partnerships
12 that we have and create new
13 partnerships.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
15 Can you give me an update on where
16 we're at with the Municipal College?

17 MS. DUCHAUSSEE: Sure.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
19 Initiatives, engagement?

20 MS. DUCHAUSSEE: Sure. So
21 we are very early in, as you know,
22 we stood up CCME on September. We
23 launched September of 2024.
24 Successfully, we had a first cohort

1 that included approximately 75
2 students across three different
3 program areas: IT, our health
4 services, specialists and our
5 administrative officers --
6 administrative support staff, right?
7 The administrative professional
8 program was the first and only thus
9 far to be completed.

10 The candidates in that
11 program are in the process of
12 interviewing for municipal
13 employment. And so we are hoping by
14 spring we will have the first cohort
15 of programs completed and have
16 better numbers for you, more
17 accurate numbers. But the response
18 was extremely positive with very
19 little by way of advertisement.
20 There was a lot of word of mouth.
21 We had just under a thousand
22 candidates express interest.

23 Again, we are constantly in
24 -- and again, the funding would go a

1 far -- go pretty far with expanding
2 the programs that we're able to
3 offer. We are aligning the programs
4 that we create to the vacancies that
5 are existing and have been critical
6 and difficult for us to fill,
7 traditionally, in the city.

8 And so we are moving
9 forward with things like paramedic,
10 our EEO professionals, and of
11 course, we continue to partner with
12 prisons and the police department to
13 ensure that we are creating spaces
14 to upskill and provide on-ramp and
15 pathways to employment in those
16 areas where we have significant
17 vacancies.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

19 Okay. Well, thank you very
20 much. And again, you know, my
21 single, like focus is around job
22 growth and development that
23 specifically tackle poverty, right?
24 Erase that moniker is best being the

1 largest poorest city in America, and
2 I believe this administration, this
3 body, is at the right time in
4 history to actually erase that
5 moniker.

6 And so that's why I want to
7 get some additional follow-up
8 questions particularly around those
9 particular issues, which before I
10 turn over to my colleague, I just
11 want to talk about FY '26
12 celebration. You know, the world
13 will be watching us, so I want to
14 get an idea, One, I know we did a
15 midyear transfer, the exact amount
16 that we transferred, just for the
17 record.

18 And then also how much is
19 in this budget to support the
20 celebration, the 250 celebration.
21 But most importantly, just making
22 sure that the dollars that are
23 transferred, the dollars that are
24 budgeted, that the organization

1 they're going to are equitable
2 across the board. So as we
3 celebrate the birthplace of America
4 and we celebrate, you know, Betsy
5 Ross and Rocky, we're still also
6 supporting Paul Robeson and Joe
7 Frazier within the same context,
8 right? And these organizations that
9 are out there are doing the same
10 work.

11 And so as I observe and pay
12 attention to this process and I talk
13 to different people, you know, they
14 want to make sure they're a part of
15 it, and that this process is very,
16 very inclusive while we're utilizing
17 the taxpayers' dollars to celebrate
18 the birthplace of America. So we
19 want to celebrate everybody and make
20 sure everybody has a seat at the
21 table and advocating, promoting and
22 participating in the celebration.
23 So can I just get an update on where
24 we're at?

1 MS. HARRIS: Absolutely.
2 And we have Budget Director Sabrina
3 Maynard for any additional details,
4 but generally speaking, specifically
5 speaking, Councilman, you're
6 absolutely correct. We -- the
7 administration is proud to have
8 already devoted over \$60 million
9 towards celebrating 2026, but we're
10 not done, so that's why you'll see
11 in FY '26 we call for an additional
12 \$40 million. So over \$100 million
13 dollars in investments that the city
14 is putting to making sure that we
15 have the best celebration and put on
16 the biggest party in America. The
17 birthplace of America was here and
18 we're going to make sure that we
19 shine and Philadelphia is adequately
20 reflected.
21 But that entails addressing
22 2026 investments from a three-prong
23 standpoint, making sure that all of
24 the events are exciting. So we get

1 kicked off this summer with the Club
2 World Cup rolling into the fall with
3 the 250th founding -- the
4 anniversary of the 250th founding of
5 the U.S. Marines and Navy. So
6 actually events start this year and
7 we are prepared to meet that
8 challenge.

9 Then we have a great New
10 Year's Eve 2026 extravaganza planned
11 for New Year's Eve, and of course,
12 in 2026, we have the semi
13 sesquicentennial which is a lot to
14 say and it's just a fancy way of
15 saying celebrating America's 250th
16 birthday on July 4th of next year.
17 And then we also have the MLB world
18 -- MLB All-Star game taking place
19 here.

20 So while we have those big
21 events, we're also going to be
22 having and sponsoring and partnering
23 with organizations that will be
24 having -- putting on smaller events

1 across the city. So we have the
2 events that are happening in terms
3 of the special events, but we also
4 are significantly invested, as you
5 will see, in the security around
6 those events, and that can't be
7 taken lightly. We've seen the
8 headlines, we've seen this past New
9 Year's Eve and some of the
10 unfortunate attacks that have
11 happened in other cities. We want
12 to make sure that Philadelphia is
13 more than prepared to meet this
14 moment. We want to have fun, but we
15 got to make sure our residents are
16 safe.

17 And then last, but not
18 least, it touches on what you
19 mentioned. Our approach has been to
20 make sure that, yes, we know
21 downtown there's going to be a lot
22 of things going on. Center City is
23 going to be a popping place. But
24 that's not all. For the Parker

1 administration, our priority is
2 making sure that every neighborhood
3 feels the lasting impact of the 2026
4 experience.

5 So from uptown to Southwest
6 Philly and Nicetown and Overbrook
7 and Northeast, we are going to be
8 focusing on commercial quarters and
9 partnering with organizations that
10 are, yes, the traditional arts and
11 cultures organization that we all
12 know and love, but some of those
13 community groups. And you'll see
14 that as we continue through this
15 budget and beyond.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
17 Thank you. Sabrina, were you about
18 to --

19 MS. MAYNARD: That was a
20 great summary. Thanks.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
22 All right. Thank you very
23 much. The Chair recognizes
24 Councilman Curtis Jones.

1 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Thank
2 you, Mr. President. And I know I
3 only have three minutes so I'm going
4 to cut all of the flattery I wanted
5 to give all of them off of my -- off
6 of my time, but I would be remised
7 in not thanking the Mayor for
8 putting together this team. I call
9 you my musketeers, of which Porthos
10 is the budget director, who has been
11 here 23 budget testimonies. Rob
12 Dubow is an amazing steward of the
13 budget.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
15 Hey, before you start
16 giving them props, we got to get our
17 stuff first.

18 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Well,
19 yeah, all right. So I just didn't
20 want to come off my time but --

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
22 Go ahead, Member Jones.

23 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: What
24 I want to say to you is that I am

1 proud of what the direction this
2 city is going in. I listened to
3 Mayor Parker's projections on
4 housing, and you don't have to
5 answer this question, but I want to
6 know that you are contemplating the
7 answer to this question.

8 All of these projections
9 depend on what number 45 -- 47
10 actually, does up in the White
11 House. And I want to know and be
12 assured that there is a plan B so
13 that this modest surplus that we
14 have is in position to be the stop-
15 gap if he decides to attempt to
16 bully the city of Philadelphia.

17 Because we -- my leader,
18 Mayor Parker, is not going to be
19 bullied. She's not going to
20 compromise her positions on her core
21 values. But fiscally, are we
22 preparing with a plan B? That's
23 question number one. Number two, I
24 want you to know that during the

1 course of this budget, I will be
2 revisiting the blueprint for safer
3 Philadelphia.

4 I always -- I already
5 talked to our Police Commissioner
6 to, kind of, look by department, how
7 we're doing. There's a 39 percent
8 reduction in shootings. I know it's
9 a combination of things, but I'd
10 like to know in a granular detail,
11 what things are working, what things
12 we need to double down and do more
13 of? And Vanessa, I know you've been
14 on this for a very long time.

15 And second -- third thing
16 is that something that I've always
17 been concerned about is our capital
18 budget and how long it takes to do
19 any one thing. I'm excited that a
20 partner, who is my shero, that has
21 taken on that goal but we've had all
22 these iterations with rebuild and
23 this build and that build, but we
24 ain't -- we haven't built enough.

1 And so how do we get rid of that
2 10-year backlog of capital projects?
3 And is that, in effect, a way to
4 help stimulate the local economy by
5 putting shovels in the ground.

6 And then along with Rob
7 Dubow, I've been here now 18 budget
8 -- no, 17 budget presentations. And
9 I always pick one department -- not
10 to pick one but to hope to do --
11 motivate to do better. And one of
12 them is -- and I couldn't do their
13 job, I say it with authority, the
14 office of homelessness. We've got a
15 homeless problem in the city of
16 Philadelphia and it is wedded to the
17 mental health problem that we face
18 in the city of Philadelphia. And if
19 we're going to be a great city for
20 FIFA, if we're going to be a great
21 city for -- there you go see, I got
22 them all in.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
24 Go ahead. Member Jones.

1 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: How
2 do we take on that task so that when
3 people visit our city, they're not
4 stepping over the downtrodden and we
5 have to kind of work with both
6 hemispheres of our brain to solve
7 that. And I'll drop the mic there.
8 Thank you. You can answer that now,
9 you can answer that during the
10 budget. You can answer both.

11 MS. THURMAN: So I have
12 four different buckets that we are
13 -- we're mapping it out. First,
14 we'll start with housing. The Mayor
15 has this process of ensuring that
16 whenever we proffer a plan, we've
17 gone through -- we've put it through
18 a rigorous test, a very rigorous
19 test. She calls it a geometric, if
20 then, statement.

21 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Say
22 what now?

23 MS. THURMAN: A geometric,
24 if then, statement. So this is the

1 plan, but then if this happens, what
2 do you do then? And then if that
3 happens, then what do you do then?
4 And so, whether it's our housing
5 plan, our Kensington Revival plan,
6 the Wellness Center plan, the
7 Wellness Ecosystem plan, even tax
8 reforms, our five-year plan overall.
9 Every plan that we proffer as an
10 administration has gone through a
11 rigorous geometric if then
12 statement .

13 So to answer your first
14 question, our housing plan, the
15 address that was delivered
16 yesterday, the plan that is being
17 uploaded as we speak, are the plans
18 that we will go into greater detail
19 on April 21st. It has gone through
20 that rigorous plan such that it will
21 stand the test of time, should
22 federal cuts happen at the federal
23 level, should proposals that we're
24 hoping, you know, be put forth and

1 passed, including the governor's
2 budget being adopted at the state
3 level, should those things happen,
4 great. But if they don't, we always
5 have another plan.

6 I don't call it a plan B
7 because the mission is the mission,
8 and we're going to continue on the
9 mission but we will employ different
10 tactics. We're happy to discuss
11 that in greater detail on April 21st
12 regarding housing. As it pertains
13 to the blueprint, I'd now like to
14 call up our director of Public
15 Safety, Adam Geer, to talk about how
16 we've actually adopted many of the
17 principals in that plan. And I know
18 that the Mayor gave you a wonderful
19 -- a nod, a shout out, a recognition
20 for the hard work that your team did
21 to bring that plan to bear. So Adam
22 Geer can talk about that and then
23 we'll go to the third bucket.

24 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Thank

1 you.

2 MR. GEER: Morning, Council
3 President. Good morning.

4 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Good
5 morning.

6 MR. GEER: Morning esteemed
7 Councilmembers. Absolutely,
8 Councilmember Jones, we have been
9 doing a lot in this administration,
10 right? It started with a lot of the
11 work that this body had been doing
12 and leading on, and we built on
13 that. Our anti-violence prevention
14 grants program, that \$25 million
15 that you all gave to the city to
16 dispense is making a difference.
17 The leadership of this Council is
18 making a difference. The leadership
19 of our Mayor, making a difference of
20 our police commissioner, of the
21 folks you see here on the table,
22 right?

23 It is all of these things.
24 It is cleaning, it is greening, it

1 is sanitation. None of them are
2 having an effect in their silos.
3 They're all collectively
4 contributing along with, yes, our
5 back to work, right? Along with --
6 I would even go so far as to say the
7 Eagles winning, lifting up a morale.
8 All of this stuff matters as a city,
9 but leadership matters. We're
10 leaning into your plan. We're
11 really excited to talk about all of
12 the other work the Office of Public
13 Safety has been doing for the past
14 year built again upon the work that
15 this Council and others community
16 members have been doing for years.

17 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Okay.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

19 I have a question on that same line
20 of questioning. So I know we start
21 off with -- I think it was 23
22 million last year, and then we
23 advocated for an additional 30. And
24 we know in this budget, it's 25 for

1 the fact -- for the Violence
2 Prevention grants. How much did we
3 spend for -- on the Violence
4 Prevention grants for Boots Center
5 Ground organizations?

6 And then also -- and I know
7 we have a chance to talk to you
8 about the Office of Public Safety,
9 but also give us an idea about the
10 consultant work for regarding
11 evaluating the effectiveness of our
12 investments with organizations from
13 the violence prevention money.

14 MR. GEER: Absolutely. So
15 we're not done spending the money,
16 right? We have already gotten
17 through our CEG, our largest grants.
18 We made those awards and also our
19 second largest grants, the CCG.

20 So that money is ramping up
21 and getting out the door, we're
22 signing those contracts, and we are
23 finalizing probably within the next
24 10 days the organizations that are

1 going to be receiving the TSIG,
2 those smaller micro loans to do
3 their work. We intend to spend all,
4 if not most of the money.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
6 How much?

7 MR. GEER: We know that
8 this --

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
10 How much have we spent so far?

11 MR. GEER: I'll get you
12 that exact number.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
14 Okay.

15 MR. GEER: For the TSIG and
16 the CEG. I know that we have that
17 available. So I will -- I will make
18 that available to you.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
20 Thank you.

21 MR. GEER: Second part of
22 your question, Councilmember, if you
23 could repeat?

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

1 The evaluation --

2 MR. GEER: Oh, yes. Yeah.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

4 -- of the organizations. And to be
5 frank, this is being asked since
6 Vanessa was in the position so I got
7 asked a question, so I want to just
8 put on a record and see where we're
9 at in terms of moving that process
10 forward under this administration.

11 MR. GEER: Most of our major
12 programs have been evaluated or are
13 currently being evaluated. That
14 includes P3, that includes GVI. So
15 it's either in process or it has
16 been completed. Now, a lot of this
17 is new territory that the city is
18 leading on, right?

19 And so what I mean by that
20 is, we have hired a Director of
21 Performance Management. We did a
22 nationwide search. We brought up
23 gentleman back home to Philadelphia
24 who's doing -- leading the work in

1 the Seattle DA's office. And we
2 have tasked him with now our grants
3 team, which we'll talk about it
4 more, but we've pulled together all
5 of our performance management folks
6 from all of the agencies. They used
7 to be in each of the agencies. They
8 now operate together as a group.

9 We pulled them out of their
10 silos so that we could all be
11 speaking the same performance
12 language. And his task is going to
13 be to continue to evaluate and
14 understand how our groups, how our
15 anti-violence program groups work,
16 what effect they have, the lives
17 that they are saving. And so we
18 will talk more about that, but we
19 are engaged in that work and we'll
20 lead on that.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

22 So at some point in time we
23 expect a report to say, from the
24 investments that we have given,

1 here's our dashboard on how we're
2 being effective in terms of
3 investing and supporting Boots on
4 the Ground Organizations and how
5 that ties into saving lives,
6 correct?

7 MR. GEER: Correct.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
9 Do we have a timeline?

10 MR. GEER: As a first step,
11 we're going to have prepared for
12 April 8th, the number of what our
13 city's anti-violence spending is.
14 As a next step, we're going to
15 continue the evaluations of those
16 programs and then be able to report
17 back to Council what we think works
18 and what we think does not work and
19 where we're going.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

21 And then also -- because I
22 also believe that what gets
23 measured, gets done, right?

24 MR. GEER: Uh-huh.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

2 But then I'll have another
3 follow-up conversation which we
4 just -- to also make sure when we
5 talk about quality and we talk about
6 quantity and numbers and evaluation,
7 right, it can sometimes be a little
8 complicated when you're dealing with
9 also, like, you know, mom and pop
10 organizations that are actually
11 doing the work, right, but also need
12 the back office support compared to,
13 like a pin that might get millions
14 of dollars from PCCD, but they're
15 not in the neighborhood, right?

16 Where they're partnering
17 with groups in the neighborhood and
18 using their list to say, during our
19 outreach, we touch 300 people, but
20 that's off the partnership of
21 working for organizations like NOMO
22 or Unity in the Community.

23 And so -- but, so we can be
24 fiscally responsible, we would like

1 to see a thorough evaluation to make
2 sure that our investments are put in
3 good hands. And so I look forward
4 to working with you on that.

5 MR. GEER: Absolutely,
6 Council President.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
8 Thank you very much.

9 Councilman Jones?

10 COUNCILMEMBER JONES:

11 Mr. President, 83 million a
12 year from the federal government
13 goes to PCCD goes to those groups.
14 We have to be cognizant of that kind
15 of impact. And I'm sorry to take --

16 MS. THURMAN: No, you're
17 absolutely right and those are the
18 -- those organizations that even the
19 Council President referenced, NOMO,
20 that work is really important. We
21 want to make sure that we have all
22 the right levers and supports in
23 place to ensure whatever changes at
24 whatever level, that organizations

1 that are the boots on the ground
2 that have been doing the work and
3 doing a significant amount of work
4 and doing a really good job can
5 continue doing that.

6 So whether that's Unity in
7 the Community under Anton or NOMO,
8 under Rickey Duncan, we want to
9 continue -- and EMIR, Chantay Love
10 and on and on, we want to continue
11 to support those organizations
12 because it's proof positive that it
13 is working.

14 And Council President, I
15 really like what you said. What
16 gets measured, gets done. That's
17 the impetus for Philly Stat 360.
18 And we have -- we have our standard
19 31 stats and measures that we
20 measure on that site, but also we
21 build out story board. So I know we
22 were here recently in this room
23 discussing our public safety plan
24 and our commitment to Kensington and

1 even the Kensington Caucus.

2 And we have a story board

3 up to show how we're measuring our

4 success. And so I can tell you

5 that, you know, it's exactly as

6 Director Geer said, April 8th is

7 D-Day. That's when we'll provide

8 that report to you on those numbers.

9 Accountability is important. What

10 get measured, gets done. That's

11 going to be my new mantra.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

13 Thank you very much.

14 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Can

15 we?

16 MS. THURMAN: Third bucket.

17 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Can

18 we defer the third bucket so that my

19 colleagues can get in? I'll circle

20 back.

21 MS. THURMAN: So we'll make

22 sure that we submit, in writing, a

23 response around the efficiency of

24 our new Capital Programs Office.

1 COUNCILMEMBER JONES:

2 Correct.

3 MS. THURMAN: Under the
4 leadership of Aparna Palantino. And
5 then of course, all of the amazing
6 work that's happening under Cheryl
7 Hill for our Office of Homeless
8 Services. We will submit that.

9 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: So we
10 can do that on round two, if it's
11 okay with you, Mr. President.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
13 Absolutely, Member Jones.

14 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Okay.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
16 The Chair recognizes Majority Leader
17 Gilmore-Gilmore-Richardson.

18 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
19 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you,
20 Council President. And I wanted to
21 start off with a thank you to the
22 administration and to each of you
23 for the work throughout the year.
24 It's been a wonderful year to work

1 together on a number of constituent
2 issues. So I just wanted to put
3 that on the record. I wanted to go
4 back to the point around the vacancy
5 rate so I could properly put my
6 question on the record. I asked
7 this because of our overall
8 financial picture and outlook over
9 the next several years based on a
10 number of things.

11 And, you know, I heard you
12 talk about the end of the one-time
13 federal funds, the new uncertainty
14 in Washington, the new contracts,
15 our new union contracts, our pension
16 obligation payment in FY '29, the
17 service department demands, the
18 weaker tax base, maintaining the
19 positive fund balance, and then also
20 the investments in the BSR and the
21 Federal funding reserve.

22 And so just for the record,
23 for the vacancy rate, because this
24 will be important to me and I know I

1 talked to Rob and Sabrina about this
2 as well. If you could just detail
3 for us the vacancy rate versus
4 actuals for the last two years.
5 And then what you have budgeted for
6 this year in addition to the
7 budgeted vacancy allowance for this
8 year. I'll start there.

9 And then I wanted to ensure
10 that I put on the record, my concern
11 and consternation regarding the
12 workforce development change. You
13 all know, and this is prior to this
14 administration, that during the
15 COVID years, during our budget
16 process in the previous
17 administration that the workforce
18 development department was
19 eliminated and then became a unit
20 under the Commerce Department, much
21 to the push of members of City
22 Council.

23 And now, we are just
24 getting back to a space in place

1 where there's real investment in
2 workforce development both from the
3 commitment of the Mayor and of your
4 administration, but also from a
5 financial perspective and how we are
6 working, both internally and
7 externally, on recruitment.

8 And so I want to put on the
9 record that I do have concern
10 regarding the transition of the
11 workforce development department in
12 that, I thought the thinking was,
13 initially, for that department to
14 work under commerce to talk about
15 all the things that the commerce
16 director mentioned earlier today
17 from a business growth perspective
18 from commerce, but also if, in the
19 Commerce Department, you're working
20 directly with the businesses that
21 will hire the individuals, who will
22 work at those businesses, if that
23 was the reason why workforce
24 development stayed with commerce.

1 And I get CCME is sort of
2 the umbrella to do the recruitment
3 work for the city overall but I'm
4 talking about from an overall
5 financial picture of commerce is
6 working with the businesses, and the
7 businesses are the ones that will
8 hire the workforce here in the city.
9 So I'll go back to -- I just wanted
10 to paint that picture for you. I'll
11 go back to the question regarding
12 the vacancies and then if we could
13 go to the commerce workforce
14 development question next.

15 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. So I
16 think we know what you want.
17 Probably, we look at vacancy by
18 division. So we can get you
19 something that shows how what we had
20 in the budget compares to actual,
21 and you want that for '24 and '25?

22 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
23 RICHARDSON: Uh-huh.

24 MR. DUBOW: And what we're

1 including in '26?

2 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

3 RICHARDSON: Right.

4 MR. DUBOW: Okay.

5 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

6 RICHARDSON: The allowance per
7 department for '26.

8 MR. DUBOW: And we're still
9 getting some of that back from the
10 department. So the '26 part may
11 take a little longer, but '24 and
12 '25 we can get to you.

13 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

14 RICHARDSON: Right. That's why I
15 started with '24 and '25 because I
16 figured 26 wasn't completely
17 finished yet, but I think that'll
18 help us sort of understand what
19 actual wiggle room we may have per
20 se. And I also wanted to address --
21 go ahead.

22 MR. DUBOW: Sorry.

23 Remember we're going -- we'll say
24 part of the trade off on vacancy

1 allowances depending on the
2 department between that and
3 overtime.

4 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
5 RICHARDSON: Right.

6 MR. DUBOW: So we'd
7 probably then need to look at, kind
8 of, how overtime compared to
9 projection too, just to give that
10 fuller picture.

11 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
12 RICHARDSON: Right. And I -- and I
13 think the other reason why I was
14 asking that question is because when
15 you go through the materials and in
16 reading everything, there are a
17 number of new positions slated for a
18 number of departments based on
19 priority. And so, for me, I'm
20 seeking to understand how many of
21 those positions are brand new
22 positions to city government versus
23 a position that can address a
24 vacancy that has already been

1 allotted for in the budget process.

2 MR. DUBOW: Yeah,
3 understood. And that was one of the
4 things that working with OHR we
5 looked at as we looked at each
6 budget request.

7 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

8 RICHARDSON: Right. Okay.

9 MS. THURMAN: So I was
10 actually working under the previous
11 administration prior to the Office
12 of Workforce Development being
13 established during the process of
14 the office being established, being
15 the department that stood up a
16 program, the first program under
17 that office and then seeing it
18 successfully grow. As I was
19 transitioning out of government at
20 that time, that's when COVID hit and
21 then the decision was made to put it
22 in commerce.

23 Coming back in this role,
24 you know, drawing on my experiences

1 both in government on the previous
2 administration, but then also
3 working with other local governments
4 across the nation and in my
5 consultant role, I realized that
6 enterprise-wide roles, enterprise-
7 wide work should rest and reside in
8 enterprise-wide focused departments.
9 And so that was the impetus for the
10 change. So yes, the work that is
11 led under Gianna who is here today,
12 Gianna Grossmann it is -- it was
13 doing really well in the Commerce
14 Department, but it was siloed
15 because it was only focusing on
16 those businesses tied to commerce.
17 That work continues but
18 it's more enterprise-wide now. So
19 not just focusing on the businesses
20 externally or external to government
21 and looking at job growth, but also
22 internally as well. So we are --
23 and we're doing the same thing as
24 well in our restructuring with our

1 HR practices. We find that when we
2 centralize it, and we can -- we can
3 then ensure that there's a common
4 practice, a common north stars if
5 you will, common guidepost and
6 guidelines that each department will
7 be held accountable for.

8 And so under the leadership
9 of Carol De Fries and CAO, in
10 partnership, of course, with Gianna
11 Grossman. There it is, Grossman.
12 We are -- we are ensuring that that
13 work is -- it is not just siloed to
14 businesses. And so that is really
15 important to us, not just focusing
16 on those businesses, but enterprise-
17 wide across all of our many
18 departments.

19 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
20 RICHARDSON: And I read the bill and
21 I want to be respectful of the clock
22 and I do have a lot here that I want
23 to try to get through today, but it
24 was my understanding that OHR handle

1 more of the internal coordination of
2 workforce development, that it was
3 not just the business coordination
4 under the Commerce Department, but
5 it was also the nonprofit partner
6 round table that, you know,
7 collaborated with the Commerce
8 Department.

9 It wasn't just business. I
10 think commerce was more external, I
11 should say. It included the
12 nonprofit partners, they had a round
13 table, a robust round table of
14 nonprofits that they met with on a
15 daily basis. We work with even the
16 life sciences and tech industry
17 folks with commerce as well. So I
18 didn't look at it as commerce being
19 in a silo. I thought that OHR did
20 the internal portion, which would be
21 more of the CCME work, and that
22 commerce focused on the external to
23 city government the nonprofits and
24 the businesses, obviously that are

1 coming to the city.

2 So I say that because I
3 also was looking at the additional
4 positions for it as well along with
5 recognizing the work that commerce,
6 I think, has done a good job around
7 ensuring that we are properly
8 investing in workforce development,
9 even creating outside opportunities
10 for these organizations with the
11 money that we and Council had put
12 into that work under the previous
13 administration because of what
14 happened during COVID. So --

15 MS. THURMAN: Yeah, it
16 wasn't a punitive decision. They
17 were doing a great job under
18 commerce, and they're doing a great
19 job but it's expanded. We've
20 expanded our approach. But the
21 focus is both internal and external
22 under CAO. So that hasn't -- that
23 hasn't changed. Just last week, we
24 met with over a hundred nonprofits

1 to circle back to them and remain
2 accountable to the work that we were
3 doing around our contracting and
4 procurement process. There is a
5 workforce development component tied
6 to that as well. So we were able to
7 seamlessly address one issue and
8 then talk about the additional work
9 that we want to expand with our
10 workforce development.

11 So it's just -- it's a
12 different model but it certainly
13 doesn't take away from all of the
14 different organizations across a
15 myriad of sectors that we were
16 engaged with under commerce. We're
17 still -- actually, our engagement
18 has grown in these last few months
19 under our new CCME model. I think
20 that we've been able to attract more
21 external partners in that -- with
22 that model as well. And so I just
23 want to, you know, just state for
24 the record that it is -- that I'm

1 really proud of the direction that
2 we're going with workforce
3 development.

4 We're even being more
5 intentional in how we are engaging
6 with our labor unit -- union. So we
7 have some exciting work coming ahead
8 that we'll be announcing pretty soon
9 around partnerships with SEIU, Unite
10 Here, CARP, Rosie's Girl, Sam Staten
11 Jr. So we have those investments
12 already in our -- in our budget, in
13 our portfolio. We're able to expand
14 it at record clip because of that
15 enterprise-wide focus that the CAO
16 team brings, that was a bit more
17 siloed under commerce. So we just
18 increased our effectiveness but it
19 didn't take away certainly from all
20 of the work that was happening
21 within the Commerce Department.

22 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
23 RICHARDSON: Okay. I appreciate the
24 response. I'll come back on the

1 next round but I'm happy that you
2 stated for the record regarding sort
3 of the thinking around workforce
4 development, which was -- I have to
5 be honest, it's one of my babies
6 since I've been here.

7 MS. THURMAN: Yes.

8 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

9 RICHARDSON: This has been the work
10 that I have focused on, legislation
11 that I have passed, and so I just
12 wanted to ensure that you all
13 understood the importance of it by
14 placing it on the record. And in
15 addition to that, I'm happy that you
16 stated that investments are already
17 in this process for the
18 pre-apprenticeship work because I
19 know that we had to talk about that
20 last budget cycle.

21 MS. THURMAN: Yes.

22 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

23 RICHARDSON: Particularly for the
24 Sam Staten, Jr.

1 Apprenticeship Program, for Rosie's
2 Girls, for the CARP program and also
3 for -- it's one other program, one
4 of the workforce development program
5 that we support is a
6 pre-apprenticeship program. But I'm
7 happy that you put that on the
8 record that the support is already
9 there for those organizations.

10 MS. THURMAN: They're there
11 for those organizations. We're
12 really excited about that work.
13 It's tied also to our housing
14 agenda. So we are really thinking
15 about how we can be more
16 comprehensive with our investments,
17 right? Ensuring that our dollars,
18 that we can stretch it as long and
19 wide as we can.

20 So through CCME, we have --
21 the same way we have -- we have a
22 funnel of showing, you know,
23 starting through partnering with the
24 school district and schools like it,

1 our charter schools, creating that
2 funnel at the early ages through
3 CCME, working from that enterprise
4 wide approach to putting them in
5 critically needed positions,
6 ensuring that whether it's within
7 government or with our -- with our
8 third party partners and then making
9 sure that it's tied to our housing
10 agenda and other agendas around
11 clean and green to advance that
12 work. That's what we mean by
13 economic opportunity for all. So I
14 appreciate that, your ongoing
15 support and that acknowledgement
16 there.

17 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

18 RICHARDSON: Okay. Thank you.

19 Thank you, Council President. I'll
20 come back on the next round to talk
21 about more of my finance questions.
22 Okay. Thanks.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

24 Thank you. The Chair recognizes

1 Councilmember Cindy Bass.

2 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Thank
3 you, Mr. President. Good morning.
4 How's everybody doing? Good to see
5 everyone.

6 I just had one quick
7 question and I want to just refer
8 back to the Mayor's conversation
9 yesterday or her speech yesterday,
10 regarding housing and the \$400
11 million borrow that was going to be
12 coming up. And she really did
13 emphasize that that money would not
14 sort of sit around which is, kind
15 of, something that happens over and
16 over and over again.

17 When we have these
18 projects, when we did rebuild, you
19 know, we had this, you know, borrow
20 a \$100 million and then we couldn't
21 get it out the door and then we
22 borrowed another hundred. And
23 meanwhile, we're paying debt
24 service, and people aren't seeing

1 projects done as promised. And, you
2 know -- and, you know, I'm not
3 blaming you. Obviously, that was
4 another administration.

5 But how do we make sure
6 that this money gets out the door
7 which is critically important to
8 ensuring that the full scope of her
9 plan and project to provide, you
10 know, 30,000 units new and
11 refurbished existing units? How do
12 we make sure that that actually
13 happens and get those dollars out
14 the door? Because we have a problem
15 with spending money. You know,
16 we're the only people who have a
17 problem with spending money.

18 Most of the time you -- you
19 know, you've got some money and is
20 burning a hole in your pocket and
21 it's not really a problem to spend
22 it down. But the way that we
23 operate, and I think Councilman
24 Jones had done a chart which showed

1 from beginning to end. How many
2 steps was it councilman?

3 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Too
4 many.

5 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Too
6 many. Okay. It was a lot to be
7 able to proceed with a project. You
8 know, I don't want to, you know,
9 guesstimate but it -- you know, I
10 want to say 30, 40, somewhere in
11 that range steps in the city of
12 Philadelphia to be able to get a
13 project up and running. Anytime we
14 can build 95 and, you know, rebuild
15 parts of 95 in a couple of days.
16 And, you know, we see private
17 developers who can get their
18 projects up and running, you know,
19 in a few months, and then our
20 projects take forever. So how are
21 we fixing that to be able to
22 accomplish her goal and vision?

23 MS. THURMAN: So I'm going
24 to call up Jessie Lawrence, our

1 Director of Planning and
2 Development.

3 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Sure.

4 MS. THURMAN: But I'll take
5 the top line of that.

6 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Okay.

7 MS. THURMAN: By
8 successfully adopting our HOME
9 Initiative, that's how we do it. So
10 that HOME Initiative -- jokes aside,
11 but no, seriously, that -- the HOME
12 Initiative does that. So the first
13 thing that we did was over 30 days
14 ago, we -- the Mayor executed or
15 delivered an executive order, which
16 called first on us, it called for
17 introspection, for 25 plus
18 departments to look at how we do
19 business, what are the bottlenecks?
20 What are the barriers? What's going
21 to prevent us from having shovels in
22 the ground? How do we learn from
23 rebuild and initiatives like it?
24 And then what are we doing really

1 well? And then how do we learn from
2 that and adopt that.

3 So on Friday, we received
4 those recommendations from those
5 departments. We're now
6 operationalizing that work through
7 our -- in the Mayor's office, we
8 have a new office of Policy Planning
9 and Delivery. That D stands for
10 delivery. It's the implementation
11 that's really important. So they
12 are working in partnership with the
13 25 plus departments and partnership
14 with a Philly Stat 360, because as
15 the Council President said, what
16 gets measured, gets done.

17 So we are holding ourselves
18 accountable with all of those 100
19 plus recommendations. We're making
20 it public. It is going to be on our
21 Philly Stat 360 website. And by
22 streamlining processes through those
23 recommendations and more, we're
24 going to be able to get shovels in

1 the ground, but also through the
2 successful passage of the
3 recommendations that we've put
4 forth. So two \$400 million bonds
5 and then I'll give it over to Jesse
6 to talk in more detail.

7 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Well,
8 before you do that, let me just ask
9 a follow-up. So, with the
10 introspection that's been done, will
11 there be -- and I know you said you
12 just got sort of, like, a report or,
13 you know, a plan last week. And so,
14 will there be a report to Council
15 detailing how we're going to change
16 things, how we're going to take it
17 from, let's say 40 steps to, you
18 know --

19 MS. THURMAN: Absolutely.

20 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: -- a
21 reasonable number? So you will be
22 reporting back to Council on that?

23 MS. THURMAN: Absolutely.

24 And in fact -- so under Jessie

1 Lawrence's leadership along with his
2 Chief of Staff, John Mondlak, here
3 recently, they showed me all of
4 those steps and my mind was blown at
5 the number of steps it takes to
6 bring a project to bear. So we are
7 streamlining that process. We have
8 proffered a recommendation. We're
9 not touching councilmanic
10 prerogative, but we are -- we are
11 looking at how we address that
12 through a new recommendation that
13 we're putting forth that the Mayor
14 teased yesterday, that we will go
15 into greater detail on April 21st.
16 But I'll kick it over to Jessie to
17 talk in greater detail now.

18 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: One
19 last question. When do you -- when
20 do you think that you'll be able to
21 report back? How long do you think
22 it'll take you?

23 MS. THURMAN: So we just
24 got the report on Friday.

1 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Sure.

2 MS. THURMAN: So we just
3 need time to upload it in our
4 system.

5 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: A
6 couple weeks, couple months?

7 MS. THURMAN: No, not a
8 couple months.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Okay.

10 MS. THURMAN: That's not
11 the type of department or that's not
12 the type of city that we're running.

13 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Not
14 right now.

15 MS. THURMAN: That will not
16 fly under my leadership.

17 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: I hear
18 you.

19 MS. THURMAN: So I just
20 looked over to my right a few
21 minutes ago and saw our CIO, Melissa
22 Scott. So as quickly as Melissa
23 Scott and Kristin Bray, our Chief
24 Legal Counsel and head of Philly

1 Stat can get it up, it will be up
2 there. But we really are a
3 government that we want residents
4 that can see, touch, and feel.
5 We're a government of transparency.
6 So as quickly as we can get it up,
7 it will be there and we'll make sure
8 that Y'all have that.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Thank
10 you.

11 MS. THURMAN: Absolutely.

12 MR. LAWRENCE: And just to
13 give the bottom line to the top
14 line, you just got. We have done a
15 significant amount of research on
16 the pace in which the program
17 spending associated with many of the
18 programs that we're carrying over,
19 continuing investing and expanding.
20 We have a great sense of how money
21 and funds have been spent over. A
22 lot of that has been -- a good
23 amount of that's being carried over
24 from NPI, so we have a sense of the

1 spending whether it's on a weekly
2 basis, quarterly basis. And then
3 also with the new programs we've
4 quantified how we need to staff up
5 to respond to that as well. My
6 particular unit will give it 30 some
7 odd positions to be able to support
8 what we're doing there.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Okay.

10 MR. LAWRENCE: And we will
11 be -- you know, we're looking at it
12 in terms of the executive order
13 report that you've -- that the Chief
14 of Staff just described,
15 understanding where the different
16 departments are already aligned to
17 carry out a lot of that work when it
18 comes to the programs.

19 So, you know, we were
20 tasked with providing the finance
21 and budget department a specific
22 spend down schedule. So we've
23 looked at that understanding, where
24 we're going to be able to bridge the

1 gap, with whatever's left over in
2 the existing MPI draw down, but also
3 understanding on a quarterly basis
4 and fiscal year basis when we'll be
5 hitting certain marks.

6 Because it's going to take
7 some time to stand up some new
8 programs, but we also have the
9 capacity to maintain the existing
10 programs as well. So with the
11 existing programs, we're expanding
12 them, understanding what monetarily
13 and staff-wise it is going to take
14 to move all of that out. The key
15 here is to minimize our finance
16 department holding on to funds way
17 longer than they should be because
18 they're the ones paying out the debt
19 services.

20 So we need to make sure
21 that that timeline aligns, so we're
22 closely monitoring that as we
23 finalize our budget, make sure that
24 we are on the same page about what

1 programs are being rolled out. We
2 are looking at every single one of
3 those programs to be sure about when
4 they'll actually start, when they
5 need to be funded, and how soon we
6 can fund them.

7 COUNCILMEMBER BASS: Well,
8 excellent. Well, I just want to
9 thank you for your work. I'm really
10 excited. I'm very excited because
11 it's -- you know, it's been a
12 minute, you know, Rebuild had great
13 promise potential and expectations.
14 And so it's been way too quiet for
15 the liking of most, you know, it's
16 been quite like a cemetery. It's
17 been way too quiet to move these
18 projects along to get them where we
19 had thought we would be by now.
20 Rebuild was debuted, I think in
21 2016, and it's just -- it is just
22 not where we had hoped it would be.
23 So I'm excited about the
24 possibilities that you're presenting

1 here today. So this is -- this is
2 good. Thank you.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

4 Thank you, Member Bass. The Chair
5 recognizes Councilmember Jamie
6 Gauthier.

7 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

8 Thank you, Council
9 President. And good morning to
10 Y'all. Thank you for being here. I
11 wanted to talk about homelessness in
12 our city. Despite past stumbles, we
13 cannot deny how crucial the Office
14 of Homeless Services is. As
15 homelessness becomes a more urgent
16 and widespread issue, we need to
17 ensure that the department has the
18 tools it needs to serve our
19 neighbors who don't have a place to
20 call home.

21 It was heartening to hear
22 the Mayor speak about the
23 unprecedented amount of investment
24 in housing in our city that will

1 come through the HOME Initiative,
2 especially in light of early
3 impressions from the recent point in
4 time count that homelessness in our
5 city is rising.

6 So, I wanted to ask as it
7 relates to the HOME Initiative, will
8 eradicating homelessness be a part
9 of this huge undertaking? What
10 additional resources and tools, if
11 any, are being deployed in this
12 effort? And can you explain the
13 proposed \$5 million decrease in OHS
14 funding over the next five years?

15 MS. THURMAN: So I'll take
16 that two -- there's a two-prong
17 question. First, I want to, you
18 know, thank you, Cheryl Hill who is
19 -- who is seated at this table who
20 was not here last year. We -- when
21 we started in this administration,
22 of all of the departments that we
23 wanted to see a quick and fast
24 turnaround, it was OHS. And we are

1 really grateful for Cheryl Hill and
2 her leadership and all of the
3 dynamic work that's happened since
4 she's arrived here in this role.

5 So Cheryl will take the
6 first question, and then the second
7 question around eradicating
8 homelessness as a part of our HOME
9 Initiative, I'll call on first,
10 Crystal Yates-Gale to talk about
11 this proof of concept that we're
12 socializing. And then Jessie
13 Lawrence and our new Chief of
14 Housing and Urban Development
15 Officer, Angela Brooks, will talk
16 about our -- the supportive housing
17 component of the HOME Initiative.
18 So, Cheryl, first, then Crystal, and
19 Jesse and Angela.

20 MS. HILL: Thank you. So
21 first I want to say we can end
22 homelessness in Philadelphia, and
23 that is our intent. And so one of
24 the things that we are currently

1 doing is we're looking at our
2 processes, we're looking at the
3 services that we provide and make
4 sure they're the right ones for the
5 people who are unhoused in
6 Philadelphia. So we take what you
7 say seriously and we definitely
8 appreciate your efforts that you
9 have also had in trying to end
10 homelessness. But one of the things
11 that we are looking at is how we
12 spend the money and making sure that
13 it goes to the right places, to make
14 sure that it's serving the right
15 people.

16 And so we are looking at
17 how much shelter that we provide,
18 how we can target permanent housing.
19 And as the Chief of Staff said, we
20 will be working closely with
21 Jessie's team in order to do that.
22 But also we have been engaging PHA,
23 we've been engaging other providers
24 to really talk about it. And on

1 Thursday, we are actually having a
2 community meeting to engage the
3 service provider community as well
4 to be able to talk about how we can
5 do things different in order to end
6 homelessness in Philadelphia.

7 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

8 Thank you.

9 MS. GALE: Good morning,
10 Councilmember. Thank you for always
11 caring about the unhoused in
12 Philadelphia. When we first heard
13 or when I first heard about the
14 proof of concept, I'm like, let's
15 call it a proof of concept to end
16 street homelessness in Philadelphia.
17 And that is our plan. So as part of
18 Mr. Lawrence's department plan to
19 add 30,000 units to the system, OHS
20 is working very collaboratively with
21 them to make 3000 of them -- at
22 least 3000 of them part of OHS's
23 supply of housing for people.

24 The other thing is related

1 to what Councilmember Bass has said
2 is that part of our proof of concept
3 is to provide these things at what
4 the Mayor says is I-95 speed. So
5 that's the answer to what we're
6 trying to do to eradicate
7 homelessness in Philadelphia.

8 MS. THURMAN: I will also
9 note, for the record, that the
10 budget was not cut. We can talk
11 more about that. But before we get
12 there, we'll talk about supportive
13 housing as it's part of this
14 initiative. And I'll call on now
15 Angela Brooks, our Chief Housing and
16 Urban Development Officer.

17 MS. BROOKS: Sorry. Good
18 morning and thank you. So I would
19 just like to refer to the section of
20 the plan. So first, prevent housing
21 instability and homelessness is one
22 of the north stars of the HOME
23 Initiative. And we have quite a bit
24 of focus that's on that. But we

1 have specific recommendations in the
2 plan that are a part of that. So it
3 would be the existing programs that
4 we have, eviction diversion,
5 homeless prevention.

6 We want to invest and
7 expand in EDP targeted financial
8 assistance. We've got the
9 Philadelphia Eviction Prevention
10 Programs and Right to Counsel that
11 will be continuing transitional
12 housing and homelessness prevention,
13 permanent housing and supportive
14 housing services, tenant-based
15 rental assistance, and rapid
16 rehousing and foreclosure
17 prevention.

18 And just to -- just, kind
19 of, note for me, prior to coming
20 here, I worked for the Corporation
21 for Supportive Housing for -- so for
22 the last four years I've been
23 working on preventing and ending
24 homelessness on a national level.

1 So this is something that's very
2 personal to me, but something I have
3 a lot of experience in. So it will
4 be a hyper focus of some of the work
5 that we're doing, but we're also
6 looking forward to working with you
7 and some of the things that you've
8 been doing as well, Councilmember
9 Gauthier.

10 So certainly, I look
11 forward to having conversations with
12 you around that. But it is a huge
13 north star of this plan. It's a
14 hyper focus and it's one of the
15 biggest things that the Mayor has
16 talked about since I've started in
17 some of her key focus areas. So I
18 look forward to thinking about how
19 we end homelessness in Philadelphia.
20 It is an achievable goal. I think a
21 lot of the funding, increasing units
22 and some of the plans that we have
23 outside of that, that aren't
24 explicitly tied to ending

1 homelessness will be very applicable
2 as well, and really help to
3 eradicate homelessness.

4 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

5 Thank You.

6 MS. THURMAN: And then
7 finally, which is part of your
8 question, but also I certainly want
9 to also shout out Councilmember
10 Lozada. We are investing additional
11 dollars into Code Blue, and I know
12 that, that is something that is
13 really important to all members of
14 Council especially in Kensington and
15 the work that you are doing under
16 your leadership there, Councilmember
17 Lozada. We also learned through
18 statistics, that were provided under
19 Cheryl Hill's leadership, that
20 two-thirds of the people that
21 actually come into our homeless
22 shelters are first timers.

23 And so through our HOME
24 Initiative, we are looking at ways

1 to do that eradication by ensuring
2 that we have pathways that prevent
3 them from going into our homeless
4 shelters but that can provide
5 supportive housing as a -- as a
6 solution. So we're working on that
7 initiative in coordination with OHS,
8 other departments of -- including
9 under Angela's leadership and Jessie
10 Lawrence's.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

12 Good. And I established a
13 working group around this particular
14 issue that I want to work in
15 partnership with the administration
16 on, one, about the point in time
17 count.

18 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

19 Yes.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

21 Who gets count, who doesn't
22 get count. Two, the quality of our
23 shelters. Because when I was out on
24 the street doing Code Blue, talking

1 to individuals, some to be quite
2 frank what you said, I prefer to be
3 here than to go and deal with what's
4 going on in some of the shelters.
5 And so the evaluation standpoint,
6 taking a look at that. And then
7 also our system, making sure
8 everybody has an opportunity to talk
9 with one another and share
10 information. I know some people say
11 it may impact the HIPAA law. I see
12 Renee Garcia over there.

13 But other cities have a
14 system where service providers are
15 able to talk to one another through
16 a particular portal while you have
17 individuals going from one service
18 or one shelter to another. So I
19 want to be a partner in that. And
20 not so much because we're about to
21 celebrate on the birthplace of
22 America, but because it's the
23 morally thing that we should be
24 doing. And also not looking at

1 homeless as just a quality of life
2 issue but also from a moral
3 standpoint.

4 You have children, young
5 people sleeping from house to house,
6 couch to couch, families
7 particularly young ladies with
8 children not on the street, but
9 staying from house to house on
10 people's couches because they don't
11 have a home. And so I want to be a
12 partner in that with my colleagues
13 in the administration.

14 MS. THURMAN: Absolutely,
15 Council President.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
17 Thank you very much. Chair
18 recognizes Councilmember Jones, and
19 then I'll go back and relinquish
20 your time to Councilmember Jamie
21 Gauthier.

22 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Thank
23 you so much, Mr. President, and
24 thank you, Jamie, for reinforcing

1 this issue. When you went out on
2 Code Blue, 30-plus people contacted.
3 Only one went in and said he felt
4 safer in prison --

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
6 Than in there.

7 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: --
8 than he did in the shelters because
9 of assaults and robberies. I told
10 you there would be one department
11 that I, kind of, got to drill down
12 on, and that is it. We can't -- we
13 cannot -- I could not do that job.
14 You find people at their most
15 vulnerable, but we have to do a
16 better job of making them feel
17 safer. Thank you.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
19 You're welcome. Councilmember Jamie
20 Gauthier.

21 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:
22 I'm hoping that -- I'm trying to
23 understand the FY '26 proposed
24 budget as related to the FY '25

1 budget. It's showing a \$5 million
2 decrease in class 200 which is
3 contracts and leases. Can you
4 explain the \$5 million decrease?

5 MS. THURMAN: Absolutely.
6 I'll call on Rob. I'm sorry. Our
7 Budget Director, Sabrina Maynard.
8 Absolutely.

9 MS. MAYNARD: Thank you so
10 much. So we are working with OHS on
11 their budget as you can imagine. We
12 meet with them weekly. There was
13 some funding they did not need that
14 was recurring. We can follow-up
15 with some of the details.

16 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:
17 Okay. I'm challenged to
18 understand how we would be dealing
19 with increases in homelessness by
20 chopping the OHS budget for -- by 5
21 million or that OHS doesn't need --
22 doesn't need the money that they've
23 had even in past budget years. I
24 think it's very important to have

1 that detail and to look at it
2 critically given the state of
3 homelessness in our city.

4 MS. MAYNARD: Absolutely.

5 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

6 Thank you so much.

7 MS. MAYNARD: Understood.

8 We'll follow-up. Thank you.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

10 Thank you very much. The Chair
11 recognizes the gentleman from the
12 northwest, Dr. Anthony Phillips,
13 Councilmember. Y'all clap for that.

14 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:

15 Y'all don't know already. You all
16 don't know already I love this man.
17 Thank you all so much. Council
18 President, thank you. I want to
19 thank the administration for honing
20 on important things to our
21 communities. The housing plan is
22 incredible. The wellness plan is
23 credible. We also have done some
24 significant work in public safety.

1 When you put a lot of sense of time
2 into something, things start to
3 move.

4 So I want to applaud you on
5 that. I want to bring forth
6 attention to something that has been
7 very important to me since I was 16
8 years old. And that is civic
9 engagement. There's an office that
10 I've been with ever since I was a
11 part -- a young person, in civic
12 engagement that I've been looking at
13 for so many years. And I always
14 questioned how are they moving a
15 needle in civic engagement in the
16 city. And that is the Office of
17 Civic Public Engagement, civic
18 engagement, which is now known as
19 the Neighborhood and Community
20 Engagement Office.

21 I am proud of the
22 leadership that's been taken to put
23 together the town -- the town halls
24 that we do in the community. I'm

1 also proud of the fact that we have
2 these neighborhood action centers,
3 which are doing quite well. But the
4 one part of the -- and this is -- I
5 want to take this as like -- I put
6 this on record for incredible
7 feedback and how we could work
8 together to make this happen, the
9 one part of that office that has
10 still yet not moved the needle is
11 the commissions and terms of the
12 commissions over the years, even
13 though I -- as I've seen this since
14 a teenager, people have showed up to
15 events, they've hosted discussions,
16 and they've also just done, you
17 know, publicity things, right?

18 But actually, having
19 significant programs that can change
20 lives and have impact and move some
21 of the Mayor's initiatives, you
22 know, across the table, we haven't
23 really seen that. So, Mike, the
24 only two commissions that have

1 really been impactful this year with
2 programs is Abu Edwards, the
3 Director of Black Male Engagement,
4 where he's literally organized a
5 program that you could see impact.
6 The Office of Women Engagement has
7 programs and so forth.

8 Thus far, when we talk
9 about, this is a -- this is in the
10 -- I want the public to hear this.
11 In the highlights of what these
12 commissions have done, the Office of
13 Black Male Engagement created a
14 program for middle school students
15 to help them become leaders in their
16 schools and communities. Abu
17 Edwards is doing an amazing job.
18 Office of Women Engagement, they're
19 launching an app that will help
20 women get real time support and so
21 forth around crises.

22 The youth engagement,
23 they're working on something around
24 safe quarters with discussions with

1 the -- with the school district.

2 Latino engagement, Muslim affairs,
3 discussions around tables. Yet
4 again, it's always discussions
5 around tables, what -- with no
6 particular impactful programs.

7 However, what bothers me
8 about this budget is that we're
9 asking for about close to a million-
10 dollar increase in their -- in their
11 budget, while an impactful program
12 such as the Mural Arts Program,
13 which has been around for 40 years,
14 colleagues 40 or so plus years,
15 decades, they're being slashed
16 significantly close to a million or
17 so dollars, and then in the next
18 couple years, they're going to be
19 slashed 2 million or so dollars.

20 So -- and coming from the
21 nonprofit world, you don't reward
22 people who have not shown impact.
23 You reward people who have been
24 impactful. So I'm going to give my

1 questions really quickly, and I'm
2 hoping that the commissions this
3 year actually do a better job. So
4 the question I have is, the budget
5 outlines a plan for 300 community
6 meetings and events to be hosted. I
7 know, personally, that 120 of those
8 meetings are going to be local
9 meetings in the town halls, the
10 Community Action centers, what are
11 the other meetings are going to be
12 about, and how do you plan to work
13 with Councilmembers to engage in
14 those -- in that space?

15 Also, I'm also concerned
16 about the next question is: What
17 data or key performance indicators
18 are being used to evaluate whether
19 or not the neighborhood and
20 communication office strategies are
21 making a tangible difference in
22 residents' lives beyond the towns
23 that -- beyond the centers? I want
24 to learn more about the commissions.

1 And then also what are the
2 commissions specifically going to be
3 doing to make sure that they're
4 engaging the diverse populations
5 around the city to actually have
6 impactful and thoughtful things
7 because, you know, we -- I love the
8 geographic if, and then, and also
9 the rigorous plan, but I just have
10 not seen, even from this report, a
11 rigorous plan for what the
12 commission is going to look like,
13 and I'm looking forward to hearing
14 from you all about that. Thank you.

15 MS. THURMAN: So my
16 colleague, Chief Deputy Mayor
17 Sincere Harris will answer that
18 question in full. But let me just
19 start by saying we don't see funding
20 our budget as a reward. So last
21 year, each of those commissions,
22 many of them are new received class
23 100 funding, but they did not have
24 class 200, 300, and 400 funding to

1 actually do their jobs. So on one
2 hand, you're saying there's no
3 impact, but on the other hand,
4 you're saying, why are we rewarding
5 them? They need money in order to
6 operate, in order to deliver those
7 services. But we by no means see
8 class 200, 300, and 400 as rewards
9 to our leaders.

10 Secondly, in our five year
11 plan, we have constraints. We are
12 constrained to word counts. And our
13 budget director, Sabrina Maynard and
14 her team under Ami Patel, they make
15 sure that we adhere to those word
16 counts. What that means is
17 oftentimes we -- we can't, in its
18 totality, talk about all of the
19 great work that's happening, detail
20 by detail. Each of those
21 commissions and neighborhood
22 engagement teams that you mentioned,
23 they have reports on our website
24 showing the impact that they made

1 with only enough money in their
2 budget just to cover their salaries
3 and benefits.

4 And so our -- my colleague,
5 Chief Deputy Mayor, will go over
6 those statistics because as you all
7 know, we do measure our impact. So
8 she will share that. But I just
9 wanted to clarify for the record,
10 the Parker Administration, we don't
11 see the budget as a reward, it's how
12 we deliver services.

13 MS. HARRIS: Thank you.
14 Tiffany took the first point, and we
15 never want to pit any of our offices
16 against each other. They all do
17 very valuable work. I'm going to
18 call up the Engagement Director,
19 Hassan Freeman. And while he's
20 making his way to this to this stage
21 -- to the stage, I just want to
22 correct the record on some things
23 and give an overview and some
24 clarifying.

1 So to your point about the
2 budget edition for the portion that
3 is considered constituency
4 engagement, that's your Black Male
5 Engagement, that's your youth
6 engagement, the women's engagement
7 who handle many of the commission
8 work that you're referring to, when
9 the increase is not a million
10 dollars, it's about 200 and some
11 thousand dollars. If you see last
12 year's budget, they're working off a
13 shoestring budget. And we pretty
14 much held them flat from FY '24 to
15 FY '25. And that's why we needed,
16 to your point, to kick these
17 programs into high gear, to invest
18 in all of those programs, which --
19 what does that investment look like?
20 You talked about Black Male
21 Engagement, Abu launching the Ben
22 series.

23 What we didn't talk about
24 is Latino engagements pushing

1 through PHLTCB and providing
2 economic opportunities for folks in
3 that community who otherwise don't
4 have the resources and the
5 opportunities to enter the
6 workforce. The Muslim engagement
7 has done a number of things, and
8 Hassan you should join me, including
9 launching the three-day Muslim
10 Business Expo in partnership with
11 the Commerce Department.

12 Again, focusing on economic
13 opportunity that is deliverable and
14 ways that we can impact the
15 community outside of roundtables and
16 advisory councils and those
17 important public meetings, because
18 yes, those are important. In
19 addition to, you mentioned the
20 Women's Engagement Team launching
21 the app, how we can deliver on
22 safer, cleaner, greener, all of
23 them, including our Interfaith
24 Roundtable, who launch for the first

1 time ever, a series of community
2 kitchens over the holiday,
3 partnering with religious
4 institutions, synagogues, churches,
5 and masjids to provide food and
6 resources to local communities.

7 So these are tangible
8 results that these commissions were
9 doing, these commissions and these
10 engagement offices were doing with
11 minimal resources, which is why in
12 FY '26, we are proposing that their
13 budget increases.

14 Now, that is separate from
15 the initiative of -- the initiative
16 of the Neighborhood and Community
17 Action Team, or NCATs, as we kind of
18 commonly started to call them. And
19 those are the 10 district focused
20 community teams where we were very
21 responsible in making sure we
22 conserved as many resources as
23 possible, maximizing our use of
24 parks, and recs, and libraries, and

1 one school, and one outside
2 partnership with a faith-based
3 institution.

4 And we've set up an
5 organizing team so that we can
6 actually deliver on Mayor Parker's
7 commitment to a government that
8 Philadelphians can see, touch, and
9 feel. They address community issues
10 right there on the spot. Potholes,
11 we had a tenant who -- a resident
12 who was overrun, Councilmember
13 Gauthier, in your district with
14 raccoons, so much to the point where
15 they had to board up the whole
16 house. And those are valuable
17 problem solving engagements that
18 residents are getting their issues
19 handled.

20 We don't wait for them to
21 come to us. We canvas the
22 neighborhood, we engage local
23 businesses. These teams get out and
24 get to know their local police

1 captain, their local fire chief, all
2 of the Parks & Recs in their
3 district. They are responsible for
4 being sort of the mini City Hall and
5 working with our local and state and
6 federal partners to make sure that
7 Philadelphians know we're all in
8 this together. When we talk about a
9 government, you can see, touch, and
10 feel. So, I don't know if I did you
11 justice, Hassan, if you want to add
12 any additional detail or
13 Councilmember, if you have any
14 clarifying questions.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

16 Yeah, just one part. I do
17 think the head of Office of
18 Community Neighborhood Engagement
19 hails from South Philadelphia. And
20 when --

21 MS. HARRIS: And we try
22 not to hold that against him.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

24 Yeah. When our current -- when our

1 current commissioner and I and
2 Mr. Freeman we were in the trenches
3 in early 2000s, when the homicide
4 rate was skyrocketing in South
5 Philadelphia, and you had gangs from
6 Tasker, and gangs from 27th Street
7 and Wilson Park killing each other
8 day in and day out. And we spent
9 like many, many, many evenings
10 trying to stop them gun wars in
11 South Philadelphia.

12 And so to Mr. Freeman, for
13 your hard work, your dedication.
14 And most importantly, with the
15 neighborhood, many, many city halls
16 working in partnership with District
17 Councilmembers to make sure we're
18 working collaboratively around
19 community engagement and addressing
20 the issues and concerns of the
21 people in our own individual
22 districts. So the floor is yours,
23 sir.

24 MR. FREEMAN: I appreciate

1 that, Councilman. My name is Hassan
2 Freeman and the Director of the
3 Mayor's office of Neighborhood and
4 Community Engagement. As you can
5 see, I'm not used to this. But I'd
6 like to answer your question. Chief
7 Deputy Mayor Harris actually talked
8 about some of the work that we do,
9 but we go a little bit further. We
10 actually just partnered with your
11 office in addressing the sinking
12 homes up on Johnson and Mansfield,
13 if I believe. So we are out there
14 doing the work.

15 In addition to the great
16 work that our women's engagement and
17 doing our black male engagement, our
18 Latino engagement is actually having
19 those round tables to discuss
20 empowering a community that has been
21 historically marginalized and
22 underserved. So it takes time to
23 put them back in their place.

24 In addition to that, our

1 faith-based and interfaith affairs
2 community just had approximately 200
3 faith-based people from all walks of
4 life come together and collaborate
5 on doing things like feeding the
6 homeless, like reducing gun
7 violence, like counseling. So they
8 are actually doing the work as well.

9 In addition to that, our
10 Muslim engagement goes beyond, and I
11 think our Chief Deputy Mayor talked
12 about it. He's also, not only was
13 he feeding the homeless, he also
14 made it recognized in schools to
15 recognize Ramadan. He's working to
16 do things to empower people, again,
17 being historically marginalized and
18 underserved in our community. So
19 the work is getting done.

20 Sometimes when you deal
21 with relational organizing, it's
22 just that relationships, you got to
23 build it, you got to rebuild the
24 trust. So it takes time for us to

1 always make it manifest. It can't
2 happen as quickly as we really want
3 it, sometimes it takes time.

4 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:

5 Thank you. I just want to
6 quickly just say, thanks for the
7 clarification. I do want to add,
8 again, just for the record, again, I
9 am congratulating you all for the
10 neighborhood towns -- oh, gosh, I
11 want to say town centers, but it's
12 --

13 MS. HARRIS: The Community
14 Action.

15 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS: --
16 Community Action Centers. But I
17 just look -- I just think of someone
18 like Abu. I mean, he didn't have
19 much money and found a way to create
20 a program. You know, I'm assuming
21 that things are going to be on the
22 upper end this year, especially with
23 more funding, but I still didn't get
24 the answer to, well, we'll talk

1 about when Mural Arts comes up. But
2 I am curious to why such a
3 significant program with an annual
4 report of success is getting
5 completely, you know, I mean, like,
6 they're losing a million, I think
7 close to that. Yes, it's a
8 significant amount of money.
9 Significant amount of money.

10 And I'm actually looking to
11 see how we can expand the money --
12 expand that, because it's really
13 important to the see, touch, and
14 feel that we talk about. So --

15 MS. HARRIS: And thank
16 you. And that's why we are calling
17 for the increased budget to help the
18 tutoring program, the mentoring
19 program that Ben is doing to
20 increase that Ramadan -- ready for
21 Ramadan Toolkit that we provided
22 with the school district in
23 partnership with the school
24 district, and to do some of the

1 other work in terms of faith-based
2 outreach with our prisons and
3 partnership with the clergy program.

4 MS. HARLEY: Good
5 afternoon, Vanessa Garrett Harley,
6 Chief Deputy Mayor for city of
7 Philadelphia.

8 I just want to address your
9 question, Councilman Phillips,
10 around Mural Arts on why it appears
11 that there is a cut in the funding
12 in Mural Arts is receiving this
13 year.

14 Essentially, there is no
15 real cut to the funding that they
16 were receiving. The proposed budget
17 for Mural Arts for this year is
18 approximately \$3.7, 3.8 million.

19 And what you're looking at
20 is that last year it looked as if it
21 was \$4.2 million in FY '25, but that
22 was because of a one-time fund
23 infusion. That is the difference of
24 approximately \$500,000 or so. But

1 the difference in those numbers, and
2 that was one time funds that they
3 received for 2026 beautification of
4 the gateways into FY '25.

5 So essentially, they're
6 remaining flat funded other than
7 that pop that was given in FY '25 so
8 that they could begin the work for
9 the FY '26.

10 MS. HARRIS: And I'm sorry,
11 I would be remissive if not putting
12 on the record. In addition to all
13 of the programs that we outlined
14 previously, the Interfaith and
15 Muslim Affairs Offices, both do
16 respond a lot of times on every hour
17 of the day whenever there is a --
18 they're part of our rapid action
19 team, so any event of gun violence,
20 whether a police officer is shot, or
21 whether someone in the community is
22 shot, they stop what they're doing
23 and show up to help that community
24 and that family as much as possible

1 through their grieving time as well.

2 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:

3 All right.

4 MS. HARRIS: So they're out
5 in the community, they're doing
6 things and we're -- we look forward
7 to approving the budget where we can
8 add to the resources that they bring
9 to the table.

10 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:

11 All right. Let's hopefully
12 get some of that more work
13 publicized in a, I don't know,
14 decent way. We'll figure it out.
15 Thank you, Council President.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

17 Thank you very much. The Chair
18 recognizes Councilmember, Jim
19 Harrity.

20 MS. THURMAN: Sorry.

21 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:

22 Thank you, Council
23 President. Thank you everyone for
24 coming. My man, Hassan, what's

1 happening? I have to say, actually,
2 I've been having dealings with the
3 Office of Muslim Engagement. Imam
4 is everywhere. I mean, me and
5 Sharif have been giving out 300
6 meals a day since Ramadan started,
7 and he's been at almost every event,
8 especially on Saturdays and Sundays
9 when we're doing it. So I just want
10 to give them a shout out.

11 And, Hassan, of course, is
12 doing good work. I'm going to ask
13 my questions. They're kind of
14 technical and I will let you get
15 back to me on those, but I just want
16 to ask them to get them on the
17 record, okay? And so you'll know
18 where I'm going.

19 First, is we're short
20 5,700, which is down to 17 percent
21 in the jobs employment are hiring.
22 Was your number down to 17 percent,
23 2 percent down? But what confuses
24 me is we have 60,000 applicants. It

1 was said in 2024. That's 12 times
2 the amount of vacancies we have.
3 Why aren't we hiring? Which brings
4 me to my next question, and again,
5 you can give me this later if you
6 want to answer. What is the time
7 between application to interview to
8 hire? I've asked for this before in
9 the last budget, I just want to see
10 if it's changed any.

11 All right. And then
12 that's my questions for that. And
13 now my other question is: What is
14 currently the total debt that we are
15 carrying for rebuild? And also I
16 would like to see the numbers for
17 the initial bid and the overrun. So
18 I want to see what the bid was
19 initially to complete the project,
20 and what the actual final cost of
21 the project was, okay?

22 MS. THURMAN: So for the --
23 your last question around the
24 initial bid to final cost, that's

1 for all rebuild projects, you'd like
2 to see that?

3 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:

4 Well, how about all for that we've
5 done in 2023, and that we plan on
6 doing 2000 -- Well, let's say 2000,
7 when did rebuild start?

8 MS. THURMAN: Rebuild
9 started in 2016. So --

10 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:
11 2016?

12 MS. THURMAN: Yes.

13 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: How
14 about we go from 20, I'll throw a
15 number 2022?

16 MS. THURMAN: Okay. So
17 Fiscal Year '22 or calendar year?

18 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:
19 Fiscal year --

20 MS. THURMAN: Okay.

21 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: --
22 calendar year, whatever you want to
23 tell them. All I'm looking for is
24 the number of what the initial bid

1 was and what we ended up paying at
2 the end of that initial. I'm in
3 construction, so I know about
4 overrides --

5 MS. THURMAN: Absolutely.

6 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: --
7 and stuff like that. That's all I'm
8 trying to get is actual numbers.

9 MS. THURMAN: Yes. We can
10 submit that to you. So for each
11 year -- each fiscal year, starting
12 in FY22, what the initial bid was
13 and final bid?

14 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:
15 Right.

16 MS. THURMAN: We can
17 definitely submit that to you in
18 writing through the Council
19 President's Office.

20 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: And
21 then the total cost that we're
22 carrying now from inception of
23 Rebuild.

24 MS. THURMAN: Yes.

1 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:

2 What is our total debt that we are
3 carrying right now from inception of
4 Rebuild? All right. And then you
5 got the ones about the employment
6 stuff. I just need to know, I want
7 to feel how long it takes. I've
8 sent a lot of people, is what I'm
9 saying. I -- like, I get a lot of
10 people and I give them the website
11 and I'm getting texts every day.
12 Oh, dude, I'm 500 and something on
13 the list as of January, can you find
14 -- and I don't even know how to
15 actually find out for them where
16 they're at on their list.

17 So just trying to get a
18 hold of that because, you know, with
19 60,000 applicants, I think we should
20 be able to find 5,700 employees. So
21 that's it. And you can get back to
22 me with that, I don't want to waste
23 time on numbers.

24 MS. THURMAN: Well,

1 Councilmember, I certainly don't see
2 it as a waste of time. And if you'd
3 like, I can call up Candi Jones now
4 --

5 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:

6 Yeah.

7 MS. THURMAN: -- to answer
8 that.

9 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:

10 Whatever you guys feel possible.

11 MS. THURMAN: -- the
12 question around time for application
13 and hiring.

14 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:

15 Yeah.

16 MS. THURMAN: Right.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

18 Thank you, Member Harrity. Okay.

19 Sorry. Ms. Jones?

20 MS. JONES: Okay. Thank

21 you. Candi Jones, Chief Human

22 Resources Officer. So there's a lot

23 to unpack there. So I'm going to

24 start with just new hires in

1 general. So we are hiring. The
2 60,000 in applications really speaks
3 to our level of engagement, which
4 we've significantly increased.

5 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:

6 Yeah, I love that.

7 MS. JONES: So we're --
8 thank you. So we are -- so we -- so
9 our new hires have gone from about
10 2,400 to about 3,300. So I will
11 provide -- thank you. So we'll
12 provide our new hire information
13 year-over-year, so you can see
14 visually kind of that our trajectory
15 upward. What's going to be really
16 important and what I would also like
17 to provide is our separations
18 information. So as we're seeing
19 that we're hiring new candidates,
20 we're hiring over 3000 people, we're
21 losing 3000 a year as well.

22 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:

23 Okay. You just answered my next
24 question.

1 MS. JONES: Right. So it's
2 important, so we're looking at our
3 tremendous recruitment efforts,
4 we're looking at new hires, but we
5 are bleeding out, right? And so
6 we're losing people to voluntary
7 resignation, drop retirements.

8 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: So
9 we're trying to compete with the
10 number of people that are --

11 MS. JONES: We're competing
12 with ourselves.

13 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: All
14 right. All right. All right.

15 MS. JONES: Exactly. And
16 so we have some really, I think
17 helpful visuals of that, just seeing
18 that our recruitment efforts are not
19 for naught. We are getting there,
20 but we also have to kind of -- where
21 we can kind of address our
22 separations.

23 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:
24 Yeah. Because I mean, 3000 hires at

1 that -- that's great stuff.

2 MS. JONES: Right.

3 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: I
4 mean, especially since you guys are
5 really a new administration.

6 MS. JONES: Right, exactly.

7 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: So
8 I'm happy about that. And then --

9 MS. JONES: And then, oh --

10 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: I
11 just need the -- I want the time
12 frames between ads and I know some
13 of it's civil service, so that's a
14 little different too, right? That
15 takes a little longer?

16 MS. JONES: Correct. So
17 it's a -- and I have a great visual
18 I can share with you after this.

19 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: Oh,
20 that'd be great.

21 MS. JONES: And so for our
22 visual, what we look at, there's
23 four pieces in the process.

24 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:

1 Okay.

2 MS. JONES: There is the
3 part that OHR owns, which is the
4 initial part where we're putting up
5 our applications to when we're
6 developing that eligible list.
7 There's a part after that where once
8 that eligible list is established,
9 the departments are reaching out to
10 us to request a certification.

11 There's a very small period
12 of time where we're providing those
13 names from the eligible list, and
14 then from that interview to first
15 hire. So we break down the process
16 into four parts and we have some
17 really lovely visuals that I can
18 share --

19 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:
20 Thank you. That would help. Yeah.

21 MS. JONES: -- that shows
22 the full comprehensive time to hire,
23 and then it really gives you an
24 opportunity to see who owns the

1 process at which time and the time
2 that that owner is taking for the
3 process. And we have that also
4 broken down by department.

5 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: So
6 it'll tell us where the hang up is?

7 MS. JONES: Exactly. And
8 so we're looking at those hang ups
9 to be very specific and intentional
10 in how we're going to address those
11 hang ups.

12 I'll also provide it by
13 department, because I think it's
14 important to also recognize that for
15 some positions, some roles, we have
16 the application period significantly
17 longer to align with improvement --

18 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:
19 Absolutely. For people with
20 advanced degrees.

21 MS. JONES: Exactly.
22 Others are shorter. So we can
23 provide all of that information.

24 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:

1 Yeah. Just trying to find a
2 disconnect. So that would be great.

3 MS. JONES: Yes, sir.

4 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: I
5 did have another one, but it, kind
6 of, went from my mind. So if I
7 could just get the numbers for the
8 Rebuild when you come back, that
9 would be great. And if I think of
10 my senior moment I just had and the
11 other question I had, I'll get back.
12 Thank you, Council President.

13 PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank
14 you. The --

15 MS. JONES: And Council
16 President, we'll make sure that the
17 visual aid that Candi referenced
18 will be submitted to your office.
19 So all members of Council will have
20 access to that.

21 And I would like to call up
22 Rob, if that's okay now, our
23 Director of Finance to answer the
24 Rebuild question around our rebuild

1 debt that we're carrying.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

3 Yeah. Briefly, please.

4 MS. JONES: Yes, sir.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

6 And we're going to double back on
7 this question as well on the second
8 round. And then also, Member
9 Harrity, you'll have the opportunity
10 to address this because on Parks &
11 Rec, they have their own time to
12 also address it as well. Go ahead.

13 MR. DUBOW: There's \$155
14 million of outstanding Rebuild
15 bonds. We actually are probably
16 planning to do one this summer
17 because --

18 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:

19 What was that number? 150 --

20 MR. DUBOW: 155.

21 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: 55

22 total? For since --

23 MR. DUBOW: Since, yeah.

24 Since inception. We're probably

1 doing another borrowing this summer
2 because Rebuild has run through its
3 funds.

4 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: And
5 what are we looking to borrow this
6 summer?

7 MR. DUBOW: About \$130
8 million.

9 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY:
10 Okay. All right. And then you'll
11 get back to me with the bids and --

12 MR. DUBOW: Yes.

13 COUNCILMEMBER HARRITY: --
14 that's technical, it may take a
15 minute. So I appreciate that.
16 Thank you, Council President.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
18 Thank you. The Chair recognizes
19 Member Brooks, then Member O'Rourke.

20 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Good
21 morning colleagues, and thank you
22 everyone from the administration for
23 testifying today. My office
24 appreciates all the work you've done

1 to prepare this year's proposed
2 budget. I look forward to hearing
3 more about the administration's
4 priorities and being in conversation
5 with my colleagues to ensure that we
6 put forth the best possible budget
7 for Philadelphia. Before I move
8 into the questions I have regarding
9 the five-year plan, I want to start
10 by stating some of the things I'm
11 thinking about as we enter the
12 budget season this year.

13 We are starting this budget
14 process with every finance expert
15 saying or citing uncertainty
16 regarding the federal budget. And
17 we have seen the Trump presidency
18 emboldened by the work of the
19 billionaire Elon Musk to quickly
20 target and dismantle federal
21 agencies, federal jobs, and in
22 certain case individuals who
23 disagree with them. Therefore, my
24 north star in this budget cycle is

1 to protect Philadelphians, their
2 rights, their finances, and their
3 livelihood.

4 That means to make sure
5 that city agencies like the
6 Department of Labor and the Office
7 of Immigrant Affairs are fully
8 funded and preparing for any
9 challenges that we might have to
10 fight right here in Philadelphia.

11 That means prioritizing
12 city services and investments that
13 would put cash directly into the
14 pockets of our city's poorest and
15 ensuring we remain fiscally sound,
16 footing up to 2.8 billion in federal
17 grants could be at risk this year.

18 That means making sure the
19 investments we are making prioritize
20 our small businesses, working class
21 families, and insuring corporations
22 and the wealthy are paying their
23 fair share in the face of this
24 growing oligarchy.

1 With that being said, I
2 want to start with my question,
3 which focuses on why the
4 administration is asking Council to
5 codify 17 years of tax cuts into
6 law. When I think back to the last
7 17 years, we saw a great recession,
8 a COVID pandemic, supply chain
9 issues that led to historic
10 inflation, and now a federal
11 headwinds and another possible
12 recession caused by this Trump
13 administration. Is this the
14 fiscally responsible thing to do
15 now?

16 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. So the
17 reason that we're proposing the tax
18 investments and proposing to put
19 them in legislation is because we
20 need jobs. And as the commerce
21 director said when she came up here
22 that is a really -- a really
23 positive sign to our businesses to
24 hire people and putting their

1 legislation in until we get to the
2 point where the gross receipt tax is
3 gone, and then net income cash is
4 cut in half, shows businesses that
5 we're committed to them and should
6 help us draw businesses and draw
7 jobs. So it's really about job
8 creation.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: So
10 by speeding up the tax cuts after
11 the pension funds is made whole, the
12 administration is also effectively
13 trying to -- or tying the hands of
14 future mayors and City Council. Why
15 should the city prioritize BIRT cuts
16 over a historic opportunity to
17 invest in city services and
18 programs?

19 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. And I
20 mean, if you look at the budget and
21 plan we're proposing, there are
22 significant investments in a number
23 of areas, right? So the biggest
24 investment that we're making is the

1 \$800 million commitment to housing.
2 But we're also committing to our
3 workforce with \$500 million in a
4 labor reserve. We're committing to
5 wellness with the hundreds of
6 millions of dollars of funding
7 there. So it's not a budget and
8 plan that is really about -- just
9 about tax cut investments. It's
10 about a whole range of investments.

11 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: So
12 why should this Council be tying the
13 hands of future administrations and
14 other City Councilmembers moving
15 forward?

16 MR. DUBOW: So what we want
17 to do is -- and one of the things
18 we've heard consistently from
19 businesses is they want
20 predictability. And so the idea of
21 showing those cuts through 2039 is
22 to give that predictability to
23 businesses, that's the rationale.

24 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: So

1 businesses dictating that Council
2 should be tied up for 17 years?

3 MR. DUBOW: Businesses
4 aren't dictating anything. It's our
5 attempt to show them a commitment
6 and our attempt to make them feel
7 confident about doing business here
8 and adding new jobs.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:
10 Okay. The administration
11 proposed setting aside \$95 million
12 in emergency reserves, which is less
13 than one week of the total operating
14 cost of the city. Can someone from
15 the administration detail on how
16 they settled on \$95 million and what
17 calculations went into it?

18 MR. DUBOW: Yeah, and I'll
19 acknowledge there wasn't a lot of
20 science. We wanted to put a number
21 to give us a little bit of runway
22 for if things started to go bad. We
23 are not going to be able to put in a
24 number that makes up for all of the

1 federal money we get, but we wanted
2 to give ourselves a little room for
3 if things were to start to get
4 really bad.

5 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: So
6 what examples do you have on how the
7 city could use this \$95 million?

8 MR. DUBOW: Well, for
9 example, if a grant were cancelled
10 and we thought that it was a service
11 that we really needed to provide,
12 some of that funding could go to
13 make up for the loss of that grant.

14 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: So
15 has the city run projections on
16 revenue loss from unemployment
17 impacting the federal workers and
18 the Eds and Meds sectors in our
19 economy?

20 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. So our
21 econometric firm that gives us our
22 projections, one of the things they
23 look at is, you know, what's
24 happening with employment. And so

1 they have built some projections
2 around that into the numbers they
3 gave us, which is why we're looking
4 at really flat -- one of the reasons
5 we're looking at relatively flat
6 growth over the next five years.

7 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: And
8 my last question is, has the
9 administration asked departments to
10 prepare for cuts either due to
11 federal funding or due to a
12 recession?

13 MR. DUBOW: We went through
14 a process earlier last year where we
15 asked departments to give us cut
16 scenarios so that we could be
17 prepared for, you know, if things
18 went wrong, and that's a process
19 that we typically go through every
20 year.

21 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:
22 Thank you.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
24 Thank you. Councilmember O'Rourke

1 and Councilmember Ahmad, I mean,
2 Dr. Nina Ahmad, then Councilman Rue
3 Landau, and then we will take a
4 break. But just for the record, I
5 want to be clear on your statement.
6 Prior to the administration and put
7 a pause in BIRT and wage tax
8 investments, right? The -- prior to
9 this, but previous years rather on
10 the last administration before them.
11 Every year there was a wage
12 reduction investment as well as a
13 BIRT reduction in investment has
14 services and spending increase or
15 decrease?

16 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. So to
17 your point, really since the mid
18 '90s, there have been reductions in
19 the wage tax and/or the burden in
20 almost every year and we have seen
21 consistent increases in our
22 revenues.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
24 So spending has continued to grow?

1 MR. DUBOW: Correct.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

3 As relates to services not
4 decreased, correct?

5 MR. DUBOW: That's correct.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

7 Okay. I just want to kind of frame
8 that just for the record.

9 Councilmember Nick O'Rourke.

10 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

11 Thank you, Mr. President. That's an
12 interesting point. Some might find
13 it tacky or taboo to say, but I have
14 to say how much I appreciate and
15 find springtime refreshing. In
16 these times, the fact that the lions
17 share of this leadership team are
18 powerful black women. I want to hat
19 tip y'all. I take great pride in
20 seeing you up here, also in our
21 Council as well, our majority
22 leader, our minority leader. Your
23 leadership is glowing and I -- and I
24 appreciate just saying it. Just

1 wanted to state that for the record.

2 Thank you to Mayor Parker
3 for her leadership, as well as your
4 team for being here today. And I
5 especially want to acknowledge the
6 team for taking the time to meet
7 with me and understand our office's
8 priorities. These are -- these
9 budget decisions carry real weight,
10 as we say all the time, budgets are
11 moral documents, where your
12 treasurer is, your heart will be
13 also, they reflect our values and
14 determine who we choose to protect
15 and uplift in this moment of
16 uncertainty that we have spoken at
17 length about today.

18 And with that, I want to
19 dive into questions about the
20 uncertainty and frankly, the fear
21 that many Philadelphians feel right
22 now. And they say as much, nearly
23 every day, I hear the same concern,
24 some variation of this question with

1 everything happening at the Federal
2 level, what is the city doing to
3 protect us? Something like that.
4 We know that Philadelphia relies
5 heavily on federal funding, yet
6 major cuts are looming. So I do
7 have questions about what's at
8 stake? In 2024, the city received
9 \$2.8 billion in federal grants. For
10 the record, Chief Thurman, what
11 percentage of our annual budget does
12 that represent?

13 MS. THURMAN: I'm going to
14 kick that over to our finance
15 director.

16 MR. DUBOW: So it's -- it's
17 a slightly complicated question
18 because not all of that is in our
19 general fund, a lot of it it's in
20 grants funds.

21 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:
22 You said it's slightly not a good
23 question?

24 MR. DUBOW: No, no, no, it

1 was a great question.

2 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

3 Oh, okay.

4 MR. DUBOW: It's a

5 complicated question.

6 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

7 Okay, okay, okay.

8 MR. DUBOW: I never say

9 it's not a good question.

10 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

11 Oh, that's fine.

12 MR. DUBOW: So we went to

13 look at kind of our all-funds

14 budget, which I believe is about \$11

15 billion.

16 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

17 Percentage-wise, that's about --

18 MR. DUBOW: So that's --

19 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: --

20 50, 40 percent?

21 MR. DUBOW: That would be

22 about 20 percent of the \$11 billion.

23 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: I

24 still find that to be quite a huge

1 proportion.

2 MR. DUBOW: It is, yes.

3 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

4 And that should be a major
5 alarm bell for all of us. And I
6 hope those -- the viewing public
7 that actually watches these things,
8 recognizes that. The city also
9 collected a billion dollars in wage
10 taxes from federal workers and
11 employees in the Meds and Eds
12 sectors, many of whom have already
13 faced layoffs of -- or financial
14 strains.

15 I think I saw an article in
16 the Inqie or somewhere talking
17 about, you know, Philly basing its
18 fiscal future on Eds and Meds, and
19 that being in question. Does the
20 administration have data on how many
21 jobs have already been lost due to
22 federal layoffs? And how many more
23 are currently at risk, including
24 jobs in our Eds and Meds sector that

1 are heavily reliant on federal
2 dollars?

3 MR. DUBOW: We don't -- I
4 mean, we have it. And you cited the
5 stats. We have it by dollars
6 collected.

7 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:
8 Could you submit it in writing for
9 the record, you know?

10 MR. DUBOW: I -- let me
11 talk to the folks in revenue,
12 because we don't -- we receive our
13 revenue from employers in a group.
14 Tell me just see what we can get you
15 on in accordance.

16 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: I
17 understand. If we don't know how
18 many jobs are already gone or at
19 risk or don't -- aren't really clear
20 about that, how are we supposed to
21 plan for what's coming in a row,
22 since I know that you said there
23 are, you know, you run things, I
24 guess year-after-year to kind of

1 think about a plan B or not a plan
2 B. The mission is the mission Chief
3 Thurman said, but what other tactic
4 you may take. But it really does
5 raise a question about how we -- how
6 we should plan thoroughly across the
7 Council.

8 We can't afford to be
9 caught flatfooted with federal
10 dollars disappearing and layoffs
11 continuing. And we're three months
12 into this administration. I guess
13 that's about 3 percent into the
14 four-year term. That's rough. Can
15 you tell us how many federal grants
16 have already been terminated?

17 MR. DUBOW: I'm going to
18 actually -- I just want to say one
19 thing about, we're not being caught
20 flatfooted, we know that there are
21 risks and you kind of cited some of
22 the numbers that we've talked about
23 that are at risk and we have done
24 things to prepare. But I will --

1 I'll turn it to -- over to the city
2 solicitor. Talk me through it
3 again.

4 MS. GARCIA: Thank you.
5 Renee Garcia, City Solicitor. So
6 far one grant has been --

7 MR. DUBOW: One.

8 MS. GARCIA: -- officially
9 terminated. I will say that grant
10 is the subject of national
11 litigation and like most of the
12 lawsuits that we have seen
13 nationally and has resulted pretty
14 quickly in an injunction.

15 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:
16 What was that one grant funding?

17 MS. GARCIA: It's a
18 government-to-government grant
19 through the EPA. There have been
20 many other grants that are off and
21 on. Sometimes at 8:00 a.m., we
22 can't draw down funds, but at
23 8:00 p.m. we can. So it is
24 something that we are working on

1 every single day. And it -- this
2 job -- this administration is
3 teaching me patience, because truly
4 it is a cycle of they do something,
5 there's a lawsuit, there's an
6 injunction, the money starts
7 flowing. So it is something that we
8 are monitoring truly by the hour.

9 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

10 Okay. Council President, I
11 did hear the bail and I want to be
12 mindful. We do get a round two
13 perhaps? Thank you very much, sir.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

15 Thank you. Thank you for
16 understanding as well. Dr. Nina
17 Ahmad, and then we're going to break
18 at 1:00 -- at 12:30 and we'll be
19 back after break.

20 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: All
21 right. Thank you, Council
22 President. I just want to commend
23 the Mayor and her team for being so
24 bold in their vision. I know times

1 are tough, but we have to be growth
2 oriented and we have to look to the
3 future. So I'm really happy to see
4 many of these initiatives that have
5 been rolled out in this budget.

6 I -- of course, the devil
7 is in the details and I have a
8 question about the home initiative
9 that is going to be issuing the \$800
10 million bond. The question was: Is
11 this -- are these going to be
12 general obligation bonds or revenue
13 bonds? Because that will determine
14 also, you know, the interest rates
15 associated in our debt. So I just
16 wanted to get clarification on that.

17 MR. DUBOW: They will be
18 revenue bonds, but they're supported
19 by all of the city's revenues. So,
20 they generally carry the same rating
21 and trade the same as our GO bonds.

22 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: The
23 second question is: Based on that,
24 from what I can tell that \$33

1 million of the \$400 million
2 approximately for the debt service
3 is about 8.25 percent. I don't know
4 if that's correct, if you can tell
5 me what that debt service rate is
6 and then also is it prudent to --
7 because rates are going to fluctuate
8 and hopefully come down, is it
9 prudent to do a too large bunches
10 like this instead of doing maybe
11 different if we can -- I don't know
12 the issues around floating these
13 bounds, but can we do it in smaller
14 trenches so we can appreciate -- get
15 the benefit of lower rates?

16 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. So two
17 things: we are assuming for the
18 first borrowing the rate is about
19 5.75 percent, slightly higher for
20 the second borrowing. The reason
21 that we're showing two borrowings of
22 that size so quickly is that we
23 anticipate to be spending this money
24 really quickly and to get it out the

1 door. So we'd agree with you, if
2 the spending was going in such a
3 pattern that we should spread out
4 the borrowings that would make
5 sense, but we anticipate for this
6 program spending will be fast.

7 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD:
8 Wonderful. Thank you for that
9 clarification.

10 MR. DUBOW: Sure.

11 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: And
12 I'm switching to, I know I don't
13 have much time switching to the 2026
14 preparations, and I see that the
15 city has committed \$60 million and
16 off that \$28 million to public
17 safety. I have a particular
18 interest in understanding if we are
19 paying attention to human
20 trafficking, particularly sex
21 trafficking that goes up during
22 times when we have a lot of sporting
23 events.

24 And I am looking to see if

1 we can carve out some resources to
2 do prevention awareness and
3 potential training. We are putting
4 together a sort of consortium to
5 talk about that and we are going to
6 be coming to you and I just wanted
7 to see if there was -- if we could
8 be carving out some of that for
9 prevention of sex trafficking.

10 MS. THURMAN: Absolutely,
11 Councilmember Ahmad. And we're
12 going to have Police Commissioner
13 Bethel talk about in detail, but you
14 saw that a lot of the budget
15 increase, as I mentioned earlier,
16 went to ensure our safety and
17 security. So that's PPD and OEM and
18 other city departments that are on
19 the front lines.

20 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: Yeah.
21 So I think that's an excellent
22 thought process. I don't think it
23 requires additional money, just
24 additional focus. We have a great

1 partnership for our federal partners
2 around human trafficking. So that
3 awareness now, I'll be very honest
4 with you, I was not aware doing
5 these types of event, we see that
6 increase, so you just raised an
7 awareness that we did not have. And
8 so we can -- I'll get back to you as
9 I talk to my colleagues, as we can
10 focus and make that an awareness
11 that we all need to be aware of as
12 we move forward.

13 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Well,
14 thank you. I've already spoken to
15 the district attorney general,
16 district attorney, the airport,
17 we're going to talk to the Hotel and
18 Motel Association because they just
19 got hit with \$17 million settlement
20 around this issues. And this is the
21 third one in the last few years. So
22 this is a problem in our city. And
23 so I look to work with you to bring
24 this plan together so we can have a

1 safe -- fun but safe time for all
2 our visitors and Philadelphians
3 during this time. And I really want
4 to make sure that we have a focus on
5 that and we'll talk further about
6 that.

7 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: Thank
8 you.

9 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Thank
10 you, Council President.

11 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: Look
12 forward to working with you.

13 PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank
14 you very much. We will be in recess
15 until 1:30, and then we will finish
16 starting with Councilman Quetcy
17 Lozada, Rue Landau, and then we'll
18 finish -- start our second round.
19 Thank you very much.

20 (Recess.)

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
22 The Chair recognizes Member
23 Jones to finish his questioning from
24 the first round.

1 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Okay.
2 Well, thank you. I appreciate that
3 prompt nature, Mr. President. So
4 what I want to talk about briefly is
5 as we start to move aggressively
6 into the space of housing,
7 affordable luxury is the quote.
8 What I want to know is how do we
9 assure luxury? How do we assure
10 affordability? And what I really
11 want to know is, are the building
12 standards up to par? That -- I live
13 in a house that is 100 years old.
14 Is it built out of things that
15 possibly will be there another 100
16 years.
17 I am not convinced that
18 based on the finances and the
19 mortgage that we have taken out,
20 that the actual properties have the
21 lifespan that will not require major
22 repairs in less than 50 years, more
23 like 25. Can somebody assure me
24 that we are building not just for

1 today but for the future. And as
2 climate change happens, that we are
3 taking that into account so that
4 poor people don't wind up not losing
5 houses because of mortgages but you
6 losing houses because of lost
7 utilities. Thank you.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

9 I want to officially ask
10 for Ms. Tiffany Thurman,
11 representing the Administration, to
12 please come on back up officially as
13 we convene and follow-up regarding
14 questions as it pertains to the
15 five-year plan Capital Budget
16 Program, the Mayor's office and the
17 Labor Department.

18 Just officially for the
19 record, the floor back is yours
20 Member Jones. And then the next
21 person who will follow-up and ask
22 questions as it pertains to
23 technically the first round, but
24 we've moved on to Member Jones

1 because members weren't here at the
2 moment. I'm going to next call on
3 Councilwoman Rue Landau.

4 Member Jones?

5 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Yes.

6 MS. THURMAN: So thank you
7 Councilmember Jones for that
8 question around affordable luxury,
9 and then weatherization, building
10 standards, and ensuring that the
11 investments that we're making will
12 have long-term impact. So I have
13 here with me now our Director of
14 Planning and Development, Jessie
15 Lawrence, to talk about affordable
16 luxury.

17 And then after Jessie, I
18 would like to call up our Chief
19 Housing and Urban Development
20 Officer Angela Brooks to talk about
21 standards that she's seen in other
22 cities and how we're going to employ
23 that here.

24 COUNCILMEMBER JONES:

1 Before you start to answer
2 that question, let me thank you.
3 Because there's a place called Grid
4 Shalom that 300 people are not
5 homeless. That PHA invested 23
6 million in. The city is investing
7 another 8 million in. So if you
8 don't do nothing else for me, you're
9 good. Now you can answer.

10 MS. THURMAN: Thank you so
11 much, Councilmember Jones.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
13 I did see a flyer with some
14 activists talking about the work of
15 addressing rental housing and
16 affordability. And -- but I wanted
17 to take a nod to Councilmember
18 Curtis Jones, who really did the
19 call for all members of City Council
20 to step up to the plate and play a
21 major role in addressing issue of
22 that Shalom, so just thank you for
23 your hard work and dedication --

24 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Thank

1 you, Mr. Chair.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

3 -- for addressing housing for our
4 seniors. The floor is yours.

5 MR. GEER: So affordable
6 housing is essentially the ability
7 to not distinguish low income
8 housing or moderately income housing
9 from market rate and upper class or
10 upper -- upscale housing.

11 Excuse me. It's a matter
12 of making sure that we are utilizing
13 finishes that are durable,
14 sustainable, things that will last,
15 things that will not deteriorate
16 over time, things that might cost a
17 little more than usual to install on
18 the front end, but will help you
19 minimize the cost and maintaining on
20 the back end.

21 So it's not just the
22 materials, it's the appliances,
23 things that might be, you know, more
24 than energy -- lead energy star,

1 that type of thing. But the key
2 here is to be very prescriptive
3 about those design standards however
4 we can.

5 We've already started to
6 enter those into things like
7 affordable housing RFPs that have
8 come out of DHCD being very
9 prescriptive about those standards
10 where we have not been before.
11 Again, not just materials, not just
12 appliances, just making sure that
13 we're doing things and, you know,
14 along the lines of just upper floor
15 is for laundry services, not having
16 that type of thing in your basement.
17 Access to outdoor space as a
18 requirement in development.

19 The key here is to make
20 sure that you can -- I think the
21 Mayor has always looked at models.
22 The one that she used to really kind
23 of reference a lot was the East
24 Falls development, where it once was

1 public housing. And one thing the
2 Mayor will always say and I
3 certainly think about my
4 grandmother's public housing. My
5 grandmother's public housing is not
6 your new public housing, right?

7 I think PHA has set a
8 standard themselves in repurposing,
9 you know, towers that have
10 historically been where poverty has
11 been centralized, but it's also
12 added some sort of aesthetic that is
13 not just pleasing to, you know, what
14 meets the eye on the outside, but
15 what residents would consider
16 comfortable living.

17 So we are making sure that
18 we insert these standards into
19 anything that we put out
20 competitively RFP wise. We're
21 setting up our planning and
22 development -- excuse me, our
23 planning commission to be able to
24 speak to those much more explicitly

1 in our urban design unit who do a
2 lot of work right now with being
3 very prescriptive about what gets
4 developed where. So, you know,
5 urban design doesn't just stop on
6 the outside, it does insert itself
7 on the inside too.

8 So we're making sure that
9 we hold these standards up and
10 looking at, you know, when these
11 budgets come in for affordable
12 housing, if they're making sure --
13 making sure that they incorporate
14 that type of item -- line item and
15 cost as well.

16 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: So
17 back 10 years ago, all -- every time
18 we talk about development, we talk
19 about lead certifications and lead
20 platinum. I don't hear that as much
21 because, you know, that has
22 subsided. But I want to make sure
23 that that's built into the
24 expectation because people will

1 become homeless more akin to utility
2 bills than they will to mortgage,
3 that's number one. Number two, how
4 are we looking at in efforts to keep
5 labor peace and average -- because
6 this is a union town. I'm going to
7 say it again, this is a union town,
8 but new ways of development that
9 have a different fabrication process
10 that I hear can cut expenses down by
11 a third. Are we looking into those
12 possibilities?

13 MR. GEER: So I think that
14 we want to be clear about the fact
15 that we don't want to minimize those
16 opportunities on the union side,
17 but, you know, we still want to
18 encourage the ability to think about
19 how we develop more -- much more
20 creatively. I think we are forced
21 to do that at this point with, you
22 know, increasing construction costs,
23 knowing that things -- I mean, it
24 just costs way more to build than it

1 used to. So we don't want to lose
2 that, but we also want to make sure
3 that we are walking that fine line
4 between the compromise of that.

5 The plan itself is looking
6 at ways to be able to provide some
7 sort of pre-development indoor gap
8 financing as well, because we, you
9 know, we have to think about ways to
10 be able to help the developer as
11 well meet their goals.

12 So I think that we are
13 looking at that, we are making sure
14 that that is part of the
15 conversation, we're being creative
16 about new construction and how we
17 can be something that's allowing us
18 to meet our goals as well, but that
19 is something that we are diving into
20 as we speak, making sure when we
21 talk about affordable luxury
22 processes for development as well.

23 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: So as
24 the final point on this question is

1 that two things can be true at once.
2 We can have quality, affordable,
3 luxury, but also have black and
4 brown and female inclusion. I know
5 DEI is a bad word at the federal
6 level, but it's -- you're speaking
7 my language here in Philadelphia.
8 How do we navigate that?

9 MR. GEER: So I think for
10 the Black and Brown and folks that
11 look like you and me, when they want
12 to develop, it's about being able to
13 access those opportunities, right?

14 You think about the ones
15 who might not look like us and they
16 have those -- they have, you know,
17 the ability for -- to access capital
18 in ways that those historically
19 disadvantaged people have not been
20 able to. So, you know, we're
21 thinking about things in
22 collaboration with the accelerator
23 fund, which has done well to provide
24 opportunities to minority developer

1 programmers -- program graduates,
2 and folks that develop along those
3 lines. We want to make sure that
4 we're bridging the gap specifically,
5 not just for -- not just for
6 development, but folks that look
7 like ourselves as well.

8 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: We
9 will be waiting with bated breath to
10 see the details of that. Thank you,
11 Mr. President.

12 MS. THURMAN: So and
13 Councilmember as Angela Brooks is
14 coming up, I also just want to pull
15 it in very plain speak. Affordable
16 doesn't mean cheap. Period. Full
17 stop. Affordable does not mean
18 cheap. So we are looking at things
19 like fixtures and finishes with the
20 build.

21 We also want to have it
22 such that -- and Mayor, you know,
23 rolled out this vision that we have,
24 you know, through an "imagine if"

1 scenario that she delivered in her
2 budget speech yesterday, where if
3 you are driving down your -- the
4 street, your street, my street, you
5 know, all across the city, you
6 should not be able to tell the house
7 -- the house that was -- that is --
8 that is considered affordable luxury
9 to the market rate house. So that's
10 important to us.

11 Now we -- and so we want to
12 make sure though that this vision,
13 right, is implementable. And so
14 that's where Angela and her
15 expertise is really important
16 coming, you know, being the
17 president of the American Planning
18 Association, helping to deliver
19 author, in fact, a national housing
20 -- national housing initiatives and
21 recommendations to other large
22 cities are really important.

23 And so her work, working
24 with labor unions in the city of

1 Chicago, her background with
2 supportive housing is really
3 important as well. And that's why
4 it was critical that we recruit and
5 retain her to join our team. I'd
6 like to call on Angela now to answer
7 the second half of your questions
8 around that union engagement, the
9 building standards to ensure that
10 we're thinking not just about
11 building fast and quick now, but
12 that it -- that we have a
13 sustainability component to it as
14 well.

15 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: The
16 first-round draft pick out of
17 Chicago.

18 MS. THURMAN: No pressure.

19 MS. BROOKS: Oh man. No
20 pressure, right?

21 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: No.
22 Not at all.

23 MS. BROOKS: Awesome. No,
24 thank you for the question. And I

1 think one of the things that's
2 really exciting and what attracted
3 me to this job is the intentional
4 partnership with the building trades
5 and, kind of, thinking about that.
6 And so Jessie kind of outlined some
7 of the priorities and around design
8 review and site design standards
9 that already exist, which is really
10 showing, based off the last four
11 years of my life, kind of, working
12 on the housing supply accelerator
13 playbook, that Philadelphia is
14 already implementing the things
15 we're seeing around the country
16 around ensuring that you can't tell
17 the difference between an affordable
18 unit and a market rate unit.

19 You know, nobody wants a
20 poor door as the -- I'm a recovering
21 affordable housing developer, so I
22 spend a significant amount of time
23 at the Chicago Housing Authority
24 after that article in New York about

1 the Poor Door. So making sure we
2 don't have that, because -- just
3 because you're poor doesn't mean you
4 have to live in a different type of
5 capacity.

6 So what some of the things
7 we're implementing are things we're
8 seeing around the country, but we're
9 also looking at being innovative.
10 So a lot of the things that we're
11 able to bring to the table are
12 things we're going to be piloting,
13 and we're going to be really
14 highlighting and showcasing the
15 great skills of some of the great
16 contractors that we have already
17 here in Philadelphia. And having
18 labor at the table with us means
19 we're really going to get this right
20 and we're going to be implementing
21 their thoughts.

22 We have a working group as
23 a part of the housing -- of the home
24 plan, so the advisory group is made

1 of builders, developers, we have
2 contractors, small and large in the
3 room. We've got non-profit and
4 market rate developers in that room.
5 There's 50 people in the room, so I
6 can assure you we're going to get a
7 wide variety of perspectives as
8 we're looking at implementing the
9 plan.

10 So we're just getting
11 started. Certainly, really excited
12 to hear a lot of your ideas as well,
13 but I can assure you, sustainability
14 -- as a recovering developer,
15 sustainability makes units cheaper
16 on the long run. So when we're
17 looking at our long-term
18 performance, I can assure you
19 there's not any developer who's not
20 looking at incorporating some of
21 these structures because it's going
22 to help them from a property
23 management side long-term down the
24 road.

1 So it's going to be top of
2 the mind for a developer, not just
3 because it's the right thing to do,
4 but the bottom line is a lot easier
5 and it makes it more operational and
6 more efficient affordable down the
7 line, so.

8 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: I was
9 encouraged when I talked to you
10 about the Cleveland model of lease
11 to own that you were well aware of
12 it from a Chicago point of view that
13 might be -- might be brought here to
14 Philadelphia taking PHA properties
15 and working it out so that the
16 tenant can own eventually. Because
17 if you look at some of the market
18 rate rents in Philadelphia, those
19 are mortgages.

20 MS. BROOKS: They're
21 mortgages, absolutely. So Chicago
22 Housing Authority has the Choose to
23 Own program, which they implemented
24 about 10 years ago. So they've

1 helped 10,000 public housing
2 residents -- or not 10,000, 1,000
3 public housing residents purchase
4 their homes using their vouchers.
5 So it's a really great program that
6 we're starting to see housing
7 authorities implement.

8 And I'm pretty sure the
9 Philadelphia Housing Authority is a
10 model for many. So I'm pretty sure
11 it's something they might already be
12 doing in Week 2 here. I don't know
13 that, but I would imagine it's
14 something -- I mean, housing
15 authorities across the country are
16 following the work of PHA, so I
17 can't imagine it's not something
18 that wouldn't be done if it isn't
19 already.

20 COUNCILMEMBER JONES: Thank
21 you, Mr. President.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
23 Thank you. Councilmember Quetcy
24 Lozada, then Councilmember Rue

1 Landau, Councilman Member Phillips,
2 and then Councilmember J. Young,
3 and then we'll officially go into
4 our second round. Councilmember
5 Quetcy Lozada.

6 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

7 Thank you, Council
8 President. First, thank you all for
9 being with us today. You know, as
10 we've done the work to restore and
11 reimagine the Kensington community,
12 some folks have said that the
13 unsheltered or the homeless problem
14 that we have in the city of
15 Philadelphia is a citywide problem
16 and not just a Kensington problem.
17 And sometimes when you're under
18 pressure, you tend to agree with
19 that.

20 I say that we are not the
21 same, right, there is a unsheltered
22 or a homeless problem in the city,
23 but the crisis is in the Kensington
24 Harrowgate community. So we are not

1 the same, and I say that because I
2 want to publicly acknowledge the
3 work that you all have been doing in
4 the Kensington community in response
5 to the crisis that that community
6 has experienced for a really long
7 time.

8 I've had the opportunity to
9 attend Wellness Court multiple times
10 over the course of the last few
11 weeks. And I'm committed to its
12 advancement and am looking forward
13 to the opportunity to expand it.
14 And so my question is that given the
15 nature of -- the pilot nature of the
16 Wellness Court program, is there a
17 specific budget allocation for the
18 program's evaluation to assess its
19 impact on public safety and the
20 recidivism rates?

21 MS. THURMAN: So, good
22 afternoon, Councilmember Lozada.
23 Wellness Court, as you know, the
24 initial pilot is its one day a week.

1 On Wednesdays however, there is a
2 budget allocation in this budget to
3 bring it to five days a week to
4 actually scale the program up. With
5 regards to the evaluation piece in
6 your specific question, now call up
7 our Public Safety Director, Adam
8 Geer, who can probably give you
9 exact detail around that.

10 MR. GEER: Thank you for
11 the question, Councilmember. We --
12 we're still about, well, six weeks
13 into our pilot program. So we're
14 not at a point where we have enough
15 information to evaluate it. What I
16 can say is though, we're very
17 encouraged. We're very encouraged
18 by the approach by who we're seeing
19 come in, by some of the outcomes.
20 Again, we will have more to say on
21 that, and by the time we testify on
22 April the 8th, we'll have two more
23 weeks. But the \$2.6 million that is
24 in the Mayor's budget, I think will

1 go a long way.

2 We're going to expand to
3 five days a week under that model.
4 And that's in combination with our
5 PAD expansion, which is also in the
6 Mayor's proposal, which will bring
7 PAD -- actually, at the end of this
8 month, we'll be operating seven days
9 a week, 24 hours a day at our PAD
10 facility. So I think the
11 combination of that and the efforts
12 of the police department and
13 everything else will continue to see
14 impact and change.

15 MS. HARLEY: I just want to
16 add one thing though, Councilwoman.
17 While the evaluation will take a
18 minute, the official evaluation,
19 because we haven't had sufficient
20 time to bring data, there is a
21 collaborative effort that went into
22 putting the whole Wellness Court
23 together, and there has been a
24 meeting or so, and I'm sure there

1 will continue to be meetings between
2 the Public Safety Office, the Police
3 Department, the First Judicial
4 District, the Defender Association,
5 the DAs, all the partners that are
6 part of Wellness Court, where that
7 way we can address any issues that
8 have come up, and, you know,
9 everybody's a little bit nimble and
10 willing to be flexible and tweak so
11 that we can make it the best model
12 possible. So that intergovernmental
13 collaboration is still taking place.

14 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

15 Thank you. And then as I
16 was listening earlier, I appreciate
17 that in preparation for the upcoming
18 special events in 2026, there's a
19 priority in making sure that
20 communities get -- feel some of that
21 impact that we're hopeful that the
22 city will have. What are we doing
23 to proactively prepare some of our
24 commercial corridor businesses to be

1 ready to receive the influx of
2 people or visitors that will be
3 coming into our city, and are we
4 depending solely on our commercial
5 quarter managers to be able to
6 prepare individuals? Are they
7 getting paid to add that additional
8 level of work that will be necessary
9 to ensure that the experience is a
10 positive one?

11 MS. BETHEL: That's a great
12 question, Councilwoman. Thank you
13 for that question. As you see in
14 the FY '26 budget, we are proud to
15 actually be launching a commercial
16 corridor. Specifically, to bring
17 that experience to the neighborhoods
18 and communities. And at this
19 moment, I'm going to call up 2026
20 Director Michael Newman. But that
21 is in partnership.

22 We have two different
23 programs, one through with --
24 through MDO and PHS, and the other

1 with the Commerce Department. And
2 we'll talk a little bit more in
3 detail about how we're going to pick
4 those commercial quarters and
5 partnership with you all. And the
6 lasting impact we -- it's our goal
7 to lead those communities through
8 these programs.

9 MR. NEWMAN: Thank you,
10 Councilmember, for that question.
11 You know, at the core of our thesis
12 for 2026 is really, as you point
13 out, driving the celebrations of the
14 neighborhoods and learning from past
15 experiences. You know, one of the
16 greatest learnings from the people's
17 experience was that folks didn't
18 even know really how to journey out
19 appropriately to spread that
20 economic impact.

21 So as we were talking with
22 folks in the neighborhoods, the key
23 thing that we kept hearing over and
24 over when we asked, what do you want

1 to see? We kept being told, we want
2 to earn money. So the commercial
3 corridors are central to that plan.
4 Obviously through the commercial
5 corridor program, we're going to be
6 making some physical enhancements
7 working with each Council district
8 office in partnership with each
9 Council district office to select
10 corridors where we can really drive
11 targeted enhancements. But it's not
12 just about making physical
13 enhancements to the space, right?

14 There's so much more that
15 goes into making sure business is
16 ready. Think about if you have a
17 restaurant, you need at least 40
18 solid images on Google just to be
19 able to rank. So we're partnering
20 with groups like Visit Philadelphia
21 to provide that digital assets, the
22 photography, the auditing of your
23 Google space, because the first
24 thing you do when you go off a

1 plane, or train, or automobile is
2 say, Google, where am I going to
3 have dinner? So we're working with
4 our commercial quarters to make sure
5 that the education is there, that
6 the physical enhancements are there.

7 And we're not just working
8 with commercial corridor managers,
9 but we're also working with CDCs and
10 other groups in each district that
11 has capacity. We're also going to
12 be creating some grant programs
13 through commerce to make sure that
14 even if you might not be an official
15 CDC or business operator, that you
16 can co-create the experience of 2026
17 for your community by offering those
18 opportunities as well.

19 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

20 Thank you for that. I think, you
21 know, we need to do that now, right?
22 We -- I walk the corridors, I walk
23 the community, and, you know, you
24 hear the buzz, 2026 is coming, it's

1 like right around the corner, and I
2 haven't heard anything, how do I get
3 involved? You know, how does my
4 business become a part of that
5 economic opportunity that you all in
6 government are talking so much
7 about?

8 And so how do we -- how do
9 we -- how do we, kind of, speed up
10 the process as it relates to that
11 direct community engagement need
12 that we are seeing and hearing from
13 community businesses and residents.

14 MS. BETHEL: So now with
15 the FY '25 transfer and hopeful
16 eventual passage of the Fiscal Year
17 '26 budget, we're ready to kick off
18 those events in a big way. So stay
19 tuned for some of that news that
20 we'll be announcing soon. But we
21 can start some of those initial
22 conversations and identification
23 with you all. So we're happy to
24 meet with your offices directly on a

1 one-on-one basis.

2 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

3 Thank you. And then just two more.

4 As we prepare for 2026, and we know
5 the large amount of people that are
6 going to come here, community
7 residents are concerned about public
8 safety, right? Will the officers
9 that are now in neighborhoods, will
10 they be pulled to the downtown
11 neighborhoods to be able to cover
12 these spaces? Are we prepared with,
13 you know -- are we prepared to
14 ensure that folks are safe when
15 they're coming into neighborhoods?
16 Are we going to respond less to the
17 public safety need because we have a
18 lack of officers in the district
19 because they've been moved to the
20 priority areas like downtown?

21 MS. BETHEL: I'll let
22 Commissioner Bethel talk to the
23 specifics about deployment of
24 officers, but the short answer is we

1 will always meet our -- meet our
2 obligations and duties to the
3 residents of Philadelphia when it
4 comes to public safety. And that's
5 why the budget is so heavily focused
6 on, yes, making sure the events are
7 great, but also almost 50/50 in
8 terms of our investment in public
9 safety. And again, police, fire,
10 OEM, making sure they have what they
11 need. And Commissioner Bethel, if
12 you want to go into any more detail
13 there.

14 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: Yeah,
15 I won't get into all of the specific
16 councilwoman, but I mean, we were
17 working in partnership. I know my
18 partners from OEM are here who've
19 been leading that effort along with
20 a multitude of folks in preparation
21 for next year. It's going to be
22 probably one of the most significant
23 challenges we've ever had in our
24 department to be able to deploy.

1 And so we are going to be
2 looking for other assets to support
3 us. I won't get into the specifics
4 of those, but obviously, we leaning
5 on our collar counties and others to
6 support us as similar as we did for
7 the, you know, the Super Bowl and
8 the parade. I mean, we had to bring
9 in a number of officers, state
10 police and provide us with a
11 significant allocation.

12 So we're confident that
13 we'll be able to maintain the
14 deployment in our communities, at
15 the same time deal with the events
16 that we're going to be dealing with
17 both Downtown and throughout the --
18 throughout the city. So we're
19 confident that we're doing that.
20 We're doing a lot of planning.
21 We'll be planning -- we've been
22 planning for quite some time, we'll
23 continue through that process, but I
24 would make sure the community is

1 aware. Our duty is to serve the
2 city and then to serve, you know,
3 the other events that we have.
4 We've been able to do this before,
5 and we'll accomplish that again in
6 2026, and at the end of this year as
7 well.

8 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

9 Thank you. And then my last -- my
10 last question, Tiffany mentioned
11 that affordable doesn't mean cheap,
12 but affordable also doesn't respond
13 to low, low income. And so how do
14 some of our low, low income families
15 take advantage of the opportunity
16 from the Home program?

17 MS. THURMAN: Absolutely.
18 So I'd like to call up our Chief of
19 Staff for Planning and Development,
20 John Mondlak, to talk about that.
21 Chief of Staff for Planning and
22 Development.

23 MR. MONDLAK: Thank you.

24 Thank you, Councilwoman.

1 John Mondlak from the Department of
2 Planning and Development. I think a
3 -- couple of things. I think that
4 it can relate to that income bracket
5 and does relate to that income
6 bracket. So right now, PHA is a
7 leader in this space. They're doing
8 quality projects, they're doing
9 projects that I have visited that I
10 would happily live in, that are of
11 great quality and there are also
12 non-profit developers out there that
13 are also doing the same quality work
14 in their developments.

15 And as part of what we do
16 when we fund these projects, we fund
17 projects that serve that community.
18 A lot of that space is PHA, but not
19 all of it. And the programs that we
20 fund, we also put in these
21 requirements that they also need to
22 include affordable luxury as well.

23 So I do think that that is
24 happening at all levels of income,

1 not just above 30 percent, not just
2 above 125 -- 120 percent, I think
3 it's happening everywhere. And I
4 think we have to be diligent to make
5 sure and keep an eye on it and make
6 sure that we're diligent in our
7 contracting process because it
8 really is important that we put all
9 of our effort into making sure that
10 that continues.

11 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I
12 appreciate that. I think that, you
13 know, when I came in 2022, I was
14 very clear and honest about not
15 understanding the entire everything
16 that went into development, right?
17 But what I do know for sure is what
18 my community needs are as it relates
19 to housing. My priority is to make
20 sure that we protect the identity,
21 the culture, and the history of
22 neighborhoods. And that if we're
23 talking about economic
24 opportunities, that all of us are

1 able to take advantage of that.

2 And so I'm looking forward
3 to making sure that these 30,000
4 units, that are going to be created
5 across the city of Philadelphia,
6 that some of our residents who are
7 on fixed incomes who choose to take
8 advantage of these programs, that
9 they have the opportunity to do
10 that.

11 And I recognize that not
12 all poor people have to live in the
13 same neighborhood, I recognize that
14 not all neighborhoods have to be a
15 specific race, but if I choose to
16 live in the neighborhood that I've
17 generationally been in for a long
18 time, I want to be able to do that.
19 I want to be able to afford it,
20 right? And I don't want -- I don't
21 want my residents to feel like some
22 of them do now on the southern end
23 of the district, that as a result of
24 development, they are the ones that

1 don't belong.

2 And so I'm looking forward
3 to ensuring that all of us across
4 the city of Philadelphia can
5 participate in these program. Thank
6 you.

7 MS. HARRIS: And,
8 Councilwoman, you make a wonderful
9 point about the rich cultural
10 identity of all the neighborhoods
11 across Philadelphia, and that's
12 exactly what we want to highlight
13 and showcase with 2026.

14 And to speak about some of
15 the work that is already going on to
16 your earlier question, I just want
17 to call up Carlton Williams, our
18 Director of Clean and Green, to talk
19 about some of that beautification
20 and greening that is already
21 happening.

22 MR. WILLIAMS: Thank you.
23 Appreciate it. Thank you. Good
24 afternoon. Good afternoon,

1 Councilmembers. Carlton Williams,
2 director of Clean and Green
3 Initiatives for Mayor Cherelle
4 Parker. Thank you, Chief Deputy
5 Mayor Sincere and team.

6 Yes, we are already working
7 with commerce and our partners
8 across the government in reference
9 to identifying corridors, where we
10 will be actually clean cleaning and
11 greening our neighborhood corridors
12 to make them more attractive for
13 people to come in and do business
14 visit. And ultimately, improve the
15 environment.

16 So far, we did an example
17 on Lancaster Avenue, and I invite
18 you all to look at 40th and 41st in
19 Lancaster, which we install planters
20 along the walkways. This, again,
21 makes it more attractive for people
22 to come in and do business here in
23 the city of Philadelphia. It also
24 makes sure that the businesses

1 understand the importance of a clean
2 environment, and so it makes them
3 feel comfortable in actually doing
4 business there.

5 So we're working with
6 commerce to identify 20 locations
7 around the city of Philadelphia that
8 will actually benefit this
9 throughout the entire areas, mainly
10 in neighborhoods outside of Center
11 City. I want to emphasize that
12 because also we want residents, as
13 stated earlier, with Philly 250, we
14 want people to come into the
15 neighborhoods to benefit from this
16 as well. So this is how we're
17 working together over the next year
18 to get prepared in reference to 2026
19 and beyond. These are legacy
20 leaving projects that ultimately
21 when the crowds go away, the
22 business is still thriving and can
23 be successful and benefit from it.

24 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

1 Thank you.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

3 Thank you. And then also,
4 I just want to state for the record,
5 also following up on the line of
6 questioning from Councilwoman Quetcy
7 Lozada. Just also, when we talk
8 about housing below, typically we
9 talk about affordable housing and
10 workforce housing, but also there's
11 a low income community besides PHA
12 that still need assistance, such as
13 The Women Revitalization --

14 MS. THURMAN: WCRP.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

16 WCRP. It's run by Nora Lichtash, we
17 just have a new project in South
18 Philadelphia that provides housing,
19 particularly for women with
20 children, right? And that's at an
21 income level, right? That is not --
22 that is below, particularly, those
23 who go for like our "Turn the Key"
24 programs, right? But still helping

1 people go from being running to
2 actually being homeowner.

3 And also CATCH -- work with
4 CATCH in my district, particularly
5 on veterans housing, right? And
6 that's another area that doesn't
7 really qualify in the affordable
8 workforce, but at the same time,
9 high quality housing, particularly
10 for veterans at a whole different
11 price point. So I think we're all
12 rolling in the same direction.

13 One thing I do take pride
14 in is that PHA houses today, like
15 they are super high quality houses,
16 right? I've been at plenty of their
17 ribbon cuttings since I've been a
18 Council President that's not inside
19 my district, that shows the quality
20 of the houses being offered. We're
21 talking about three stories with a
22 roof deck, right? With all the
23 finishes. So I have witnessed that.

24 And obviously, if you -- if

1 anybody in here participating in
2 "Turning the Key" ribbon cutting,
3 you see that we're going in the
4 right direction in terms of
5 providing high quality housing for
6 individuals that we service.

7 But with that being said,
8 I'm going to go back to Councilwoman
9 Quetcy Lozada real brief.

10 MS. THURMAN: I just want
11 to say just thank you also, Council
12 President. And I also as the
13 daughter of a military veteran, I
14 appreciate also the shout out to
15 veterans because --

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
17 Absolutely.

18 MS. THURMAN: -- whether
19 it's that constituency, or that
20 group, or that the single mothers,
21 or single fathers, or guardians, we
22 want to make sure that there is
23 something in this substantive mind
24 you, in our housing plan for

1 everyone, so absolutely.

2 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:

3 Yeah. To me, it's
4 important that we are able to
5 respond to that 20 to 60 percent
6 MAI, right, because those are the
7 folks that oftentimes don't have the
8 opportunities that we talk about in
9 some of the programs, right? Those
10 are the folks that we don't
11 prioritize.

12 And so for me, it's
13 important that as we're creating
14 this new stack of housing, that that
15 community is also remembered -- you
16 know, you're remembering them in the
17 process. And understanding that not
18 all residents want to be homeowners,
19 some of them want to be renters,
20 right? They don't want the
21 responsibility of the overhead of
22 maintaining a home.

23 MS. THURMAN: Absolutely.

24 Absolutely. One of the things, and

1 so we -- one of the things that
2 Mayor Parker always says that has
3 resonated throughout this process,
4 and one that I also stand by, is
5 that in this process, whether it's
6 the One Philly Mortgage, or the
7 litany of other programs that we
8 either discussed yesterday, or are
9 part of this program that we will
10 roll out more comprehensively over
11 the coming weeks, ahead of our April
12 21st hearing, we are not going to
13 put the haves against the have-nots,
14 or the haves against the have just a
15 little bit. We're thinking about
16 all of it. So absolutely, we
17 concur.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
19 Okay. Thank you very much.
20 It is Rue Landau, Thomas, Jay, and
21 then we'll be officially in our
22 second round. Rue.

23 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:
24 Thank you so much, Council

1 President. I promise to be brief --
2 as brief as possible. And thank you
3 all so much for being here. I want
4 to -- I'll start with housing too.
5 As somebody who used to sue PHA a
6 long time ago, long before this
7 executive director, I could not be
8 happier with the quality and the
9 style and the way in which Kelvin
10 Jeremiah is doing business here in
11 Philadelphia. It's just a complete
12 change from what it was back then.
13 So that is very exciting to me.
14 I wanted to also -- I might
15 just follow-up a little bit on -- I
16 -- I guess I also want to underscore
17 what my colleague, Quetcy Lozada,
18 just said about making sure we don't
19 leave behind people in deep poverty
20 while we are going through this home
21 process. I am excited for digging
22 in deeper to what all of you are
23 laying out here through this, to
24 have the city investing its

1 resources to transform the way we
2 are dealing with housing, providing
3 housing, and the city of
4 Philadelphia. It's so exciting for
5 me, but we need to make sure that
6 we're not leaving behind folks in
7 deep poverty.

8 MS. THURMAN: And
9 Councilmember Landau, let me just be
10 very clear, that's not lost on us.
11 None of us up here at this table and
12 those who are in leadership, many of
13 us, we are first generation, first
14 to graduate college, first to be in
15 leadership roles, first to sit at
16 this table, right? And so in that,
17 to leave behind people in deep
18 poverty would be leaving behind my
19 grandmother, my uncles, my cousins,
20 right? And so, no, that will not
21 happen. That will not happen.

22 This is not a tone-deaf
23 plan, and this is also not a plan
24 that's just going to sit on the

1 shelf. So absolutely, we concur,
2 we're with you. But to leave behind
3 people that have just a little bit,
4 will be leaving behind the people in
5 our families, and we're not going to
6 do that.

7 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:

8 That's wonderful to hear.
9 Thank you so much. And I've
10 appreciated talking to Directors
11 Brooks and Hill recently getting to
12 know them and thank them so much for
13 their initial meetings with me.

14 It's clear that we need to
15 focus on homelessness -- the
16 holistic approach of homelessness to
17 home ownership. And that we're,
18 again, excited to partner with you
19 on that. But I remember, I believe
20 that we've already heard the stat
21 that two thirds of people in who are
22 coming into our shelters are coming
23 in for the first time.

24 MS. THURMAN: Yes.

1 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: That
2 struck me as something that's really
3 significant and that we could --
4 it's an opportunity to triage and to
5 problem solve immediately while
6 they're coming in the shelters, and
7 certainly, a place where we can use
8 an extra \$5 million to come up with
9 a program to make sure that we are
10 figuring out exactly what the needs
11 are and hopefully keeping them out
12 of the shelters.

13 You were -- we discussed --
14 I think it was Director Hill who
15 talked about that stat. I think it
16 predated her, but also the fact that
17 they've been doing a deep dive into
18 what all the touch points are in the
19 homelessness system that we have.

20 What happens when you come
21 to a shelter? What happens next?
22 And I'm curious if you've talked to
23 the people in need of shelter
24 housing, whether or not they have --

1 there's been any kind of, you know,
2 discussions with them to make sure,
3 why were you coming here? What do
4 you need? What can we do next?

5 What can we do better so
6 that we can have, you know, as we
7 all discussed, the shelter units
8 that feel more like a real first
9 step, where we can put in a lot of
10 supportive structures and then get
11 them moved into housing.

12 MS. THURMAN: Yes. And it
13 is through that engagement where we
14 discovered that that's where that 66
15 percent figure came from. But I
16 will call up now, Cheryl Hill, the
17 Director of the Office of Homeless
18 Services, to talk more about that in
19 greater detail.

20 MS. HILL: Thank you for
21 the question. So to answer your
22 question, one, we try to engage
23 individuals with lived experience.
24 And as we're going through this

1 process over the next few months to
2 a year, that's exactly what we
3 intend to continue to do. But also
4 what we're doing is we're engaging
5 the service providers.

6 We are also looking at our
7 monitoring a lot better, and just
8 addressing something Council
9 President said earlier, that is what
10 we want to make sure that whatever
11 our shelters look like is something
12 that any of our family members can
13 go to, and we are accepting of our
14 family members going to that.

15 Because similarly, I have
16 family members who have actually
17 used the shelters here in
18 Philadelphia, and I recognize that I
19 do not want them to have to do that
20 again. So with that, we are
21 evaluating our shelters, we are
22 talking to the service providers to
23 make sure that we're getting their
24 information, but also we plan to

1 bring in individuals with more live
2 experience to talk about what are
3 the barriers.

4 We have a survey that we
5 use now in some of the shelters or
6 in our shelter system to get some of
7 that information, but we do want to
8 do a deeper dive because we want to
9 make sure that the path that you
10 take to get out of homelessness is
11 one that can keep you out of
12 homelessness.

13 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:

14 That's wonderful. Thank
15 you. Welcome to Philly, we need
16 you. Welcome here into this role,
17 is what I meant. And then the next
18 questions I had, I wanted to -- I'm
19 going to save most of my tax
20 questions for later. But I wanted
21 to talk a little bit more about
22 federal -- potential federal funding
23 cuts, which I'm also concerned with.

24 We talked about there's a,

1 you know, we get \$2.8 billion in
2 federal contracts. My first
3 question is: When you calculated
4 that number of 2.8 billion, did --
5 what does that number entail? Does
6 it also include contracts that come
7 to the city of Philadelphia through
8 -- as pass-throughs to nonprofits?

9 MS. BROOKS: Yep. So when
10 we talk about the city, the funds
11 directly to the city, that's what
12 we're talking about that will not
13 include partner entities who are not
14 the city, like the district, or PHA,
15 or other entities.

16 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Do
17 you have that number as well? So
18 that's more than 2.8 billion.

19 MS. BROOKS: It would be
20 more, yes, for other -- for other
21 entities.

22 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Do
23 you have that million? Not million,
24 I'm sorry, it's been a long day

1 already.

2 MS. BROOKS: Probably more
3 than a million, yeah.

4 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: Do
5 you have that number? Sorry.

6 MS. BROOKS: I do not, we'd
7 have to collect that information
8 from some other agencies.

9 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:
10 Okay. Can we get that at some
11 point?

12 MS. BROOKS: We can work
13 with them, yep.

14 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU: And
15 also, just while we were -- I was
16 following up, I believe on
17 Councilmember O'Rourke's questions
18 about federal workforce as well.
19 It's my understanding that 80
20 percent of federal workers live
21 outside of Washington, D.C.
22 including as many as 137,000 that
23 live in Pennsylvania, somewhere
24 between 20 to 30 -- 25 to 35,000

1 that are -- live in Philadelphia.

2 And that doesn't even include the --
3 our counties where they come to work
4 in Philadelphia.

5 What is -- have you done
6 calculations on what happens with
7 the loss of these -- potential loss
8 of these federal jobs?

9 MS. BROOKS: So we work
10 with our outside economists to
11 understand, sort of, what the --
12 what we expect in the job market.
13 And so our job projections reflect
14 some of what we anticipate,
15 understand that it is a fluid
16 situation and we'll continue to work
17 with them if things -- if things
18 evolve.

19 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:

20 Okay. Knowing that these
21 rise, it'll be increased
22 unemployment rates, increased
23 vacancies in buildings, and a lot of
24 stress on families, which will

1 disproportionately affect black and
2 brown families as we know,
3 especially black families here in
4 Philadelphia, which, you know, have
5 a larger number of jobs and we have
6 a significant number of veterans
7 here in Philadelphia who will also
8 be affected as well.

9 I guess, I had one last
10 question for now that I'll just put
11 on the table for the future for
12 trying to get down into the -- into
13 the -- into the departments. But I
14 wanted to dig down deeper in
15 staffing to talk about which
16 departments those 5,700 vacancies
17 are.

18 And are we looking at each
19 avenue to aid in the hiring process
20 in different ways. I'm so excited
21 for you, Director Jones, to be here,
22 and would definitely want to drill
23 down, dig deeper into that. I don't
24 know that we need to talk about it

1 today, but I would love to get a
2 breakdown of those 5,700, where they
3 are, where we can help, and what are
4 there different barriers for
5 different jobs.

6 MS. THURMAN: We definitely
7 have that breakdown and we will make
8 sure that we submit that to the
9 Council president's -- Council
10 President's Office for your review.

11 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:

12 Thank you. Oh, CP, can I
13 ask one last question? When it
14 comes to -- I'm all, I really want
15 to focus also on our business growth
16 here in Philadelphia and wanted to
17 know if you could touch more on the
18 plan for Market East. Very invested
19 in making sure that our east market
20 is thriving as soon as possible.

21 MS. THURMAN: Absolutely.
22 And I shared that along with you.
23 Earlier in the year under the
24 leadership of Donovan West, who

1 heads our Mayor's office of Business
2 Roundtables, we convened at the
3 Sears Center and with all of our
4 business roundtable leaders and
5 talked about all of the
6 recommendations that have come forth
7 by way of that office.

8 As part of that, the Mayor
9 shared then, and also in her budget
10 address earlier this month her
11 commitment to Market East from City
12 Hall to the river. And in that she
13 announced that Jerry Sweeney, a
14 local business owner, would be
15 heading an advisory group. Also,
16 part of that advisory group will be
17 all sorts of stakeholders, including
18 business owners that in Chinatown,
19 residents of Chinatown, and Wash
20 West.

21 We are working, of course,
22 in close coordination with
23 Councilmember Squilla to ensure that
24 through our Office of Planning and

1 Development, we do a robust, you
2 know, master planning process. But
3 in that process, we'll be doing
4 ongoing engagement around that.

5 Also, of course, working in
6 coordination with larger
7 organizations like Jefferson, who is
8 really important to this
9 administration, Mesa Ridge, and on
10 and on and on, so.

11 COUNCILMEMBER LANDAU:

12 Thank you. Thank you,
13 Councilperson.

14 MS. BROOKS: Sorry, we have
15 also -- just in our transfer
16 ordinance, we have 250,000 to start
17 the marketing study. And then in
18 2026 -- FY '26, we're proposing the
19 remaining 500,000, so 750 total to
20 get the ball rolling this year so we
21 can get that started.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

23 And I'm sure this will be in
24 partnership with Neil form

1 76ers/Comcast on partnership and
2 commitment to revitalize East Market
3 Street, correct?

4 MS. THURMAN: Yes.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
6 For the record?

7 MS. THURMAN: Absolutely,
8 for the record. That is absolutely
9 correct. We will do that in
10 partnership with Comcast and the
11 6ers.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
13 Thank you very much. The Chair
14 recognizes my majority with
15 Councilmember Isaiah Thomas.

16 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: Good
17 afternoon, Council President. And
18 it's been great dialogue so far. I
19 appreciate my colleagues asking such
20 informed questions. I want to first
21 start by thanking the admin for your
22 partnership around issues related to
23 education as well as 2026. And I
24 also want to commend the admin for

1 what you've done around public
2 safety. Clearly, it's not just the
3 Mayor and the administration alone,
4 but when you look at where we were
5 when we all sat together this time
6 compared to where we are right now,
7 its a victory lap that you all
8 deserve. So I just wanted to
9 commend you on that.

10 A couple things. And I'll
11 go, you know, straight down the list
12 and whatever you can answer now,
13 great, and whatever you can't we can
14 save for a later time. But where we
15 are right now, looking at new
16 spending this year, we're looking to
17 spend a lot of money, a lot of
18 spending this year.

19 I'm wondering, looking at
20 the amount of spending that's been
21 proposed by the admin compared to
22 where we are, not just locally, not
23 just on the state level, but also
24 federally. I want to -- I want to

1 -- I want to understand, are we
2 meeting the moment looking at
3 tariffs, looking at the cost of
4 goods, thinking about what you want
5 to do around housing, are we -- does
6 it fit the moment that we're in?
7 That's the first thing.

8 Second question is around
9 2026, while we've made significant
10 progress as it relates to what we've
11 spent, we still have a lot more work
12 to do, so at some point we would
13 like to discuss what we're missing,
14 what we still need to do, and if
15 that conversation happens at a later
16 time, I know we're going to do a
17 2026 hearing, we're a 100 percent
18 fine with that.

19 Third area of focus, you
20 propose 800 million in housing,
21 which will be paid for beyond the
22 five-year plan, as well as tax cuts
23 that will be paid for beyond the
24 five-year plan.

1 Despite anyone's opinion on
2 both initiatives, when you think
3 about the idea of us spending money
4 now to pay for it later, when we're
5 currently not in a fiscal crisis
6 help us understand your thought
7 process behind that.

8 And then last but not
9 least, taxes. We were able to lower
10 taxes by 40 points over two years
11 from 6.2 on birds, specifically,
12 down to 5.8. Based on your proposal
13 right now, the admin would only be
14 lowering taxes 30 points over five
15 years, which is less than what we
16 were able to do over a two-year time
17 period. So I'm wondering, what
18 message do you think that sends to
19 the business community when the
20 majority of the tax cuts over 70
21 percent of the tax cuts that's being
22 proposed by this Mayor would not be
23 implemented until after this Mayor,
24 and a lot of us on City Council will

1 no longer be here.

2 I'm specifically thinking
3 about jobs that pay between 90 and
4 \$200,000 a year. We do a phenomenal
5 job of a job of growing jobs that
6 keep people poor. What are we doing
7 to grow the job market that helps
8 move people into the middle class?
9 Because it's phenomenal to build all
10 of the housing that is being
11 proposed by the admin, but who's
12 going to buy these houses? Who's
13 going to live in these houses when
14 the majority of people who make
15 between 90 and \$250,000 a year are
16 choosing to leave Philly because we
17 don't have those type of
18 opportunities. So I know that was a
19 lot of different items, but I just
20 wanted to see if I can get as much
21 on the record as possible in my
22 first round of questions.

23 MR. MONDLAK: Okay. Let me
24 start and see what I can handle. So

1 the first question was, are we
2 meeting the moment of uncertainty?
3 And, you know, we've all talked
4 about how much uncertainty there is.
5 We tried to position ourselves to be
6 ready for that uncertainty. I don't
7 think you could be ready for all
8 that could happen with the federal
9 government, but we are coming into
10 FY '26 with -- for us, a very high
11 fund balance. We are making
12 contributions to a rainy day fund.
13 The budget stabilization reserve
14 fund, and we are putting money into
15 the Federal Reserve. So we're
16 trying to do those things to kind of
17 steal ourselves against what may
18 come while also not abandoning
19 needed investments. And we want to,
20 at the same time, make crucial
21 investments in the course of this
22 five-year plan to keep the moving --
23 the city moving forward.

24 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: So I

1 just -- we just going to continue
2 to, we have this conversation
3 tomorrow, because tomorrow we're
4 going to do a deep and dive. But
5 when we're talking about investing
6 in the ideas of economic growth in
7 the city of Philadelphia, we are
8 hearing everything that the admin is
9 saying, and we know that former, the
10 Mayor, former councilwoman had that
11 priority. So we know that the track
12 record is there and the appetite is
13 there, we're just not sure if the
14 numbers meet the appetite.

15 And so in tomorrow's
16 dialogue, we're really going to push
17 around this economic side and around
18 the fiscal side, because I'm
19 concerned with issues related to
20 reverse commuting, I'm concerned
21 with issues related to center city
22 buildings. And looking at the
23 dynamics that we're dealing with
24 here, listening to dialogue around

1 East Market Street, I just don't
2 know if the numbers match the
3 passion, if that makes sense.

4 So I'm looking forward to
5 doing a deeper dive into that
6 dialogue, because again, when we
7 look at where we are fiscally, and I
8 think we all agree with our
9 intentionality around pension
10 payments and the pension fund, we
11 all want to make sure that that
12 stays intact. I don't know if we
13 all agree with what we do once those
14 payments begin to change. And I
15 don't know if we all agree that this
16 legislative body in collaboration
17 with this Mayor should be spending
18 or earmarking dollars for the
19 future.

20 From my opinion, when I
21 think about earmarking dollars for
22 the future, those are decisions that
23 we make when we're dealing with some
24 type of fiscal crisis. And

1 according to you all, the fiscal
2 health of the city is pretty good.
3 So I just think that it could become
4 a little risky to Aramark future
5 spending with the climate of what
6 we're dealing with right now. And
7 as a person who's extremely
8 supportive of investing in growth in
9 the city of Philadelphia, even the
10 recommendations that will promote
11 that type of growth, I would be
12 hesitant to support for those
13 dollars to be already earmarked. So
14 I hope that made sense and I'm
15 looking forward to the continued
16 dialogue tomorrow.

17 MR. MONDLAK: Can I talk?

18 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS:

19 Please, yeah. I would love to hear
20 your opinion, especially on the
21 payments that would be made based on
22 the recommendations in the Mayor's
23 budget proposal.

24 MR. MONDLAK: Yeah, and I

1 -- first of all, on the economic
2 growth, the tax investments are part
3 of that, and there's, you know, a
4 lot more that the commerce director
5 spoke to some of that. We've been
6 talking about, I mean, everything
7 we've been talking about today has
8 been related to that. And I
9 understand everything we do is a
10 trade off, right? So what we're
11 trying to do with the tax
12 investments by having legislation
13 that goes through, you know, to when
14 the gross receipts portion goes away
15 is to make -- to show the business
16 community that there's a commitment
17 -- there's predictability, that they
18 know what's coming so that they can
19 make their investment choices based
20 on that, based on the sign that
21 we're giving with that legislation.

22 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS: And
23 I think that intentionality is
24 really important, and so I do

1 appreciate the admin looking to give
2 Philadelphia's, right, not just the
3 business community, but Philadelphia
4 is in general a vision as to where
5 we're going with the future of the
6 economics of the city. I think that
7 the concern that we have is will we
8 make it that far?

9 The pandemic showed us that
10 people can work from anywhere, and
11 what we're seeing is we're seeing
12 people to choose to locate their
13 business outside of Philadelphia and
14 in their surrounding areas so that
15 they can elude a lot of our taxes,
16 but simultaneously are able to take
17 advantage of our phenomenal culture,
18 because people love Philadelphia,
19 whether they live in the city or
20 around the city, they still love our
21 area, they still love what it is
22 that we do.

23 So we can't just ignore the
24 fact that these businesses are

1 choosing to locate themselves
2 outside of the city of Philadelphia,
3 and we can't ignore the fact that we
4 have one of the highest reverse
5 commuter ratings with over 50
6 percent of Philadelphians leave our
7 city to go to work to come back to
8 the city. So that tells us right
9 there that we have issues with our
10 tax structure, not even considering
11 the fact that we lost more revenue
12 during the pandemic than any other
13 major city in the country besides
14 Detroit.

15 I think my time is up
16 Council President, so I'll save my
17 questions for the second round.
18 What I do want say, before we close
19 out this first -- before I close out
20 right now, I'm looking forward to
21 the conversation around 2026. We're
22 going to have plenty of dialogue
23 around there. I want to continue to
24 advocate for Councilmember Quetcy

1 Lozada's specific ask around a plan
2 specifically around Kensington. I
3 think that that's extremely
4 important. She asked for that
5 months ago. I want to continue to
6 advocate for that.

7 And I also want to say that
8 in the midst of you reading your
9 statement this morning, you did not
10 talk much about public education,
11 but I know that public education was
12 mentioned in your statement because
13 I read it. So I just want to make
14 sure that the general public
15 understands that public education is
16 a huge priority both to the admin as
17 well as to City Council, and I look
18 forward to specifically our
19 conversation, not just around our
20 traditional academic settings, our
21 facilities, getting an update on
22 where we are with our facilities
23 plans, but also around our
24 universities.

1 We've had significant
2 issues as it relates to our
3 universities for a number of
4 different reasons, not just thinking
5 about institutions that close, but
6 also our own institution and the
7 community College of Philadelphia,
8 and I'm hoping that we can all work
9 together with the labor issues that
10 we're facing right now at CCP to
11 assure that we can put ourself in a
12 position where those young people's
13 academic journey is not disturbed.

14 I know for us this is March
15 and we have a long way to go before
16 our "Season is over", but for young
17 people who are in college, a lot of
18 them are looking to graduate pretty
19 soon. And I would hate for the mess
20 that we have it as adults to put
21 those young people in a position
22 where they're at the ending of their
23 academic journey is messed up
24 because we can't get some fiscal

1 problems situated.

2 So I just wanted to put
3 that on the record, both for you and
4 for us so that everybody in the
5 public knows that education is a top
6 priority for the city of
7 Philadelphia, and we'll all work
8 locked in step to be able to address
9 the education crisis that we're
10 dealing with here in Philadelphia.
11 Thank you, Council President. And
12 I'll cue myself up for the second
13 round. Thank you, sir.

14 MS. THURMAN: Council
15 President, we do have six -- we have
16 six items that we will follow-up
17 with you on the record through the
18 Council President's Office that we
19 were tracking. I did want to just
20 reflect for the record that the
21 Kensington plan, we did deliver that
22 in a -- both a press conference, but
23 also ahead of the hearing that we
24 had a few weeks ago. So I know that

1 through the Office of Public Safety
2 that was provided and --

3 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS:
4 (Indiscernible) is considered?

5 MS. THURMAN: Yes. And we
6 can -- we can follow-up on that.
7 And then -- but then regarding
8 education, sir, if we may respond to
9 that. I know that with our -- with
10 Chief Deputy Mayor, Vanessa Garrett
11 Harley up here, I can -- I can feel
12 her. I know that she's going to
13 want to respond to that, if that's
14 okay. Okay.

15 MS. HARRIS: Yes. Thank
16 you, Tiffany. I just want to put on
17 the record, councilman and thank you
18 for calling out education. It is a
19 primary concern and primary
20 importance to both Mayor Parker, as
21 well as myself and to our Chief
22 Education Officer, Debora Carrera,
23 and all of the others of us who have
24 young people in this city, whether

1 it be our children or other
2 children. It is a top priority,
3 though, for the marriage. You know,
4 she was a teacher, this means an
5 awful lot to her.

6 The extended year program
7 is one of her primary and will be a
8 legacy program, which we have
9 devoted a lot of time, money, and
10 attention to, and is going well.
11 That is currently 20 school district
12 schools, five charter schools, and
13 we have asked for budget allocations
14 to expand that program to 10 more
15 school district schools and five
16 more charter schools so that it will
17 be a total of 40 schools altogether,
18 30 school district, and 10 charter.

19 And it is enhancing the
20 academic environment, it's enhancing
21 learning social emotional
22 intelligence, and many other things
23 for our young people who are part of
24 those schools that that program is

1 available and the parents who wish
2 to take advantage of it. We are
3 working very closely with our school
4 district and our school board, but
5 we believe in the educational
6 importance for all kids across the
7 board in this city, because we care
8 about all children and all
9 children's education, and not just
10 those in the public-school district,
11 so we also continue to foster
12 additional partnerships, even in the
13 charter school realm.

14 So we are very, very
15 focused on education, but thank you
16 for calling that out.

17 COUNCILMEMBER THOMAS:

18 Well, since you said that, let me
19 just add another shameless plug.
20 You know, I'm never going to throw
21 away a moment to be able to do that.
22 The admin proposed to increase the
23 real estate tax from 56 percent to
24 56.5 percent, specifically for

1 schools, which I support. But I
2 believe in your proposal, that
3 wouldn't go into effect until 2030.
4 I'm going to fight for us to do that
5 now. Looking at the fiscal issues
6 that our schools could possibly face
7 in collaboration with your vision
8 around extended day, I think that
9 year should be moved up.

10 So I want to go ahead and
11 put that on the record to you,
12 Council President, as well as to my
13 colleagues, we need to look at that
14 56.5 percent now. We did a
15 phenomenal job going from 55 percent
16 to 56 percent last year, and last
17 year's budget. And I think we need
18 to move on that. And I'll close out
19 by also saying thank you to the
20 admin for putting money back on the
21 table for Vision Zero. That's
22 something that's been a huge
23 priority to my office, my team, and
24 the work that we're doing. And I

1 want to give a shout out to my guy,
2 Mike Carroll, for the great work
3 that he does as it relates to Vision
4 Zero based initiatives, and
5 continuing to do that work. Thank
6 you.

7 MS. BETHEL: Thank you,
8 Councilman.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
10 I want to second that. I had that
11 down there. I just want to give
12 Mike a good shout out for his hard
13 work and his dedication, but most
14 important administration for
15 stepping up and being supportive for
16 Vision Zero. The gentleman I want
17 to acknowledge before we go into our
18 next round is Councilmember Jeffrey
19 J. Young.

20 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank
21 you, Mr. President. Good afternoon.
22 I'm sorry for my tardiness. I was
23 at a Janazah of a 15-year-old, who
24 was shot on a SEPTA bus and

1 unfortunately passed away. You
2 know, Barry, at the same cemetery
3 that my nephew shot, killed by gun
4 violence is buried. So seeing a
5 15-year-old get buried next to my
6 nephew who died from the same thing,
7 this epidemic that we face in our
8 city called gun violence. Gun
9 violence.

10 The Mayor acknowledged in
11 her speech that public safety is
12 number one. What are we doing about
13 that in the city? And when you look
14 at these documents, you go through
15 it, you see that there are so many
16 priorities, so many priorities that
17 are put in front of things that
18 affect a community that goes through
19 death and violence on a very regular
20 basis. I've been going to funerals
21 from people killed since I was 14
22 years old. 14. That is
23 traumatizing to a community.
24 Traumatizing. There were 13-year-

1 olds there burying a 15-year-old.
2 He was Muslim, so they would help
3 him put the dirt on his body. 13
4 years old. That's what communities
5 have to face in this city. What are
6 we doing about that? That's the
7 number one priority in this city.

8 Look to these documents and
9 listen, everything is great. We are
10 a city, so we have to provide
11 different levels of services, and
12 that is all understood. But we have
13 to prioritize what really -- what
14 the number one issue is. We have to
15 prioritize that. We have to.
16 Because people are literally dying.
17 Babies are killing babies. We are
18 the only community in the world that
19 goes through this type of trauma.

20 MS. THURMAN: We're not a
21 sleeping administration. Every
22 shooting we're there.

23 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: And I
24 understand that. But look at --

1 MS. THURMAN: One moment.
2 May I -- may I please respond, sir.
3 Because I feel your passion and I'm
4 there with you. Just last year,
5 less than a year ago, my best
6 friend's brother was murdered. And
7 so I'm right there with you. This
8 is not lost on me.

9 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: And
10 Tiffany, please, let finish all due
11 respect. I was -- let me finish,
12 please. And I -- and I --

13 MS. THURMAN: Oh, I'm
14 sorry. I thought you were finished.

15 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: And I
16 empathize -- and we empathize,
17 right? Because we are -- we have a
18 shared experience. A lot of us in
19 the city have that shared
20 experience. So let's prioritize
21 that shared experience. Housing is
22 number one, which is very important.
23 Taking care of our municipal workers
24 is very important. Tax reform is

1 very important. We have to grow
2 jobs in the city. Very important.
3 Our wellness ecosystem, a \$100
4 million that we invested last year
5 as seed money. 216 million
6 operating funds, right, proposed
7 over five years. 2026, very
8 important to the city. We get to
9 all of that, then we get to public
10 safety.

11 And you look through the
12 public safety, the what -- what's in
13 this document regarding public
14 safety, talks about the forensic
15 center, which is important. Body
16 cameras keeps us safe. But you look
17 at the -- what really -- the crux of
18 it, what can help these communities
19 is \$25 million grant in anti-
20 violence grants. From this
21 document, that's all we see, right?
22 That's all we see, is a \$25 million
23 grant for the number one issue that
24 is facing this city.

1 Then we get the Clean and
2 Green, which is something very, very
3 important to our city to keep our
4 city clean and green. Economic
5 opportunities, great education, core
6 support. There is nothing in this
7 document that talks about our
8 opportunities in our parks, our
9 libraries, our rec centers, nothing
10 in this document. Those are the
11 things that are important to this
12 city. Everyone acknowledges that
13 public safety, that gun violence is
14 the number one issue in this city.
15 Let's do something about it. That's
16 why we're here. Let's do something
17 about that.

18 I'm tired of going to
19 Janazah's of 14 or 15-year-olds, and
20 I'm saying like, it's not -- like,
21 where's that normal at? Why is that
22 normal? That should not be normal.
23 It's not normal for folks on the
24 mainline, but it's normal for us.

1 And it's been normalized. That's a
2 tragedy. That should not be
3 normalized. A teen -- it should not
4 be normalized to want to get a gun
5 to take somebody's life. As a
6 teenager, what opportunities are we
7 providing for those kids to not want
8 to do -- because I never wanted to
9 do that. I had the world given to
10 me by a great educational system,
11 and my environment was so different.
12 And I know that if we change these
13 environments, every kid can have
14 these same outcomes. But we're not
15 investing in changing these
16 environments. Like, we're not \$25
17 million, but the eco, the wellness
18 center, you know, you do five, you
19 know, add demand for five years, 25
20 million, 125 million, they still
21 getting 216 million.

22 I mean, you know, it's
23 really nothing in here for our
24 youth. You know, it's similar to a

1 line of questions that, you know,
2 Councilman Phillips had. Right,
3 with the engagement. Where's that
4 at? So, and I understand, you know,
5 that our passion, like you said, our
6 passion. But Councilman Thomas just
7 said, the numbers don't match the
8 passion. They don't. So I look
9 forward to continuing the
10 conversation throughout this budget
11 cycle that addresses that number one
12 issue, right? And so I've talked to,
13 like, I talked to these folks that
14 we emphasize with them, we live
15 their life.

16 So if folks want to keep
17 talking about these unnamed
18 constituents, like these are the
19 people I'm talking to at these
20 places, places you're not there,
21 right? And we have to be that voice,
22 that voice to their government
23 because they deserve services too.

24 MS. THURMAN: Now, I agree

1 with you, but to suggest we're not
2 there, that's where we can agree to
3 disagree, because we are there. We
4 really are. And not just when a
5 shooting happens, we're there long
6 before the shooting happens. But
7 when the shooting happens, we're
8 there as well. And I echo your
9 passion. I feel that as well.

10 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: And
11 that's great to be there when the
12 shooting has happened.

13 MS. THURMAN: And I feel
14 that as well. Now, if there's an
15 opportunity to respond to you, I
16 will, but I will not out of respect
17 for you, go back and forth.

18 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: No,
19 no.

20 MS. THURMAN: If there's an
21 opportunity to respond, I will do
22 that. But if you don't want me to
23 respond, I'm also very happy to
24 listen. And I mean that. I mean

1 that.

2 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG:

3 Tiffany, and I'm not -- and I'm not
4 saying you cannot respond. I just
5 -- I want the record to just be
6 clear that I'm not saying that you
7 aren't doing these things. You are.
8 The Mayor has been there, the
9 Mayor's office has been there, the
10 administration has been there. I'm
11 not saying that the numbers don't
12 lie, things are coming down, right,
13 the numbers don't lie for
14 themselves, but when you look at the
15 budgetary priorities, right, that's
16 the thing. That's what I'm talking
17 about, that's it.

18 MS. THURMAN: And that's
19 where I would like the opportunity
20 to respond. I'm going to first kick
21 it over to Chief Deputy Mayor
22 Vanessa Garrett Harley, then
23 Commissioner Bethel, followed by
24 Adam Geer to talk about that 25

1 million. But I want you to know
2 before I kick it over to my
3 colleague, I hear you. I hear you.
4 I'm right there with you. I'm not
5 in a Ivy Tower. I'm not just in
6 City Hall. I'm in those same
7 neighborhoods that you're talking
8 about. I got -- I got friends that
9 live there. I got people who are
10 now family to me that live there.
11 That's where I dine. That's where I
12 spend my time when I'm not working
13 here. I'm in the neighborhoods.
14 So, but I hear you. I want you to
15 know that. It's not lost on me, and
16 it absolutely is not fallen on deaf
17 ears. I hear you. And it impacted
18 me. It impacted my best friend and
19 her brother, who is no longer here.
20 So I want you to know, I hear you.

21 MS. HARRIS: So,
22 Councilmember, first and foremost,
23 sorry for your loss. Please accept
24 my condolences and that of the

1 administration. I more than
2 understand your frustration. I
3 think my career work for the last
4 about 22, 25 years since I've been
5 at the city has been very focused on
6 children and youth issues, and not
7 the least of which is violence
8 prevention around that work. I
9 formally had the role of doing the
10 -- what is now under our Office of
11 Public Safety, but have been in all
12 of these communities where there
13 have been shootings. I have talked
14 to many of these folks, still talk
15 to many of the mothers who have lost
16 their children to gun violence,
17 unfortunately, have worked with many
18 organizations, including those of
19 Council president's and many of our
20 boots on the ground folks who are
21 actually doing that work. That will
22 never be a non-priority. It is
23 definitely the primary priority for
24 the merits, a primary priority for

1 me, even though technically, that is
2 not my portfolio anymore, I continue
3 to do that work because it means
4 that much, right, to me.

5 There's a significant
6 amount of money that you may not see
7 reflected in a line item that you
8 can just point to, though, in this
9 budget. In the juvenile justice
10 arena that we have under our
11 Department of Human Services. So we
12 not only run the PJJSC, and
13 obviously we want to catch these
14 young people before they ever come
15 there and change the trajectory of
16 their life before they get there.
17 But certainly, there is a
18 significant number of prevention
19 programs that we have, programs that
20 catch kids that are on the cusp of
21 delinquency, or some that have
22 already been in the system that we
23 are trying to change what they do.
24 We do a lot of work directly with

1 community organizers. And even for
2 our young people that are in the
3 PJJSC, we have programs that we
4 bring inside. We have even credible
5 messenger programs, because while
6 they may not listen to me or to you,
7 they may listen to somebody who has
8 that level of credibility and
9 influence out of the streets. And
10 we have a significant number of
11 people with lived experience who
12 come in and work with our young
13 people on a very regular basis.

14 I know that commissioner
15 Bethel is very committed to young
16 people, he can speak for himself in
17 a minute, but there's my radar
18 programs that we're doing with them
19 as well around diversion and other
20 diversion efforts, and there's money
21 that is being poured toward that.
22 We certainly continue to work very
23 significantly with our school
24 district and with all of the

1 partnerships where you would see
2 young people, our Parks & Rec, there
3 are numbers that would be embedded
4 within their budgets, even the
5 programs embedded within the Free
6 library's budget, which is to try to
7 offer those safe places and spaces
8 for young people to go.

9 You will soon hear us in
10 about another week or two, do a
11 presser about summer activities,
12 summer job activities, because we
13 all know that if we can keep young
14 people busy and we want to keep them
15 safe in every way we can. I'm
16 working with Councilwoman Gilmore-
17 Gilmore-Richardson, the CERC, as we
18 call them, or the Community Evening
19 Resource Centers, is another place
20 where we've opened these young
21 people are going. We have almost
22 1,400 visits already this year.
23 There are places and spaces, but it
24 is foremost in our minds as to how

1 we do everything we can to try to
2 keep these young people safe, even
3 trying to build into conflict
4 resolution, into curriculums, and
5 everything else to try to show them
6 a different way. But I will turn it
7 over to our Commissioner Bethel.
8 But I want to assure you, it is
9 first and foremost in the minds of
10 many of us, and I'm born and bred in
11 this city.

12 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: And I
13 know that.

14 MS. HARRIS: I come out of
15 North Philly, and I have probably
16 been to as many funerals as you
17 have, unfortunately.

18 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: And I
19 agree.

20 MS. HARRIS: And so I feel
21 where you're coming from.

22 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: And I
23 agree with all of that, and I know
24 that these programs exist. I'm not

1 saying that the work is not being
2 done, but what I'm saying is in this
3 document, right, where's that's a
4 priority. When we're talking to the
5 residents of the city of
6 Philadelphia, the constituents of
7 the city of Philadelphia, for the
8 first time, they're represented with
9 this. There's nothing in here that
10 talks about that. That's, you know,
11 I'm not saying the work isn't being
12 done. I see it.

13 With my office works with Blue's
14 Office, the Office of Victim
15 Advocate.

16 MS. HARRIS: Understood.

17 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: You
18 know, we do. We know it exists, but
19 I want the communities to know that
20 they exist too.

21 MS. THURMAN: And that's
22 the reason why we do the Budget Town
23 halls. We're go -- we don't expect
24 the community to tune in and watch

1 this hours and hours and long
2 hearing, we're going to the
3 community, both through the
4 neighborhood action centers ongoing,
5 but in our budget town halls.

6 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: It's
7 not hours.

8 MS. THURMAN: And beyond
9 the budget town halls.

10 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: This
11 don't -- this won't take hours.
12 This don't take hours.

13 MS. THURMAN: So what I'm
14 -- what I'm saying is that whether
15 it's in that document or not, this
16 is a government that you can see,
17 touch, and feel. That's our
18 administration. We're coming to
19 your neighborhood. We've been there
20 before, we're there now, and we'll
21 be there in a couple of weeks again,
22 talking about this budget. We've
23 taken a three-pronged approach:
24 Prevention, intervention, and

1 enforcement. That's the holistic
2 approach.

3 So I hear what you're
4 saying, and I agree with you. I
5 absolutely agree with you. No
6 doubt, no doubt. No defense at all
7 here. I agree with you.

8 Commissioner Bethel is going to talk
9 about the work that we're doing
10 around intervention and enforcement,
11 and then we'll also talk about
12 prevention with the time allowed
13 through Director Geer.

14 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank
15 you.

16 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: Ready
17 to say something?

18 MS. THURMAN: Please
19 proceed.

20 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: Okay.
21 Yeah. So I -- I listen, then I hear
22 you. I think all of us understand
23 that, I've been at it almost 40
24 years. The amount of death I've

1 seen as a child growing up in West
2 Philadelphia and coming in this
3 department, and the reason I came
4 back to the department for that same
5 purpose of whether we can -- how we
6 can change, and how we work to make
7 sure we reduce the level of violence
8 in the city.

9 The Mayor said her from the
10 time I walked in the door, from the
11 time I met her before I took this
12 job, Kev, we have to get this
13 violence under control. And for the
14 first time, we are heading in that
15 direction. I know you're
16 frustrated, but in that era of
17 juveniles, we're down significantly
18 in a number of young people who've
19 gotten killed under the age of 18.
20 And we're down significantly in the
21 kids from 18 to 34.

22 And that's not because
23 Kevin Bethel's sitting here, it's
24 because of all the people -- some

1 people in this room, a lot of people
2 in this room, the work that you are
3 doing, Councilman is doing, and the
4 folks out there in the field who are
5 touching these young people each and
6 every day.

7 And so, as we weave our
8 work, I think it was said
9 appropriately, a lot of this stuff
10 you don't see councilman because
11 it's already woven into a lot of the
12 work that we're already doing. For
13 example, you know, we work around
14 our prevention work.

15 I have the Powell Centers,
16 I have 15 Powell Centers, those are
17 publicly funded, millions of dollars
18 that pour into our communities, but
19 not sewn on the sheet because it's
20 outside of the work that we do.
21 When I talk about our diversion
22 program, where we're working
23 upfront, our school diversion
24 started almost 10 years ago.

1 Commissioner Ali is in
2 here, and I think others where we
3 have all of the COAs have been
4 supporting us since day one. And
5 we've diverted almost 3,500 young
6 people into programming to be able
7 to turn them in a different
8 direction, and it's going
9 phenomenally well. The recidivate
10 rate for those young people are so
11 down.

12 And now we've expanded that
13 citywide to work -- now we're doing
14 diversion in the community. A young
15 person that we engaged for the first
16 time was done a low level offense,
17 and we're now looking to use CERC,
18 but we're using the COAs and we're
19 using the Juvenile Assessment
20 Center. All that stuff it's cost.

21 I have 11 men and women
22 dedicated to the Juvenile Assessment
23 Center. I just trained them into be
24 youth specialists to go out in the

1 community and work with young
2 people. And so, as we do all of
3 this layer of perk, I worked with
4 the, you know, public safety, Adam
5 Geer, we are locked in step, but
6 that was a new position that was
7 created. And Brilly is bringing in.

8 So their GVI program is
9 really working with us. Now they're
10 doing GVI group violence initiative
11 with teenagers.

12 We're also launching a
13 program -- a group -- a gang youth
14 reduction program in your zip code
15 19121, where we're -- but guess
16 what? That's coming from other
17 dollars, and we have a grant that we
18 got from the state. It's almost a
19 800, \$900,000 of money that you
20 won't see on the books, but that
21 we're using. So we're also using
22 other dollars.

23 And so I know you hear it,
24 but I can tell you for the first

1 time, and I've been at a long time,
2 that for the first time we're seeing
3 a lot of synergy around our young
4 people, our work with my school
5 district, you know, with the
6 corridor program that I started
7 before I left the school district,
8 and we continue to this day.

9 I'm working on a program --
10 a project with a doctor from -- a
11 doctor from Stoneleigh Foundation.
12 She's actually looking at data
13 before I left the school safety. So
14 going back in time to see where
15 could we intersect young people and
16 see where we can touch them earlier
17 in the process, and she does that
18 well. For the first time, we'll
19 have some variables.

20 Council, we have -- I have
21 1,600 people that have been shot
22 more than twice. I've got almost
23 300 -- almost 300 people have been
24 shot three times. I have a guy been

1 shot six times, right? I mean, and
2 so, yeah. It's something that's
3 been entrenched for a long time.

4 But I can tell you, we've
5 been fully supported. Everything
6 that you, the Council, has given me,
7 even when we talk about our victim
8 advocates, the money that came from
9 this Council. I have now victim
10 advocates working with homicide to
11 work with families to support them
12 when they have a death, a tragic
13 loss.

14 And because all of that
15 untangling of the conflict, all of
16 that stuff that GVI is doing, going
17 to the homes, and I know I'm -- I'm
18 still talking about Adam's stuff. I
19 hear your frustration, but I've been
20 at it a long time. It's different
21 now. I feel a difference, I feel a
22 level of collaboration I have not
23 seen in a long time. I think we're
24 headed in the right direction. It's

1 not about the money.

2 See, I could put money down
3 here all day. I seen money get
4 spent. I seen millions and millions
5 and we ain't getting nothing done.
6 And really, it's not about the
7 money, it's about the work. And I
8 think if everybody focus on the
9 work, we can get these things that
10 you want get done and do it
11 effectively.

12 But about the dollars, I've
13 seen a lot of money get wasted. I'm
14 looking at Sue Slawson across of me
15 running the recs. Man, we're --
16 we're lockstep. What she needs, I
17 got for her, protect her rec
18 centers, get around their pools,
19 make sure that's a safe place for
20 us.

21 And so just, I would just
22 -- I hear you, but I would just tell
23 you, in my experience, things are
24 different now. And it's not about

1 the money, it's people care about
2 our kids. They want the what you
3 want and we want it in a different
4 way, and that's got to cost money.
5 It's going cost money because we
6 can't get it done ourselves. And so
7 I just -- I'll just stay there. Oh,
8 you can pull up. No, okay.

9 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

10 RICHARDSON: Okay. Thank you very
11 much, colleague. And I just, I want
12 to say this for the record, if it's
13 okay, colleague. We're all very
14 sorry for your loss collectively as
15 a Council body and as colleagues.
16 And we feel your pain, we want you
17 to know that we are with you and
18 we're supporting you, your family
19 and community during this time.

20 And I'll just ask that if
21 we could follow-up -- we're not
22 going to do any more on that
23 particular question for this round.
24 And I ask that if the administration

1 would follow-up with Councilmember
2 Young. Okay. Thank you very much.

3 MS. THURMAN: Absolutely.
4 Thank you.

5 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
6 RICHARDSON: Okay. Thank you.
7 We're going to move on to Round 2.
8 Okay. For round 2, we'll have two
9 minutes for this round. The Chair
10 now recognizes Councilmember
11 Gauthier.

12 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:
13 Thank you. Although
14 Philadelphia's Parks & Recreation
15 system offers great access across
16 the system to people from
17 neighborhoods all over the city, it
18 is well documented that as a city,
19 we spend less on Parks & Recreation
20 per person and per capita than many
21 other big cities.
22 It is also well documented
23 that the quality of Parks &
24 Recreation space varies greatly

1 depending on your race and your
2 income. And so in whiter, wealthier
3 areas, there tend to be more high
4 quality public spaces than in
5 neighborhoods that are black and
6 brown and poorer.

7 Given that context, I
8 noticed that parks and recreations
9 budget seems to have decreased by 8
10 percent or about 7.3 million due to
11 cuts in class 200, in classes 300,
12 and 400. Can you explain those
13 reductions? And then also, I see
14 that Parks & Recs staffing budget
15 has remained flat.

16 As Commissioner Slawson
17 knows because I've bugged her about
18 it a lot. I've been trying to get
19 PPR staff person to help manage two
20 very vibrant parks and parks with a
21 lot of needs in my district, Malcolm
22 X Park and Clark Park. We've been
23 working on this for two years now,
24 spanning two mayoral

1 administrations.

2 And, you know, these are
3 well used parks, these are parks,
4 you know, that people love to
5 frequent, but it's -- they are also
6 parks where we have issues with
7 dumping, where we're trying to form
8 some order among vendors, where we
9 have issues helping unhoused people
10 and people with drug use disorders.

11 So can you first speak to
12 the proposed budget cuts of 7.3
13 million, and then can you next speak
14 to why we're keeping the staffing
15 budget for Parks & Recreation flat
16 when we have a lot of needs for
17 staffing and programming across our
18 Parks & Recreation system.

19 MS. MAYNARD: Thank you.
20 So there were some one-time things
21 in FY '25 that we added in the
22 transfer ordinance. And so that
23 includes Lemon Hill Prep, that was
24 several million dollars. And then

1 there's also -- there was funding
2 for the Youth Sports Initiative. I
3 think they're still spending a lot
4 of that down, so we had set that up
5 as one time, but there's some more
6 money in '26, so we're kind of
7 working through that.

8 We didn't want to add money
9 until that was spent. And then
10 there were a couple of other kind of
11 supply related items that were
12 one-time in the proposed transfer
13 ordinance. In terms of these
14 staffing, I think perhaps Parks &
15 Rec can talk about some of what
16 they're doing to filler vacancies.

17 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

18 Can you slow down a little bit?

19 MS. MAYNARD: Sure. Sorry.

20 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: I
21 don't understand.

22 MS. BROOKS: Sorry.

23 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

24 Just slow down a little bit.

1 MS. BROOKS: I know I talk
2 too fast.

3 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:
4 Break down the 7.3 million and what
5 that cut entails with a little more
6 detail.

7 MS. BROOKS: Sure. So the
8 FY '25 number, the current estimate
9 includes some things that are
10 non-recurring. And so in our first
11 transfer ordinance, we included
12 about 5 million for Lemon Hill
13 Related Prep for 2026, so that's a
14 piece of it. There was also some
15 one-time sports fund funding in FY
16 '25 that doesn't recur because Parks
17 & Rec is still spending it down.

18 And then there were a
19 couple of supply related items, and
20 then some tree pruning funding that
21 was -- or sorry, some -- a couple
22 things that were one-time. We can
23 get you a list of what the items
24 were. But the big one is the Lemon

1 Hill site prep in FY '25.

2 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

3 Can you -- do you know, if
4 you take out these one-time items,
5 do you know how sort of the normal
6 Parks & Rec budget compares to this
7 year?

8 MS. BROOKS: It should not
9 be a reduction.

10 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

11 Thank you so much.

12 MS. BROOKS: Okay. Yep.

13 MS. THURMAN: I'd like to
14 call up a Commissioner Sue Slawson
15 to talk about the quality of our --
16 of our programs, of our system, and
17 to also to speak to some of the
18 points that you made about the
19 budget for Parks & Recreation in
20 comparison to other cities. We know
21 that the amenities, the
22 infrastructure is much bigger than
23 even larger cities like the City of
24 New York, so I'll kick it over now

1 to Commissioner Slawson.

2 MS. SLAWSON: Good

3 afternoon, Sue Slawson, Commissioner
4 for Parks & Recreation. Thank you,
5 Councilmember for bringing up those
6 questions. One of the things that
7 when you look at the differences
8 Philadelphia Parks & Recreation in
9 other cities, some, there's really
10 no comparison. There's no other
11 city that has 70 pools. We have
12 more pools per capita than any city
13 in the country.

14 When you look at
15 facilities, most facilities, most
16 cities don't have 159 rec
17 facilities, they don't have 10,000
18 plus acres. And so there are a
19 number of things that just don't
20 balance out when we are compared
21 against other parks and recreations.

22 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

23 And I do acknowledge that
24 we have a massive system. It

1 provides good geographic access to
2 people all over the city. I think
3 I'm talking more about spending that
4 would get us to where we need to be
5 with respect to equitable quality
6 and staffing and programming.

7 MS. SLAWSON: I think that
8 Sabrina addressed the budget and the
9 fact that we really aren't cut.
10 There were some one-time
11 opportunities that we're trying to
12 prepare for 2026. And that's really
13 all it is. Our budget is -- hasn't
14 been cut.

15 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:
16 And are you all going to speak to
17 the staffing piece or?

18 MS. SLAWSON: What's your
19 question about staff?

20 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:
21 How are we thinking about increased
22 staffing, giving the needs of some
23 of our parks? I talked about two
24 parks in my district specifically

1 that are highly used and highly
2 trafficked that we really do need
3 more of a staff presence. I imagine
4 that other council districts
5 experience this as well. How do we
6 meet those needs with a flat
7 staffing budget?

8 MS. SLAWSON: So it's not
9 that the budget's flat, it's the
10 opportunity for us to actually get
11 the staff in. So we are working
12 with HR, we are constantly doing --
13 going out, even next month, we're
14 having a opportunity for hiring at
15 the Dell Music Center. It is not
16 funding, it is getting people in to
17 actually take the jobs.

18 So I think a lot of people
19 are struggling with identifying
20 people that want to come in and work
21 for different positions. So we're
22 advertising, we are on the radio, we
23 have, even in our facilities, we're
24 letting people know, we're trying to

1 get people in to get jobs. It's not
2 that we don't have the funding,
3 we're looking for staff. And so we
4 actually would be happy to give you
5 information to assist us. Because
6 you and I have talked about this, so
7 we are working very hard to bring
8 people into our system. The
9 funding's there, we need the people.

10 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

11 Thank you. Thank you, Madam Chair.

12 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

13 RICHARDSON: Thank you.

14 Councilmember Gauthier, The Chair
15 now recognizes Councilmember Brooks.

16 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:

17 Thank you so much. So HIPAA permits
18 general analysis of population. So
19 I want to ask some broad questions
20 about the Wellness Court system.

21 There has not been much public
22 discussion about how effective these
23 plans are. I would like to get some
24 specific numbers on participation.

1 So I have like five questions. The
2 first is: What is the percentage of
3 people who have accepted the offer
4 of Wellness Court in lieu of jail?
5 The second question is: What
6 percentage of people who agree to
7 attend rehab in Wellness Court are
8 actually showing up for court? And
9 how many people have received
10 services pursuant to the Wellness
11 Court outcome? How many people ended
12 up in supportive housing? And how
13 much has the Wellness Court costs
14 since January?

15 MR. GEER: Thank you,
16 Councilmember. Good afternoon.

17 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Good
18 afternoon.

19 MR. GEER: So we can tell
20 you approximately 35 people, right,
21 and this is operating once a week
22 have entered into the Wellness Court
23 system. Beyond that, we will get
24 you more answers in terms of numbers

1 that we can share. Keep in mind
2 though that this is operating at one
3 day a week, and we're not going to
4 put a strain on any of our systems.
5 The idea is, right, it's a pilot, is
6 to move slowly. And now with the
7 Mayor's proposal, where we're able
8 to increase five days a week, we
9 will plan for that and make sure
10 that is in an intentional and well
11 thought out scaling up because we're
12 dealing with people's lives. And to
13 the extent that we can share
14 information across the board, we
15 will continue to share that
16 information.

17 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:

18 Okay.

19 MS. THURMAN: So for the
20 record Councilmember, it's been six
21 weeks and we -- but values based,
22 data driven, it's something that we
23 preach ongoing about all of our
24 programs. So those are metrics that

1 we can provide in the future. We
2 don't have it now, not because we're
3 not prepared, it's only been six
4 weeks.

5 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:

6 Okay. So we could just wait on some
7 more data maybe.

8 MS. THURMAN: Yes, ma'am.

9 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: By
10 the end of the summer or mid-summer,
11 will we have more data on? I mean,
12 because part of it is the increased
13 expense of this whole system that we
14 created, and if we don't have
15 numbers, how do we know that it's
16 worth us spending, I don't remember
17 what the --

18 MS. THURMAN: I think six
19 months.

20 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: --
21 hundreds of millions of dollars that
22 was asked for?

23 MS. THURMAN: That's fair.

24 And I think six months is a really

1 good interval, so absolutely.

2 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:

3 Okay. I think that was that. I
4 have a few more. Should I wait to
5 the next round?

6 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

7 RICHARDSON: Yes.

8 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: Yes.

9 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

10 RICHARDSON: Okay. Thank you,
11 Councilmember Brooks. The Chair now
12 recognizes Councilmember O'Rourke.

13 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

14 Thank you, Madam Leader. I have
15 raised concerns all of us have about
16 federal uncertainty and the risks to
17 small businesses. All while large
18 corporations stand to benefit from
19 the Mayor's tax plan. Meanwhile,
20 this budget proposes significant
21 service cuts for Philadelphia's
22 working families.

23 I'd like to clarify these
24 cuts for the record explicitly not

1 to obscure them in record. So if
2 the answer is yes, say yes. If the
3 answer is no, say no. Again, just
4 trying to get it clearly on the
5 record. Is it true that the Mayor's
6 proposed budget cuts 9 million from
7 the fire department?

8 MS. THURMAN: No.

9 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:
10 Does this budget cut nearly 5.6
11 million from the Office of Homeless
12 Services?

13 MS. THURMAN: No.

14 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE: Is
15 it true that the Mayor's proposed
16 budget cuts 1.1 million from the
17 Office of Community Empowerment and
18 Opportunity, an agency that also
19 heavily relies on federal grants?

20 MS. THURMAN: I will get
21 back to you on that.

22 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:
23 Does this budget eliminate the
24 city's Zero Fare Transit program,

1 which provides free transit to
2 35,000 of our poorest residents by
3 zeroing out its funding?

4 MS. THURMAN: Yes.

5 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

6 Thank you for those answers. I do
7 appreciate that, particularly around
8 the Zero Fare, and we talked about
9 this in our meeting. The cuts are
10 alarming for me. While large
11 corporations get tax breaks,
12 Philadelphia's working families are
13 seeing some of their essential
14 services, I believe, slashed. These
15 proposed cuts are not just numbers,
16 they represent real harm to the
17 people who need our support the
18 most. And eliminating the Zero Fare
19 Transit Program in particular
20 betrays a serious anti-poverty
21 strategy that actually helps boost
22 our struggling septic system in a
23 time where they keep talking about a
24 death spiral.

1 I wanted to shift a bit.
2 I've seen some very concerning
3 reporting about the use of our
4 opioid settlement grants. From my
5 understanding, the city has
6 previously contributed opioid
7 settlement dollars towards two grant
8 programs: The Overdose Prevention
9 and Community Healing Fund, and the
10 Kensington Community Resilience
11 Fund. These funds have used
12 participatory decision making to
13 allow the most impact to community
14 members to make decisions about the
15 types of programs and services that
16 they need to address the opioid
17 crisis and its impacts.

18 In 2024 alone, the
19 Prevention Fund distributed 3.1
20 million, I'm going to wrap up Madam
21 Leader, 3.1 million to 43
22 organizations. I'm concerned about
23 changes that the Parker
24 Administration has made to these

1 programs. Could you confirm, has the
2 Parker administration officially
3 ended these two grant programs,
4 which we have -- which have been
5 managed by the Scattergood
6 Foundation?

7 MS. THURMAN: We have not
8 ended it, but we're not working with
9 the Scattergood Foundation for that
10 fund -- for those funds. So we are
11 -- we are still doing that grant
12 program, we're working with another
13 entity to ensure that more dollars
14 are going directly to the community.
15 We're also working in close
16 coordination with Councilmember
17 Lozada and the Kensington Caucus
18 around that decision making. So
19 that's really important to me. You
20 know, you talk about participatory
21 decision making, but not everyone
22 was involved in that participatory
23 decision making. With this new
24 process, we're going to ensure that

1 all community members as well as
2 working with Councilmember Lozada's
3 office are involved in that process.

4 Going back to SEPTA just
5 for, because that yes or no
6 question, I actually like the round
7 of yes or no questions, but I do
8 want to say that you mentioned the
9 death spiral with SEPTA. We've
10 worked very closely with SEPTA, with
11 the current GM, the Scott Sauer and
12 his team. And even before then when
13 Leslie Richards was there and their
14 chief of Staff, Elizabeth Smith,
15 who's both have gone on to other
16 roles now, we will continue to work
17 with them. We will continue to
18 support them through our budget, and
19 along with Y'all, advocate for, you
20 know, the Commonwealth to adopt the
21 governor's proposed budget. That
22 has not changed.

23 As with regards to the
24 program that you mentioned, that

1 program was a two-year pilot funded
2 by ARPA Funds. Those funds have
3 dried out, and we have chosen not to
4 continue that pilot, but that is not
5 to suggest in any way that we do not
6 support SEPTA and that we're not
7 concerned about their fiscal health.
8 So I just want to note that for the
9 record.

10 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

11 Thank you, Chief. Madam Leader, can
12 I squeeze my other questions in real
13 quick and get off your mic? Yes. On
14 that point heard and also
15 recognizing the programs that
16 actually directly attack poverty in
17 the city, I believe this is one of
18 those things, and that's, I think
19 more the point I wanted to make as
20 it relates to those in terms of how
21 much of a -- how much bang you get
22 for your buck. I know it was ARPA
23 funded, but 35,000 people in the
24 city being able to have that sort of

1 transit is something that I think
2 would be essential in a city like
3 ours if we're actively trying to
4 move against that. But let me get
5 these other questions around the
6 wellness village. What percentage
7 of the city's opioid settlement
8 funds are currently going towards,
9 or plans to go towards the Wellness
10 Village ecosystem? And I've also
11 been concerned about more
12 sustainable funding sources for the
13 wellness ecosystem. Are the
14 providers who are offering services
15 at the Wellness Village being
16 reimbursed by Medicaid? Like what's
17 the long-term revenue plan for the
18 project on that point? And if you
19 could get answer those questions,
20 that'd be great. Thank you, Madam
21 Leader for your Grace.

22 MS. THURMAN: Thank you so
23 much. So to answer the question,
24 first, I, of course, our budget

1 director is coming up, but I --
2 Sabrina Maynard, but I would also
3 like to call up Managing Director
4 Teal to talk more holistically about
5 the wellness Philly ecosystem and
6 provider our long-term funding as
7 well.

8 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

9 Thank you.

10 MS. MAYNARD: Thank you.

11 So for the opioid settlement funds,
12 roughly a quarter is going to
13 non-wellness items. So that includes
14 programming at the prisons for MAT
15 Behind the Walls, 175 Housing
16 Continuum, OHS Beds, CEO Outreach,
17 the Wound Care van, and so that's
18 about \$50 million over the proposed
19 plan. And so the remainder would be
20 for wellness. I'll turn it over to
21 --

22 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

23 Madam Leader, Councilmember Adam
24 Teal, the managing director.

1 Councilmember, the providers that we
2 are partnering with across our
3 ecosystem, most of them are when
4 they're able to seeking Medicaid
5 reimbursement. And we are also
6 working with the Commonwealth and a
7 number of others to help change the
8 way that system works so we can have
9 more opportunities to recover those
10 dollars.

11 And we are also working
12 with, as you've heard Mayor Parker
13 say anybody who has a nickel-
14 and-a-quarter to contribute to this
15 core public safety function to find
16 other ways to provide the ongoing
17 funding, both operating and capital
18 that is going to be required to
19 operate this system. Still with the
20 idea, we hope, and we said this last
21 year still, this is the -- this is
22 the hope. And again, with, I think
23 now we are showing we are able to do
24 this, we are showing the concept

1 works while still early.

2 We are hoping that
3 eventually there will be a market,
4 we're hoping to catalyze a market
5 for providing these services where
6 there is currently the gap, which is
7 in recovery. We have also shown
8 over the past year, there is some
9 elasticity in the market for the
10 front-end services, for the
11 treatment services. We've seen an
12 expansion in treatment beds, about
13 600 treatment beds across the
14 ecosystem. Those are not city
15 supplied, those are our partners who
16 are expanding that front end. We
17 still have that gap in recovery. We
18 are hoping that eventually there
19 will be other mechanisms to address
20 that gap besides the city doing it
21 still right now. There is nobody
22 else to do that but us.

23 COUNCILMEMBER O'ROURKE:

24 And so in my conclusion, I'll just

1 say that the raise -- I raised this
2 question around sustainability for
3 the long-term. There needs to be a
4 sustainable funding plan. Like what
5 is the backup plan if Medicaid
6 actually gets wiped at the federal
7 level part, like if, if that's gone,
8 that's a big deal. And so I just
9 want to make sure that we raise that
10 and at least that we're focusing on
11 it. Thank Y'all for your time and
12 answering the questions. Thank you,
13 Mr. Chairman. Mr. President.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

15 Thank you. The Chair recognizes
16 Member Phillips.

17 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:

18 Thank you, Council President. I too
19 just want to echo that I really felt
20 the --

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

22 Member Phillips, just for one
23 second. I just want to clarify,
24 there won't be a third round. We

1 are at 4:00 o'clock, we will be
2 wrapping up. And so I just want
3 members to be direct, and straight
4 to the point with your questioning,
5 and likewise, in terms of response,
6 let's just get right to, you know,
7 the actual response because I know a
8 couple times, which I think is
9 great, three, four people
10 responding, which is great because
11 that shows Y'all engaged. But
12 likewise, the whole commentary
13 before we ask the question, if you
14 want to get it in this realm before
15 we leave, just want to state for the
16 record, this needs to be real
17 direct. Councilman Phillips.

18 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:
19 Thank you. I'll just give right to
20 the questions. For the Department
21 of Labor, I just wanted to raise a
22 couple questions. Last year, FY '25
23 budget cut \$400,000 from the
24 Department of Labor. What were the

1 impacts that cut had in terms of the
2 difference in worker violations,
3 cases investigated, and the
4 comparative wait time for each
5 reported violation? What is the
6 current number of back law cases and
7 the time each has been waiting?

8 MS. MAYNARD: So in terms
9 of comparing the budget from year-
10 to-year, so in FY '25 and the
11 transfer ordinance, we're proposing
12 adding a million dollars for their
13 arbitration costs. That's one-time
14 money, so that won't recur in '26,
15 so that'll look like a reduction. I
16 can call up the folks from labor to
17 talk more about the other questions
18 you raised.

19 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:
20 Thank you.

21 MS. MAYNARD: I'm sorry.

22 MS. THURMAN: Thank you,
23 Councilmember Phillips. And I'm
24 going to call up Deputy Director of

1 Labor, Cara Leheny, to get into more
2 detail, but in terms of your
3 question about last year, and I know
4 Sabrina addressed the difference
5 between FY '25 and '26, but last
6 year's difference was solely about
7 one-time payouts and potential
8 bonuses that just didn't carry over
9 as well.

10 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:

11 Thank you.

12 MS. LEHENY: Good
13 afternoon, Councilmember. My name
14 is Cara Leheny. I'm the first
15 Deputy Director of the Labor
16 Department. I apologize, because I
17 am going ask you to repeat sort of
18 your --

19 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:

20 Yeah, absolutely.

21 MS. LEHENY: You asked
22 about the 400,000 I think since I
23 already answered that.

24 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:

1 Yeah. What were the -- what were
2 the impact of that change? That
3 there was a, you know, what are the
4 current number of back law cases in
5 the time it has been taken to
6 investigate them?

7 MS. THURMAN: And I'm
8 sorry, Councilmember, which backlog
9 and -- and we have four units, three
10 of which do investigations, which
11 unit are you specifically referring
12 to?

13 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:
14 This is the -- hold on, this is the
15 department of -- I'm not exactly
16 sure. I didn't know that you had
17 different those. Let me come back
18 to that question so I get more
19 specific to that.

20 MS. THURMAN: We'll, answer
21 to the sub-urban.

22 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:
23 Okay. Got you. I didn't know it
24 was debt and nuance.

1 MS. LEHENY: What I can say
2 Councilmember immediately is that
3 the difference between FY '24 and FY
4 '25 of that \$400,000 didn't impact
5 our investigative capacity at all.
6 As was stated, those were -- those
7 funds were associated with terminal
8 leave payouts for some longstanding
9 employees who were dropping and
10 things like that. So that didn't --
11 that didn't impact our capacity to
12 investigate.

13 I'm going to have to get
14 you data on our -- on backlogs in
15 any particular area. So I could
16 either try to gather that
17 information and for everything added
18 to you later, if you want to tell us
19 if there's one particular office or
20 unit in mind that you have,
21 whichever you prefer, we'll get that
22 information for you.

23 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:
24 Okay. And then also, just for the

1 sake of thought, many workers have
2 spoken to our offices about fair
3 retaliation in the form of lost
4 hours being fired -- being fired,
5 and other threats. With an
6 increased budget, how will the
7 Department of Labor take action to
8 mitigate retaliation and widespread
9 fear of retaliation among low wage
10 workers?

11 MS. LEHENY: Well, I'm
12 going to speak directly about our
13 Office of Worker Protection and our
14 Office of Labor Standards. Those
15 are our external facing offices.

16 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:
17 Okay.

18 MS. LEHENY: And both of
19 them do excellent work in this area.
20 I'll start with the Office of Worker
21 Protection. First of all, they have
22 an out -- they have a community
23 outreach program and they go out and
24 they -- and they educate the work --

1 the Philadelphia workforce and
2 employers as to the worker
3 protection laws that this Council
4 has passed. So that's the first
5 step that we take: trying to get
6 people to understand what their
7 rights are.

8 The second step is that OWP
9 will investigate complaints
10 anonymously. They will do what's
11 called a wall-to-wall investigation,
12 they won't focus on a particular
13 person. They'll look at the entire
14 workforce of that site or wherever
15 the complaint comes from. So they
16 have ways of protecting
17 complainants.

18 Finally, they also -- there
19 are also anti-retaliation provisions
20 built into those ordinances that
21 Council has passed, and OWP
22 investigates and enforces those.
23 The Office of Labor Standards, that
24 office is charged with

1 monitoring the projects where the
2 city is contracted for \$100,000 or
3 more, that's something like 470 to
4 500 projects right now. They
5 actively go out, they're proactive,
6 they interview people on site, they
7 start finding out if, you know, are
8 people getting paid properly
9 according to prevailing wage and the
10 fringe benefits that are associated
11 with that? What about the diversity
12 requirements that are required by
13 our code? Things like that. The
14 apprentice ratio, they're asking all
15 of those questions. Again, they are
16 doing comprehensive project wide
17 investigations. They don't reveal
18 that someone may have picked up the
19 phone and said, I don't think I'm
20 being paid properly. They go out
21 and they look at the entire project.

22 COUNCILMEMBER PHILLIPS:

23 Okay. All right. Thank you,
24 Council President.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
2 Thank you. Before I got it right --
3 before I call on the next member, we
4 have members from the -- we have the
5 Mayor, vice president, and their
6 Council from Frankfurt, Germany,
7 which is our sister of city, just
8 celebrating 10 years partnering with
9 the City of Philadelphia to say
10 hello. They're here watching
11 government in action. The Chair
12 recognizes Councilmember Dr. Nina
13 Ahmad, and then next I have
14 Councilmember Majority Gilmore-
15 Gilmore-Richardson, then I have
16 after that Councilmember Jim
17 Harrity, then we're going to circle
18 back to Councilmember Jeffrey J.
19 Young, and then if we could squeeze
20 in, if it's before 4:00 o'clock,
21 we'll have Jamie Gauthier, Brooks,
22 and Lozada just give their last
23 brief statement before we wrap up.
24 And just for the record,

1 this is the five-year plan, but also
2 individual departments will be
3 coming back, and so we'll do a
4 double follow-up regarding the
5 issues and concerns that we want to
6 address. This is just the beginning
7 of the process today, so we've got a
8 very long way to go.

9 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Thank
10 you, Council President.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
12 Dr. Ahmad.

13 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Yeah,
14 thank you, Council President. I
15 wanted to just go back about the
16 proposal to eliminate the 1 percent
17 Development Impact fund. I wanted
18 to know what impact on the NPI bond
19 issue of the 127 million that
20 happened in 2024 as the development
21 impact fee was part of the bundle of
22 revenues to back that bond issue. I
23 remember Rob telling us -- Mr. Dubow
24 telling us it was not a huge amount,

1 it was 3 million. I just wanted to
2 know what the impact was on that
3 revenue bond.

4 MR. MONDLAK: Right. And
5 like the bonds we're considering.
6 Now, those bonds were covered by all
7 of the revenues of the general fund,
8 but development impact tax was
9 introduced to try to help pay for
10 those bonds. It never generated
11 what we thought it was going to, it
12 generates about three and a half
13 million dollars a year. So the
14 bonds have really been paying off,
15 been paid off with -- are being paid
16 off with other revenues, so that tax
17 going away has no impact on our
18 ability to repay the bonds.

19 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Okay.
20 Thank you for the clarification. My
21 next question is about the
22 impressive and ambitious housing
23 plan. I just wanted to know what
24 percentage of that plan had mixed

1 use, mixed income, and for the mixed
2 income space, where I think that
3 actually addresses the issue of
4 quality as well, I've seen this work
5 in New York, I've seen it in
6 different parts of New York, I've
7 seen the first person in Brooklyn
8 works really well, and so I wanted
9 to know what we were going to do in
10 our plan here.

11 And the second part of the
12 question is: Once we have, you
13 know, these new developments coming
14 up, the impact of that on the
15 property values and thereby property
16 taxes of longtime residents who may
17 not be able to afford this upswing
18 in their taxes, are we going to have
19 a plan to mitigate that in a way
20 that they're counseled and offered
21 resources such as LOOP and other,
22 you know, tax freezes and such in a
23 very comprehensive way?

24 MR. LAWRENCE: So I think

1 your first question was what the
2 percentages amongst everything was?
3 Just to be clear about what I can
4 provide as far as the unit
5 breakdown, 30,000 units obviously
6 are of the total. Of those 30,000
7 units, we are earmarking for
8 production 44,850 for ownership
9 opportunities, and the rest of that
10 8,850 for rental opportunities.
11 Now, it doesn't necessarily
12 break down as far as unit types and
13 building types, but to break it
14 further down on the affordable --
15 affordability levels that we're
16 estimating at the moment, of that
17 4,850 for ownership and production,
18 approximately 1,400 of those will be
19 for the affordable band, which is 30
20 to 50 percent in our plan. For
21 workforce housing, 2,100. And that
22 band is from 50 to 80 percent, and
23 that's for ownership, I'm still
24 talking about.

1 For Workforce plus, which
2 is 80 percent to 120 percent, we are
3 estimating at 1,100, and for market
4 rate within that same ownership
5 structure is for 150 units. Also in
6 production for a rental, we are
7 looking to have 1,800 for the deeply
8 affordable bands, so that's
9 everything below 30 percent of AMI.

10 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: And
11 only that one kind of housing in
12 that kind of -- in that 1,800?

13 MR. LAWRENCE: So again,
14 these don't specialties don't --
15 there are no subcategories for what
16 types of housing yet. Right now
17 we're just at a level of focusing on
18 how many units we're looking to
19 yield and to what extent we are
20 trying to target certain
21 affordability bands.

22 So again, with rental,
23 2,500 for affordable opportunities,
24 on production, again, 30 percent to

1 50 percent, for workforce housing,
2 50 percent to 80 percent, we're
3 looking at 2,900 units, and for
4 workforce plus, it's 1,400 units in
5 the rental side. And for market
6 rate, which is above 120 percent of
7 AMI, that's 150 units as well. So
8 on the flip side for preservation
9 opportunities, those numbers start
10 to jump a lower AMIs because we're
11 uphold -- we're standing up
12 investing in expanding a lot of the
13 preservation opportunities as they
14 exist now, and then also investing
15 in some new opportunities as well.

16 As it stands right now,
17 DHCD's funding most of it, at least
18 50 percent of it does target those
19 lower incomes right now. So we're
20 keeping that same pace, keeping that
21 same approach, 5,600 units for
22 preservation, 9,400 units for
23 preservation -- I'm sorry, not --
24 5,600 units for preservation at

1 deeply affordable opportunities.
2 For affordable opportunities, 9,400
3 units and preservation. For
4 workforce housing, 1,200 units for
5 preservation, and for workforce
6 plus, at least 100 units to be
7 affected.

8 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: So we
9 didn't talk about, these are just
10 the actual units. Are they going to
11 be mixed in terms of mixed income in
12 the same building for affordable --
13 different levels of affordability?

14 MR. LAWRENCE: It's a
15 highly likely. So, you know, we are
16 looking at -- we don't specify what
17 unit types, but what I can share is
18 that it'll be a diverse approach in
19 our -- in our building. So it will
20 be some single families, there'll be
21 some duplexes, triplexes, quads as
22 well, but then we are also looking
23 to incentivize multifamily
24 development as well. And if we're

1 keeping on pace with what we do now
2 as far as those opportunities, where
3 there's a disposition policy that
4 does require some mixed income
5 opportunities on the publicly owned
6 land, we would anticipate that mix
7 being a model here.

8 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: So
9 highly recommend to have some of
10 these mixed income units for density
11 purposes as well, if we are going to
12 try to grow our population?

13 MR. LAWRENCE: That will be
14 ideal for us.

15 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Yeah,
16 thank you. And my very last
17 question is for the police
18 commissioner, very short question.
19 Last time we had heard about your
20 cadets being poached once they were
21 trained in -- by you, and then they
22 were poached by other counties and
23 other states, has that gone down or
24 are we still -- are we still facing

1 that problem, and should we have
2 some way to not allow people who've
3 been trained by us to be poached
4 within a certain timeframe?

5 MS. THURMAN: Councilmember
6 Ahmad, you also asked a question
7 around the impact on property value?

8 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Yes.

9 MS. THURMAN: Can we answer
10 that or would you like for us to --

11 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Yes,
12 please.

13 MS. THURMAN: So I want to
14 make sure I'm in keeping with the
15 guidance from the Council President.
16 That would mean calling up Greg
17 Heller, our consultant.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
19 Bring Greg, that's a very important.

20 MS. THURMAN: Thank you.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
22 Question. And I even want to push a
23 little further as it relates to Greg
24 can answer this question. So, for

1 instance, construction costs are
2 higher now, right? And so, even
3 though we Turn The Key, normally we
4 sell a house for 265,000, right? And
5 then you get the subsidy from the
6 city, and that'll get it down to
7 about 180 for a brand new house,
8 right, which is actually a pretty
9 good deal.

10 However, costs are up, and
11 so you'll have developers who are
12 participating in Turn The Key
13 program will say, well, at 280,
14 right, 280,000, right, you can pull
15 out the largest subsidy from the
16 city, which is \$70,000, right. That
17 will bring it down from 280 to 210,
18 right, and then you'll get another
19 10, 15,000 from the bank. So
20 they'll bring the house again down
21 to the same amount, roughly 190,
22 195, which is a deal, right, for a
23 brand new house. But that 265 to
24 285, right, increases the value of

1 the house next door to you, that may
2 be, let's say on the high end,
3 200,000, was 150,000, right?

4 So now that next door
5 neighbor that increase in value is
6 going to go up in their home, which
7 is a good thing, but as a result,
8 their taxes are going to go up and
9 so it's a legitimate question in
10 terms of how we make sure we're
11 staying in front of it and also
12 aren't perpetuating gentrification
13 in the process. So we're thinking
14 about it on the front end.

15 MS. THURMAN: Yes,
16 absolutely.

17 MR. HELLER: Good
18 afternoon. Greg Heller. I'm a
19 partner at Guidehouse Consultant
20 with the city. Yeah, Council
21 President, it's a great question.
22 There are several factors that are
23 connected to it. So Turn The Key
24 program is based on trying to

1 analyze what people within the
2 target income bans can afford, what
3 developers are building at, able to
4 build at based on current
5 construction prices, and making sure
6 that those home sales reflect market
7 values so that they don't unduly
8 shift market dynamics. So there are
9 several things that the Turn The Key
10 program elegantly does address and
11 has successfully.

12 On the flip side, you're
13 absolutely right that whether it's
14 Turn The Key or not, when real
15 estate prices start going up in a
16 neighborhood that affects other
17 properties. And so the city has a
18 number of programs like Homestead,
19 like Loop, and all the other
20 programs that we know about that are
21 intended to address those.

22 But all of those things are
23 interconnected, as you said, and so
24 it's really important that as the

1 city continue to shape these
2 programs, that they change with
3 changing market dynamics, that they
4 reflect changes in income, in home
5 sale values at the sub-market level,
6 construction costs, and I feel
7 confident that the city staff are
8 incorporating all of these
9 variables, so that the program can
10 continue to be priced correctly, can
11 do what it's supposed to do,
12 assisting first-time home buyers,
13 providing the right level of support
14 for the contractors and developers
15 in the program, and providing the
16 tax support on the back end so that
17 people can afford their property
18 taxes.

19 But you're absolutely
20 right. These are all interconnected
21 factors that these programs need to
22 make sure they're sized and shaped
23 correctly to be able to address.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

1 And, Greg, we'll work with
2 you on this two possible proposals:
3 One, from an intergovernmental
4 relations standpoint that we should
5 be lobbying and advocating and maybe
6 find someone to sponsor a bill, and
7 I have a person that probably would
8 carry the bill.

9 We were talking to
10 Representative Regina Young
11 regarding carrying a bill to expand
12 the criteria for senior citizens tax
13 freeze, right? That's a state-
14 related policy that has to change,
15 right? To freeze the taxes of our
16 seniors, and so we have to increase
17 that criteria, right? So that's
18 something I would like to figure out
19 how we work in partnership with the
20 state level.

21 And then also, obviously,
22 I'm a main proponent and chairman of
23 Loop, long-term owner occupants
24 program, which at one time it was

1 only for 10 years for long-term
2 residents, but now, it's for the
3 lifetime of you living inside your
4 home based upon your income
5 criteria.

6 However, what happens when,
7 and I know this happens a lot in
8 South Philadelphia, when mommy or
9 daddy pass away, and then the
10 children inherit the home, and they
11 may not even be -- have that
12 opportunity to incur and pay those
13 taxes, right? Because that just
14 might be what they're dealing with
15 in terms of some of our
16 neighborhoods.

17 So maybe looking at
18 expanding LOOP, right, to also cover
19 that next generation who inherit the
20 actual property. So that's
21 something we're going to explore as
22 well, just to make sure we are --
23 we're being preventative and we all
24 want, and I know about equity.

1 So yes, I want equity in
2 all the homes, definitely in my
3 home, I would like to have it, but
4 at the same time we want development
5 without displacement, right? And so
6 the more we think about it on the
7 front end, we can be able to
8 mitigate some of the issues that
9 could possibly have unintended
10 consequences down the line. And so
11 --

12 MS. THURMAN: And Council
13 President, a decade ago when I
14 worked for the Mayor as her
15 executive director of the
16 Philadelphia delegation with the
17 Pennsylvania House of
18 Representatives, when she was
19 delegation chair, we were huge
20 supporters of LOOP then, senior tax
21 freezes then, and even more now.

22 So absolutely, yes, we are
23 -- we are absolutely a part of -- in
24 support of that, but also seeing the

1 development happen without the
2 displacement. We know that there's
3 case studies around the country,
4 including the Dudley Street Project,
5 which is something that I love to,
6 you know, read about and study about
7 and we're going to see that here in
8 Philadelphia as well.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

10 Absolutely. Dr. Ahmad, any
11 other questions before?

12 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: No,
13 thank you. It was just my last
14 question to the commissioner. Thank
15 you.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

17 Thank you. The Chair
18 recognizes the Majority of the
19 Gilmore-Gilmore-Richardson.

20 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Oh,
21 Council President.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

23 Excuse me.

24 MS. THURMAN: I know that

1 Dr. Ahmad had a question for --

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

3 Oh, I'm sorry. Go ahead. One last
4 question.

5 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Do
6 you need me to say it again?

7 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: No, I
8 think I got it, Commissioner Bethel.

9 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Yeah.

10 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: So
11 the -- so one of the things you -- I
12 share my frustration around cadets
13 leaving and they have that continue,
14 but this past year, you know, well
15 this, in latter part of last year,
16 Commissioner Healy on my team got
17 good -- good counsel from the law
18 department. We, for the first time
19 introduce a MOU with the individual
20 signed. So every recruit starting
21 in December were required to sign a
22 document that if they leave within
23 the first year, they would owe us
24 \$58,000. That gets prorated over

1 three years.

2 So if they stay beyond
3 within the three-year period -- if
4 they leave policing, we do not go to
5 recoup that funds, but if they stay
6 in policing and opt to as one
7 individual left the next day, and
8 just to congratulate.

9 We're hopeful, we're early
10 in the process, we've had two
11 classes now signing that memorandum.
12 We don't -- can't go back in time
13 for those who are in the academy
14 already. We'll be able to see if
15 that's at least holding them longer
16 than the period of time that we're
17 seeing. So we're hopeful that model
18 will work and we'll be able to
19 report out to you probably in this
20 next budget cycle next year to see,
21 yes, in fact, it's having an impact.

22 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: Well,
23 thank you. That was a smart move,
24 and I'm glad to see, you know, you

1 worked on that in this budget cycle,
2 so I appreciate that.

3 COMMISSIONER BETHEL: Yes,
4 ma'am.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
6 Any other questions, Dr. Nina Ahmad?

7 COUNCILMEMBER AHMAD: No,
8 sir.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
10 You're welcome. Thank you
11 very much. The Chair recognizes
12 Majority Leader Gilmore-Gilmore-
13 Richardson, then Councilmember
14 Quetcy Lozada, then Councilmember
15 Jeffrey J. Young.

16 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
17 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you,
18 Mr. President. I wanted to try to
19 get this question on the record and
20 this is for our finance and budget
21 team.

22 So you all recognize from
23 following the markets that the U.S.
24 Treasury yield curve which has been

1 one of our most reliable signals of
2 a recession is flashing red again.
3 And you know that as of March of
4 this year the spread between the 10
5 year and the two-year treasury
6 yields as well as the three-month
7 notes remains inverted. And so we
8 know what that indicates relative to
9 a market perspective.

10 And so I wanted to sort of
11 talk about our overall financial
12 picture around any concerns that you
13 all may have with the bond market
14 and any other indicators around our
15 financial future in the short term
16 because I heard you all talk about
17 earlier that the borrowing you
18 wanted that to happen very quickly.

19 And so based on what's
20 happening in the market I wanted to
21 put that on the record. In addition
22 to -- on page 2 of the testimony,
23 you talked about having
24 consideration for a number of those

1 challenges and other potential risks
2 as a part of the Mayor's proposed
3 five-year plan, but that we are
4 maintaining positive fund balances,
5 and you notated that the BSR and the
6 Federal Funding Reserve, you know,
7 keeps us that we continue to make
8 contributions to those reserves and
9 that it'll be up to 280 million by
10 the end of the planning. You know,
11 we worked on that with my BSR
12 legislation.

13 But some of the takeaways
14 that have been notated regarding the
15 information that's being presented
16 is that the general fund balance is
17 projected to fall from 514 million
18 in FY '26 to 41 million in FY '29.

19 In addition to that, you
20 know, that the city is anticipating
21 operating in a deficit for FY '26 to
22 29 with an additional operating
23 surplus projected in FY '30.

24 And so as you take all of

1 that into account, looking at the
2 markets, thinking about the
3 borrowing, and then you notated here
4 that the debt service would add 33
5 million in FY '26 and then 263
6 million over the life of the
7 proposed plan.

8 As you all are taking all
9 of that into consideration in
10 addition to recognizing where the
11 school district will be, in addition
12 to recognizing where SEPTA will be,
13 in addition to the continued federal
14 uncertainty, as you know, we still
15 do rely on federal for, you know, a
16 good portion of our own city budget.
17 Can you talk about this overall
18 financial picture for this proposed
19 plan?

20 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. and --

21 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

22 RICHARDSON: Perfect.

23 MR. DUBOW: There is -- and
24 we've talked about this repeatedly

1 there is a great deal of uncertainty
2 and as you talked about, you can see
3 that in the markets where there's a
4 lot of volatility where markets are
5 looking for signs of, you know, what
6 federal policy is going to be, what
7 tariffs are going to be, and, you
8 know, move really quickly on kind of
9 the smallest indication there used
10 to be markets would move based on
11 financial information.

12 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

13 RICHARDSON: Right.

14 MR. DUBOW: And now they're
15 moving on financial information and
16 kind of the latest proclamation. So
17 that definitely adds some
18 uncertainty. We have tried, you
19 know, working with our outside
20 consultants and build that into
21 their projections for what we see is
22 happening with our tax revenues and
23 with employment.

24 And like I said, employment

1 we're really keeping flat because we
2 don't expect big expansion in the
3 economy nationwide and worldwide.
4 So we've tried to capture that in
5 our projections while at the same
6 time not losing sight of the fact
7 that we're a city of great needs and
8 we have to keep making investments.
9 We can't be kind of paralyzed by the
10 uncertainty.

11 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

12 RICHARDSON: Right.

13 MR. DUBOW: And we tried to
14 make sure in this plan that we
15 weren't and we made crucial
16 investments while including things
17 like the budget, legislation,
18 reserve fund, thank you.

19 Putting reserve funds in,
20 maintaining a fund balance. So it's
21 all, you know, it's all part of
22 trying to deal with the uncertainty
23 while still moving ahead.

24 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

1 RICHARDSON: Right. And I wanted to
2 mention that because even with the
3 updated BSR legislation that we all
4 worked on together, my bill. We
5 know because of the anticipated low
6 general fund balance that there
7 won't be an additional contribution
8 in the out years of the five-year
9 plan, which is why I think it was
10 important for us to do what we did
11 in the last midyear, relative to the
12 one-time Federal Reserve investment.

13 But I bring that up because
14 I want to go back to my other
15 question around the vacancies,
16 right? Because, you know, I'm
17 reading all these reports and I did
18 read the report from the PICA board,
19 and they were stating that in FY '24
20 the city spent 130 million less on
21 salaries for city employees than we
22 had originally budgeted, and in FY23
23 \$81 million less. And that our
24 recent payroll actuals have been

1 about five percent lower than
2 budgeted.

3 And so given the overall
4 size and share of the spending on
5 our employee wages, the variance of
6 the five percent represents a
7 significant fund that we could have
8 used to redirect within the fiscal
9 year.

10 And so I wanted to blend
11 all of that in together as it
12 relates to our overall financial
13 outlook, our picture and our fund
14 balance, to ensure that we are
15 appropriately looking at the vacancy
16 rates and allowances as it relates
17 to what we know will be true in the
18 out years of the five year planning.

19 And that we're really
20 serious about that this year because
21 it'll be more important than ever
22 because of the volatility in DC.

23 MR. DUBOW: And I mean, a
24 couple of things there. You will

1 see and that Candi talked about
2 this, that we have been filling more
3 positions. So we're hoping that
4 those vacancy rates actually come
5 down as we fill positions to provide
6 the services that we have in our
7 budget.

8 You'll also see that
9 vacancy rates are higher in this
10 year's budget in divisions. We're
11 trying to make them track more of
12 the reality of what's happening.
13 But the other thing is that, you
14 know, those variances from budget
15 were like in the three to five
16 percent range.

17 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

18 RICHARDSON: Okay.

19 MR. DUBOW: So to the
20 extent that we really do start
21 hiring up, they could go away pretty
22 quickly.

23 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

24 RICHARDSON: Okay. And that's --

1 and I just want to reiterate this --
2 and I heard the bell but I think
3 it's really important too for us to
4 understand from a class 100
5 perspective, of the positions that
6 are being proposed in the five-year
7 plan, which ones address vacancies
8 versus which ones are brand new
9 positions to city government because
10 that also has an overall impact on
11 our pension obligation as well, you
12 know, for further down the line.

13 MR. DUBOW: Yep. That
14 makes sense. And we can --
15 obviously as we go department by
16 department we can -- we can go
17 through that.

18 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
19 RICHARDSON: Okay. That'll be
20 great. Thank you.

21 MR. DUBOW: Thank you.

22 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

23 RICHARDSON: Thank you very much,
24 and I just wanted to put this on the

1 record for the Department of Labor.
2 I know Cara Leheny was up earlier we
3 had spoken about this and we
4 continue to meet with law, with
5 labor and have been very
6 appreciative of the work that you
7 all have done.

8 But I wanted to go back to
9 some of the work that happened under
10 the tenure of Richard Lazer. And I
11 thought he did an excellent job
12 working with us around ensuring that
13 there was public participation as a
14 part of the FOP contract
15 negotiations.

16 And I just wanted to ask
17 for the record, if there will be a
18 continued commitment from the city
19 to ensure that we have a community
20 member on the panel before the
21 arbitration board, which is what we
22 did last negotiation cycle prior to
23 the one year.

24 So it was -- this is for

1 the last longer term contract under
2 the previous administration after we
3 did the public comment legislation.
4 We had worked with the Department of
5 Labor and specifically with Richie
6 and with law to ensure that there
7 was a community person that could be
8 on the panel that went before the
9 arbitrator.

10 MS. HARRIS: Specifically
11 for arbitration. When it comes to
12 Act 111, hearings are not open to
13 the public unless the panel votes to
14 do so. We did put in a request
15 before the panel.

16 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
17 RICHARDSON: Okay. Yeah. No, not
18 the hearing being open to the
19 public. I meant the part where the
20 city prepares the panel of
21 individuals that will speak on
22 behalf of the city during the
23 presentation, it was -- I think it
24 may have been one or two people. It

1 was just someone that participated
2 in the hearing process. I think
3 labor chose the individual based on
4 the, I think it was like 99
5 witnesses total.

6 MS. HARRIS: Cara?

7 MS. LEHENY: Yes. Hello,
8 Councilmember. Yes, we had two
9 witnesses who presented to the panel
10 who were representative of the
11 communities. I'm remembering Pastor
12 Waller and I am blanking on the name
13 of the other person.

14 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

15 RICHARDSON: It's a female.

16 MS. LEHENY: Yes, from
17 Power.

18 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

19 RICHARDSON: Yeah.

20 MS. LEHENY: We are -- we
21 are in -- we're discussing -- I know
22 Adam Geer, our Public Safety
23 Director is talking with community
24 organizations. And certainly we can

1 take that request under advisement
2 and talk it through.

3 We're certainly going to be
4 having CPARK presenting to the -- to
5 the panel in support of the proposal
6 that is in our proposals to get them
7 the various investigative and other
8 authority that the ordinance gives
9 them. So, you know, that is a focus
10 of our -- of our case.

11 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

12 RICHARDSON: Okay. I just wanted to
13 make sure we were going to at least,
14 at the very least, do minimum what
15 we did last time.

16 MS. HARRIS: Councilmember,
17 we'll get back to on that. And I do
18 just want to note that previously we
19 did not have the Office of Public
20 Safety as a -- as a member of the --
21 of the administration. And Adam
22 Geer is a part of our negotiations.

23 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-

24 RICHARDSON: Okay. That's good. I

1 just want to make sure from a --
2 like a community perspective that we
3 do at least the bare minimum of what
4 we did last time. Okay. Thank you
5 very, very much.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
7 Next, the Chair recognizes Council
8 Quetcy Lozada.

9 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA:
10 Thank you, Council President. And I
11 just have one question. In your
12 testimony, it states that there are
13 significant investments that are
14 going to be made in the next -- in
15 the next cycle.

16 Riverview was mentioned to
17 complete the new tower, a multi-year
18 project to renovate the Fire
19 Academy, critical improvements to
20 the city's prison systems. And that
21 made me think about the prison
22 systems, right? Sometimes we don't
23 -- we don't often hear about the
24 issues around the prison systems

1 until there is some type of crisis.

2 And so my question is that
3 given the ongoing challenges of the
4 prison -- with prison staffing and
5 security, are there plans to enhance
6 staffing levels or security measures
7 in conjunction with the facility
8 renovations?

9 MS. THURMAN: Thank you,
10 Councilmember. I'll call on a
11 Managing Director Thiel to answer
12 that question.

13 MR. THIEL: Thank you,
14 Council President, Councilmember. I
15 think the short answer is yes,
16 absolutely. We've had the best with
17 Commissioner Resnick and his team on
18 board. I mean, it's -- they're an
19 absolute testament to how leadership
20 matters, and with Mayor Parker's
21 fulsome support we've had the best
22 report from our court monitor of,
23 you know, the past many years.

24 And all of the security

1 enhancements are absolutely
2 integrated with the facilities
3 enhancements. I mean, it really is,
4 they're physical security, their
5 staffing is improving greatly and
6 has improved greatly over time at
7 the same time that a lot of the
8 proactive measures they've made to
9 help, you know, keep the population
10 where it should be working with the
11 courts and others.

12 It just -- things are
13 really moving in the right direction
14 and the investments here will help
15 address issues that are specifically
16 mentioned in the Remick settlement,
17 as well as continue to institute
18 best practices from the correctional
19 industry that Commissioner Resnick
20 and his team are bringing to our
21 Philadelphia Department of Prisons
22 along with a really dedicated and
23 committed workforce.

24 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: What

1 campaigns have you all done in order
2 to hire more correction officers?
3 And I ask because I've not heard of
4 any, I've not seen any and so I want
5 to -- I want us to figure out how do
6 we keep our prison population safe,
7 as well as those corrections
8 officers that are currently there.
9 I -- we hear from them often, right,
10 that they -- that they need help,
11 right? That they want to maintain
12 safety as a priority in the system
13 but they're -- they just -- they
14 don't have enough bodies.

15 And so what are we doing as
16 it relates to making sure that those
17 who are there have the support that
18 they need in order to efficiently do
19 their jobs? And how are we working
20 towards increasing -- what kind of
21 campaigns are we looking at to
22 increase the actual staff?

23 MR. THIEL: Councilmember,
24 I really appreciate the question and

1 the attention. It's a really long
2 list, and we do have -- we will have
3 prisons here for their own session.
4 So I would -- I mean, we have page
5 after page after page of
6 enhancements that Commissioner
7 Resnick and team have put in place
8 in full consultation and in
9 conjunction with the Law Department
10 Managing Director's Office. So we
11 could probably spend a lot of time
12 answering those questions in a
13 detailed way.

14 We have a full-time
15 recruitment officer with PDP now, we
16 have a retained advertising firm and
17 they're putting campaigns out there.
18 And the proof is really in the
19 pudding. We have our largest
20 correctional officer classes, and
21 again, in many years, onboarding
22 almost continually just opened a new
23 training and wellness space and on
24 and on and on, Councilmembers.

1 So I guess we certainly
2 could go into great detail, you
3 know, subject to your discretion and
4 Council President or if you want us,
5 we'll -- we could have all of that
6 elaborated during prison's time here
7 with you.

8 COUNCILMEMBER LOZADA: I
9 look forward to hearing about that
10 campaign Council President. Again,
11 we get contacted by some of our
12 officers in the prison systems who
13 stress the importance of needing
14 more support, right? And so I want
15 to make sure that we're doing
16 whatever we can through this budget
17 process to ensure that they are safe
18 as well as our prison population.
19 Thank you.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
21 Thank you. Chair
22 recognizes Councilman Jeffrey J.
23 Young.

24 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank

1 you, Mr. President. And I just have
2 a question for Rob Dubow. But I --
3 before I get there I just want to,
4 you know, set the record straight.
5 I didn't want to make it seem like
6 I'm minimizing anyone's efforts in
7 this. We -- I know everyone's
8 efforts, we're all working on it
9 every single day. And I know you're
10 working continuously to make sure
11 that Philadelphia is the safest city
12 and the city -- in the country, I
13 understand that completely.

14 And, you know, I just
15 wanted to elevate that conversation.
16 I just wanted to put that to the
17 forefront because I know it's at the
18 forefront of a lot of folks' minds.
19 And not to say that, you know, my
20 colleagues, you are not out there in
21 the -- in the community doing the
22 work. I know you are, but I just
23 wanted to elevate that in the -- in
24 the -- in the comments.

1 And some of the answers we
2 received, you know, talking about
3 the programs that exist, that
4 address that issue of public safety
5 and gun violence in our city. There
6 were a lot of different departments
7 that had something to do with that.
8 And that goes to my question that I
9 have for Rob, can you explain to us
10 this -- the type of budgeting method
11 that the city uses?

12 MR. DUBOW: Yep. We use
13 program based budgeting. So we'll
14 look at each program, what we spend,
15 what outcomes we expect from it.
16 And when you look at our budget
17 detail, and you look at our five-
18 year plan, you'll see that for each
19 department we show what we spend,
20 what we expect for that, if they're
21 going to generate any revenues.
22 So we put that all together so you
23 can see what we're -- what we're
24 getting.

1 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: And I
2 guess how often are like programs
3 changed or in the budgeting process,
4 do you -- are you looking to see the
5 effectiveness of each program as
6 you're allocating more or less
7 resources when, you know, we're
8 looking at, I guess, certain
9 particular outcomes that you're
10 looking for?

11 MR. DUBOW: We are. We are
12 always looking at that. And there
13 was a little discussion about this
14 before with first Deputy Mayor
15 Harris, where if a program is not
16 meeting its goals, it doesn't
17 necessarily mean that you should say
18 we should give them less money,
19 right?

20 It could be that they
21 actually need more resources to do
22 what they're doing. And what your
23 measures do is really raise
24 questions for you and let you ask

1 the right questions to decide, you
2 know, what level of resources make
3 the most sense.

4 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: And
5 so when you're doing that and doing
6 that evaluation, and I guess my
7 point is because they're coming from
8 so many different departments, it's
9 not as transparent for the public to
10 see like what's going on.

11 And so -- and it's not as
12 flexible, and so if we -- if we
13 change how we budget, how we
14 allocate resources, I believe to
15 more outcomes based budget and
16 process, where we're starting --
17 where we're aligning our resources
18 with the actual results, right?

19 Where we're starting from
20 these are our goals and let's figure
21 out how to fund our goals, right?
22 Rather than each year just give and
23 take from a particular program, do
24 we need more money, less money?

1 Like, let's -- what are our goals?

2 And then what are our priorities?

3 And how can we let our constituency

4 know that these are our priorities?

5 And I think if we change

6 our budgeting system so they can

7 clearly see what the outcomes are,

8 what the priorities are based on the

9 dollars that being allocated to

10 that. I think it'll be -- you know,

11 it'll help us in our city be more

12 efficient as we look to, you know,

13 to govern, you know, to improve

14 these particular outcomes that we

15 have for our constituents.

16 MR. DUBOW: I understood

17 that. And if you look through our

18 five-year plan, you'll see that for

19 each department in each program we

20 start with what the goals are, what

21 their mission is, and then they talk

22 about how they want to meet those

23 goals. So that's what we try to do

24 in our plan, and we actually do it

1 in our budget detail too.

2 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank
3 you.

4 MR. DUBOW: Sure.

5 MS. THURMAN: And, Council
6 President, may I just respond to one
7 thing when you --

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
9 Sure.

10 MS. THURMAN: When you
11 opened, Councilmember Young, thank
12 you for that, but I want to assure
13 you, I want to double down on it.
14 We will never under this
15 administration, under Mayor Parker's
16 leadership, normalize gun violence.
17 It will not happen. It will not
18 happen. We will not normalize it
19 and we hear you.

20 COUNCILMEMBER YOUNG: Thank
21 you. Thank you, Mr. President.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

23 A very brief lightning
24 question, Gauthier, Brooks and then

1 we are wrapping up.

2 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:

3 Thank you, Council
4 President.

5 I wanted to ask about
6 immigration legal defense. For the
7 past five years, Pennsylvania
8 Immigrant Family Unity Project or
9 PAIFUP funding has been
10 indispensable to local immigration
11 legal defense. Given the Trump
12 Administration's ongoing campaign to
13 create fear in and intimidate our
14 immigrant communities including, but
15 not limited to illegal deportations.
16 I think we have a responsibility to
17 expand services and resources for
18 immigrants in our city.

19 Advocates have been asking
20 not only for more funding for
21 PAIFUP, they've asked specifically
22 for an increase the 1.3 million, but
23 also to move PAIFUP to the
24 Defender's Association, which

1 already has skilled immigration
2 lawyers on staff.

3 So briefly -- two brief
4 questions. Is the administration
5 willing to increase funding to
6 PAIFUP and is the administration
7 willing to reallocate the funding to
8 the defender so that they can take
9 on PAIFUP under their umbrella. Why
10 -- will you do it? And if not, why
11 not?

12 MS. THURMAN: So, to answer
13 that question I have to kind of give
14 a little bit of context first. So
15 the -- and the context is of course
16 Amy Eusebio who was historically the
17 OIA director, you know, was in place
18 when we received PAIFUP funding on
19 the last -- on her last day in the
20 administration. I'm told by our
21 Chief Defender and the Defender's
22 Office that there was discussion
23 around that funding because no one
24 else in the administration was privy

1 to that conversation.

2 What we said was, we're
3 open to it with the caveat that we
4 want to fill the OIA director
5 position first.

6 We've had a record number
7 of people to apply for that role.
8 My office under my leadership, as
9 well as with our city solicitor,
10 we're supporting our Managing
11 Director's office and combing
12 through those -- the record number
13 of very impressive resumes might I
14 add once we name that new OIA
15 director which will not be a long
16 drawn out process, I want to note
17 that for the record.

18 Once we name that director,
19 we will then go back to Keisha
20 Hudson and have that more fulsome
21 conversation around PAIFUP funding
22 and where does it sit, you know,
23 does it stay within OIA or does it
24 go over to -- over to that unit.

1 We're not opposed to it, but we're
2 not going to make a decision until
3 we have the OIA director in place.
4 They understood that when we met, in
5 fact Rob Dubow and our budget
6 director was a part of that
7 conversation.

8 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: Do
9 you think it's important that we
10 have those conversations and make
11 that decision within the -- the FY
12 '26 budget process?

13 MS. THURMAN: Absolutely.

14 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER: So
15 that is the intent?

16 MS. THURMAN: Yeah. The
17 intent is to work on parallel
18 tracks, name the -- name the OIA
19 director and have the conversation
20 with our Defender's Office,
21 absolutely. During this -- during
22 this process. So yes, absolutely.

23 COUNCILMEMBER GAUTHIER:
24 Thank you. I'm probably going to

1 ask more about this in future

2 sessions, but thank you for that

3 answer today.

4 MS. THURMAN: Thank you.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:

6 Thank you, Member Gauthier. Member

7 Brooks?

8 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:

9 Thank you. So last year, I
10 was very disappointed to see the
11 administration cut the Department of
12 Labor Budget and for City Council to
13 fail to fully fund the department.
14 I heard this happened because the
15 Finance Department refused to fund
16 open positions. Something there are
17 a lot more of this year.

18 Is this administration
19 prioritizing the Department of Labor
20 the way it should be, particularly
21 in light of what's happening with
22 the Federal Department of Labor?

23 MS. THURMAN: So I'm going
24 to kick that over to our Chief

1 Deputy Mayor, but I want to say that
2 the Finance Department did not make
3 a decision of void of the Mayor's
4 office around cutting based on the
5 reasons that you shared. But I'll
6 kick that over to Chief Deputy
7 Mayor.

8 MS. HARRIS: And as I
9 explained before, and there is not,
10 there hasn't been a cut last year,
11 and there was not a cut this year in
12 terms of funding for wages and class
13 200, class 300. We still have the
14 same compliment and we're still
15 invested in the same services. They
16 were either terminal leave payouts
17 or in the -- for the instance for
18 this year, because we're in the
19 midst of active negotiations with
20 five major unions.

21 We have some funding needs
22 around arbitration, interest
23 arbitration and those negotiations
24 specifically some of the costs. So

1 that's what you see in terms of the
2 difference between FY '25 and FY '26
3 and that will be in a transfer next
4 Monday. But we are not cutting the
5 Department of Labor, the work that
6 they do between the Office of Worker
7 Protection, the Office of Labor
8 Standards, recovering over \$5.1
9 million on behalf of 2,600 workers.
10 The Office of Labor negotiate --
11 Labor Relations who is in -- helps
12 us do all the negotiation and the
13 research and making sure that we are
14 responsive to our workforce.

15 And then the Office of
16 Employee Relations where, you know,
17 folks who are city workers and have
18 any issues in terms of potential
19 workforce harassment and any of
20 those complaints, they do all of
21 that investigatory work. It's work
22 we take very seriously and we are
23 not cutting.

24 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: So

1 when the strategic goal outlined in
2 the five year plan states is that
3 one of the goal is to better
4 integrate staff into assisting
5 existing city structures, that's not
6 including this department that's
7 other departments.

8 MS. HARRIS: Well, we
9 always aim to better integrate our
10 workforce into the city structures.
11 That's not any -- that's not
12 indicative of any cuts or any
13 deprioritizing.

14 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS:
15 Okay. Thank you.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
17 You good?

18 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS: I'm
19 good.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
21 Okay. Thank you very much. So to
22 Deputy Chief Mayor, Sincere Harris
23 to Vanessa Garrett Harley, Deputy
24 Mayor, and the Chief of staff,

1 Tiffany Thurman, I thank you for
2 your presentation on the five-year
3 plan. Give them a round of
4 applause, y'all, right?

5 Now I've been around --
6 I've been around for a little while
7 and oftentimes -- and I've been an
8 elected official in City Council
9 since 2011. I also have been a
10 state representative under Governor
11 Ed Rendell and Tom Corbett.

12 And so during Women's
13 History Month, it's not often that
14 you see three women in leadership,
15 whether we agree or disagree, as we
16 go through this budget process. But
17 three women in leadership like
18 leading the helm in a charge moving
19 forward.

20 So if you can say that we
21 look forward to a robust discussion
22 around the city budget as we move
23 the city of Philadelphia forward.
24 And I thank all my colleagues for

1 sticking in this out today and
2 making sure as we do every day show
3 up.

4 And so the Chair recognizes
5 Majority Leader Katherine Gilmore-
6 Richardson for a motion at the
7 public hearing and meeting on the
8 bills and resolutions before the
9 Committee today stand in recess
10 until Wednesday, March 26th, 2025,
11 at 12:30 p.m. in room 400, City
12 Hall.

13 COUNCILMEMBER GILMORE-
14 RICHARDSON: Thank you,
15 Mr. President. I move that the
16 public hearing and meeting on the
17 bills and resolutions before the
18 committee today stand in recess
19 until Wednesday, March 26th, 2025,
20 at 12:30 p.m. in room 400, City
21 Hall.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON:
23 It has been moved and
24 properly seconded that the public

1 hearing and meeting on the bills and
2 resolutions before the committee
3 today stand in recess until
4 Wednesday, March the -- March 26th
5 at 12:30 p.m. in room 400. All
6 those in favor will signify by
7 saying aye. Those opposed?

8 The ayes have it and the
9 motion carries. This committee will
10 stand in recess until Wednesday,
11 March the 26th, 2025 at 12:30 p.m.
12 at which time we will reconvene in
13 this room.

14 (Committee on the Whole concluded at 4:05 p.m.)

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

2

3 I hereby certify that the proceedings and
4 evidence are contained fully and accurately in the
5 notes taken by me of the above case, and this copy is a
6 correct transcript of the same.

7

8

9 Samanda J. Rios

10

Samanda J. Rios

11

Court Reporter
Notary Public of PA & DE

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