COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

PUBLIC HEARING

BEFORE THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

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Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Monday, February 23, 1998
9:45 a.m.

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BILL NO. 980003 - An Ordinance Adopting the Operating budget for Fiscal Year 1999

PRESENT: PRESIDENT JOHN F. STREET, Chairman
COUNCILWOMAN AUGUSTA A. CLARK
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN DAVID COHEN
COUNCILWOMAN ANNA CIBOTTA VERNA
COUNCILMAN JAMES F. KENNEY
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COUNCILMAN RICHARD T. MARIANO
COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO

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I N D E X

P R O C E E D I N G S

PRESIDENT STREET: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. This is a recessed hearing of Council's Committee on the Whole. Today we will take further testimony on Bill No. 980003, an ordinance adopting the operating budget for Fiscal Year 1999.

As most of you know, we will be having hearings for about another month, and we will not have a public meeting today, but we will take testimony on a number of City operating departments, including the Health Department, the Office of Emergency Shelter Services, the Department of Recreation, Camp William Penn, Fairmount Park, the Art Museum, the Free Library, the Historical Commission of the Atwater Kent Museum.

Whereas we have been formally allotted a certain amount of time for each department, we would appreciate it very much if all of the departments would stand ready so that if we get to you before or after your projected time, you will be available to testify.

I'd like to mention at this time that

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the viewing and funeral services for Miss Vera Gunn, a very significant, important, civic-minded, and hard-working Philadelphian, are taking place this morning. I understand that the viewing is from 9 o'clock till 11 o'clock, and the services are at 11 o'clock, so that there are some Councilmembers not here now who are now at the viewing.

I've spoken to Councilwoman Augusta Clark. She is absent. Of course, she is at the services for her good friend. So there are other Councilmembers who may be leaving to attend these services. I will be leaving because I'm going to be going to pay my respects.

So we appreciate very much your understanding. And we encourage Councilmembers, if they can, to pay their respects, but as many of us as possible, we'd like to have here so that we can continue with the hearings.

Our first department today for consideration is the Health Department. Commission Richman.

(Commissioner Richman comes forward.)

PRESIDENT STREET: Good morning,

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Commissioner. Please identify yourself for the record.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Good morning President Street and Members of Council. I am Estelle Richman, Commissioner of the Department of Public Health. Thank you for the opportunity to present the Health Department's budget for Fiscal Year 1999. With me is my Deputy for Finance and Administration, Ellen Steiker.

For my fourth year as Commissioner, I am happy to report that, on the whole, the Fiscal Year 1999 budget maintains service levels comparable to Fiscal Year 1998.

I will note later in my testimony where we anticipate that some areas of the Department will have difficulty keeping up with the increasing demand for services. This is due primarily to factors: a series of cuts in welfare programs and termination of several demonstration grants, most notably Target Cities and Healthy Start. These cuts have had a negative effect on some of Philadelphia's most vulnerable citizens; and subsequently, on the Department's capacity to provide the array and quality of services it has

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been providing.

The Department of Public Health cannot afford to supplant benefits formerly provided by the State and federal government. However, the Department is committed to continue to meet its mission to promote and ensure the availability, accessibility, and quality of preventive and personal health services necessary to protect and improve the health and well-being of the Philadelphia community. This budget request reflects that commitment while recognizing the inherent challenges.

This year's budget request totals $953.2 million, just under $108.5 million in the General Fund, $414.7 million in the Grants Fund, and $430 million in the HealthChoices Behavioral Health Revenue Fund. Of the $953.2 million total budget, $54.9 million, or 6 percent, comes from the City tax-supported funds. The Department will support 1,337 full-time positions.

The major issues facing the Department for Fiscal Year 1999 are the impact of the changes in the health and welfare system on Philadelphia and Philadelphia's Behavioral Health Managed Care

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Initiative. In particular, we foresee continued challenges in our health care centers as well as in the Department's ability to continue to maintain its role as the safety net for many Philadelphians.

For more than 30 years, the Department of Public Health has provided behavioral health care for disenfranchised, impoverished, and uninsured Philadelphia residents through the Office of Mental Health and the Coordinating Officer for Drug and Alcohol Abuse Programs.

In February 1997, the provision of these services changed dramatically with the State's implementation of HealthChoices, a mandatory managed health care program for medical assistance recipients and the City's Management of Behavioral Health Services through Community Behavioral Health, CBH.

The City has a unique opportunity to integrate funding streams and create a behavioral health system that helps ensure the transition of clients from higher-cost care (for example, hospitalization) to less costly treatment such as outpatient treatment without sacrificing the

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quality and appropriateness of service.

Historically, the City administered a combination of federal, State, and City funding to provide to medical assistance recipients and Medicare recipients those behavioral health services that were not covered by medical assistance and to offer a full range of behavioral health services to uninsured individuals. Providers were reimbursed directly by the State for the cost of MA-eligible treatment for MA patients.

Now, for the first time, the Department of Public Health is able to manage, along with its more traditional mental health services, substance abuse program services. When viewed in its totality, therefore, the City's behavioral health system will total $513.5 million in Fiscal Year '98, including $341.4 million for CBH, $129.1 million for OMH and $43 million for CODAAP.

In Fiscal Year'99, the Department is requesting $107 million for the behavioral health system, $430 million for CBH, $134 million for OMH, and $43.7 million for CODAAP.

During 1997, Philadelphia's 400,000 MA

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recipients were enrolled into HealthChoices in stages, and approximately 48,000 individuals have used behavioral health services in less than a year.

All financial goals including the State's requirement that it establish a reserve equal to one-half of one month's capitation payment, or about $14 million have been met or exceeded. In addition, the City has established its own $5 million risk contingency funds.

Although these initial indicators are very positive, it will be another several months before the City has a better understanding of the service utilization patterns for the entire population and, therefore, a clear indication of the long-term financial performance.

In calendar year 1998, the first full year of operation, revenue is projected to be $344 million. In addition, CBH has made a commitment to hiring individuals previously on welfare. As of December 31, 1998, 16.1 percent (or 29 people) of CBH employees were former welfare recipients.

Six years into the Rendell Administration, recent and potential federal and

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State cost-cutting measures threaten to eradicate the progress that the City has made in providing critical health services for Philadelphians. Every entitlement program for medical assistance and Medicare to supplemental income and food stamps has been on the chopping block over the last two years. In fact, Pennsylvania has been in the forefront of welfare funding cuts nationally.

There is a health care crisis in the country and in the City. Hospitals throughout Philadelphia are feeling the same effects as the health care centers: more uninsured, lower reimbursement rates, and an increasing inability to finance care. Hospitals are faced with increasing fiscal crises, resulting not only in a threat to the continuum of care in Philadelphia but to the local economy as hospitals are faced with layoffs and cutbacks to meet their own bottom line.

A primary objective for the Department of Public Health is the continued provision of quality health care in the face of uncompensated demand caused by eroding federal and State financial support of America's poorest citizens.

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The financial viability of the City's health care center system has depended on the Health Department's ability to balance the services to the uninsured with its services to the insured. The growing imbalance threatens the current level of service, and the City simply cannot afford to absorb the full financial consequences of ill-advised changes in federal and State welfare policies.

The Health Department operates a network of eight community-based primary health care centers which represent the heart of the City's health care strategy. Because the health centers have always served those with little or no ability to pay for care, efforts to generate revenues to help offset unreimbursed costs have been a priority.

The network of centers provides comprehensive health, dental, pharmacy, and laboratory services to more than 105,000 adults and children throughout the City. Each center employs public health social workers who provide extensive health care, social service, and benefits counseling.

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Moreover, the centers offer uninterrupted service delivery as patients move in and out of health insurance status and between health plans, which makes them particularly attractive to patients whose health care coverage is subject to change.

The solid performance of the eight centers in this area is particularly remarkable when viewed in light of the volume of patient visits they attract. Total visits went from 277,000 in Fiscal Year '94 to 324,000 in Fiscal Year '97, an increase of 17 percent. And the Department of Public Health projects that the number will grow to 330,000 in Fiscal Year '98 and 335,000 in Fiscal Year '99.

In order to provide this level of service in Fiscal Year '99, the Department is requesting $30.2 million, $28.1 million in the General Fund, and just over $2.1 million in the Grants Fund for ambulatory health services, up $1.5 million from Fiscal Year '98.

The termination of general assistance for Philadelphians cost the health centers 1,000 managed care enrollees between July and October of

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1996 and reduced the centers' revenues by $250,000 annually. Federal cuts in HealthChoices cost the health centers 3500 enrollees and $750,000 annually. The loss of potential revenue was $1 million.

The effect of these changes is already plain. Compounding a projected increase of 37,000 patient visits (12.8 percent) since Fiscal Year '95 is the fact that those visits are being made increasingly by people who are less likely to have insurance.

In Fiscal Year '94, only 45 percent of health care patients were insured. That rose to 58 percent in Fiscal Year '97, and 59 percent in December of 1997, and it is expected to reach 61 percent in Fiscal Year '98, an escalation in uninsured visits of more than 30 percent from Fiscal Year '96 to Fiscal Year '99. In fact, DPH estimates that the number of visits by patients with some types of insurance is actually projected to decrease almost 20 percent from Fiscal Year '96 to Fiscal Year '99.

As a result, the unreimburseed costs of care, those costs that are fully supported by

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City's taxpayer dollars, have risen from $8.8 million in Fiscal Year '96, to $10 million in Fiscal Year '97 and Fiscal Year '98, with $11.7 projected for Fiscal Year '99.

While increases in waiting times have not affected all services and patients as yet, the Department of Public Health does not believe that has seen the end of the ever-growing line for service. Should waiting times continue to increase, the health centers may very well become less desirable places for insured patients, jeopardizing health center third-party revenues, and placing mounting pressure on limited City resources, creating an ever-downward spiral.

In addition, while appointment availability within three weeks has reached 89 percent by Fiscal Year '96, increased service demand, primarily by adults whose medical assistance benefits have been cut, lowered that to 76 percent in Fiscal Year '97, and a projected 74 percent in Fiscal Year '98, and a projected 72 percent in Fiscal Year '99.

Despite this, appointment availability at the health centers is competitive with the

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private sector, especially as three-week availability for prenatal care remained at 100 percent, and the longest appointment wait is four weeks.

In addition, as I mentioned earlier, the Department continues to feel the effects of cuts and reductions in federal demonstration grants; specifically, the Target Cities Program and Healthy Start. These grants were for federal demonstration projects, which were one-time funding from the outset.

Healthy Start was a federally-funded demonstration project aimed at reducing infant mortality and improving maternal and child health in west and southwest Philadelphia. Phase I of Healthy Start provided $8.1 million annually; Phase II will provide $2.5 million in Fiscal Year '99 and the remainder of the project.

Target Cities was a federal grant to improve the substance abuse treatment system. Target Cities provided the City with $4.2 million dollars annually through Fiscal Year '96, $23.5 million in Fiscal Year '97, and $2.2 million in Fiscal Year '98. A remaining 600,000 is expected

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through Target Cities in Fiscal Year '99.

The Health Department is aggressively pursuing ways to offset the losses incurred with the termination of these two grants. Services provided by the HMOs through the HealthChoices Program will provide some Healthy Start services for those clients who are MA-eligible. Those clients served through Target Cities will receive services through the Behavioral Health System.

I conclude my testimony by stating that while the issues that I've discussed will be difficult ones for the City and the Department to grapple with in the coming year, I believe that with the additional investment contained in our Fiscal Year '99 budget request and continued advocacy for policy and practical changes in welfare reform, we can continue to protect our most vulnerable citizens.

I want to again thank you for the opportunity to give testimony today, and I will now take questions.

(Councilwoman Verna takes over the Chair.)

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you,

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Commissioner.

I would like to discuss, if I may, the Philadelphia Nursing Home. I believe it's costing the City $3.3 million?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: That's correct.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: And I remember the day it was costing us well over $8 million or close to $9 million. Can you tell me, how long is the contract for Episcopal Hospital for the nursing home?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: The initial contract was a three-year contract, and we are within the second one-year extension of that contract.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: All right. And the census presently is. . . ?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: The current census is 450 people. The capacity of the nursing home is 500.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: So I assume from the census, that we have opened that wing that had been closed for quite a while?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: No.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: We have not?

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COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Six West, which is the one wing of the nursing home, remains still closed, and there are several reasons for this.

The first one is that we have an outside monitoring team that does review the nursing home on a quarterly basis, DePaul. And they have found two deficiencies that we've been seeing over time: one is infection control and the other is housekeeping deficiencies.

And in their last report, which happened -- in the survey in January of '98, they still found that these deficiencies still existed, although they were significantly better than they found in other surveys.

So we are continuing to keep our eye on these two to make sure when we do open, we don't put ourselves at risk again at a licensing level for the State.

The other issue has been staffing. Staffing problems have persisted for several years. In fact, in my last visit to the nursing home, which was about two weeks, it was the first time they've had unit managers on all ten units. So for the first time, we're actually reaching

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full staffing.

We will be reviewing -- I have just received another request from Episcopal again requesting the opening of Six West. In light of the fact that they are at full staffing now and the deficiencies are showing improvement, we will again review in detail with Episcopal the possibility of opening the unit.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: I also note in your testimony that you say that the City is assessing appropriate strategies related to the future of the Philadelphia Nursing Home. Can you elaborate on that?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Yes. As we have worked with the nursing home over the past four years, one of the most consistent problems that we've heard, both from our subcontractor, ELTC, and the State, is the physical setting, the building. The building is old, we have frequent systems breakdowns, and the size of it makes it difficult sometimes to both supervise and hire staff for.

So we have been looking at the possibility of what other things we can do with

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the nursing home that would possibly either have us use a different site, be able to split to different kinds of sites, but looking for, as we project to the future and look at this contract, what are other possibilities that might be open to us.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: It should be interesting.

Commissioner, would you mind referring to page 34-151 of the operating budget?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: 151?

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: 151.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: There is no indication as to what the cost for personal services would be. What I would assume is that they are the providers.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: I'm --

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: It's the contract between CBH and the providers.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: I'm not quite sure I'm looking at the --

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: There's no list of who the providers are.

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COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Providers for CBH?

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Mm-hmm.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: I have that information and can easily get it to you, if you would like.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Would you, please?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: I can tell you since I do have a list of providers here that there are 242 providers for CBH. That includes 30 hospitals.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Can you tell us how many employees CBH has?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Yes. CBH has 188 employees; that's full-time. And there are another 14 part-time.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Can you give us a detailed budget for CBH?

DEPT. COMM. STEIKER: We can provide that. That's no problem.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: And when can we expect to see that?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Probably within

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five days.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you.

Since we have a rather lengthy schedule today, I thought it would be best if each of the Councilpeople had five minutes for questioning, and then we'll have another go-around if necessary. Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Fernandez.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Let me follow up on some of the questions about CBH. I was reminded again yesterday morning when I went to the local 7-Eleven to get a newspaper, and there were two people panhandling. Again, I'm not a professional, but I wondered if drug- or alcohol-abuse might have been a part of the picture.

And so I'm really -- again, I thought of CBH and thought about how important it is that it will be to the City's best interests to provide not just quicky-fix kind of care for people to get them in and out as soon as possible, but really to

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try to help people deal with serious drug and alcohol problems and mental health problems.

And certainly, as far as I'm concerned, with all of the cuts coming from the federal level in terms of welfare changes and stuff, probably having CBH in place is probably one of the most important positive steps and sort of safety net that the City might have.

Could you review for the record what kind of savings or -- I don't know what the exact word you use is -- I think it's "profits," but basically savings that could be reinvested from CBH?

I know there was some discussion that was one of the testimonies about -- is it 500,000 or $1 million that will be reinvested if Council so approves outreach services for the homeless?

But where I'm leading is, I'd like to know what the level of savings has been that would be available for reinvestment, and then what some of your plans and thoughts are for that reinvestment.

Because my goal would be that I would be able to say to people panhandling at the

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7-Eleven or downtown, or when I saw someone in trouble, I'd be able to say, Here's a card, there is help, go get yourself help so you aren't out here asking me to support your drug or alcohol habit. Or if there's someone with serious mental health problems, there would be, again, a place to turn.

Could you review that for us, please.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Let me try to break that up in a couple ways.

First, in our end-of-month report with our month ending in November, we had $19.7 million in savings and are projecting $21.6 million for December, but the December one is still an estimate as we're in the work of closing the books for December.

Of that $21.6 possible dollars, $14.2 million is for the Risk and Contingency Fund set by the State. The other $7.4 million would be a Risk and Contingency Fund for the City. And with that Risk and Contingency Fund for the City, we were hoping to allocate $1 million at this point for reinvestment.

And let me take this opportunity to

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apologize to Council. The Health Department did make a commitment last year that before any reinvestment dollars were used, that there would be a resolution before Council for the usage of those dollars. In our hurry this year to do some investment in the homeless system, we failed to do that. Those resolutions are -- will be -- the language for some of those will be presented to Council hopefully sometime this week.

So we would like to again apologize for not forming the procedure that we said we would be in, and we hope to be partners with Council from this point on, to make sure that you're aware of any planning that is going on with reinvestment dollars and have an opportunity to review that before any commitments are made.

We have identified for this year approximately $1 million that were to be available for reinvestment; $500,000 for the homeless initiative and approximately $500,000 to work with children at risk within the School District on a partnership basis.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: And then what about the other money? If you say there's about

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22 we have, 14 that the State asked you to set aside, what about the other 6 million, what might that be used for? What would be the process?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: At this point, the first thing we would like to do is engage in a full planning process to involve as many stakeholders as we can in the system. And, certainly, that would involve Members of Council and their staff as we begin to create a plan for how State dollars would be used.

We also would like to create our own Risk and Contingency Fund. As you know, this is still a new program, and we are still trying to make assessments on what kind of dollars we'll use, what kinds of risks may still be out there. So we would like to continue to develop a Contingency Fund for the City as well as a reinvestment Fund.

And, as we work through what those planning efforts should be and what should be in each fund, we will keep Council involved and very aware of where we're moving in that activity.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: What time -- how long --

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COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Councilwoman, I'm sorry.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: One last question that relates to the --

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: That will be your last for the time being and then we'll do another go-round.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Right. What now is the waiting time if someone says, I am willing to get some drug treatment help, I'm ready and willing to go, how long is -- what's the wait time now?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: I believe that someone can be placed in a program immediately. There should be no wait whatsoever for any drug and alcohol problem -- program at this point if somebody is willing to go into a program. And that includes both our CBH initiative and our BHSI initiative.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: If you did see someone on the street who looked like they needed help -- not that you'd try to --

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Right.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Where would

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you tell them to go? Where would someone refer them to?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Now you're a little bit too technical for me. Mark?

(Assistant Health Commissioner Mark Covone comes forward.)

ASST. COMM. BENCIVENGO: I'm Mark Bencivengo. I'm the Assistant Health Commissioner for the Coordinating Office for Drug and Alcohol Abuse Programs.

What we in the office have been telling people when they call seeking help is there are two phone numbers. If they are on an HMO and, therefore, a part of HealthChoices, that they call the CBH 1-800 number or 1-888 number.

If they do not have insurance, then we give them the number of the Behavioral Health Special Initiative for the people who are uninsured.

They call either one of those two numbers. And, as the Commissioner said, placement is virtually immediate to whatever level of care that they might need.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: I would

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suggest you get those numbers around to us so we know -- I'd really like to know what they are.

ASST. COMM. BENCIVENGO: We'll be glad to make those forms available to Council.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Rizzo.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Commissioner Richman, could you please give us an update on the Needle Exchange Program, the status, increased number of needles, decreased number of needles, how much we're spending with Prevention Point?

And also, could you please provide the Chair some of the literature that Prevention Point is distributing to the community?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: We'd be very glad to provide that information to the Chair on all of the information provided by Prevention Point.

And Mark will specifically answer the question.

ASST. COMM. BENCIVENGO: Prevention

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Point is distributing approximately -- will distribute approximately 850,000 syringes this fiscal year.

I believe that the Commissioner's testimony, there was some tables in the back, and it indicated that 97 percent of the syringes distributed by Prevention Point are returned. That's one of the highest return rates of any of the 72 cities that currently have syringe exchange programs.

And the Department is currently allocating approximately $203,000 to Prevention Point.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Commissioner, in your opinion or legal -- or in the Law Department's opinion, this program, do you consider it a legal program? Do you see any violation of State law at all in this program?

I know the Mayor's executive order established this program, but I understand that the Attorney General said it is an illegal program.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: At this point, the Mayor's executive order has not made it

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illegal in the City of Philadelphia. The State Attorney General, I believe, at this point, still hasn't ruled on the program and has remained quiet.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: He has publicly stated that it is not legal to distribute needles.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: I think that they've tried to remain silent on the program, rather than having a specific ruling on the program.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: With regard to CBH, are the subcontractors generally satisfied with the general contractors? We've had some complaints regarding the service.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: In general, I think that people have been very satisfied with the program. We do regular surveys of consumers who are using the services, and those consumer issues have always come back resolved and very positive.

The providers, I think, are at different stages in terms of their contracting and their ability to adjudicate claims appropriately. We have long lists of issues that have to be

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addressed with the State, as to what it takes in terms of information submitted to have a claim successfully adjudicated. An adjudicated claim is what happens when you get paid.

And we work with providers individually in provider meetings. And probably for most of those providers that are having problems, we are probably meeting with them practically once a month to help them resolve any claims issues they may have.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Commissioner, on page 2 of your testimony, you explained that the Health Department revenue initiatives have contributed $8.2 million. You also explained that cost savings initiatives have $10.8 million.

Can you explain these initiatives?

DEPT. COMM. STEIKER: Good morning. This is Ellen Steiker. I'm Deputy Health Commissioner for Finance and Administration.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Can you turn on her microphone, please.

DEPT. COMM. STEIKER: Good morning. This is Ellen Steiker. I'm Deputy Health Commissioner for Finance and Administration.

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The initiatives are laid out in the five-year plan in some detail, but the revenue initiatives include improved billing and eligibility at the district health centers, fees for asbestos control programs, environmental user fees, increased revenue for dental services, increased revenue for pharmacy improvement, and making some changes to the County Health Act that would improve the revenue that comes from county health.

And those total initiatives, as we said earlier, were $8.8 million -- $8.5 million in FY '99.

On the cost side, when the Rendell Administration began, there were a number of initiatives that were put into effect to contain costs. Most of the cost initiatives have been really implemented already and are part of our base budget.

They include implementing the EPSCT program and MHMR that allowed reduction in program-funded dollars, the privatization of Riverview, the privatization of PHN, and some cost reductions in the General Fund when we moved some

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of those funds to grant-funded sources.

Those were the major expenditure savings. And they were worth $10.8 million in FY '98; and the same, $10.8 million, in '99.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you. Finally, Commissioner, could you give us the status of Love Park? It's been closed now for the winter. And hopefully by spring, the restrictions for people to use the facility for recreation, for lunch, hopefully, it will reopen in the spring.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: We are certainly working towards looking at this as a possible reopening.

Just for your information, last spring, when we closed the park for the summer, there were 80 active rat burrows. We now -- it's down to about 5. So it was 80 when we closed, it's down. We do think -- these were rats with a very large size. Some of them looked more like squirrels we do believe now that because of the bathing and the rat-proofing and the landscape changes, that we really do have that under control.

We are working with Fairmount Park and with the other departments of the City to assess

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what it's going to take to reopen the park. One of the things we do know is that rats multiply more frequently in the spring, so we want to do it a little bit slowly so we don't have a sudden surge in the rat population again, which created environmental and health problem.

But starting now, we will be meeting with Fairmount Park to put forth a plan as to how we should move. And our hope would be to certainly, at least on a pilot basis, while we track the rats and the borrows, to see whether we can get it reopened.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you, Madame Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you, Councilman.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Nutter.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Madame Chair. It just never ceases to amaze me what sometimes we end up talking about in here.

Good, morning Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Good morning.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Let's go back to page 4 of your testimony, back into what is

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affectionately known as "CBH World."

In response to a question asked by one of my colleagues, you said that there was no wait for drug or alcohol treatment in the City; is that correct?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: That's correct.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. Do you have any information with regard to drug and alcohol treatment in our prison population? Do you provide those services, or does the prison provide those independently?

ASST. COMM. BENCIVENGO: There's a program in the Philadelphia Prison --

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Excuse me, Mark.

ASST. COMM. BENCIVENGO: Excuse me.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Before testifying, please identify yourself for the record.

ASST. COMM. BENCIVENGO: Assistant Health Commissioner for CODAAP.

There is a program in the Philadelphia prisons called "Options." It is not run by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, but we do have a close relationship with the Options Program.

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And individuals who have been identified as eligible for the Forensic Intensive Recovery Program, which the Department does operate, are referred into the Options Program so that we assist them in making them treatment-ready so that when they leave prison, then they can go into community-based treatment. But the Department does not operate the program behind the walls.

So I can't speak to the issue of, Does it have the capacity to see everyone who want to go into it? That would be something that the prisons would have to answer.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. You're anticipating my next question.

Did the Health Department ever operate the program? And is Options relatively recent?

ASST. COMM. BENCIVENGO: No, the Department, to the best of my knowledge -- and I've been around for quite some time -- has never operated that program. Options is not a particularly new program. It is, I believe, run by a woman by the name of Deb Ratta (ph.) within the prison system.

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COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay, I'll save that for the prisons.

Commissioner, in response to Councilwoman Verna, you told us that CBH has 188 full-time employees and 14 part-time employees; is that correct?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: That is correct.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. In addition to the information that the Chair asked, could you add to that an organization chart now that you have all of these employees on board?

And there was a question back when we were dealing with the larger issue of creating CBH about who these people were, were they Philadelphians, were they outside Philadelphia? Could you also provide information with the list to indicate who's in Philadelphia, who may not be in Philadelphia?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Yes, we will be able to.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. In your testimony, it seems to indicate that you're asking for a $90 million increase in the budget for CBH. If I'm reading this correctly in your testimony,

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FY '98, $341 million for CBH; FY '99, $430 million for CBH. It's about a $90 million increase.

DEPT. COMM. STEIKER: Ellen Steiker, Deputy Health Commissioner for Finance and Administration.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I can't -- I'm sorry, it's not your fault. Can we check and make sure that microphone's on? I cannot hear her.

DEPT. COMM. STEIKER: This is Ellen Steiker, Deputy Commissioner for Finance and Administration.

The increase is a large increase, we realize that. The basic reason is that we're being fairly conservative in the way that we are budgeting because of very unknown factors.

If I were to break this down for you, I would say that revenue for FY '99 could be in about the range of $380 million, so that's about a 40 million increase from where we are now, although that's high.

But, again, it depends on the number of enrollees, and it depends on what category of aid they're in, which will determine the rate that we get paid. And some of these factors are not

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known. So we are budgeting conservatively, which means we're asking for appropriations to make sure that we have enough.

Secondly, we get revenue in one year. We may not spend it in the year that we get it. There are timing issues. And, particularly, there are delays from the time that services are delivered until when a payment is made. And so we're taking into account some of those timing differences, which, again, are sometimes hard to anticipate.

So we have another $46 million put aside for the combination of those timing differences and any reinvestments that we want to do from prior years' savings.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Madame Chair, I know I got the buzzer. I'll come back.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you. The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Tasco.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Good morning. Commissioner, I have a couple of questions. After I ask my questions, I'm going to leave to attend the funeral. I have others, but we'll talk later.

We talk about the number of uninsured

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people who are on the increase because of the cutoff in the welfare rolls. What impact will that have on the City? And have we seen a significant impact to date?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: We are seeing -- can you hear me? Okay?

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: We are continuing to see significant increases for the uninsured. In Fiscal Year '96, the number of uninsured clients we saw was about 49 percent of the people who came to the district health centers. As of Fiscal Year '99, we're predicting that number to be 61 percent. That's a 30 percent increase in three years.

The impact that it's having is to extend waiting times so that when people are calling for an appointment, rather than pretty reliably getting an appointment within three weeks, it is dropped to about 76 percent of the people get an appointment within three weeks. And that's for basic adult care.

Pediatric care and prenatal care tend to be a little bit better, but they ultimately

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will be affected. But it's the single adults that seem to be coming off the welfare rolls at this point that are being affected most dramatically.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Will we have to increase the staff at the health centers to deal with this increase?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: If we wanted to impact the waiting time, we would need to hire more docs in the health care centers more specifically, and some of the support for those doctors, which would be the other staff.

At this point, the budget request that we have to Council is to increase our hospital contracts and our pharmacy contracts primarily, which are ones that are impacted already by the increases we've already seen.

So we have not at this point requested additional staffing for the health care centers.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Would the Chip Program cover the children?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: The Chip Program will cover the children. But, again, with the Chip Program, one of the major issues is finding the children, getting them registered, and making

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sure people know about the program.

In those outreach efforts that are going on with the Chip Program, we usually find about 50 percent of the children are actually eligible for medical assistance, and 50 percent are eligible for Chip.

But the Health Department is supporting efforts by both PCCY and Choice, which is a subcontracting agency, to help find those children and get them registered. But that will add revenue, yes.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I don't know if I'm reading this correctly, but in the budget, on page -- where is it? Page-something, I had it here.

There was -- it seems to be a decrease in the number of MA enrollees for '99?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: That's correct. As people come off medical assistance -- as they come off welfare and consequently in some cases as they come off medical assistance, we're anticipating a drop in medical assistance enrollees.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: But will it

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increase the uninsured?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: In many cases, it will increase our uninsured. In some cases, obviously, some of these folks, as the ones who are working for CBH, will have full medical coverage. But that's probably more of an exception than a rule.

As people go into their first job, as they transfer from Welfare-to-Work, many people, if not most, are not going into jobs that are paying them full health benefits for their families.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Which leads me to a question. I have the proposal here, the Welfare-to-Work proposal for the City of Philadelphia. And one of the areas they're concerned about is the number of people -- individuals who have mental, physical abuse and drug abuse, substance abuse.

Are you tied in with this Welfare-to-Work Program in terms of the drug and alcohol program being upgraded or expanded to provide for the -- to cover this population?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Because this

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particular population is still on welfare rolls, yes, we are involved. Most of these folks are members or will be members of CBH or they're receiving treatment -- or they can receive treatment through BHSI.

The Health Department and CODAAP and the entire Behavioral Health System is preparing to screen about 40,000 people and looking at as many as 50 percent of those who will probably be requiring some level of drug and alcohol treatment. We believe that many of these folks are currently in the system, and many of them probably are currently -- or have currently received that treatment.

So we are in the process of gearing up for that and are working with the Mayor's Office of Policy and Planning to try to prepare for this massive transition of folks by indeed looking at our delivery system and looking at our provider system preparing them.

The problem -- the key point for us is making sure we have enough providers that understand the relationship of domestic violence as we do that counseling and substance abuse

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treatment.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: When the Partners for Progress go into a neighbor, such as they did in West Philadelphia with the drug sweep, are there facilities and resources for people who want to get long-term treatment? Are they available, and do we have enough facilities to provide long-term treatment?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: At this point in time, we really -- it appears that we do. I hesitate a little bit because we haven't seen the massive number of people come in at the different points in time that we have anticipated.

Certainly, when -- anytime anyone presents for a drug or alcohol treatment, they have to be screened with a State instrument, that is the Pennsylvania Client Placement Criteria, PCPC. And that tells us whether or not they need a long-term treatment, a short-term treatment, inpatient, community-based, what kind of treatment they need.

At this point in time, we are managing to treat people who come and present for treatment. Now, if we get 20,000 new people or

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10,000 new people that we haven't seen before and that are brand-new into the system, I'm sure that will stress the system. But at this point, we haven't seen those kind of overwhelming numbers that we can't handle.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I notice you talked about the contract at the prison. How's that going? The health services contract.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: The health services contract, our role -- we no longer, as the Health Department, hold that contract. The contract is held by the prison.

What we do do is monitor the contract. So we monitor the contract for quality. And we send in DePaul, which is our quality assurance monitor, once a year to look at those services.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: One other question. The Healthy Start Program, I know that it's in Northwest Philadelphia. Do you have any plans to expand that program to North Philadelphia?

Certainly I understood there was some discussion, particularly to expand it to the Latino community.

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COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: As you know, the Healthy Start Program itself is ending as a federally-funded demonstration project. The concepts within that program are lay home visiting and early identification within prenatal and are concepts we hope to continue.

However, the general amount of dollars for maternal and child health in this City have decreased because of the ending of Healthy Start and the change in funding from the State.

But let me have that addressed by Sue Lieberman.

MS. LIEBERMAN: Hi. I'm Susan Lieberman. I'm the Director of Maternal and Child Health.

And we've lost in the past two years, counting the loss of federal funding for Healthy Start and some federal Title 5 block grant money, which comes through the State, close to $7 million, which is about 50 percent of our maternal and child health budget. So we are struggling to reassess what we have and to become more efficient.

We've asked the managed care companies

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to pick up what they acknowledge is their responsibility, and we've also looked at some different ways of delivering services. So we've moved from general outreach into education programs where we provide parenting skills, and we provide different kinds of education to groups.

But $7 million is $7 million. And no matter how mightily we try to make up the difference, we're not going to be able to make up the difference, even with different ways of providing the services.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: The Healthy Start Program was a federally-funded program, and it was a demonstration project. I imagine at the end, there was an evaluation to determine the need for the program, but the federal government decided that there was no need for a Healthy Start Program?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: I think that the federal government determined there was a need for the Healthy Start Programs, and it would be a good idea to continue them, but they declined to be the funder of them.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Typical, typical.

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COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: And the last two years of the grant are spent in what are called "sustainability discussions." In other words, how can these grants be sustained without federal dollars.

And one of the primary recommendations that came out of many of those discussions is the use of managed care or mandatory managed care, or MA managed care, to transition these programs or the concept of these programs into.

When you look at the HealthChoices RFP and what the HMOs are mandated to do, many of those services are indeed there. The HMOs are being paid by the State to provide lay home visitation, transportation to and from clinics, nutritional and other counseling, and specific outreach to MA-enrolled clients, as well as all the EPSDT services that are normally requested and needed by infants. So many of the services are there.

And if you were to ask the HMOs if they provide these services, they would all unequivocally say yes, they do. In our opinion, they do some of them, and they may not do them all

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in the same way that we wanted to see them done within Healthy Start. And we continue to work with the HMOs, all four of the HMOs around these services, to make sure they're there.

With our dollars, we've tried to target the most isolated, the most at-risk, and particularly the non-English speaking clients for the services that we do because they needed to be so much more intensified, and we didn't feel they were being reached as effectively as the more routine population.

But, indeed, the federal government has said yes, it was a good service; yes, it met many of goals; but, no, they were not going to continue funding it.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: One other question. Some time ago, years ago, one of the issues of the Health Department was the billing for services at the health centers.

Do you now bill the HMOs for services? And if you do, how up to date are you in that billing?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: At the time that was a discussion, it was shortly before, I think,

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the current administration came in. The health centers did not actively bill the fee-for-service system in medical assistance, and neither did they have strong contracts with the HMOs.

At this point, when we became a federally-qualified health center, we were able to begin billing the State fee-for-service system very effectively.

And when we have transitioned now into Medicaid, we have contracts now with all four HMOs, and we're capitated by them, so those dollars come in on a very regular basis. So capitation means we're paid before the service.

What hurt us the most, though, was in the transition from a voluntary system to a mandatory system. You may have heard in my testimony last year that the State misassigned many people, and we lost about a thousand clients at that point in time. And by the loss of those clients, it lost us about $1 million.

So that was -- and we're still working with the State and with the benefits consultants to try to find out if many of those clients would like to return to the health care centers and any

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other activities that we can do to increase the number of people using our health care centers that are currently part of the mandatory managed care system.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: One final question, Madame Chair.

Could you tell me if we have a good relationship with the landlords and correcting lead problems in the housing?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Oh, the Lead Program?

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: The Lead Program. I'm sorry, I went from one to the other. Here's my guy .

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: We are currently actually working very well with the people in the Lead Poisoning Program. I think there have been some major gains this year. And the task force that we're working through is a joint one with OHCD and the Health Department.

And I'll have Rick update you on some of those positives.

MR. TOBIN: My name is Richard Tobin. I'm the Director of the Childhood Lead Poisoning

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Prevention Program.

As Estelle has said, we are working very closely with landlords across the City in the task force. We have worked well with them in the past year.

There are problems, of course, whenever you issue -- whenever you have an enforcement agency issuing orders, and there will be complaints. And I would ask anyone who gets them to please refer them to us directly.

We are also working currently with the Commonwealth. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania recently passed regulations requiring certification of abatement contractors and inspectors. This is going to change somewhat what is being done and how it has to be done in terms of remediating lead problems, but I think we can work through all of these issues very nicely.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: What is the -- do we see a decrease, a decline in the number of families who are being threatened with eviction or evicted because they filed a complaint against a landlord for lead paint?

MR. TOBIN: We seem to be seeing a

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decline in that. We have set up procedures to enforce the Council regulations and to protect tenants in these cases.

We also have a program working through the Office of Housing, which can provide money for private landlords who are renting properties. And there are HUD funds available to do some of the hazard remediation work in the form of forgivable loans and low-interest loans. And that seems to be working nicely.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you very much. Thank you, Madame Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Ortiz.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Following up on Councilwoman Tasco's questioning, on Healthy Start. Ten years ago, we had probably one of the highest infant mortality rates in the country, north and east of Broad, Philadelphia. And we also had a very big one in West Philly. But, really, the problem that we had in Broad Street and in the African and the Latino communities were of third-world country

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statistics.

And it concerns me in terms of the cuts that we're having because, one, we didn't expand the Healthy Start into the rest of the City. And two, the HMOs are not picking that up in terms of the poorer communities.

The third factor is the cuts that are coming down on welfare. And the people that will be left are the ones that will need the greatest need and will probably have the less education. So we are in a situation in which the greatest danger perhaps that children and infants will face in the City will be the lack of medical services.

And I wonder what has been the progress during the last few years in reducing the infant mortality rate in terms of north and east of Broad, Philadelphia, and in the other parts of the City where we had the problem.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Let me start off by saying that the reduction in infant mortality actually happened in both parts of the City.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Right.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: And part of the controversy about the success of Healthy Start is

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that they didn't see a dramatic drop just in Philadelphia because there was a drop also in parts of North and Central Philadelphia also. So they said if there were a drop in both, the plan couldn't have been effective.

In our opinion, there were drops in both. And part of the reason for the drop in Southwest Philadelphia, we think, was Healthy Start. And part of the drop we believe we saw in the North Philadelphia areas were because there was some active outreach by HMOs. We did have a Healthier Baby Initiative there, and there were drops there.

Neither drop is sufficient. So I don't want to --

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: No, no, I understand that, because we had hearings with Dr. Clifford, and we had -- Council held hearings that dramatized that. And then the City began to put some more money into the health centers in terms of education. The Mom Mobiles came into being.

What I wonder right now is -- because we just cannot say, Well, the federal government is not going to fund it, that we're just going to

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leave infants and children in terms to essentially die and go back to a situation where we were ten years ago.

And I'd like to see what it is that we're planning to begin taking care of the problem so that we don't slip back to our ten-year situation.

MS. LIEBERMAN: Hi. I'm Susan Lieberman, the Director of Maternal and Child Health.

And some of what we've tried to do in this past year is also prepare for the end of Healthy Start by doing some different types of activities and by moving to some different kinds of services.

So, for example, we have created for the Latino community -- we were one of the first partners in the Women's Center at Congreso. So we know that healthy women have healthy babies, and so we're also looking at extending the continuum to make sure that we have healthy women who can then have healthy pregnancies, who then can have healthy children.

So we've looked at extending the

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continuum in larger ways and for smaller amounts of money to serve that population. We have asked the Mom Mobile to keep at a hundred-percent-funded their outreach services to the Latino community.

So we have looked at -- we've done a lot of educational materials in, actually, Puerto Rican. And what we've done is trained outreach workers to go and to do training. We've done a lot of sensitivity training, but --

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: What I'm asking -- we were -- we were in trouble ten years ago.

MS. LIEBERMAN: Mm-hmm.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: We have a problem right now in terms of funding -- the poverty population in Philadelphia has started decreasing. The problem will grow when the welfare reform has an impact.

If we're cutting out Healthy Start and we didn't expand it to other areas of the City, and I know that we did have and we generally put forward a series of programs across the City that brought some prenatal postnatal education to the population.

But if we're having all of these costs,

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what is it that we're doing in terms of the health centers? And what are we doing in terms of the Health Department across the City and specifically in North and Central Philadelphia, where these statistics have always been higher, in order to begin programming for these cuts, so that in a year and two years from now, we're not here and we're taking about infant mortality rates that we have seen in the City because it is still high. And I'd like to have those statistics across the City to be sent to the Chair.

But what are we doing in terms of programming or diverting funds? Or if CBH has that other funding that should be redirected, what are we doing in terms of putting some monies into programs that prevent us from sliding back to third-world figures?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Okay. Part of what -- in looking at the Healthy Start Grant, some of the things that we determined were most effective coming out of that grant were lay home visits and being able to visit mothers 24 hours after babies, they got home, and making sure those home-visiting teams stayed in contact for the

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first year.

We tried to make sure that mothers got back and forth to clinics. Everything that we did within Healthy Start didn't come out looking effective. We tried to narrow down what really worked and what really didn't work.

The Mom Mobile was effective, lay home visiting was effective, transportation because many times, moms couldn't get to the clinic because there were other children or other factors. Getting them to the clinics for their prenatal visits was effective. Making sure there were appropriate nutritional counseling and nutrition in the home was effective.

Many of these projects are in different formats, and we'll either continue to push the HMOs to do them or if we can do within the district health centers. We do say -- and one of my statistics was that we are at a hundred percent of seeing people who come into the district health centers who are coming in for prenatal visits within that three-week period of time.

So we are encouraging and are also still putting money into Latino Mom Mobiles

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specifically and in other North Philadelphia places to do the outreach.

So many of those services still are being covered, but they're not being covered in the depth that they were originally, and we do track those numbers very carefully. And we'll be glad to share them with the Chair for every part of the City that we've been involved in, to make sure that don't get back to those infant mortality rates that we saw before.

One of the criticisms of Healthy Start is that not all of the projects that were funded were as effective in reducing that rate. So it's looking at where the programs were effective and not trying to re-fund programs that the HMOs are currently being funded to do, but to work with the State and to work with the HMOs about making sure they do the job that they've already been paid to do.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: I'll come back for the rest of these.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you. The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you,

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Madame Chair.

Commissioner, the Needle Exchange Program was listed, which we totally support. But if we have a community that doesn't want it --

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: I'm sorry?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: The Needle Exchange Program, if we have a community who doesn't want it, can we use those resources someplace else in the district who does?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: If I get the question, if there are communities in the City who would not like a Needle Exchange Program and there are parts of the City who would very much like the Needle Exchange Program, can we shift some of the sites?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: (Nods.)

ASST. COMM. BENCIVENGO: Mark Bencivengo, Assistant Commissioner for CODAAP.

The quick answer to your question is yes. In fact, we have worked with communities that are not supportive of the exchange, and we have made some moves there.

And there are neighborhoods and communities that would like to see that. They

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should certainly have some representative contact my office, contact me personally, and we'd be glad to have those discussions.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All right. I will be in touch with you. One of my captains has spoken with me. I'm sure he's been in a dialogue with the Department, but I will make that known to you.

Commissioner, what's CBH's relationship to the Access Program? And I assume Access, due to their own funding source, would pay for whatever clients they have. Am I correct?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Let me have Deputy Commissioner Covone answer that.

But while he's coming up the Access Program is another demonstration project of the federal government that does come to an end. Some parts of Access Program, not all of the dollars, but some of those dollars pay for case managers.

For those dollars that pay for case management, that piece of it will probably be transitioned to CBH in terms case management.

I'll let Mike address the rest of the program.

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(Deputy Health Commissioner Mike Covone comes forward.)

DEPT. COMM. COVONE: Mike Covone, Deputy Health Commissioner for Mental Health and Mental Retardation.

As the Commissioner said, one of the advantages of CBH and having an integrated behavioral health system is the continuation that Access was a five-year program that ends, I guess, next summer. And we are going to be able to continue through Community Behavioral Health that case management component as a covered service and afford the sustainability there.

We're going to look at the other components of that Access Program over the course of the next year to see if there are other components that can be transitioned on that as well. But the decision on that hasn't been made yet.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: The reason that wouldn't fit so well is that the clients within Access are Medicaid-eligible clients, and the case management is an in-plan service that they would be doing anyhow. So it makes for a natural

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movement between the two.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you. The Philadelphia Child Guidance Center, we continue to hear rumors about them, and I know we need them, especially the residential component that they provide.

Will that service be ongoing? And hopefully -- I just don't know what's going on with the organization, and I'm hoping that it will survive intact, but what do you hear about that?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Let me not talk too much for Child Guidance itself. But, as you know, Child Guidance as completed a merger with CHOP, and they're involved in some major changes right now, both programmatically and physically. And they did work with us around some of the format of those changes.

And they have relocated their inpatient beds at the Kirkbride Center for the next year, I believe. And for their outpatient services, they are continuing to work.

We are trying to keep an eye on them and make sure they survive these transitions. But we really do hope that they come up with a

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stronger, more diverse, and more responsive program. And I've been assured by their leadership that that's their goal also.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All right. And, finally, I'm just reminding you, in terms of Mr. Bencivengo, to keep us updated in terms of that drug money that we've been fighting so hard about for clients who need these services, that money coming from the State.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: The BHSI, Behavioral Health Special Initiative dollars?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes, the BHSI dollars.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Yes, we will keep you up to date on where we are with our negotiations on that. We still have concerns about Fiscal Year '99 and we will certainly make you aware as we hear more about the Governor's budget and where that seems to be going.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Finally, just a comment. The infant mortality issue, that was really, really severe in West and in Southwest Philly.

I was just talking to Bernard Brown,

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and we have people like Virginia Brown who are all so very, very committed in this area. And certainly, we just ask that you just continue to work with them too.

And we don't want to lose the focus on our area, so that we continue to make a difference in terms of infant mortality.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: The struggles with infant mortality, both in South and Southwest Philadelphia as well as in North Philadelphia have been fought, and the gains have been slow but steady. And we certainly don't want to lose any of those.

So this will be an area that we will continue to work; whether it is continuing to sort of pound on the State government to work with the HMOs, but also to find some ways to make sure the investments we made in both areas aren't for naught and we can continue to decrease infant mortality and not see it rise again to those third-world levels where it was ten years ago.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Absolutely. Thank you, Madame Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you. The

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Chair recognizes Councilman DiCicco.

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Thank you, Madame Chair. Good morning, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Good morning.

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Before I get to my question, I would just like to take this opportunity to address the question that Councilwoman Blackwell referred to concerning the Needle Exchange.

Your department has been extremely helpful in addressing some of the concerns that one of my neighborhoods in my district had as to the location of the Needle Exchange Program. They were not necessarily opposed to the Needle Exchange Program; it was the location which was in close proximity to a school and the district. And your Department has really helped me work through that process.

I believe we've relocated the Exchange location, and everyone is happy, I'm glad to say. And, again, I want to publicly thank you for your cooperation.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Thank you. And we will continue.

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COUNCILMAN DICICCO: There are no page numbers that I can find in this book when we get into the budget parts, so I'll try to describe where I am.

It's the area that's -- the types of services that we're speaking to is HIV prevention, surveillance, and care services. And at the bottom of that page, HUD Construction Services as it relates to William Way Center.

Again, there are no page numbers. I can't figure out where to get you. You could borrow this if you'd like.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Okay, I see it, yes.

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: There was $300,000 in '97, and I don't see any obligations for 1998. My question goes to: What is the HUD Construction Services?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: This was actually money that was given to us on a grant through Senator Foglietta.

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Congressman, Ambassador Foglietta, the former Councilman.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Former, thank

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you. As a one-time grant for this specific purpose, let me see.

MS. BASS: I'm Patricia Bass, Codirector of AACO. And the Commissioner's correct, that was one-time dollars that were allocated to the program.

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Thank you. I mean, they do a wonderful job in the gay and lesbian community, and they're in need of additional funding for an elevator, which would really help their program.

So I was looking to see if we can get some more money in it. I guess we'll have to speak to the next congressman in the First Congressional District.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Hopefully, the next congressman will be able to help.

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Well, if it's who I think it's going to be, I certainly believe he will help us.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Okay, thank you.

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: The other question is the following page with the Ryan White Formula Services. Under that heading, there are a number

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of agencies that provide outpatient health and support services and case management and comprehensive treatment services.

My question is, there are about 12 or 13 agencies that are performing that. Are they selected through an RFP process? And why is it there are so many of them? And I'm really getting to one issue, it's the third one on the list, South Jersey Council on AIDS.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Okay.

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Why would we not go with a Philadelphia firm?

MS. BASS: Again, I am Pat Bass from AACO.

South Jersey is part of the --

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Excuse me. Could you please pull the microphone closer to you because the stenographer is having difficulty hearing you.

MS. BASS: As you probably know, the EMA for Philadelphia is for Philadelphia as well as the PA suburbs and the New Jersey suburbs. And so the South Jersey contract is, in fact, a contract that we are engaged in to provide

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services in South Jersey.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: "EMA" means "eligible metropolitan area." And Philadelphia receives funding for nine counties; five counties in Pennsylvania, and four counties in New Jersey. And Philadelphia controls funding for all nine counties.

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Are there any City dollars --

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: No.

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: -- involved in that at all?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: No, no City dollars, no match. It's a hundred percent federal dollars, and it's called "The Ryan White Care Act," and Philadelphia receives it for the nine-county metropolitan area.

Almost all of the dollars within Ryan White go to metropolitan areas. We are one of those metropolitan areas.

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Okay. And the same would apply to the bottom of the page where it says "Supplemental Services?" It's the same thing?

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COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Right.

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: I'm not familiar with this. That's why I needed to know -- when I hear of firms outside of Philadelphia, I generally panic.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Right. Approximately 70 percent of the dollars are earmarked for the City of Philadelphia, 15 percent for the Pennsylvania suburbs, and 15 percent for the New Jersey counties.

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Again, my concern was there was no City dollars, right? I want to clarify that.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: No City dollars.

COUNCILMAN DICICCO: Okay, thank you.

I have no further questions, Madame Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you.

Commissioner, I'm going to sneak in a question. Do you mind, Councilman Nutter? I see you smiling.

Can you tell me what guidelines exist concerning the placement of special-needs homes in residential communities?

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I had written you a letter making such inquiry under date of February 10th. I never received a response. I had a member of my staff call your office on Friday, and I still have not received a response.

I'm going to a meeting tonight, and I would like something in writing from you, if I may.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: I apologize. I was out of town on Friday afternoon, and I did receive the message that your staff had called this morning.

There is no City policy that governs strictly notification for residential programs. We do notify the Chief of Staff's Office at the point that someone is requesting to move in, and at that point, he will approve whether we should continue with the process or not.

We have done that in this case. We notified that office that there is an agency that is looking for property in that particular area of the City.

For the area that you are specifically asking about, the six clients in question

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currently live in that area. In fact, they live about four or five blocks from the area they're going to move into. They have lived in the Korman Suites for about ten years. The agency's looking to build or construct --

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Actually, there would be 12 clients.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: I didn't -- are there 12 clients?

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Mm-hmm. That's what the proposal's for.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Two homes, six clients each.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: I thought there were four homes, three clients each.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Okay, sorry. I will let Mike answer.

DEPT. COMM. COVONE: Mike Covone, Deputy Health Commissioner of Mental Health and Mental Retardation. I think, based on some of the feedback we have received and some of the discussions that we have had with the organization, that the grouping of the homes were only two on the particular street that were in

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question last week and not four on -- I believe it was --

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: How many clients?

DEPT. COMM. COVONE: Six clients. And I believe that's the information that we sent over to the Mayor's Office as well.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Well, once the Mayor's Office receives this information, what's the next step?

DEPT. COMM. COVONE: It's generally just a notice to proceed.

What they've been trying to do centrally is not to have various organizations within the City who are developing housing trip over one another so that mental health or mental retardation wouldn't be developing a home without some central clearing point, that also there could be an AIDS home being developed or a homeless facility on the same block.

So they've tried to serve more as a central clearinghouse to notify departments that, did you know something else was in the same particular area? It hasn't been an approval process; it's more of a clearinghouse function

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that they serve.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Evidently, there has been a lot of activity with the neighbors around this particular home and this particular site.

We would be glad to provide to you all of the backup information about the meetings that have taken place and the current status of all of the activities currently going on with this particular residential site.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: And when would you get me that information? The meeting is this evening.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: I will get you that information today as soon as the hearing is over.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: I'd appreciate that.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Fernandez.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Madame Chair.

On page 1 of your testimony, there was a reference to a $200,000 additional amount of

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money for the Animal Control Program, and it added that you have a new vendor contract. I couldn't figure out why we needed more. Like there were more rottweilers running wild or -- and why a new vendor contract would require additional money. Maybe I'm misreading it.

DEPT. COMM. STEIKER: This is Ellen Steiker, Deputy Health Commissioner.

Actually, in the FY '98 budget process, the Environmental Protection Division came to us and said the current vendor hasn't gotten an increase and is not covering costs. There was a negotiation, and the result was a two-year increase that, I believe, was about $500,000. I will get you the exact number.

And it took place in two parts. This is the second of two years. But the idea was that this particular vendor couldn't provide its current level of services unless we increased its contracts, and we went through a negotiation process and did agree to some increases over a two-year period.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: But this is not a new vendor. This is the same vendor we've had

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for the past several years.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Who is that?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: The SPCA. And basically, what they do is pick up stray animals, and we've had an ongoing contract with them. We have not upped the amount of that contract in several years.

They said they had been losing money on it for several years and were willing to eat that cost and found that they could no longer do that and requested a fairly large increase. We were able to negotiate that we would do that increase with them over two years, and this is the second of the two years.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: As long as they get all those rottweilers running around.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: The second issue is, you mentioned a lot about the Mom Mobile and said how important that is as one of the strategies to deal with -- in terms of reducing, you know, infants at risk and children at risk.

I looked in the budget, and I was puzzled as to why in '97, 304,000, almost 305,000,

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was spent. But now, it's only like 25. And I'm wondering, is there some additional money somewhere else?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Yes. As I look at it, we've moved money from -- the General Fund was funding it at 305. Next year, the Title 5 will be at 322,000.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Good, okay.

And following up on the discussion of, you know, the funding from Healthy Start being cut back, and you said you're really trying to work with the HMOs, the four that have the contracts in the State.

What kind of actual leverage do you have? I mean, is there anything more than gentle persuasion? Or who does really have a hammer over these HMOs if they don't produce the kind of -- essentially, I call them almost "softer services."

It would be if someone comes bleeding to the hospital, you know, it's very evident. But if it's the kind of stuff that's more prevention and really doing the aggressive kind of outreach, it might be harder to track and monitor.

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Who monitors? And then, what kind of hammer is there?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: In fact, the Philadelphia Health Department doesn't have that level of leverage with the HMOs.

What we do do is try to push them, to shove, to try to be not nice sometimes in terms of letting them understand that they have a contractual obligation to the State to provide these services.

The State does have the responsibility to monitor the services and to monitor the contract. And these are all contractual services for the HMOs to provide for women who are receiving medical assistance.

What we try to do is to push the HMOs as much as we can as well as help the State if people are not meeting what we feel are their contractual obligations. Some of the discussions -- and, obviously, we would like this to be as black and white as we can get it, and it probably isn't. The HMOs will say that they are providing these services; and, to some extent, they are. Are they providing them at the same level of depth

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and breadth as we would like? We don't believe that.

But we are continuing to try to work with them to let them know where we see the gaps, and to push them as much as we can with as many other advocacy groups as there are in the City in terms of service, what needs to be done, who's at risk, and where we think they're actually missing.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Did I hear the bell?

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Yes, you did.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: I'll wait one more round.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you. The Chair recognizes Councilman Nutter.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Commissioner, I'd like to go back to an area where Councilman Ortiz was. When we talk about the Healthy Start Program and some of the other projects that are grant-funded and then the funding drys up.

I received this report last year. It's the "Annie Casey Foundation, City Kids Count"

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report. I assume you're familiar with that?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: No, I'm not.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. Annie Casey does an annual report, apparently, on various data on the well-being of children in the 50 largest cities in the country. And you may not necessarily have answers right now, and that's okay. I'd like you to get back to us with some information.

But in the most recent report done in 1997, in the category of percent low birth weight babies in 1994, Philadelphia ranked 43rd of the top cities of the country. In infant mortality rate, the City ranked 41st out of 50. In the percent of births where the mother who received late or no prenatal care in 1994, Philadelphia was 48 out of 50. In the percent of all births to females under age 18, in '94, the City ranked 40th out of the top 50 cities in the country.

My question is: In light of either Healthy Start funds being cut or other potential funding cuts that affect us either at the State or federal level, what are we doing over time to get our numbers down in whatever anyone might consider

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to be a more acceptable rate? Or at least out of the 40s, possibly into the 30s or the 20s of these top 50 cities across the country?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: I'm not familiar with the report. Sue Lieberman is familiar with the report, so I'll have her address it.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay.

MS. LIEBERMAN: I think one thing that I need to restate is that when we go from 14 million to 7 million, no matter how much we try to do, we're not going to be able to make up that difference. And we have looked at some other sources of funding, we do have some grant requests.

And some of what we're trying to do is use our current money more effectively and more efficiently and to leverage money in a better way.

One of the things we've done is, this year, we've looked at smoking and pregnant women. And we know that one of the two highest causes of infant mortality really relates to pregnant women smoking. And we also know that programs that help pregnant women stop smoking are relatively cost-

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effective. They already exist in this City.

And so we try to work with managed care companies to say, you know, If you put some money into this and we will leverage some of our money, let's put together a systematic approach to try to help pregnant women cut down on their smoking because we know in the end, that's going to have a much better result. So some of what we're looking at is how can we take the money that we have and leverage it and use it to convince managed care companies to do some things and then to work with us.

We've also looked at things like breast-feeding. We know breast feeding is going to have a very significant impact on the health of children and infants. And so we've also done some work to say to managed care and to actually cost out for them how much, if they promoted breast-feeding, it would help and how much money it would save. So we're looking at that kind of program.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, I guess my question is, do you believe that by looking at all of these programs or pursuing these various

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efforts that in a fairly comprehensive fashion, all of those efforts will lead to better indicators over some time?

I mean, what's the goal for next year or what's the goal over the next five years? Where is this going?

MS. LIEBERMAN: Well, I mean, I think part of where it's going is, hopefully, less babies dying. But as I've said, there's also some other indicators that I think are really important measures of health. And those are both women's health because, as I also said, if we had healthy women --

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Right.

MS. LIEBERMAN: -- we would have healthy babies. Because healthy women who -- women who don't have high blood pressure when they get pregnant, women who don't have diabetes, women who are well nourished will have a much healthier pregnancy.

And so part of what we want to look at is, how can we get those women into care and get them healthier so that when they get pregnant, they're going to have healthier infants.

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One of the other things that we really want to look at is the other side of the continuum. Once we have a healthy baby, that we make sure that that baby stays healthy, so that we don't just say, Okay, well now we've had this healthy baby, and in two years, that baby will be back in the DHS system or in the mental health system or in some other system, in the emergency room, because we didn't do something for that baby.

So what we're looking at now is what kind of programs can we put in place that will be those prevention programs -- programs so that -- and we're doing a joint program now with the Department of Human Services called "Hip Families." It is for children who have some kind of health care need. But they're not the kids that DHS will see now, they're not the kids that managed care is going to see now. But they're those children that we all know that if we don't do something, they're going to be in the hospital emergency room or they're going to be in DHS in two years.

And so what we've tried to do is put

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some of our resources into those services so that we have prevention so that we're going to be bringing down the negative kinds of indicators.

But it's going to take a little while. And, frankly, I mean, we can do a lot of group education because that's one of the things we've moved to now. We've moved to a lot of -- instead of doing a lot of in-home education, bringing women together on sites and doing group education.

And we can do a lot. But, as I said, there's only so much that we can do with what we have.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Let me also add to that. Not only are we interested in making sure that the infant mortality rate not get any worse in this area, and that all those numbers in the 40s get into the 30s, these are also the primary areas that the State is tracking for the medical assistance clients here in Philadelphia and tracking the outcomes of the HMOs.

This is one reason that gives them some impetus to work with us because we're both being judged on the same statistics. If those outcomes don't improve, then the State has to judge whether

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or not they're doing their job with the capitation dollars they're receiving.

Our focus with them is to make sure they know as much as we know about the research that we've been doing and the results from Healthy Start. We know that smoking is a cause, we know that no prenatal care is a cause, we know that not doing enough outreach to make sure we can connect with mothers with care is a cause. Once all those things are done and as we continue to monitor them, those numbers in the 40s should begin to get into the 30s.

Certainly my long-term plan would be to very actively watch those outcome indicators and very actively see whether or not the programs we are investing in are making a difference. And if they aren't making a difference, being ready to change them and to continue to force both the State's hand and the hand of the managed care providers to make sure that they are also using their dollars in the most effective way.

We chart that very carefully so that we are aware if the numbers aren't changing. We know right now, for example, that our immunization

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numbers are going way up. That should have an impact. We know that both Annie Casey and several other foundations are willing to invest in Philadelphia to help us to continue to track these dollars and the outcomes of them.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Miller.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Good morning, Miss Richman.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Good morning.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I too just want to express my advocacy, interest, and support for funding regarding Healthy Start.

And having worked for the former Chair of the Pennsylvania Health and Welfare Committee, then I know the influence and impact they can have on helping you to get what you need.

I know things have changed now, but I just wanted to express that.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I'm going to ask

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a couple questions regarding Health Center No. 9. And you and I have had this discussion once or twice.

Health Center No. 9 is one of the oldest health centers in Philadelphia, but I don't think that this fiscal plan has been changed to keep up with the demand now, particularly with the number of uninsured patients that are coming there. And it's my understanding that they're serving more uninsured patients than any other health center in the City.

And I know that there's a -- the Capital Office right now has an RFP out for the purpose of, I guess, planning design. And we're really glad that that's going on.

I just wanted to talk about time lines or deadlines.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Okay. The two health centers that we're working on now are 2 and 10. And the renovations in those centers should be completed by July of '98. The two centers after that are 9 and 3. And, as you were told, that planning effort is going on now.

You're also correct in that District

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Health Center 9 has a high portion of the uninsured. And, again, the uninsured tend to be working poor and not people on medical assistance. These are people who are actively working but don't have health insurance coverage and, therefore, use the district health centers as their base of health care. That's why the health centers were designed indeed.

And they have seen an increase in that as more people have been taken either off medical assistance or, for whatever other reason, don't have appropriate health care.

I will let the Deputy Commissioner address some of the time lines and other issues with the health center renovations.

(Deputy Health Commissioner Michael Lucas comes forward.)

DEPT. COMM. LUCAS: My name is Mike Lucas, Deputy Health Commissioner.

As the Commissioner said, the next two centers which are under design and which expect to be completed by the end of this calendar year to mid this calendar year are Health Centers 3 and 9. Health Center 9's renovations are principally to

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make it a better-looking center and a more functional center, concentrating on the first floor.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay, thank you.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: And it's expected to be completed in August or September of '98, so within this calendar year.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay, good. Also regarding Health Center 9, I understand that there are some vacant staffing -- we want to talk about staffing. There's some vacant positions that haven't been filled in more than two years?

DEPT. COMM. LUCAS: At any given time, there will be vacancies at each of the health care centers.

Each of the health care centers have a particular staffing level. If Health Center 9 is down two or three staff members, which I believe they are right at this point, it's simply a result of the positions being tested for and hired within the City's civil service system.

The two or three which I think you're probably referring to are expected to be filled within the next month or two months.

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COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. One other question regarding the way that the community advisory boards operate with the Department. It's my understand that the community advisory boards are to be a part of the budget planning process, and they have an authority to approve budgets.

It sounds like -- well, first of all, is that true, due to legislation? Can you explain the actual role the community advisory board has as it regards to the budget, budget approval?

DEPT. COMM. LUCAS: Certainly. As the Commissioner said earlier, the health care centers became federally-qualified health centers in 1993. And one of the stipulations to become an FQHC was to have a community board.

The community board has a variety of responsibilities, but if you look at the bylaws of the board and the memorandum of understanding, which we would be happy to provide to you, there are two items in which the City cannot relinquish responsibility: that is in financial matters and in personnel matters.

There are civil service and other budgetary matters which supercede the

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responsibility of the board. That is clear in the memorandum of understanding and the bylaws, which we can make available.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay, I'd like that, plus I think the community boards need that information to be really clear on it.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: We will try to clarify it. I know that the boards themselves have been told that they don't have fiduciary responsibility, and they don't have responsibility for personnel, but I think sometimes the boards feel that so much of the activity relates around those two things, that they would like to have input on that. But we will explain it to them again and try to make it clear as possible.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay, I have one other question.

In my district, and it probably will be happening in other districts too, we seem to have an influx of blackbirds. People were calling my office -- calling lots of places, saying they felt like they were in Alfred Hitchcock's movie "The Birds." The birds were everywhere, in trees. And it was -- this year, it was unlike past years.

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Did you get any other calls? I was driving through North Philadelphia one day and I saw this same situation, birds lined up on the telephone wires, like hundreds in a tree, which is something very unusual.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: I am not aware of an influx of blackbirds at this point. However, we will investigate and get back to you as to whether --

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: You know, I'm very serious. The people were very scared. The first time we got the first couple calls, we sort of sat back and said, Oh, well, we have these birds, but then we had more and more people talk about the birds flying around in flocks and messing up streets and all kinds of things.

Okay, that's the only questions I have so far. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Cohen.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: During a previous session, Commissioner, I raised with you the question of what it would take to give all Philadelphians minimal but adequate health care

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and as to how it kind of would be structured and what the cost would be.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Yes.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Have you been able to do anything on that?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN. Yes. I guess I'm a little surprised you haven't received that correspondence yet, but we have been able to do that, yes.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: And are your conclusions going to be in writing or oral?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Yes, the conclusions are in writing, and we give you a range of different kinds of insurance and what we thought the costs would be. In other words, the per capita rate can vary between the very minimum to a little bit more than that. And we did give you a range of dollars that would cover the uninsured.

The hardest part of that exercise, actually, was trying to get a basis of what is the percentage of uninsured in Philadelphia. We reached out to several national research organizations and basically came in with a

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percentage of somewhere between 12 and 17 percent of people in Philadelphia are uninsured.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, I don't want to put the President of the United States in an embarrassing position, but his Saturday radio address, I think, probably went beyond my request in his Saturday address. And I would like to suggest that my question be tailored to fit in with the President's.

He said, as I think everybody knows by now, that there are intolerable differences that exist between the health care of whites, blacks, Native Americans, Hispanics. And he set forth the need over a ten-year program.

In my impetuosity, I would like to have it cut to five years, but maybe ten years allows a little more, you know, working time. He said that that difference has to be eliminated.

Now, tailoring my question to that presented by the President, how in Philadelphia do we guarantee that all Philadelphians, regardless of their background, receive adequate, affordable health care -- whatever that may mean, based upon their economic circumstances, but adequate health

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care?

And so, therefore, I suggest, as you're putting together the final thoughts, you try to tailor what would a Philadelphia model be of that because that's essentially the same question that I've raised.

I think it's intolerable that in the United States, we ought to be satisfied with adopting City policies. I understand the imperatives that push us in that direction, but we have City policies that help put people on the streets of Philadelphia, that counter other efforts to take people off the streets.

And we excuse it on the grounds of finance, and I would suggest that finances cannot be any reason in the United States for permitting any differentiation in the adequacy of the health care of each Philadelphian or each American ought to receive. And I think you would probably agree and you're working toward that end.

But could we have a model for Philadelphia presented? Or would your answer fit that category?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: We will try to

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make sure our answer fits the scope of your question. And since we've already started it, we will continue to develop the model we have now and try to address those types of individual differences.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Because there's going to be federal money that will be coming, you know, to those groups that are prepared to adopt the President's model, and I think we ought to be ready to advance that and to be the first major city which can really boast about the health care of its citizens.

Thank you, Madame President.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: You're welcome, Councilman.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Fernandez.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Despite all the tough questions you've gotten -- maybe it's because the Health Department is such a large and important department -- I just wanted to end by saying that you and all of your staff deserve an incredible amount of credit for

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all that you have done, having dramatically increased child immunization, having what's described as the most effective lead poisoning prevention program in the country, for all you've done to improve the quality of care at health centers, including having evening and weekend hours at least in one.

And the child care facilities for parents as they wait for their kids, I think that's a great addition, and then all of the progress you've made in terms of reducing infant mortality and low-weight babies, not to mention CBH.

And I noted in your testimony that there was one other good indicator that you may or may not be responsible for, and that was having our air quality be improving. And I'm wondering, what do you feel the Health Department's been doing to improve the air quality?

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Actually, we do have -- air management is a main part of the Health Department. John will describe that.

But we've also been very active in working to identify those places that are

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violating our Air Management Act and to try to stay on top of any of the discharges to the air that would endanger our health.

DEPT. COMM. DOMZALSKY: I'm John Domzalsky, Deputy Health Commissioner.

The Commissioner is correct. A large part of the improvements in our air quality, particularly going for the number of poor-quality to good-quality air days which, incidentally, is reported daily in the weather section of The Philadelphia Inquirer. And through using our air-monitoring data, which --

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: The Philadelphia Inquirer and The Daily News or just The Inquirer?

DEPT. COMM. DOMZALSKY: And the Daily News.

And a large part of that has to do with our implementing at the local level all of the provisions of the Federal Clean Air Act and working closely with our industry to ensure compliance with those regulations.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: So it's not just an El Nino effect?

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DEPT. COMM. DOMZALSKY: (Laughs.)

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Okay, thanks again for your good work, and continue the careful monitoring.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Are there any other questions or comments from Members of the Committee?

(No further questions or comments at this time.)

COUNCILMAN VERNA: At this point, I would simply like to invite Mr. Covone into my office before he leaves the building.

Thank you. Thank you very much, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER RICHMAN: Thank you.

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(Council President returns to the Chair.)

PRESIDENT STREET: May I have your attention, please. Office of Emergency Shelter Services, Office of Emergency Shelter Services.

(Members of Panel from Office of Emergency Shelter Services come forward.)

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PRESIDENT STREET: Good morning. Please identify yourself for the record, and proceed with the summary of your statement.

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: Good morning, Council President Street and Members of City Council. My name is Michael Nardone, and I am the Deputy Managing Director for Special Needs Housing.

I am joined today by Sally Fisher, Acting Director of the Office of Emergency Shelter and Services; and Richard Shaeffer, Administrative Services Director of OESS.

I'm pleased to offer this testimony on the homeless services budget request for FY '99 and the significant challenges that lie ahead. As presented to Council, the proposed FY '99 budget for OESS is $29.3 million, of which $12.6 million represents City General Fund dollars, and $16.7 represents grant revenue funds.

I do not need to tell you that there is perhaps no other problem as complex and challenging as homelessness. And the numbers who are homeless or at risk of being homeless threatens to increase with the enactment of a

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series of welfare reductions affecting thousands of victims and families throughout this City.

At the same time, we have witnessed a reduction in resources available to Philadelphia from federal and State governments for emergency shelter and services. In FY '97, the City absorbed a $3.4 million reduction in federal and State assistance. Despite an FY '98 increase in homeless assistance funds, the amount of State and federal support remains significantly below prior year levels.

Unfortunately, despite the real human impact of these external funding decisions, the City is not in a position to replace dollar-for-dollar cuts imposed at federal and State levels; nor can the City allow decision-makers in Harrisburg and Washington to walk away from their responsibilities and shift costs to City government.

As a result, for the past two years, the Administration has made the extremely difficult decision of imposing shelter restrictions to ensure sufficient resources to provide shelter beds during the winter months.

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Even with these restrictions, the Administration has had to come before Council to seek additional funds to cover emergency shelter costs.

The $29.3 million requested for OESS in FY '99 will support 2,150 year-round shelter beds, with an additional 100 children's beds supported through the Department of Human Services.

We received some good news in December when HUD announced restoration of 828,000 in federal dollars for emergency shelter under the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act. These dollars reverse prior-year federal reductions and will support an average of 300 winter beds, freeing up resources to allow for an increase in year-round shelter beds from this year's level of 1950.

And, fortunately, while Washington has decided to reverse past funding reductions, the Governor's budget does not take a similar step. For FY '99, the Governor proposes only a 2 percent increase for the Homeless Assistance Program, an increase of approximately $136,000 in HAP funds over this year's level.

While any increase is obviously appreciated, this proposal still leaves the City

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$700,000 to $1 million short, compared to prior-year levels. It also falls far short, given the potential fiscal impact which welfare may have on the homeless service system.

The Administration has chosen to direct the limited new resources at our disposal to increase the number of shelter beds rather than undertake new initiatives in the FY '99 budget. At the same time, we have taken great pains not to drain resources from other critical ongoing investments in the homeless continuum of care; for example, homeless prevention.

But the State's failure to step up to the plate and provide sufficient assistance to fund homeless services likely means that we will again be required to impose some manner of restriction as we prepare to enter the next fiscal year; unless, we of course, are able to -- unless we are successful in persuading the State to provide additional assistance.

But the news is not all bleak. The inclusion of $3 billion in federal Welfare-to-Work dollars in the 1997 Balanced Budget Act will help to mitigate some of the impacts of welfare

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reform. Philadelphia expects to receive some $50 million over the next two years to help TANF recipients move successfully into work.

As the Administration develops its plan, I have been working to ensure that TANF recipients residing in shelters and transitional housing receive priority for service within components of the Welfare-to-Work Program.

We are we are also exploring enhanced case management, life skills, job preparation, and computer-literacy training, including development of shelter-based computer labs for TANF recipients in the homeless service system.

OESS is complementing the Welfare-to-Work initiative with a major employment and training initiative targeted primarily at non-TANF recipients who will not benefit from the new Welfare-to-Work funds.

With the help of FY '98 and proposed FY '99 general funds as well as dollars recently made available by the Private Industry Council, we hope to be able to support at least a million-dollar program over the next 15 months, devoted to the employment training needs of these recipients.

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These initiatives will not fully counter the impact of welfare reform. However, it is the Administration's goal to use those dollars as efficiently as we can to assist those within the homeless service system achieve independence and economic self sufficiency.

We are also working hard on a number of other fronts to improve the continuum of services provided to homeless individuals and families. With the appropriation of an additional 250,000 in General Funds, the Administration has been able to significantly expand and revamp the City's homeless prevention efforts.

Beginning in FY '98, OHCD will contract with two nonprofit organizations to provide community-based prevention services, including cash assistance for delinquent rent and utility payments, case management, and employment assistance to households at risk of becoming homeless.

The Members of City Council deserve a great deal of credit for their support of this expanded homeless prevention program. Our success is attracting federal dollars for housing

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developments and support services for homeless individuals also continued this year.

In December, HUD announced it was awarding City area nonprofit providers $16.8 million for 13 housing projects under the McKinney Homeless Assistance Act, up from $16.1 million in the previous fiscal year.

All told, these projects will support about 220 housing units, serving approximately 550 homeless individuals and families. They are in addition to the estimated 380 housing units in the pipeline which may be completed at the end of the current calendar year.

Finally, in collaboration with Community Behavioral Health, the Administration is putting in place, as part of this year's winter bed initiative, a set of new services targeted at homeless men and women with serious mental illness who require on-site mental health support and are not adequately served in the typical housing shelter setting.

Despite the significant strides we are making, however, there is little doubt that difficult days lie ahead. A big part of the

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Administration's legislative agenda will include advocacy aimed at increasing support for homeless services and plugging some of the gaping holes created in the social safety net.

Though a relative newcomer to City government, I am well aware of the hard work done by the Members of City Council under Council President Street and the Mayor to restore the economic health and welfare of the City.

Among your many accomplishments, you have helped this Administration develop a range of services for homeless individuals and families that seek to transition them to independence and self-sufficiency. However, the impending impact of welfare reform threatens to unravel much of the progress made over the last several years.

In light of our limited resources, we must work together, building on the opportunities at hand to mitigate the serious human consequences that welfare reform may entail for the City.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to testify, and I'd be pleased to answer any questions you may have.

PRESIDENT STREET: The Chair recognizes

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Councilwoman Blackwell.

I'm sorry. Oh, Councilman Cohen, I'm sorry. I thought it was Councilwoman Blackwell's light; it was Councilman Cohen's.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Cohen.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Mr. Nardone, I read your statement, and it looks kind of warm and friendly, and then I go back a second and a third time, and I'm not sure that the sentences are quite as clear and the paragraphs have as much meaning as I first thought or maybe hoped they had. So let me start.

First I read in the first paragraph, "As presented to Council, the proposed FY '99 budget for the Office of Emergency Shelter and Services is $29,300,000 roughly, of which 12-1/2 million represent City General Fund dollars, and over 16-1/2 million represent Grant Revenue funds."

And then I go to your last page, which contains the operating budget of the City, and I'm looking for where I am going to find this 29 million or at least the 12-1/2 million representing City General Fund dollars. And all I

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can find is a statement which talks, at the most, about $4 million.

And I wonder, do I have a defective copy? Or, if I don't have a defective copy, is there some other explanation?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: Well, I think the -- I don't know if the number you're referring to is the service-level statement that's at the back of --

COUNCILMAN COHEN: I'm referring to what is furnished to us.

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: Right. The $4 million that I think you're referring to is a service level related to meals. But in terms of the --

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Is there any other document I should have? Am I missing a page or. . .

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: There is a budget number that I could make --

COUNCILMAN COHEN: I have an eight-page written statement.

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: Right.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: And I have one

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single page with the front and back having budget figures on them. Now, am I short on that?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: Yes. I think that we need to make sure you have the budget numbers and --

COUNCILMAN COHEN: No, no, I'm only talking about what was distributed to us as your advanced statement; I'm not talking about the other budget books.

Do I have the completed statement that you had distributed?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: That is the complete package that I distributed.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, then, can you tell us -- you know, I had trouble understanding. I've never felt that the City, considering all the funds, ever invested anything like $30 million in shelters, but it's a hopeful sign that maybe we are taking it seriously. And then when I look for the confirmation of it, I come up with $4 million.

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: The $29.3 million in the statement refers to both City general funds and grant revenue funds.

And the amount of -- I apologize that

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you don't have -- that we haven't provided the information that we need to, but the amount of General Fund dollars is $12.6 million, and the amount of anticipated grant fund revenues is 16.7. And those are the numbers that --

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Why did you furnish us only with the budget document showing $4 million?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: Those -- my understanding -- what the testimony -- what's affixed to the testimony are the service-level impact numbers. And I was -- I thought -- and that was the package in addition to the testimony that I was provided.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: I'm having a great trouble understanding.

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: I'm sorry. The service --

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Can you furnish the source?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: I think it's been the practice -- I'm new to City government. But it's under my -- I understand that the package that we usually provide includes both the overall

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statement as well as there's been a practice of providing the service-level impact statements. And that's what that two-page document is.

It's not an attempt to -- it's not an attempt to give you the budget numbers; it's an attempt to provide you with some indication of service levels through the Office of Emergency Shelter and Services.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, basically, the reason I raised those was, my staff member working on budget matters for me is indicating to me what is contained in the regular book furnished to us. But, generally, these statements are supporting statements by the officers in charge of the department, that when they give us budgetary material, they give it to support what's in their written statement. And I'm suggesting that I find it difficult to deal with that.

And I'm troubled because I'm worried about these shelter restrictions. I worry about beautiful language like "shelter protocols," which you use in this statement, giving a kind of dignity to the concept of forcing people to sleep out on the streets of Philadelphia. I find that a

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very undignified thought, people sleeping on sidewalks.

But, you know, shelter restriction, shelter protocols sound as if it's a really humane approach, when I find it to be a very inhumane approach. That's the reason I'm raising the question.

And then to talk in terms of these large sums of money supported by documents which show anywhere from 1/3 to 1/6 or 1/7 of the amount of money you say is very troubling.

Let me go on to another statement of yours that I find very difficult. On page 6, you talk about the federal funds provided through the HUD Initiative Cities Grant and some other things. Your office, which, you know, now operates -- you weren't there at the time -- placed more than 475 homeless clients into full- or part-time employment.

Let me ask you, how many of those folks are still employed now?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: I do not have -- I'd be happy to provide that information to you. I don't have that available right now, but I'd be

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happy to provide that for you.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: All right. In a fashion so that we could check it out?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: Certainly.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Because my experience over the years is that by this time, if the job promises we were told every time we participate in giveaways to businesses at various levels, this City would be teaming with maybe 2 million more additional workers, and our population would be maybe closer to 3-1/2 million instead of 1-1/2 million.

So I'm very suspicious of these numbers, and I would really like to be able to track them down.

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: There's no question that particularly with the population and the efforts that we've garnered away, that it's very difficult to continue employment over a period of time.

One of the things that we're trying to do with the new initiative or the expanded initiative that we're putting in place is to track very carefully what are the results after six

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months and one year of time.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, we would like to see it so we could know what it means. If you have, in fact, placed meaningful jobs with income sufficient to support a small family, and jobs have a major permanency, say a year or more, we can understand that.

But we're told by suburban employers that they're very lucky if out of ten referrals at the end of six months, if one still remains working with them, for a lot of different reasons none of which I attribute to the fault on the hands of the people running the program. There are just economic problems that exist: transportation problems that exist, levels of skill problems that exist.

But we'd like to be able to, you know, weight these figures in a meaningful way and see if it's 475 that got jobs, and three weeks later, after each one got a job, they were no longer working, that kind of thing.

Thank you, Mr. President. And I'd like to pass this round and continue on the next round.

PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

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The Chair recognizes Councilman Nutter.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. Nardone, I just really have one question. I've read through the testimony. And in light of the recent announcement by the City Administration, I was somewhat surprised that there was no mention of the potential impact of the elimination of the homeless preference at PHA in the Section 8 Program and what impact that might have on your agency, which, I assume there would be an impact on your agency.

But in the eight pages of testimony, there's no mention made of that.

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: You're correct, there is no mention in the statement about the Section 8 policy. One of the things that -- although the homeless preference is eliminated, the --

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Has it actually been eliminated?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: No, I believe it has to go before the PHA Board, and I'm joined by John Kromer, who might be able to provide some

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additional details in that regard.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay.

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: But one of the things that that policy envisions is not the elimination of the homeless preference -- I mean, it envisions the elimination of the homeless preference, but that does not mean that no homeless families will receive Section 8s.

What it means is that there will be an allocation process put in place between Tier 1 and Tier 2, the Tier 1 being those who are homeless or who also -- there are also a number of other categories in that, but primarily, that's the homeless category.

The intent of that is to have some flexibility in terms of the allocation of those units so that we can closely monitor what is the impact on the system and, therefore, rearrange policies as we proceed forward if we are seeing an impact.

We also continue our investments with respect to transitional housing and also -- that are presently in place, which we will be able to move some of the folks out of the shelter into the

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traditional housing units.

And, John, I don't know if you have any additional --

(John Kromer comes forward.)

MR. KROMER: Yes, I'm John Kromer, Director of the Office of Housing and Community Development.

Just three points which may be helpful. First, the Mayor has asked his staff to draft a resolution for the PHA Board to consider. The homeless preference has not yet been ended, but a resolution is being drafted for consideration by the Board.

Secondly, it's not yet clear how much of an impact that change might have because an assessment has not yet been completed of the availability of Section 8s during the coming fiscal year.

Last year, our understanding and the Housing Authority's understanding was that Section 8 certificates would be very scarce. And then, without warning, the Housing Authority had several hundred new certificates made available by the federal government. So that assessment needs to

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be completed.

And then, finally, the resolution, if enacted by the Board, would give the Board discretion to allocate between Tier 1 and Tier 2 preferences.

And I just wanted to say that the families in the Tier 2 category are not middle-class families. These are people that are seen every day by the Tenants Action Group and the Tenants Rental Assistance Corporation, people that are just hanging in there.

And part of the purpose of this change would be to provide support to those families as a way of preventing homelessness and preventing them from entering the shelter system in the first place.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, let me go back to my original question. Are you anticipating any impact on OESS as a result of the proposed change in policy?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: It's very difficult to answer that question because I think that it's difficult to know with a great deal of certainly, first of all, how many Section 8

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certificates will be available in the upcoming year to begin with.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, I understand that. I mean, that may be, you know, one of the great questions of the universe.

But if we go by past history, there was a homeless preference in the Section 8 Program, and if that means that homeless people had a preference for the certificates and therefore they were getting them and moving into neighborhoods and subsequently, at least by some accounts, causing great havoc throughout the City, which is not particularly a view shared by myself, but that's another argument for a different day.

If homeless people were getting the certificates, and if the policy is changed so that they won't, or that there's no preference, what happens?

MR. KROMER: It's not clear at this point whether that change would have any impact at all on the system. For every Tier 1 person who does not receive a certificate, there may become available a Tier 2 household that is helped maybe prevented from entering the system in the first

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place.

It really is too early to tell, but there may be no impact at all on the system.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, you know, one, I find that hard to believe but, you know, we'll see what happens.

Mr. Nardone, is it correct that your office provides a variety of social services to people while they're in your care or in your custody?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: That is correct.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: And is it also true that if a person leaves the system, should they, under the current policy, be fortune enough to get a Section 8 certificate, do they then lose those services?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: The services -- we have so many families that fill in the gap behind them, that basically the services do not follow the families into Section 8 housing, that's correct.

One of the things, however, that --

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Is that a financial question, is that a policy question? And why

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wouldn't the services follow the person? They didn't all of a sudden have some epiphany and everything just got better for them, did they?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: I mean, there is -- I mean, there is -- I mean, there is the need to continue services to folks in Section 8 housing.

And the policy that the Mayor's Office has released tries to address that issue through the provision of some $1 million in support services funds to folks moving into Section 8 housing.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: IS this the million dollars coming off of the Section 8 administrative fees --

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: Yes.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: -- that's proposed?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: Yes.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: How would it be funded?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: We do -- there are -- in addition, there are -- one of the things we have added under John's direction is support services that follow individuals into traditional

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housing as well as people who are leaving the shelter to move to transitional housing.

And we do have a pilot program that's in place when individuals and families move from transitional housing to Section 8, that the services do follow the clients. But we need to do a much better job, I think, in providing social services to individuals in Section 8 housing.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. Well, to the extent that you can keep us informed should there be a change in policy, what you think the impact may be or at that point in time is, I think all of us would greatly appreciate it.

And I guess lastly on that same point, I'd like to get that information prior to what I anticipate will be your appearance before us in about six to nine months for transfer ordinance for OESS as a result of the impact on your department.

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: Yes, Councilman.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Kenney.

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COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you, Mr. President. Just one comment relative to Councilman Nutter's last question.

Perhaps if those services had followed those people under the Section 8 Program in the first place, we wouldn't be talking about the elimination of the preference for homeless individuals.

And I would reiterate the need for this continued social service help for people to be able to transition from the street to permanent housing so that they have the skills required to be good neighbors and home occupiers and property managers of their own individual properties that they receive through the federal government through subsidized housing.

It is critical that that happens, and I don't think that the Section 8 Program, in its efforts to help homeless individuals, will be successful unless that follows with it.

And to cut people off, maybe not intentionally, but to cut people off from social services and then basically abandon them in a house, without the skills necessary to run that

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house, is very unfair -- not only to the people in that house but to the people who live around that property. That's just my opinion.

There are two projects in Philadelphia that I am familiar with and ended up working with over the last number of years: one is Project Home, at 15th and Fairmount; and the other is Women of Hope.

Even though we're talking about a smaller number of people -- I think in a Project Home issue, it's about 32. But it's not transitional housing, it's certainly not sheltered housing. It's permanent, dignified decent living, with the opportunity to work on-site in three different business that are running a bookstore and a restaurant that is open to the public and a secondhand clothing outlet, which is very successful.

And it deals with people that have been on the street, that have mental illness or former substance-abuse problems, that have a need to utilize each other in a way to lift themselves up into a dignified life.

Why aren't we following that model?

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And why aren't we investing more dollars into those kinds of projects and those kinds of developments than we are into a shelter system which, at best, is very undignified? But at some point in time, people are on the street because they don't want to go into the shelter.

Why can't we duplicate what Sister Mary has done in neighborhoods throughout the City? Because, I tell you, despite the understandable concern of community people about this type of development, as time has gone on, they are very, very good neighbors. They have been a benefit to Fairmount Avenue at that location, and it is a pleasure to see people who were formerly destitute and homeless have some form of hope.

Why can't we follow that model and move forward based on that model, as opposed to the shelter system?

MR. KROMER: If I could just respond, the Community Development Block Grant Program provides the development subsidy funding for ventures of that kind.

And our basic policy is to provide those capable, experienced developers with as much

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development subsidy funding as they can use to leverage other funding support. And that other funding support is a limiting factor.

Every venture of that kind that you see is dependent not only on our development subsidy from the Community Development Block Grant, but also on low-income housing tax credit investment equity -- which is awarded by the State, and which is limited -- and on some source of operating support, frequently the McKinney funding.

And so we try to put on the table as much of our funding as we possibly can to leverage those other sources of support, but they are limited. And that really is the overriding limitation.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: But I guess my question is: Why don't we really emphasize successful efforts to eliminate homelessness that are present in those kinds of operations?

We seem to be dumping money into projects that warehouse people -- that either warehouse them, or then find them a home and leave them alone and never go back and deal with them again until there's a community upheaval about

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subsidized housing.

I mean, when you go into Fairmount Avenue, it is clean, it is decent. I mean, the people are happy, they're working. There's a real epiphany, a change in their lives.

Why can't the government follow that model in all of the work that it does as it relates to trying to resolve homelessness?

MR. KROMER: The only answer is the limitations of funding, the ability to leverage that other funding.

The best capable developer is Project Home, the People's Emergency Center. And private developers that have done well, we have funded at capacity.

In addition, where we have see good models operating elsewhere, we have tried to transplant them to Philadelphia. Over at 49th and Wyaloosing, Project Help is a New York-based nonprofit that is building transitional housing, and we support it.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Do we need State legislative changes or federal regulatory changes that would allow us to do a better job in that

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regard? And what needs to be done?

MR. KROMER: The single, most beneficial change would be a substantial expansion of the federal tax credit funding so that we could get access to more of that, or get it on a priority basis.

COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Is there anything that the State can do?

MR. KROMER: The State is really doing all it can at this point. It's a federal issue, in my opinion.

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: I would just add to that. A major source of funding for those types of programs is -- and Project Home is clearly a model that I've been very impressed with since coming on the job here.

But the McKinney funding that comes from Washington is a major source of funding for model programs, and the dollars that go for new developments has been declining over time.

The President recently announced that he was going to increase funding by about 40 percent in the next fiscal year, but we won't see those dollars until Fiscal Year 2000.

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COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Okay. Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Mr. President.

I agree with my colleagues that we have to be very careful to stress that we do need homeless counseling, which is now not mandatory for individuals who move into housing.

But I disagree with the Administration's appealing to the PHA Board to take away the homeless preference. I don't believe that we have the luxury of picking either-or when we have both problems that coexist in this City that we have to deal with at the same time.

It would be a luxury if I could say I'll only deal with homeless people or people with homes. The people in my district, some are homeless, some have housing; they're in all stages of life in society. And we have to deal with it on a continual basis. So I certainly would like

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to register my disagreement with the cutoff of the homeless preference.

I think it is unfortunate that we don't realize that it has to naturally impact the shelter -- it has to impact on the shelter budget, and it has to impact on people in shelters if they don't have -- it has to impact across the board on our budget. And I think that's very, very unfortunate that we would move forward and then retreat. That's the only disappointing issue I find.

And I would just like to make a comment on warehousing people. Project Home is just doing an excellent job. They worked hard to apply for grants and funds, and they also get a lot.

The whole concept of warehousing people, unfortunately, usually becomes an economic one where we don't have the resources to have things as nice as Sister Mary has it. And none of us want people warehoused. We all want people to have basic levels.

And I agree with my colleague that Sister Mary has a show place that we can take anybody to from anywhere in the world. But the

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whole issue of warehousing people becomes an economic one of what we want to do and how we want to use the dollars we have.

Let me finally thank you, Mr. Nardone. I know he's new and this is a tough field to work in, but it is one where people need us the most. So I thank him and, certainly, Miss Fisher and Mr. Shaeffer for their commitment.

I know the pressure we put on them, but we do appreciate them trying to work with us and all of the clients we serve.

Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

Mr. Nardone, I'd like to raise a question that we have talked about at considerable length at certain times in the past. And this is something that will be near and dear to Councilwoman Fernandez's heart because of the many, many discussions we've had about this over a long period of time.

When we use the word "homeless," we all know that's a shorthand that includes a lot of people. It has nothing to do with whether they

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have a house or not. So when I use the word "homeless," I'm not really -- I understand that it is a convenient shorthand for us because there's a lot of people who don't do what we all do to misunderstand.

But I want to know the extent to which you can comment on the relationship between what you do and what the Water Department does and what PGW does and what PECO does. And, hopefully, you'll have a great answer to this and you'll be able to tell us that this is just not a problem.

Some of us know that the moment you turn off the utilities, particularly the water, you've just created a bigger problem than would have been created if we had found a way to keep people in the current residence.

And, you know, for purposes of this record only, not to suggest that you don't understand that when the water goes off and the families either become a big nuisance or else they leave the house, then the house is vacant, it's often vandalized. We clean and seal it, but sometimes that's not enough.

You know, it ends up sometimes being a

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big demolition bill, and then it could be a fencing bill, and then it could be a vacant lot that has to be cleaned over and over and over again.

And I'd like to know the extent to which we are -- we, you, are tied into the Water Department and our other agencies that supply our utilities to make sure that we aren't cutting off our noses to spite our faces; i.e., we're going to collect that water, rent, whatever it is. We're going to collect it, and if we don't collect it, we're shutting it off, and you're out of there. And then they aren't out of there; they're only off maybe one part of our budget.

What's happening in this regard?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: Well, I know you wanted a clear and concise answer, and I'm afraid I don't have it.

PRESIDENT STREET: We always want clear and concise answers.

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: I would have to be honest with you that most of the work that I've done with respect to this area has been through the work of the Homeless Prevention Task Force

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that you cochair as well as Councilwoman Fernandez.

And it's been -- a lot of my focus over the first eight months has really been trying to oversee that initiative and the additional dollars that have been provided through City Council for homeless prevention.

I think you're suggesting an area that is definite necessary for study, and I think you raise a very excellent point. And I think I need to work more closely in that regard.

PRESIDENT STREET: Councilwoman Fernandez, is your comment on the same point?

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Yes. I think my understanding of what a major role of the Homelessness Prevention Program has been to try to find utility assistance for families who are imminently in danger of becoming homeless. And one of the parts of the assistance they provide is hooking them up with utility payments to help them keep the utilities on and keep the home. I think in other cases, there's assistance with the mortgage payment.

So it's trying to bring those resources

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to families who are on the verge of becoming homeless and going down this really both personally and economically costly path to try to keep people in their homes.

I'd also like to add, I think it was Councilman Cohen earlier that questioned about jobs. The very important component that was added to the Homelessness Prevention Program, which initially was devised to serve single adults who were getting all of their public assistance cut off, they found -- you know, how are you going to help someone if they have no income anymore.

And you need to help people find jobs, so a job placement component was added to the Homelessness Prevention Program. And if I recall, there's something like 150 or 60 men that primarily have been placed in jobs through that initiative.

But it is a complex issue, but I think that the utility assistance, the mortgage and sometimes rental assistance, plus the job training and placement, I think, are important parts of that.

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: If I could just

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add on the employment and training. In announcing the most recent program for non-TANF recipients, one of the things that we are asking is if employment and training providers are tied into the homeless prevention networks to get at the issue of individuals who have no income, then who could benefit from that service.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Thank you.

PRESIDENT STREET: The Chair recognizes Councilman Cohen.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Who has made the recommendation for the elimination of the homeless priority on Section 8 housing?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: That was -- the Mayor has put forward a proposal, and that proposal would need to be voted on by the PHA Board.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, that's not a very sensitive board.

(Laughter.)

COUNCILMAN COHEN: I want to associate completely with Councilwoman Blackwell's objection to the removal of the homeless priority.

And it really isn't, I guess, the PHA

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Board; it's the Mayor and the Council President who are the effective members of the Board in the point of view of determining policy. But I think it's just a very unwise one.

And, Mr. Kromer, I just can't understand how you say that the impact of eliminating that may not result in any effect whatever on what else is going on, 'cause I draw from that, you mean units, housing units that the homeless have used may just lie vacant.

If they have no effect, if they don't increase the housing available to others, and if it has no effect on it, it means to me that units occupied by the homeless, that the City is saying, Our preference is to have them vacant rather than to have them utilized by the homeless.

Your comment on that, sir?

MR. KROMER: There are certainly no transitional housing units for homeless people that are left vacant or would be.

But with regard to the issue of the preference, I think it's generally agreed that preventing homelessness is better than trying to help someone who has landed in the shelter system.

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COUNCILMAN COHEN: But that's not part of the policy of the City.

MR. KROMER: That's really the intent of the proposal by the Mayor.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: How can you do that and have your shelter restrictions which specifically increase the amount of homelessness on the street? How can you say that the City favors a policy of preventing homelessness?

It seems to me the City encourages policies that cause homelessness, like the one the President just referred to on the Water Department shutting off or PGW shutting off its supplies so that people are forced into homelessness.

MR. KROMER: No, the intent of the change is to prevent by helping people out in the Tier 2 category with assistance that will prevent them from going into the shelter system in the first place.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, that's the kind of logic I can't follow at all, because I think it makes no sense.

In the Section 8, if you take it away from the homeless, do you endanger the McKinney

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monies that come? And I think you say there's something like 13 million coming through the Stewart McKinney Bill?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: 16.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: 16 million?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: 16 million.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Are we going to endanger that? Because that seems limited to the use for homeless.

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: No, that would not be endangered by the Section 8 policy. It's not impacted by it.

John, do you --

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, all right, I'm puzzled and will be watching and waiting.

With respect to --

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: And those are -- I'm sorry.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: With respect to making shelters more liveable, because there are many homeless who just say the shelters are in such miserable condition, that they would prefer to stay on the street rather than subject themselves to the conditions in the shelters.

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Tell me, why is that a small family shelter like this Greiser -- I don't know how you pronounce the name -- a shelter that's been around for many years, where the ownership, as far as we know, is kind of a family affair, and they've added all kinds of embellishments to the service provided to the homeless.

Why is that being discontinued?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: Funding for Greiser is not being discontinued. They're funded at 30 shelter beds through the winter, and they were funded at 15 during the summer.

They are also a facility for single males and single families -- and not a -- single females and single males and are not a family shelter.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, what's the dispute about? Why are the newspaper stories indicating they're being threatened with being pushed out of shelter activity? There have been a number of stories in the newspapers in Philadelphia.

All right, can you get the information if you don't have it?

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DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: Basically, the concern was about reductions that were implemented as part of the shelter restrictions last fiscal year. The number -- the funding for beds was reduced from 30 beds during the winter to 15 during the summer. And that's what the concern is.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, tell me how that makes sense.

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: The demand was more for the family beds rather than for the beds for individuals, and we did not have the need for the individual beds during the summer.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: And you didn't have the need during the winter when you reduced it from 30 to 15?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: No. We have -- in preparation for the winter, we have increased the complement of beds at the Greiser Home to 30.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Didn't they have 30 before last winter? Well, why don't we get the report on that.

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: Okay.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: It's a very

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troubling thing.

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: Okay, I'll give you -- I'll be happy to give you more information on that.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: And that's the reason it seems to me the City's policies, added all together, support -- tend to promote homelessness, support insensitivity toward homelessness, rather than support the notion that Mr. Kromer was beginning to explain eloquently before about moving homeless into transitional housing and permanent housing.

That's a goal that we all would love to see. I submit, Philadelphia's policies move in the opposite direction.

One last question. In the detailed budget material, it seems to me that this year's listing for the fiscal '89 budget is much less detailed than in previous budgets.

My impression is that in previous budgets, we listed specific shelters. One could look and examine the detail and see where the City, you know, what kind of shelters the City was using. And I don't see that degree of

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specificity.

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: I think that refers to the fact that at this point in time, we haven't made the selection for shelters would be funded in FY '99. We are beginning an RFP process to decide which shelters would be funded for the next fiscal year.

I believe, though, we can provide you detail, though, on the shelters funded this fiscal year. And I believe that's included in the budget submission.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, the detailed information is far less that what we have in the big books, you know, where the details in the City budget are supposed to be very specifically listed.

I wish you would check it. And I would like to get as soon as you've completed it the list of shelters that are approved. How long would that take? When do you think you'd have that complete?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: Well, we will be going to be going through the process over the next two months to select providers for the next

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fiscal year, and we'd be happy to provide with that list as soon as we've made those decisions.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, I would request that and I would request you to look at the differences between the submission for the year '99 budget, the one we're considering now, and, say, the year '98, the year that just passed.

Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT STREET: The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Mr. President.

Question: After the Mayor prepares this letter that goes to be considered, who would vote on that? Would it be the President, the Mayor? And who is the Director of PHA?

Or would it be five individuals? Who has that vote?

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: John?

MR. KROMER: It would be a proposal to the entire Board of the Housing Authority, the five-member Board.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All right. And my final statement is that we do have a class

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here with Leona Smith. All of us know that she's head of the Employment Project, has worked in the homeless field for many, many years, and has gone through many, many experiences.

And I wanted to take this opportunity to welcome her and her students and her teachers back there and ask them to stand up so that everyone can see who they are.

(Leona Smith and students and teachers stand up to be recognized.)

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: One last question.

DEPT. DIR. NARDONE: Okay.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: While your response to Councilwoman Blackwell as to who votes, I think one has to be realistic. There may be five members on the Board. But I think two votes have the magic ability to overcome, if needed, the other three votes.

And that's the reason I said it's basically the Mayor and the City Council President who make the decisions for the PHA Board 'cause

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they're the only members of the Board who have the ability to put anything behind their decision in the way of changes in the City budget or the allocation of funds.

So while all five vote, I think it remains a Mayor and City Council President board.

Thank you.

PRESIDENT STREET: Is there anyone else?

(No further questions or comments at this time.)

PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

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PRESIDENT STREET: Next is the department that there's not a lot of interest in this City.

(Laughter.)

PRESIDENT STREET: And I'm sure this will take just one or two minutes. The Recreation Department.

(Members of Recreation Department Panel come forward.)

PRESIDENT STREET: Good afternoon, Commissioner, please identify yourself for the

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record and proceed with your statement.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Good afternoon, Council President Street and Members of City Council. First I'd like to introduce who's at the table here with me from my staff:

Tom Fox, who is my Maintenance Director; Joanne Mangano, who is Administrative Service Director; Carol Rice, who is Deputy Commissioner of Programs.

In the back here, Bill Carapucci, who's the Head of our Planning and Special Programs and Development; and Greg Valone, our Stadium Manager.

My name is Michael DiBerardinis, Recreation Commissioner, and I am pleased to present to you the Recreation Department's FY '99 budget request for $33,559,400 in the General Fund, and $7,382,621 in the Grants Fund, for a total of $40,942,021.

The requested FY '99 General Fund appropriation will support a staff of 556 full-time, 149 part-time, and 1859 temporary positions. It includes increases of:

$750,000 for after-school programs to expand our capacity from 1400 to over 3,000

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children in its number of sites from 67 to 130;

$47,826 to provide two full-time maintenance workers at all our Class A recreation centers;

$82,000,000 to expand the Mural Arts Programs;

$25,000 to fully fund the overtime work required for the weekend conversions at Veterans Stadium;

$80,000 for preventive maintenance at the stadium;

And $55,000 to fully fund our chlorine purchases for our City pools.

After that formal reading of my testimony, I will just summarize some of the initiatives and the budget implications for FY '99.

Earlier this year, during the Fiscal Year '98, the Department reopened three formerly closed centers. This continues a process that we began probably in the second year of the Administration, to reopen facilities that had been abandoned over the course of the previous decade.

Those three centers are Heritage

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Recreation Center, Winchester Recreation Center, and Belmont Recreation Center. We are currently funding them with seasonal employees and working with neighborhood advisory councils to reclaim those centers and to do active recreation programs at those facilities. With the addition of those three facilities, we now have 161 staffed facilities around the City.

Also in this year's budget, there is $750,000 in the FY '99 proposed budget for after-school programs. They are three-hour-a-day, five-day-a-week programs. We began our initiative to establish competency in programming at our centers within this model in Fiscal Year 1997 when we had approximately 20 programs that we funded through grants dollars and reallocating some of our operating dollars.

Last year, the Administration and Council gave us an additional $600,000-plus in our FY '98 operating budget, and we added another 55 programs -- or 45 programs, which brought us up to 65 five-day-a-week, three-hour-a-day programs around the City.

We anticipate, with the additional

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$750,000, to operate between 130 and 140 sites around the City. Approximately 115 of those sites will be within our system, within our recreation system, and the remainder will be collaborative programs with churches, schools, and other nonprofit agencies.

They will function within our after-school model, but will be off-site. And we're really looking forward to expanding those types of programs, and we think they offer a great deal of potential in learning and more about these programs for after school.

Early in the Rendell Administration and my tenure as Recreation Commissioner, we expanded drastically our sports programs around the City in all the major sports. And in this fiscal year, FY '98, we are still building our soccer program, our swimming program, our basketball and baseball programs.

And this year, we have -- in FY '98, we have 700 more children per month in registered, organized sports program. And we've very excited about this increase. We expect next year, in FY '99, to have a slightly lower increase, but we

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are beginning to slowly top out in our ability to -- space-wise to expand the programs at any higher rate.

Two programs that we're particularly excited about in FY '99 is an initiative to increase the participation of young girls in athletics. We did an internal survey, and we found that the poorest -- the kids from the poorest neighborhoods -- the girls from the poorest neighborhoods had the lowest participation rates in organized sports.

Based on that data, we found that -- and we were particularly hard hit in North Central Philadelphia. We entered a partnership with Nike, and now we have 320 girls between the years of 8 and 10 years old in a nine-month cycle of organized sports programming.

We just finished up the basketball leagues, which were a lot of fun and very exciting. And we will be moving on to volleyball and then baseball and indoor soccer.

So it's an exciting program, and we will evaluate this model after the first cycle is completed and, hopefully, expand it. Next year,

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we are anticipating over 400 young girls in the program for FY '99.

Another exciting sports expansion is we've teamed up with the PGA, and we will have in every recreation district, we will convert our athletic fields to small golf courses, and we will have ten introductory golf camps at every recreation next summer, in FY '99, which will have 200 children playing golf with restricted flight balls and being to learn the game of golf. And then, hopefully, they could be integrated into one or two of our golf camps that we run every summer for more advanced players. We're also very excited with that partnership, with the Professional Golf Association.

In arts and culture, in FY '97, we had approximately 850 boys and girls and young men and women in either the visual or performing arts -- per month, 850 participants per month.

In FY '99, this was a Department initiative with a goal of expanding visual and performing arts, we have 4,300 young people per month in our system. And this has been a major expansion, and we have accomplished this with the

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use of operating dollars and also through a lot of fund-raising and grant-writing.

Next year, we hope to expand on that 4300 number per month by about 5 or 600 registered, active participants.

Within the Maintenance Division, we have really focussed on not only counting accurately but increasing the number of work orders we complete within our Maintenance Division. And since 1994, we have roughly doubled that number. I think in 1994, we had about 6,000 annual completed work orders, and now we're up to 11,000.

We have also within -- in some of the things that we have done to sort of build on that number and to increase the -- just our physical plant and the condition of our physical plant has been to -- for instance, last year, at every pool, we installed automatic chlorinators, which was a major project for the Department, and we did this at the urging of the Health Department to make sure that the pools were clean and safe for usage.

What that resulted in was we used more

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chlorine because we were chlorinating at a much more regular and consistent levels, and that's also been in this proposed FY '99 budget money, to increase our purchases of chlorine.

Another project that's within the Maintenance Division is the Grafitti-Free Program, which seeks to not only eliminate graffiti from all our buildings, but to keep it off. We have -- approximately of our 160 staff facilities, we have 120 facilities that are in the program, so they are graffiti-free, and they have the ability to keep graffiti off of their buildings.

And we hope to in the next year, year and a half, to complete the program and have every one of our recreation staff buildings free of graffiti.

I'd like to close my testimony by talking a little bit about Recreation Department's role in the Children and Families Cabinet. As Recreation Commissioner, I'm also the Chair of the Youth Violence Reduction Task Force. We are working on two fronts.

One of the fronts is a program initiative in eastern north Philadelphia. This

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initiative has been in process for about two years, and it has recently received a major grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. It's an 8-year, $10 million grant, with the goal of reducing the incidents of youth violence in North Philadelphia, river to river, Callowhill Street north to Tioga. It's a big area.

We are doing this through two major processes. One is to build -- coordinate a service delivery among City agencies and departments, and also to link up with neighborhood organizations, institutions, and individuals, where we bring those coordinated City services together with youth organizations and churches and schools in tightly-defined neighborhoods, to coordinate the delivery of youth services in a way that will have a direct impact on the safety of children and the risk that they confront in the neighborhoods that we're working in.

We're very excited about this program. We think that the fact that the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation chose Philadelphia in a national competition indicates that at least somebody thinks we're on the right track.

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Some of the more interesting components of this program. Right now, we are working very closely with the Police Department and the School District in the areas around Stetson School and Elkins School, and also around the deBurgos Family Center and deBurgos Middle School, to really hit hard at some of the drug houses and some of the more blatant handgun and crime factors in that neighborhood.

It's not the only thing we're doing but it's a very exciting process that we're involved in up there with these neighborhood coordinating teams that grow out of the Cabinet.

The second component of the work of the Cabinet around youth violence is the Handgun Task Force, which has been working again for about two years. And last year, we developed a very close relationship with the federal law enforcement agencies as well as a range of City operating departments and nonprofit organizations in the City.

Out of that task force has grown the recommendation and eventual implementation of the Police Probation Patrols that are now in effect in

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certain parts of the City. This is an interview protocol for gun offenders to begin to collect data on where handguns are and how handguns are getting into the hands of young people and other persons arrested for possession of handguns or crimes with handguns.

There has also been a certain amount of communications and interaction with neighborhoods around tracking of handguns, having neighborhood folks help the police to figure out where the handguns are coming, and how they might better control the availability of those guns to young people in their communities.

Again, this work is growing every day. And the collaboration between the City departments, the law enforcement community in the City, and the federal agencies and then bouncing back to the community, I think, gives us hope that we can also make a dent in the availability of guns and, therefore, the use of guns to commit crimes.

With that, I will close my testimony and will be happy for me and my staff to entertain any questions that Council may have.

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PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Nutter.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Mr. President.

Commissioner, I want to -- in this first round of questioning, I want to touch on three particular items. One has to do with additional funding for recreation programs, the second has to do with the Mural Arts Program, and the third is on a topic that we discussed when you were last here, I think, in your capital budget testimony that had to do with custodial maintenance. That may be the longer of the three.

In a conversation and meeting I had some time ago with groups or organizations that have concern about Recreation Department programs and funding, one idea -- and I think this is not necessarily a new idea or even a current or relatively recent idea -- has to do with the potential for surcharge on the tickets for various sporting events at major facilities; primarily, I guess, the Vet, and probably Spectrum One and Spectrum Two, at least four major sports teams here in Philadelphia.

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I have asked the City Solicitor's Office to look at the issue from a legal standpoint. But I wanted to ask the Department if you could take a look at it from both a revenue-generation standpoint, assuming that you can make some determination at least of what the Phillies and the Eagles do by way of attendance since we own Veterans Stadium. And through other contacts, you might be able to get some of the same information for the two Spectrum facilities, just to see what may be generated by way of a potential 50-cent surcharge.

This is purely an exploratory stage, and I think we need to have more information going forward. But if you could get that information, I'd appreciate it.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: I mean, if I understood the question correctly, you would ask us to look at attendance figures for the Eagles and the Phillies, and then try to talk as well as to the 76er and the Flyers.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Right.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: To see what their annual attendance is and compute annual

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attendance against a 50-cents-per-ticket surcharge.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Right. Something like that would be included in the price.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: I think we could do that exercise and get you that.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Right, and then you'd be able to tell us what that generates and then possibly extract from those figures the amount of funding and then what you would possibly do with it if it was a dedicated source of revenue for the Recreation Department.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: I think we could do that, sure. And we could probably work with -- I would try to work with the Budget Office as well to come up with the numbers.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you. On I guess it's the first written page of your testimony, you mention an additional $82,000 to expand the Arts Mural Program. And then later in the testimony, you actually talk about what that funding is for.

You're trying to increase the number of murals by the program from, I guess, the current

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fiscal year from 85 murals, to 100 murals in FY '99. And that $82,000 in FY '99 will support two additional Mural Arts employees and provide paint and painting supplies to increase the projected number of murals placements to 100.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Mm-hmm.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: You then go on to say that you'll go from workshops in 10 after-school centers to 36 in FY '99.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: They could have used you -- your efforts, I guess, at the -- at the loaves and fishes. How do you propose to do all of that with $82,000?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Well, as you will see, Councilman Nutter, also in testimony in FY '98, we raised a quarter of $1 million with help from a lot of people. So our staff did an excellent job, but we have a number of advocates and people in government -- yourself included -- who helped raise that outside money. That also helps increase our production totals.

In addition to that, the after-school -- or the Mural Arts After-School Training Program

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is funded both in our operating budget and in our grants budget.

And it is my suspicion -- and maybe Carol can talk about this -- that some of that $750,000 of allocation for our After-School Programs would go and support the increase from 10 to 36 in FY '99.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: But the 85,000 will go a long way to help us raise additional money as well as putting more staff and supplies actually on the street to paint the murals.

This program has a lot of energy and a lot of support in the neighborhoods, within the arts and culture community in the City, within the foundation community, and in the Department.

And we are -- in addition to this, we are blending our internal resources from our Maintenance Division around helping us set up the scaffolding and helping supply some of the paint for some of the projects, wall prep. We're using some of our already-preexisting services that are available in the Department also to support the

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project.

And it's the energy of Jane and the staff that also makes all of this work.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, I mean, I think you already know that there's a lot of support for that program, there's a lot of support for a lot of programs in the Recreation Department.

This is one that myself and, I know, my colleague across the floor, Councilwoman Fernandez, has a particular interest in. But I think many Members of City Council like this program whether it's the large, small, or medium murals out on buildings.

But also the opportunity for the workshops that probably touch even more young people who may either have a fear of heights or don't necessarily want to paint murals.

Okay. Lastly, tell me about follow-up to our discussion about custodial services.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: I was hoping to have the work completed before today, but we were trying to create real numbers --

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: We appreciate that.

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COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: -- for your question, and not just plug in, you know, one person at one center times, whatever, 30 centers, and give you a number.

We were trying to really look at each facility that's within our system to see what are the hours that we believe are the real weekly hours that would be necessary; that if we could staff, what would those hours be.

So we're trying to compute those numbers now. It's taking us a little longer to come up with those numbers than we had hoped.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Let me just ask this as an add-on, and this will be my last question for the moment.

When you look at that, is there a procedure, either by way of -- you mentioned your strategic plan, or is it just the history to the Recreation Department?

Are the centers checked on a regular basis to see what the current maintenance is, what the cleanliness is, are the bathrooms being taken care of, is there, you know, appropriate supplies, and all of the things that make a place decent

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enough that somebody wants to be there?

How often are they checked? And is that a regular --

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Every day, at 2 o'clock, 161 staff persons show up in the Program Division, and they check, and we know what the problems are if they are there. We know if the gym floor needs to be mopped, we know if the bathrooms need to be cleaned, we know if the trash had been picked up in a timely way.

So it's staffed facilities, year-round staff facilities. It's not difficult. And the work orders and requests for service generate from the program staff leaders.

If -- it's like if they come in and see a panel, an electrical panel has been tampered with and there's exposed wires, we hear about that right away. If there's a game that night and the gymnasium floor needs something that did not get done, or there was an order, with some timeliness, we hear about that.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: All right. So you have a regular process --

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Yeah, we

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have a system.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: -- and a system by which to check centers.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right. Now, the harder question becomes in the unstaffed facilities, parks and squares. And, you know, we talked -- I think I talked to a lot of people here in Council who care about those, which people do care about how they look and whether trash is picked up, whether there's a tree branch that has fallen, that kind of stuff.

That's a little harder. And that sometimes takes a little longer to get to us because they're done more on a rotation. They tend to, uh, staff aren't there immediately and may not be there that day, so that those work orders or requests for service tend to come in at a different rate than the staffed facilities.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. Okay, thank you. Thank you, Madame Chair.

PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you. The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Fernandez.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Mr. President. I'll be brief.

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Commissioner, I think the fact that you've been able to attract so much private money and again this Robert Wood Johnson, this 7 or $8 million grant.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: I might be off a million, but it's an 8-year grant, and I think the annual allocation is $1.2 million per year.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: What you're getting is fantastic, attracting all of that money, plus, you know, all kinds of corporate and other kinds of support.

And I think it can be attributed to the incredibly fine leadership and all of the good work of people in your Department, plus people realizing how important recreation is for our neighborhoods, for keeping our neighborhoods safe, and for having positive things for children and adults to be doing.

So I think, again, you deserve a lot of kudos because, again, thinking where we were with the Recreation Department back when the Rendell Administration first took office, you've come a long way, and I think it really is commendable.

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I also think it's important and I want to thank the Administration for including the additional money for after-school programs and for the Arts Mural Program that's now in your department, for including those additional funds. The extra 750,000 will be, you know, I'm sure, well used.

My one concern is that I note in your testimony, you say the additional funds will allow you to serve 3,222 children or something like that, a little over 3,000. And it's great that, again, we've made this additional investment.

But my concern is that there are still so many young people out there who do not have a safe, supervised place to be after school. And particularly now with the welfare change coming that basically says everyone, all the 60,000 primarily mothers who have been receiving AFDC in the old days have to be out working, children and young people are going to need care more now than ever.

So, again, I think you've done a great job, I think the City is investing more, but when we look at the scope of the problem, I think we

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all need to keep finding ways to find additional resources.

And it does take money to provide supervision for kids after school to begin to make a dent in this huge number, whether it's 20,000, 30,000, 50,000, 80,000 kids who need good, safe places to be after school because their parents are working.

That's it.

PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

Commissioner, who is responsible for the mural that recently went up -- or is going up at Broad and Spring Garden Street, on the northeast corner??

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: That's part of the Arts Mural Program, the Recreation Department's Mural Arts Program.

PRESIDENT STREET: Well, that is --

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Isn't that spectacular?

PRESIDENT STREET: That is beyond spectacular. Is that the same -- the ones at the southeast corner of Broad and Vine, are they also a part of the program?

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COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: That's right. And I'd just like to brag a little bit about Jane and her crew and the work that Ed Fagan has done and the Mural Arts Advocates.

As you've noticed, Mr. President, the quality of the work is really at a high level right now. When we're working -- both what we do in the neighborhoods, not like in Center City, but even in the community, we're attempting to do high-quality work.

Mario Lanza in South Philly, that's a beautiful portrait of him and his life. The peace mural in Grays Ferry, which Councilwoman Verna was there at the opening or the ceremony to mark that, it's just a -- it's not only that the theme is a wonderful theme, but just the artistic level is so high.

We're -- it's -- we're excited about the program. We're so happy it's in our department. We feel like we're a very good fit for that program and can carry on, I think, the tradition and the themes that were -- that originated in the Anti-Graffiti Network, to carry them on and try to see them grow and develop as

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the years go by.

So we're very happy about it.

PRESIDENT STREET: One very general question.

I would like for you to tell us how it is you are interacting with the School District of Philadelphia, as you provide recreation and/or other services to young people in the City.

I have never -- this obviously is -- you've done a great job, and we all appreciate that, but I don't think any Member of this Council is satisfied that there's a direct enough relationship correlation in working between the Recreation Department and the School District.

What is happening? Tell us what's happening between your department and the School District.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Well, you're right. I think we're learning more every day. And institutional relationships do grow over time. People get to know one other.

PRESIDENT STREET: I thought you were going to say "grow slow."

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Well, they

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do, they do but we're working at it. And I'm just trying to make the point that this stuff takes time if it's going to last and it's going to get people on board and feel good about it, it just takes a little time.

But that said, we -- and I say this -- at least I've said this as I testified before, we operate 120 school gymnasiums every year, beginning approximately October 15th through March 15th. Every night and on Saturdays, Recreation Department programs and athletic clubs and advisory councils use those facilities for everything, from cheer-leading, the drill teams, basketball, volleyball, and indoor soccer.

And we're happy with that. We think that's a tremendous mix of Department staff and volunteers and resources with the School District's physical plant, to really provide an excellent service.

And we operate eight of the School District's indoor pools after hours. That was a couple years ago, we received additional money from Council to do that. We only had four, and now we're up to eight and that's the maximum. I

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don't think there's any more of the pools we can run for public use after school hours.

We now have a few schools where we're linking up with the School District to do after-school programs, off-site after-school programs. At the Fairhill School and at Potter Thomas School, and at Dunbar, they're either in progress, actually on the ground running, or actually very close to being established. We hope that next year, as this after-school program expansion, this expansion in FY '99, we will see more of a that programming interaction.

The School District, on the other hand, uses our facilities as well. And I don't have a real good -- I can't articulate exactly where these facilities are.

But, for instance, I know that Overbrook High's football team uses that Disston Recreation Center athletic field for their football team. And there's a number of those instances where our gymnasiums and our fields and courts are used by the School District.

That's not to say that we've reached the end of the road; I think we're just at the

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beginning, and I would really like to continue. And I think this Administration, under Superintendent Hornebeck, has been open to exploring many more connections between the Recreation Department and the School District.

And we think within these teams is really these neighborhood coordinating teams, which has the School District as a member, has the Recreation Department as a member, and has lots of neighborhood folks as members, we're seeing the fruits of that in that neighborhood, particularly with the after-school programs.

PRESIDENT STREET: Well, I would like to know what would be involved from the Recreation's point of view if there were some program being operated either by the School District or by the Recreation Department or by the two of you together in every one of the 257 schools that we have in the City so that there would be no school that closes regularly at 3 o'clock and sends the children home, that doesn't have after-school programs, recreation programs, other kinds of programs, weekend programs.

I have long held the view that we just

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-- the capital expansion that we have in this City in many instances is unnecessary and that we need to make greater use of the buildings that we already have.

And, you know, it's only so many buildings that we need to build, so many roofs that we have to keep in good repair, so many heating systems and air-conditioning systems that we can improve.

It just seems that we ought to be able to -- it would be a lot easier to set up in an existing facility than it is to go out and start developing new facilities and developing independent of each other.

And I would like for you to investigate what would be involved, and tell us, you know, give us some idea of how long do you think a phase-in program might work. I think we need to do a better job in providing recreational as well as educational opportunities for young people in these buildings.

And I'd also like for to you consider the summer, summer programs as well.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Rizzo.

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COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Mr. President.

Commissioner DiBerardinis, I just have two questions. One is the fact that the Police Athletic League has basically gotten out of the boxing business. And I constantly get calls. There's a lot of controversy, positive, negative about boxing. But there are apparently a lot of young people that want to involve and learn boxing.

And could you just give me a little idea of what's going on? I don't see any mention of the boxing program at all in the testimony or the budget.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: No, we have a lot of boxing, and I will let either Carol or Bill, who's ever most appropriate, to review what our boxing program looks like.

DEPT. COMM. CARAPUCCI: Councilman Rizzo, I'm Bill Carapucci, Deputy Commissioner of the Special Programs.

We have nine boxing sites active in the Department of Recreation in various parts of City: South Philadelphia, North Philadelphia,

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Northwest Philadelphia. So we do have a program that's ongoing.

I would that say we have probably about 300 people in the program, City-wide. A few years ago, we were down, but the last couple years, we've been putting more emphasis in this program.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I think I had a conversation with you, Commissioner, about equipment, the heavy bag. The program again is in how many locations, eight locations?

DEPT. COMM. CARAPUCCI: Well, we have nine.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Nine?

DEPT. COMM. CARAPUCCI: Altogether.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: And you feel they're up and running and that it's active?

DEPT. COMM. CARAPUCCI: We have a Boxing Advisory Council that we formed about two years ago, were we run fund-raisers, we have a boxing banquet. They have more supplies now than they had in the past. And we're looking into what else we can do to help them in the upcoming year.

And there are a group of people -- in fact, one of our employees is in the advocacy

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group, Stan Williams. They meet with us on a regular basis, and we get some input of what they need.

Their equipment is quite expensive. And since it's to a small number, you know, we have to put in a priority listing. We're going to see what we could do this year to help them somewhat.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I've talked to the Police Athletic League, and they tell me the reason the program went away was because of insurance problems that they hated to deal with. Do you have a similar concern?

DEPT. COMM. CARAPUCCI: No.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: No. And there's only so many -- part of the problem is that there's only so many facilities that we can actually create a ring. I mean, you put up a -- there's only so many facilities where we can physically accommodate a ring. It takes up a lot of space, and it only can be used for one purpose, no multiple uses.

And we try to create regional hubs versus, you know, having 50 gyms or 40 places for

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young people to box.

And it's true. Bill said that the equipment is sort of specialized and expensive. If there's an equipment issue, and I know you've brought some of them to me, we attempt to right away, if we can, address those issues as quickly as we can, either through fund-raising or within our operating budget.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Commissioner. My last question is in the area of energy management. Public Property pays the Recreation Department's electric bill, right?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: That's correct.

COMMISSIONER RIZZO: I receive letters, and also I have seen this personally, and I know that you're dealing with in many cases an antiquated system at many of the fields.

But when you ride by and see a fully illuminated recreation field -- and the reason that at 3 o'clock in the morning it's fully illuminated is because of security reasons.

Do you ever think you'll get to the point where you'll be able to reconfigure? And

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maybe Councilman Mariano can help with this, reconfigure the electrical circuits at these facilities so it appears that we're not just wasting the taxpayers' money and over-illuminating these facilities.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: You're right. And it bothers me sometimes, I'll be honest with you. I'm never out at 3 o'clock in the morning, but --

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: If you were a Councilman-At-Large, you would be.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: But after hours, after 10 o'clock or 11 o'clock, if I see a facility lit, it means one or two of a few things. Maybe the timer has been tampered with at the facility. And most of these systems, given the last few years, we put a lot of new outdoor field lighting systems in, and they have very good timing systems, but sometimes they get messed with or they malfunction.

Sometimes, as you've said, there's a neighborhood request for certain lights to be on, and you can't segregate the lights in the system. It's either on or off. You cant say, Leave these

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three on and turn the rest off.

Sometimes that happens in the community requests and we try to balance that out, but I think we can do a better job at trying to sort of uniformly have our system be off when the fields aren't being used.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Well, I'm pleased. You know, I'm happy that it is troublesome to you and it's something that you would like to correct because people who do live in the area of these facilities certainly, they want them to be secure and be able for the police to see any improper activity. But when they're lit like for a game day, that is also not something that the community wants to see.

As long as you recognize it. The Public Property, Commissioner, tells me, When you start paying the electric bill, you'll so something really quickly about it.

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Miller.

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COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you, Mr. President.

Good afternoon. I just have a couple of questions. Are there any plans to expand the youth access centers per recreation district?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: If you don't mind, Councilwoman, I'm going to have Deputy Commissioner Rice answer.

DEPT. COMM. RICE: This is Carol Rice, Deputy Recreation Commissioner.

The youth access centers are funded through the HSDF grant. The goal is to expand to ten youth access centers. We're presently at five and we will be expanding. We hope to get one more open this fiscal year, if possible, but it takes an identification of a center that can house all of the things that a youth access center does.

Our most recent one was Grays Ferry, which includes Vare, Lanier, and 30th and Oakford. And that was a unique way of doing it, providing additional services and using all three. But yes, we hope to expand, but it is grant money that is allowing us to do that.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. And

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they're housed in a Recreation Department building or someplace else?

DEPT. COMM. RICE: Yes, they are housed in a Recreation Department Building. The objective of a youth access center is to expand and build up the programs and to bring the youngsters and the teenagers in, and then to have available services within each area, depending upon the need.

You can have a health worker, you can have a social worker, you can have a human relations department, you could have all of these things, services in there that would be able to benefit the youngsters, especially as they get into that adolescent age, that 11-, and 12-, and 13-year-old group.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. There are a couple centers in my district that are small, and I think I raised this the last time you were over talking about after-school programs.

They're not large enough to house an after-school program, but I want to make sure that their area still gets served, so who would be a part -- what people will you contact to see just

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what's in the area, churches, other community-based organizations?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: What we hope to do is to do this year is have more off-site after-school programs, so we would -- this is hypothetically.

If there was a church or a nonprofit or even a school that had a lot of interest in an after-school program, let's say, within your district, then the Department would have some capacity where we didn't have enough room at center in that neighborhood, to begin to start a program linking up with that institution or agency.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay, but --

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: So we're looking into doing that.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: But you will like maybe talk to me, talk to the center's advisory council.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: So that people in the neighborhood will be involved.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right,

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exactly.

And we're doing our best to make sure that, you know, we just don't move aimlessly to where it's easiest to move to but we're being conscious about the expansion to make sure that the coverage is where the programs are not only where we have the fiscal plant to house them but where we can also meet the need.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. One other question I have is regarding activities funds, and I don't know whether anyone raised it prior to me coming back up.

Would you explain to people what the process is and what holds it up? 'Cause I've had a number of -- a couple people, you know, express different concerns.

DEPT. COMM. RICE: Okay, several things can hold up payment. Number one, the main thing would be, after the people are notified, if they don't get the contracts. We spend a lot of time writing people, encouraging them to get the contract that they need to have done back to us. Once that is completed, it usually runs pretty quickly after that.

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Once we get the contract, we're able to get the checks. The checks require two signatures, we've got to catch two people. And I'm sure your hands, as the representative, have gotten tired from signing but we try to get them through as quickly as possible.

The only other thing that could hold up a check getting out would be that they have not complied with the contract from the year before. So we have to get all of those things done before we can even issue a check.

But basically, the majority of these checks get out in a rather quick manner.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: May I piggyback on that?

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Sure.

PRESIDENT STREET: The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Verna to piggyback.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: You know, I never saw so much confusion with the activities fund grant as I did this year. People told me that they had sent their contract back and called the Recreation Department and were told they had not received it. They would send out another

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contract. And then people did not receive, supposedly, the second contract that went out.

It got so bad that I literally had to have a contract picked up and hand-delivered to someone so that they could fill it out, and I told them to call me when it was completed so that we could hand-deliver it to the Recreation Department.

Something went afoul this year. I don't know what caused it, but I will tell you that we got more complaints about that than we ever did.

DEPT. COMM. RICE: If I could just, you know, respond. I'm sorry that the people, you know, experienced that problem. We had close to 800 recipients of the activity fund, and that was in the minority, but we will do everything possible to make sure that it doesn't, you know, happen again.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Well, there were a number in my district that had that problem.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: And I'm upset about hearing this, but --

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: And I don't think

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I'm the only one, maybe I just keep track more than I should.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: I would think that we did pretty well, but if we hear otherwise, I'll be more concerned.

But I think if -- and I hate to say this, but if you can't make your first run, you don't get the appropriate response, then you should -- Carol is -- really manages the grant, the staff that does it.

I would go directly to her, and I think that if your staff person called, they could talk directly to Carol, and I think we can get this stuff settled.

I apologize for any inconvenience or funding, you know, people not getting their checks when they anticipated it.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: On that same vein, I know that monies are appropriated for FY '99. Can you tell me what portion of FY '98 funding remains unspent? And what happens to that money?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Of the activities fund?

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Mm-hmm.

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COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Well, there is a small amount of money that comes back. And, in fact, we just met this morning, and this was on the agenda. That group does not -- for instance, they're a qualified recipient, we send the check to them or the contract or check, and the money doesn't get spent or the check gets sent back for some reason.

We were going to write Council President and the Mayor to say, Guide us in this, there's some money that has been accumulated in the last year or so, and please tell us how to deal with it.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Mr. President, I would hope that it would remain in each of the Council Districts, because I know that not all of mine were spent, and whatever was not spent this year, I want it to be rolled over for next year.

PRESIDENT STREET: Councilwoman, as soon as we get the details for that, I'm sure we can make arrangements.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: And can we be apprised of exactly what that is, please?

PRESIDENT STREET: Sure. Actually,

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this is the first time we're hearing about it.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right. And it's just something that we, in preparing for this meeting Carol preparing for the meeting this morning raised it, and we chose to seek some guidance on that.

PRESIDENT STREET: I can think of at least 11 people who would be very prepared to give some strong guidance.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Miller.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I know that (inaudible).

PRESIDENT STREET: Can we have Councilwoman Miller's microphone on?

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: It's here, it's right here. I know that --

PRESIDENT STREET: See, we have this state-of-the-art equipment, you know what I mean?

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: It comes on when it wants to.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Anyway, can you tell people the new deadlines for applications or when applications are coming out that's different

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from last year in an effort to get money to groups by the summer?

DEPT. COMM. RICE: Yes. We have already printed the requests for proposals. They are ready to come to your offices as well as the other locates. The grant period will run from March 2nd -- which is earlier than it has been, I think, since its inception -- through April 15th.

And then we hope to have them to the Council offices for review by the end of April so that we can make sure that the allocations and the notifications are to the people prior to the end of the fiscal year so that the money and the checks can go to them at the beginning of the year.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay, that's very good. I have one other question.

You know, when I read the testimony and read the five-year plan and see initiatives such as the anti-violence violence initiative under the eight-year grant, what are the specific areas that are targeted? I think it says it's in North Philadelphia from river to river, or something like that.

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COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: And what's -- it's not going to take you eight years to implement it. And will it ever spread across the City before those eight years are completed?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Well, we hope so. But with this particular grant, we had to --

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Target the area.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: -- target the resources.

However, the Children and Families Cabinet is seeking funding to not just to generate some money and funds, to do the same thing in other neighborhoods in the City. So we're not sitting on our, you know, flat-footed. We have this money and we'll just work where the grant allows us to work.

We're attempting to generate both foundation dollars and other public dollars, particularly in this instance from the State, to do this kind of work on the ground with neighborhood groups and City agencies in other neighborhoods.

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So depending on how we do in our development of additional resources, we'll impart -- or in large part dictate our ability to move beyond the foundation-mandated area. However, we're very interested in moving beyond the area.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. And one other question. Should we as Councilmembers be advocating for you to get additional staff, particularly regarding building repairs and all of that?

Because that's what I get a lot of, you know, that our center needs repairs, we've asked about it. So you're not supposed to say yes, but they're needed. I think they're needed.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Well, I think we've made a lot of progress and our staff has grown. I mean, I think in 1993, we only had 490 staff for Fiscal Year '93. I think it was '93 or '94. Don't hold me to the exact year, but I think it was '93. This year, we'll be 556.

So our programs have grown, and we have expanded rapidly, but we have also increased our capacity to perform maintenance functions. For instance, in 1993, we did not have a full-time

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custodian at every recreation center -- at every A center. Today we have a full-time permanent custodian at every A center.

We were not fully staffed in our plumbing unit, our HVAC unit, we didn't have a tree crew. We have decent, adequate funding for those units. We are -- so I feel like we've made great progress in the trades.

And I think we are looking within the Department very closely at attempting to do better with the resources that we have, to use those resources in a more strategic way, to make sure that the priority work orders get done, the things that the center needs that people are telling us and the leaders are telling us need to get done quickly, that we don't get swallowed up with getting the pools open or getting the rinks open or getting the grass cut.

We have to do them no matter what, right? But to figure out how to make those other pressing needs come up in the system and be dealt with in a quick way.

So even though I think we've made great progress, our staff is increased, I still have we

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have some ground to cover in keeping the centers at a higher -- I mean the standards are higher now to.

I mean our standards -- I mean, just to tell you, in 1992 or 3, I was getting calls every week about roofs leaking and heaters that didn't work, you know, toilets that wouldn't flush.

I mean, we're past that now. I mean, we're past that now. We still have work to do -- I mean, I don't want to misrepresent that, but we're not dealing with major systems collapsing around us or an inability, when they do, to get them working again. I think we're past that.

And now we're at a level of really trying to do -- like make sure that the fences that get cut, as soon as we fix them, how do we make sure that those fence lines and those fences are standing straight and doing what they're supposed to do. And that the locks in the center -- the locking system and the windows are maintained appropriately.

So we're at a new level, but that's a demand, that's a legitimate, honest demand that people are making on us and it's one that we're

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really trying to meet.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. I just want to end by saying thank you to you and other members of the Department on all the help that you gave us on the lining of our rec center.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Yeah, that's great, isn't it?

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Deal, right. Okay, thank you.

Thank you, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT STREET: Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Mariano.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Thank you, Mr. President.

Commissioner, first of all, I'd like to thank you too. As one "Kenso" to another, I'd really like to thank you for adding some more indoor facilities for the indoor soccer. You know how much I care about that and the ice hockey too. And I have a couple questions.

The first question is the fences since you mentioned fences.

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COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: If a work order comes in to repair a hole in a fence, say, at Newts. You know, they're probably 80-year-old fences down there.

By the way, will we ever get grass at Newts or are we planning on cinders that are --

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Well, that's up to you guys. That's part of --

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: I inherited Newts from Council President Street.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: I'll be honest with you, I don't know. It's the best training field in the system.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: I know.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: It can rain for three days and if it stops for one hour, you can play soccer or baseball on that field.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: You're absolutely right. But the problem is when them kids come from Yardley and they see them cinders, they don't have no idea what that --

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: They try to park on the field. They think it's a parking lot.

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COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Yeah, they think it's a parking lot. And they were all like that at one time.

But if a request comes in for a fence, does Tommy handle that from Maintenance?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Yeah, we'll -- we'll --

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: If it's a hole in a fence at Newts --

MR. FOX: I'm Tom Fox. Councilman, if get a request to repair the fence, it could depend on the type of fence. Some of them are the wrought-iron fencing. You might need a welder or a backhoe or something to pick this up. That's a big --

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Like MacCauley has cyclone fences, Newts still has the old wrought-iron fences, right?

MR. FOX: Yeah, the situations vary, but if it's a regular cyclone fence, we will, again, make out a work order. The work order goes to the depot supervisor, who then will sent out a fence crew.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: How many fence do

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you have, though, Tom?

MR. FOX: Presently we have one fence.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Is the fence crew -- I guess then they're experts on cyclone fences, wrought-iron fences, stockade fences, whatever type of fences we might have?

MR. FOX: Yes, they're experts at what they do, yes.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Okay. What kind of equipment is at their disposal? Is there hole-diggers, front-end loaders?

MR. FOX: We have two backhoes or front-end loaders that they use. They'll sometimes have to get that from the Grounds Maintenance Unit.

The supplies are -- we try to stock the regular supplies like the four-, eight-, ten-foot high fencing. We try to keep some of that in stock. The vehicles -- they have a vehicle to get there to the job.

For the most part, they have the equipment.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Rick, we're behind. I mean, I'll be honest with, we're

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behind.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Yeah.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: And we have trouble -- right now, we're waiting for a list for the maintenance mechanics, and it's just sort of to the extent that we're like limping along until we get these positions filled and get a civil service list. We can pull a couple maintenance mechanics off that list.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: But it sounds to me like you need more than one fence crew. I mean, we could use two or three. For a while, when you only had that one bucket truck, you know, we were renting a lot from T & T. And that's nice, but. . .

I mean, is it the same deal? A fence crew here, a fence crew there?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Well, we'll have another crew. I checked in with Tom on this before we came over here. If we an get this list, when the list gets established --

MR. FOX: Yeah, we're presently waiting for the Maintenance Mechanic I list to be active. And when that becomes active, then we'll get two

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more mechanics on.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: That said, the fence line -- we're -- the vandalism is, I think, a problem that again is going down. The level of vandalism at the centers, because they're used more, because people are engaged more, because they look nicer.

You know, the capital program has really kicked in, made a big impact. You know, people feel better about the recreation centers so they take a little more pride and there's a little more care going on.

But one area where we still have a little trouble is our fence lines get clipped a lot. And I hear our skilled trades guy say they're fixing the fence and they see somebody across the street, you know, doing this with wire cutters.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Right.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: You know, if they want to play with us. And a lot of times we get behind because it's not usage or wear and tear, general wear and tear, it's vandalism. So that creates an issue for us.

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COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Let me ask you this, Commissioner and Mr. Fox, whoever. When does a repair become a capital improvement? I mean, a capital improvement on a fence per se, I mean, that's a vague question.

MR. FOX: Well, it depend on the situation. Sometimes it's a dollar-thing. But between 7500 to $10,000 might make it capital.

If the situation requires somebody to get way up, you might need a crane, say it's a lighting pole that falls over and you need special equipment that we might not have, it wouldn't be wise for us to have that type of stuff. That makes it a capital.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: It's cheaper to rent it.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Well, the rule of thumb, Councilman, for us anyway, is if the system needs -- if the system's broke, then we go to Capital. If it's a part of that system and we're capable of it, we try to keep that in-house before we bump it over to Capital.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Well, we talked -- I joked with you about Newts and the cinders, but

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-- 'cause I've done some stuff up at Piccoli, and you guys have been great, getting the dirt up there and the diamond texture for North Catholic baseball, my alma mater. That has nothing to do with it. If I went to Frankford, it would still be done, I'm sure.

What's the status of our grounds keeping? I mean, that's another big deal too, right?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Yeah.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: I mean, I can imagine getting all them fields --

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: 425.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Getting them ready every year for baseball and soccer and for --

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right. Tom has really, I think, creatively suggested that we increase our purchase of diamtex, which is the like kind of clay-like dirt that is used to dress infields, baseball infields, and in some instances, other parts of the playing field.

Every field in the system is -- right now, I mean, we drop it right now in the winter. So spring cleanups come and whether it's in

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conjunction with the Department staff or the clubs go out and the advisory councils do the work on their own, they have that dirt there, which is costly if they have to buy it.

In addition to that, when clubs are working with us to really dress the field, which we might do at Piccoli, we will then drop double or triple the amount of dirt we normally drop to do a major dressing of an infield.

But that, again, is based on the amount of volunteers we have and the amount of resources we can put in but we add a lot more to that.

Our fence lines, we have a contract now for limited spraying of our fence lines, which has really helped keep the weed and weed tree growth along them. I don't know how much better we're doing at the trimming, but we made a big effort to, as we cut to trim. If don't do enough trimming, then we start losing battle.

I would say that, again, in a general way, our Grounds Maintenance Division has improved in the upkeep of the fields, but we're only maybe in the middle of the journey.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Commissioner,

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while we're on that subject, I grew up across from Piccoli playground. Now, somebody mention trees, I think, one of the Councilpeople. I came in late here.

But the trees across from Piccoli, for lack of better words, I don't know they're called. When I grew up, we called them "vomit balls," because they do two things. These little seeds fall off the trees, hit the ground, and all the kids run through the trees, and this stuff smells like throw-up.

So you can imagine if you had a house in Juniata Park -- I'm sure it's all over the City. This was a great idea for somebody. I don't know why.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: But a bad idea for us.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Yeah, because it gets tracked in on your wall-to-wall carpeting. And my mother, God rest her soul, was like, Don't go over on the vomit balls. I don't know, that's what we called them, you know?

We don't put in any more of them trees in, do we? 'Cause I don't know what you -- can

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you find that out for me next year when you come back, what those trees are called?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: I will.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Because I'm sure they have a purpose and somebody had a reason. They're beautiful trees, but they only do one thing, they make these seeds that -- maybe Councilman Ortiz knows, I don't know.

MR. FOX: We have staff person in Engineering who's a landscape architect, I'll --

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: No, you're right. I think they're horrible.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Find out what the purpose was. I mean, it was before Michael grew up and you grew up, 'cause I'm 42 and Piccoli was there in the sixties, so they were planted.

My one last comment is Councilman Rizzo spoke about the lighting problem. And he is a Councilman-At-Large, and he's out till 3 o'clock in the morning. I'm out till 5 if he's out till 3, believe me.

But the centers in my district where we went around and you did the good electrical contracting -- now, I won't say "union," 'cause

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you know where I come from.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: I know.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: But the guys whose names I won't mention that did Piccoli and Cione, when I walk in Piccoli or Cione, they're laid out different. I can close my eyes and tell you where everything is, and Tom knows this.

So if we hire the same people if we can, the same kind of deals, we get the same thing. So, therefore, if a rec leader's at Piccoli and he gets transferred to Grays Ferry, everything's in the same place because, you know, with the contacts and the lights and the timers and the photo cells, you know, Eric's always looking at that. And that's a big thing, that they're in the same place.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: We do our absolute best to uniform all our capital programs so that heating systems, lighting, major systems, the more uniform they are, the easier it is for the Maintenance Division to prepare, and the easier it is for the Program Division to operate.

So that is always something that we're working towards.

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COUNCILMAN MARIANO: And let me ask you this, Commissioner, since David Cohen's not here looking over your shoulder, can you tell us anything? Or Greg Rouse may be hidden somewhere here.

What can we do? 'Cause I appreciate it. Besides the Police Department, in my scope of the -- in my world, the Recreation Department's right there. I mean, if we're going to spend money in the Police Department or the court system, we might as we well spend it now for kids to play soccer, box, or baseball, or basketball, whatever it is, 'cause it really does develop well-rounded individuals.

What can we do? If you don't want to say --

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Look, I think if -- I mean, last year's increase, if you look at last year's budget, the Administration request was for, I think, $125,000 for after-school programs, and this Council boosted that up to $625,000.

That was a significant increase. I think it really created an energy and a drive in

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the City to look at this kind of programming in a new way. I think the increase the year before that, in our 12 additional, you know, semiskilled workers to fill out our custodial at our A centers was a big increase.

So I would just say your continued interest and understanding which this Council has of the Recreation Department's role and potential in neighborhood is a blessing to the Department. And that kind of attention is a greatly appreciated.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Thanks, thanks for your help.

Tom, one last thing -- I know I said that three times. The boards at Tarken and Scanlon -- I know we have interest in ice hockey -- are they every going to be changed?

MR. FOX: There's an ongoing discussion with Eric in Planning and Construction especially to see about Tarken.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: They get a lot of banging and all of that, and I see 'em getting looser every year. Thank you.

That's it, Madame Chairwoman.

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COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Commissioner, do we have rec leaders at all of our facilities, do you know?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: No.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: We do not?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: No. We have what we call "D centers," which are the smallest physical plant building and equipment at them, and they're not staffed except on seasonal, like a summer, spring-summer basis.

So we do not have year-round staff at those facilities and at the neighborhood parks that do not have some sort of recreational facility built in them. For instance, like Mifflin Square, for instance, that's not a staffed facility.

So those two levels.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Give me another example, like Eastwick Regional.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Carol can -- there is a staff at Eastwick Regional.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: I believe there are two part-time staff in the afternoon and two in the evening.

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DEPT. COMM. RICE: Yes. Eastwick, the previous leader, Darryl Nelson, was promoted and is at Finnegan, but he is still coming back in the evening to cover Eastwick. We also have a community outreach worker who is covering it during the day.

We are in the process of interviewing for a replacement for Eastwick. And I would expect that within the next two weeks, there should be an assigned person who is being promoted to that position, which would allow them to admit to be there a minimum of two to three years, so there's some continuity.

I know that Eastwick has experienced the young lady who took a promotion and went to the prisons, and we then put Darryl there and they loved him, and then he got promoted. And so we're trying our very best to get some stability in there.

But we do have it covered. And we are also looking -- because of the large after-school program that they have there, they're awaiting another application for a part-time worker so they can spend -- there will be two people working with

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that after-school program besides just the leader.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Can I have something in writing to that effect? Because there's a community meeting on Wednesday evening, and I --

DEPT. COMM. RICE: Yes, and I'll be with you on Wednesday evening.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Wonderful. I'm very happen to hear that.

DEPT. COMM. RICE: Right.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Ortiz.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Commissioner, the after-school programs, I see that we're going to have an increase of $700,000-plus, and that will permit the Department to service around 3200 more children.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Yeah.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Around that?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Yeah.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: About how many more children -- about how many children in total will

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the Department then be able to serve?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: That will be the total, I'm sorry.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: What?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: That will be the total of all our programs, after-school --

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: 3200 --

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Will be the total enrollment in our five-day-a-week, three-hour-a-day --

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: It's 3200?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Yes. That take us -- I think we were around 1500, and that would jump us up to around 32.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: To 32. That seems an awful small percentage of the universe of children that are out there in terms of latchkey students, the other students that are not into the after-school programs that we are not servicing, especially in the poor neighborhoods that we have, do we have any idea?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Well, I don't have any number that's been generated by the Recreation Department or that I know of that's

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been generated by a City department or agency.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: PCCY probably does.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Yeah, I know PCCY probably has numbers.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: I think they tell us around 40,000.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right. And that's the number that -- their number.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: So it's like 40,000, and we have around 3200.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: And in addition, there's after-school programs that the School District has instituted this year. I think they have about 30 programs operating and expect to expand on that number significantly next year.

And, in addition, I think there are summit pledges, and I'm not sure of the exact number, but I think that's around a thousand additional slots.

But if you use the 40,000 number, then it only begins to move us into the upward trend that we --

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: And the school programs is almost like a pilot program at the

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current time, and we don't know how extensive that's going to be, we'll find that out when they come in.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: And in terms of other programs that the Recreation Department has in terms of churches and other areas and so on, are those included in the --

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: This year, we only have a handful of, I would say, maybe 5, a total of 5 programs out of 65 that we are currently operating that take place in --

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: How many? How many?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: We have 65 programs in FY '98. Of those 65 programs, 5 are non-recreation-center-based but are either in schools or churches or working with nonprofit organizations.

Next year, we expect to have a total of 30 or more after-school programs that are non-recreation-center-based --

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Are you including in that the schools?

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COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Yes.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: The programs at the schools?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: No, no, this is separate.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Okay.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: If we do it in a school, it will be either in conjunction with the School District where did they did not have a program or resources enough to have a program, with a church or a nonprofit or some agency that is looking for a partner, and then we would then become the partner with that organization or agency.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Are the schools being looked upon as part of the expansion of the after-school program in terms of the Recreation Department?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: The School District has right now -- again, I'm remembering from a meeting from a few weeks back, but I think it's around 30 programs that they're operating right now. They hope to build on that next year, but there will be many, many schools in their

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system that do not have after-school programs.

So I think in those instances where there's either not enough or the School District doesn't have enough resources to fund in all of middle schools and elementary school, we would look to team up in certain instances with those schools to create the base.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: What is the total amount of money for after-school programs that you're going to have?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: We will be spending approximately a million and a half dollars next year, the Recreation Department. I don't know what the School District's budget is or will be.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: Last year, we proposed an amendment to add $2-1/2 million to that, to that budget. What would be the effect of adding $2-1/2 million projected to the after-school program?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Well, it would make my staff crazy, number one -- no, I'm teasing.

I mean if that kind of money, we would

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really begin to -- we would be programming almost exclusively outside of the Recreation Department system.

So that means that we would be working exclusively with that money on churches, schools, and nonprofit organizations to create those programs. It would radically increase the number of participants and, I think, at that level, begin to measure impact.

COUNCILMAN ORTIZ: The Police Commissioner said something -- I read something about what he said that is not new because I said it here in Council, and other people in hearings have said it, that public safety is an economic development tool, and after-school programs, according to all of the hearings that we've had in City Council, prove that it's probably one of the biggest public safety instruments that we can have.

So that an investment of an extra $2-1/2 million would probably be a very good investment in terms of keeping our City safe and safer. And it's probably something that perhaps we should look into to and see how add that

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money. Maybe we can get more votes this time around than we did last year.

Okay, thank you. Thank you, Madame Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you. The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Tasco.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Good afternoon.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Good afternoon.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I too want to thank you very much for your leadership as Recreation Commissioner. You've done an outstanding job in bringing the centers up to date in terms of repairs and staffing. And I think you've done it in a well-coordinated way, not a piecemeal, patch sort of way.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: So you ought to be commended for the work that you're doing. And certainly, I have to commend you on Simons and the skating rink. It's wonderful, and we hope to develop some ice-skating stars out of the rink. It won't me be, though.

I just have a couple of questions; one,

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I think, that has been asked. It's a staffing issue. And I want you to know that with all the programs that we ask to you undertake and that you are asked to undertake, you've only increased your staff about one percent. I'm certainly sure you could probably use more staff.

What would be a nice complement, increase in staffing, if you had a dream, if you could really dream. Let's just dream a moment and think about what you'd like to have.

I guess you'd say you are dreaming in here, right?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Well, if I dream too much, I could get -- no.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Certainly around the issue, the programmatic issue as well as maintenance.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: I think we're all right programmatically. I'm really proud of the way we've increased programs in the Department. I think in some parts of City, we're literally running out of space.

Now, it doesn't mean more does not to be done. It doesn't mean that the need is being

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met, but all it suggests is that within our facilities in those parts of the -- in certain sections of the City, we can't do any more time. We just -- you know, from the time we open to the time we close, we're booked. And if we try to squeeze any more people in there, we start pushing people out the door in the back.

I think that the Maintenance Division and the care of the facilities is our biggest challenge, the upkeep and maintenance. And this Council, I think, made some very wise decisions with the Administration to invest in the physical plant of the many departments, but obviously the one that I care about is the Recreation Department. It has done remarkable work in systematically lifting this system up in the last six years.

And our challenge, if I had a challenge -- and that's the way I like to talk about it. It's our obligation not only to the kids who use them but to this Body and to this Administration to take care of that $100,000,000 investment-plus that this government has made.

So our -- my goal and our challenge is

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to focus our attention on how do we best do that with the operating dollars that we receive every year.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Councilman Mariano asked you this question, and I'm going to ask you again.

What repairs are operating -- come out of the operating budget or and what are capital? It seems that there are some repairs that can be either operating or capital.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: That's true. For instance, in -- we had -- this a great story. And, again, it's something that I take some pride in with our Maintenance Division.

We had from Councilwoman Verna's office a request -- and a needed request. The roof at Vare was leaking, and it was a capital budget item that we were waiting to get the design work completed so we could do the work.

Due to the urgency of the request and really the deterioration that was going on in the building at that time, we -- and Tom gathered his men and women up at that time, and we did it within the Maintenance Division. And they put a

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new roof on. They went out and did a capital job with the Maintenance Division.

There are instances where we can do that, where the line is blurred, where we have the capacity, the skill and the capacity to do what might be a capital job.

The problem when you go down that road is, you begin to use your allocated resources -- roofing materials and tar and things like that that you plan for every year, you begin to overuse on those supplies and equipment.

So if you do too much of that, at some point during the course of the year, you're not going to be able to do your normal, day-to-day maintenance and preventive maintenance function.

So there's a little bit of a balance.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Well, if you have supplies for roofs, for repair of roofs, is that to fix a patch or something? It's not to do major roofing, is it?.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: It's not to do -- we do not do generally do entire roof renovations within the budget. It's a patch job, it's a tar job to make sure just to sustain the

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roof.

Generally speaking, we don't do that kind of major replacement but we can in certain trades do that kind of work. And in certain instances where the need and the conditions are such, we try to do that.

But the major system work is capital. A new heating system in a big facility, let's say like Simons, that's a capital job. A fence line, 20 feet of a fence line that needs replaced is a maintenance function.

If the entire system is rotted out and the poster falling down and you have hundreds of yards of fence missing, then that could become a capital job because the fencing system is out of order, not just a particular segment of the fence.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Would a tennis court be considered operating or capital?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: If we were going to just patch the court, let's say there's a few cracks, we could come in.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I'm with you.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: That's a Maintenance Division function. If we have to

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recoat or dig the entire surface up and replace it, that's a capital job.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Right, right, right.

Oh, you have in your budget funding for a PHA site recreation facility. Where are the sites?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: I'll let Deputy Commissioner Rice handle that.

DEPT. COMM. RICE: This is only one site, and it's the Passyunk Homes. The Philadelphia Housing Authority contracted or gave us a grant to cover the cost of salaries to operate their newly-built community center at Passyunk Homes.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Okay, thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Are there any other questions, Councilwoman Tasco?

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: No, thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: You're welcome. The Chair recognizes Councilman Rizzo.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Madame Chair.

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Commissioner, following the capital versus operating, and I want you to know that I appreciate and also the community appreciates very much that you allow community groups to have meetings and use the facilities for daytime activities.

But one thing troubled me a little bit, and maybe your testimony just made me think of this issue. I was at a particular recreation center recently, attending a community meeting. And you mentioned that heat was a capital expense that the Recreation Department paid for.

Well, I was a little bit surprised that this community group of senior citizens had to buy their own air conditioner for this facility. And I --

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Do you know where this was? Do you remember?

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: It's right off the Rising Sun, near Olney Avenue. And the air conditioner, they purchased it, and it sat for months and months and months and months before it was installed.

Do you think that in the future that

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air-conditioning, especially for our senior citizens, could be considered an essential?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: In most instances, it is but -- oh, jeez.

At our senior -- we have five senior centers that are part of our system and centers that are exclusively for senior citizens, and that program is built into our budget. And we do that, maintain the air-conditioning system just as a matter of course.

When you get into our -- like you said, we open up our doors even like before 2 o'clock when we're supposed to open, we do everything we can to let our centers figure out a way to have the doors open before 2 o'clock, and we do this a lot with senior citizen clubs that exist.

It is -- it would be a dilemma if we said as part of our mission or part of our mandate is every center in our system we will buy an air conditioner for that has a club and we will pledge ourselves to maintain that system, that's a step it.

I mean, not that -- it shouldn't have sat around. I won't defend that. It should not

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have sat around after it was purchased; it should have been installed in a timely fashion.

But -- and I would have to consider this, so it's a good question, but I'm raising it back to you as a question. That if we said yes, every center that we own and operate that has, let's say, seniors or younger children in it on any kind of regular basis, we would air condition and pledge ours to see maintain that air-conditioning. That would be a big step for us.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Commissioner, could that be a goal?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Yeah.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: That maybe we could to develop a budget on --

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: That's very good question.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: -- what that would cost because --

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: It would cost money.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: It would obviously cost money, but talking we're about our senior

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citizens. Those facilities would be, in my opinion, probably more so utilized than they are now, because they tell me it's just incredible, the temperatures in some of these facilities in the summer.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: I hope my answer is not diminishing the need or, you know --

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: It's something we haven't done and --

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: It would take a lot of money and thought and planning.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Well, let's try to figure out how much money we're talking about.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Sure, right.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: At least let's deal with the locations that we know are being utilized for those activities, and maybe we could prioritize the locations that aren't being utilized. Until they are, they stay un-air-conditioned.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: I appreciate that, I appreciate your questions.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, thank you

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Commissioner.

Thank you, Madame Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you. The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Clark.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Thank you, Madame Chair.

I feel a strong urge to join the hallelujah chorus.

(Laughter.)

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: So I will stipulate to all good things that other people have said about you and not enter any rebuttal. But do I have a few questions, please.

What percentage of swimming pools in your centers will be operational this summer?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: All but one, which is under a capital program. The only pool that will not operate this summer, at least currently that we know of, which I'm assuming will be what it is in the spring is Awbury Pool at Awbury Recreation Center, which is in Councilwoman Miller's district, which has a significant appropriation -- capital budget appropriation.

We have to literally dig up the entire

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-- we have to contract to dig up the entire water-delivery system in the deck a major job. It's a major job, but we hope to have that done -- at least begun sometime within the next couple of month, but we don't think it will be completed to get the pool open this summer.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Just for the record, what number of pools do we have in our inventory?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: 81.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: 81. And 80 of the 81 pools will be operational?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: That's correct.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: In the summer of '98?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right, and we'll begin opening the pools projected some time in the first week of June.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Great. What impact, if any, will welfare reform have on the services provided by the Rec Department? And in particular, what impact would it have on your after-school program? Welfare reform, its impact

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on after-school programs.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right. I'm assuming that it will have an impact. But I'll be honest with you, Councilwoman, I don't understand at this point what those implications, like in detail what they might be.

I think what we're guessing is that there will be more young boys and girls who are in need of care. And our assumption is if that's the case, then as these programs open up in the fall, these additional programs, we're assuming that we'll see that in the demand.

I probably should know more and I should pay more attention to exactly what the impacts will be. But right now, that's about how we're looking at it.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Well, you're not late because it hasn't hit yet, but I do think we might want to start some program planning.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Because if we are correct in our assumptions, there are likely to be large number of people who will be in need of what is in essence day care service or supervised

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leisure time.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Which falls directly in the scope of your services.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Okay.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Could I piggyback?

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Oh, sure, of course.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Commissioner DiBerardinis, in reference to the swimming pools, last year the pools appeared to close earlier than many people would like. I got some calls that some of the pools closed -- forgive me for using the word "early" but I'll use it -- early.

I think I contacted you, and you indicated that part of your problem is that many of the life guards are college students and have to leave very early, and that shut down many of the swimming pools.

Do you think there's a solution to that problem? When did many of the pools close?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: I think on or about August 20th, we began. I won't see it

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was the 19th or the 21st or the 18th, but it was around then that we began our school closing, which -- and that is a direct result -- it's not budgetary.

It is a direct result of -- a large percentage of our guards are college students, and we're happy about that. College now, you know, kids go back in August now. You know, Labor Day, forget Labor Day for going back to college.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Commissioner, when I was a kid, August 20th, I had half the summer left.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Well --

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: That was a long time ago, Frank.

(Laughter.)

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: No, I appreciate the question. We began closing the pools, but we ran a significant number of our pools into the Labor Day weekend and up until Labor Day.

But life guard recruitment and retention is a big concern of the Recreation Department. And it is -- we are asking people to

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do very difficult work, work that requires a level of maturity, a level of competency, and 40 hours of training just to get your certification, not just swimming, but CPR and first-aid. And they have to be renewed. So once you get it, you're not set.

Then we have an issue of young people not wanting to work at some of our pools, and we train them and then they just trot off and work somewhere elsewhere where it may be a little easier.

So all of those issues, put together, create in middle or late August a condition where those young people leave, the ones we do recruit, and we do get them on board and are able to run pools, they start going back to college.

And they may want to take a week off. They've been working since, you know, June the 4th, and they want a week off. So maybe they're going back to college the 25th of August, they want out a week ahead of time.

I can't keep 'em, I can't say you can't come back next year. I need them next year, so I'm not going to -- they're not permanent

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employees, so if they want to take a week off, that's when they leave.

We do everything we can to "incentive-ize" them staying. We will give them overtime hours, right? We'll give them more hours, we do everything we can, but we're stuck a little bit.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Is this job -- a life guard, I know, is a strenuous, physical job. Is this job strictly limited to young persons?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: No.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Old people can do it.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Is there other people out there that could fill the void or even be included in the program that would be able to work through August?

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Gym teachers.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: We have done everything. I mean, we have articles in the newspaper, public television appeals, recruitment on every level we possibly can, articles in local papers.

I mean, we do -- we've tried every

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trick, and I'd be willing to try new tricks to expand the base.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Commissioner, the Councilman --

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I'm not available.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: He's much too modest. He wants to do it.

(Laughter.)

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Only if Michael Nutter agrees to help me.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Let Councilman Rizzo do a couple pools, okay? And, I mean, get him certified, and you'll be all right.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: But just one thing I would want to say in addition to all of that, we do see some beginning about the second week in August when we do our counts, we see a drop in attendance also.

But in terms of that, that makes me feel a little bit better, but it still doesn't answer my question about trying to maintain and keep the guards there. They get another calling, they're advancing their education, they're in college. We can't do anything about that.

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COUNCILMAN RIZZO: All the resorts have a similar dilemma.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: But if there are any ideas, we're open to ideas and we're trying to dig deeper into that well of potential guard, and age is really not a problem for us. In fact, we like college -- we like people in college, but we like adults too. If they can work for us and do that, that would be great.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: And, again, I don't want to mislead Councilman Nutter. I would really like to know what the requirements are. I'm not personally interested, but I'd really like to know what the requirements are because there may be people out there that we can get.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: And we can get them to you. They're relatively stringent, though. You have to be a very good swimmer, you have to be able to save a life in a pool, and also the first-aid and the CPR.

So we will get you the requirements.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thanks. Thank you Madame Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you. The

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Chair recognizes Councilwoman Clark.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: One last question, Madame Chair. There's so much talk about violence in the City. And very often violence is said to play itself in and around playgrounds. What has been your experience with violence and what new approaches have you instituted so as to make playgrounds safe and inviting places for all who would choose to use them?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Well, we had probably the most serious incident of violence, not like on off-hours where there was something happened in a field where some people happened to meet, but where there was an active program going on and a young man decided to shoot up the gymnasium when there was a couple hundred people in the gymnasium. This was at Myers Recreation Center. That was about in December of 1993 or 1994. In all honesty, I thought it was reflective of the state of the center at that time. The center was in physically bad condition, it had only one program really that active and alive there, and that was the basketball program, and it was dark, it was dirty, and it didn't have

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a lot of adults involved in that center. So to me, that's when we're most vulnerable to violence, when the young people or when we're up and operating.

We've put our mind to it, and we've worked with Councilwoman Verna and Councilwoman Blackwell to begin to move that place forward, and that place is completely turned around. It has a ton of programs a great advisory council a lot of adult volunteers, and we have not had a single incident at that facility since that time.

I think what we do just within our system is to say that a center that people care about and a center that's used, that looks good, that has a lot of adult presence tends -- and I use that word very consciously -- tends to be safe.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: So, Mr. Commissioner, you are suggesting that there's a direct correlation between a program -- a recreation center that has viable programs and staff and a diminishing of non-acceptable behavior.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: That's

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correct. That's right. There's a way to behave. And once you create that way to behave, people may be crazy somewhere else, but the chances diminish of them being crazy within your system.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Do you have other centers that need that sympathetic treatment? And if so, what's being done for them? In the light of welfare reform, we are likely to need more effective recreation than less.

So tell me what your challenges are.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Within our system?

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Within your system.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Again, I think we've raised the level of what's -- when you look at a center five years ago, the problems were the roof's leaking, the gym's a mess, the bathrooms, don't work, the fences are falling down, the light poles are falling down --

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Wait, stop right there.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: That's where we were five years ago.

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COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Okay.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: So they're no longer the questions.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: So now we got all the roofs working?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: All the bathrooms work? They're not dingy, they're not dark, they don't need paint.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right. We are at a point where we are -- how do we keep graffiti off, how do we get it off, how do we keep it off. How do we engage more adults to be active in that center, and we're working with our advisory council leadership to look at generating more interest in the advisory councils.

How do we create after-school programs that are consistent, you know, that parents and kids know that it's something they're going to like. How do we coordinate with the police and other City agencies that work around the center to make sure that we not only cut down on the violence at the center but cut down on the incidents of violence in the neighborhoods that

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surround the centers.

So we're at a new realm. There are challenges that are probably harder challenges than the ones we took on, this Council and this Administration took on a few years ago.

So we're playing at a higher level, and I think the issues are tougher, but I think that's where we're at now, we're playing at a higher level.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Okay. Madame Chair, I won't prolong this. I thank you for your sensitive answers and suggest that the sociology that you describe is going to be more difficult than the physical refurbishment. But because you are headed in the right direction, it's not hard for us to follow your lead.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Okay, thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you.

Councilman Nutter, do you wish to be recognized?

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Yes, Madame Chair, very briefly.

Commissioner, I want to renew two

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requests that we've had previous discussions about. One has to do with the prospect of a recreational facility in the Wynnefield section of the City, and as a part of my district, we have, I guess, one of the D-size facilities unstaffed except on a seasonal basis.

But there's no ability in Wynnefield or Wynnefield proper for one central place for kids to go, either to play basketball or baseball or other outdoor kinds of activities. And, obviously, one of the big problems is location, but I think we may have at least one potential site, and I'd like to follow up with you and take a look at that. There's been an ongoing need for increased recreation programs in the Wynnefield community.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Second is the ongoing discussion about the prospect of the ice-skating rink in the 21st Ward up in Roxborough section, which, I think we have now five ice-skating rinks across the City?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: That's correct.

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COUNCILMAN NUTTER: But that particular area, as we look at the five centers and chart out across the City, there's a fairly decent distribution of centers, but there's kind of a hole over in the northwest section, I guess with the exception -- is there one in West Oak Lane?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right, Simons.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Simons, which locationally (sic) probably won't serve very well the people in either Roxborough, Manyunk, possibly even Germantown and that area.

My last question is your testimony is filled with mentions of either different programs or initiatives for which I certainly want to commend you. You almost have as many programs as HUD.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: I'm not sure that's a compliment, Councilman Nutter.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, HUD's not doing too bad.

The one thing that strikes me, and I've thought about it more and more as I've tried to grapple with the need for coordinated recreational

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programs out of -- the problem that I'm trying to deal with out in Wynnefield is, is there a handbook or guide that we would be able to give to a person by Councilmatic district to tell them all of the various programs that exist out in their community, where they are, how's their operation, who they serve, all of that kind of information?

Short of giving someone a copy of this testimony and almost on every one of your categories, youth access center, neighborhood golf mini camps, I'm particularly intrigued by the Women and Girls in Sports programs and the Nike program.

I mean, I could have asked you for each one of those, give me a list of where those are operating, give me the hours of operation, all of that kind of stuff so we can see where we have all of this activity going on. And so no matter where someone was or where they live, for instance, in my district, I could give them this booklet and say, These are all of the activities and programs, after-school programs, regular daytime programs that are going on in the district. You know, figure out which one is closest to you, and this

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is where you send your kids, or as an adult, this is where you would go.

Do we have something like that today?

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: No. I mean, it sounds great. And just let me tell you about some of the problems we confront when we try to do this.

Our programs change. So what we might be doing in October will be very different than what we're doing in January. Now, some programs run like from September to May.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Yeah, I understand that.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Some programs run in two- and three-month segments, so that would have to be either something that says you could see this or you could see that. It's a great idea, though. I think --

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Well, I mean, I understand that programs do change. On the other hand, I mean, it's like the more things change, the more they remain the same.

I mean, we know that we're going to do certain things, and to the extend that we can do

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facts sheets by center and when you have these kinds of updates going on, I mean, you either stick it in the back of the book or it ends up in the next version that comes out.

And I'm not just -- I don't think this is a Recreation Department project. I mean, this may go up into either the Policy and Planning Group. I mean, someone would have to sit down and maybe you could -- I mean, maybe some outside entities that fund some of our activities would also like to see something like this.

We should be able to give to a person and that it be relatively in date, you know, within a two-or three-year time period. I should be able to tell someone, These are all the programs going on in the Fourth Councilmatic District. Figure out where you live.

Now, you know, if the thing is two years old, and a program has changed, that's kind of life in the big city.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Right, right.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: But maybe something has taken its place, but we should be able to tell

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people this and then they would be able to almost kind of plan primarily their children but maybe again for themselves or we have senior programs, they would be able to know almost all of the time what's going on in their center that's nearby but what's going on in their community.

Because maybe one thing's going on at Sheppard, maybe Disston has something else where, you know, I can do something the Sheppard on Monday night, I can go over to the Disston on Tuesday, maybe I want to do something somewhere else on Wednesday, and you'd know all this information. And we'd be able to get it out through our offices, libraries, I mean the various City facilities.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: You made a very good point, and I think, based on that point, we'll begin to look at that. I think we don't do this stuff real well. You know, it's one of those things where you always say it would really be a great idea, but somehow you never get to it. I appreciate that.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I know a little bit about that. This is my one bright idea for this

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budget cycle.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Thank you, thank you for it.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: I have no more ideas for the rest of the. . .

Thank you, Madame Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you.

Are there any other questions or comments from the Members of the committee?

(No further questions or comments at this time.)

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you all very much.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Thank you.

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COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: The next group to testify will be Camp William Penn.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Good afternoon, Madame Chairman. My name is Michael DiBerardinis, Recreation Commissioner, and I am presenting testimony in support of Camp William Penn's FY '99 operating budget request.

Camp William Penn is requesting a total of $318,666 in General Fund appropriations for FY

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'99, which is $5,236 more than the FY '98 anticipated obligations and provides for full funding for negotiated pay raises.

The FY '99 request supports 3 full-time employees and 65 temporary workers to staff Camp William Penn during the camping season which starts in July of 1998.

In 1998, we will continue to provide one five-day and three eight-day encampments for boys and girls, ages 8 through 12. Nine hundred and twenty (920) children attended in FY '98. This is an increase in attendance of 152 children over the previous season.

And, essentially, I will dispense with the rest of my remarks if you don't -- I can continue to read the testimony, but I think our goal is to run a quality camp every summer to make sure that we get the best possible staff, seasonal staff to support the facility.

We have a full-time 25-year veteran Recreation Department staff person who oversees the camp, which hasn't changed the way historically that's been done.

And we also seek to span usage of the

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camp, and you'll see in my testimony that we had 200 children attend a shortened camp after the regular camping season from our environmental programs.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Are there any questions regarding Camp William Penn?

(No questions.)

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you very much, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER DIBERARDINIS: Thank you.

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COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Fairmount Park.

(Members of Fairmount Park Commission panel come forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Good afternoon.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Good afternoon, Madame Chairwoman. I am William E. Mifflin, the Executive Director of the Fairmount Park Commission. With me this afternoon is Mr. James Donaghy, to my left, the Director of Operations and Landscape Management for the Fairmount Park Commission. To my right is Mr. Paul Nice, who's Deputy Director for Administration Support. And I guess joining me shortly will be Mr. Dennis

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Waller, another Deputy Director from Fairmount Park for Business Administration.

Madame Chair, for the sake of the time, I'd like to just paraphrase or highlight from my prepared testimony. And, of course, will be pleased to answer any questions that Members of Council might have regarding my testimony or any activities of Fairmount Park.

It is my pleasure to appear before you today to present on behalf of the Fairmount Park Commission the recommended operating budget for Fiscal Year '99.

The Fairmount Park operating budget before you today totals almost $13 million, $12.8 million in General Fund appropriations. It provides for $274,428 in additional appropriations above the FY '98 adopted budget, which will be used exclusively for the negotiated wage increased.

The FY '99 budget provides funding for the continuation of service improvements achieved in FY '96, '97, and '98. In FY '96, Fairmount Park received $400,000 in additional appropriations for improvements in turf

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maintenance and other Park maintenance tasks such as ballfield maintenance in preparation and support of special events. These improvements in budget will continue in FY '99. The budget also includes $1 million for street tree maintenance.

I'd like to talk very briefly about some of the major accomplishments that the Park Commission has recently provided. Since 1992, the Fairmount Park has undertaken several important initiatives and projects to improve its delivery of services and to utilize its budgetary resources more effectively.

These efforts have led to significant improvements and the Park has improved upon its operations and service delivery. The implementation of these improvements will be greatly enhanced by the recent award of a $26.6 million grant to the from the William Penn Foundation.

This grant, which was awarded in October of '96 and is now up and running, is completing the first we're its the planning. We have a full staff of 5 employees and we have been working with the community throughout the City of

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Philadelphia as we begin to plan the improvements in the approximately 5400 acres of the 8900 acres of Fairmount Park.

As you know, 14.3 million or 54 percent of the grant will be used for the restoration of woodlands in 7 major stream valley and estuary parks within the City, including FDR Park, Poquessing, Pennypack, Tacony, Wissahickon, Fairmount, and Cobbs Creek.

In addition, another 5.2 million will be used for the construction and expansion of environmental education and resource centers at each of the major estuary and stream valley parks.

Regarding street trees, as I've mentioned previously, in FY '98, the Fairmount Park Commission received funding in its operating budget for the first time in years, thanks to City Council, for the pruning and other maintenance of the City's 250,000 street trees. This $1 million provided in '98 is expected to prune 6700 trees. We again have requested the same level of funding in the FY '99 operating budget.

In the area of programmatic improvements, we do operate 10 summer camps. And

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I would take note of our rowing camp, which continues to expand in the number of inner-City children that we serve. Last year, of 120 campers, which culminated in a, actually a regatta between the cities of Wilmington and Philadelphia at the conclusion of the program. It's a very successful which includes support from the private sector.

Again, the Fairmount Park Commission, a critical component of its operations is it's ability to utilize volunteers as well as obtain outside financial and service contributions. We are now up to 75 Friends groups; whereas in '91, we had approximately 63.

We had over 18,000 volunteers in support of Fairmount Park last year, which, of course, culminated at the President's Summit on America's Future in the spring, where we had over 500 volunteers in that one day providing support for cleanup of six park areas.

In the area of management initiatives, we continue to provide improved services in landscape maintenance. Recognizing the importance -- the important need and opportunity to improve

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maintenance, in FY '95, the Park implemented a successful competitive contracting landscape maintenance initiative.

I believe now we are maintaining -- over 75 percent or 80 percent of our acreage is contractually mowed. And we are doing this without any reduction in Park staff.

We are pursuing other similar initiatives in other areas of maintenance services. And I think we'll continue to provide effective resources of our existing staff.

One of the initiatives that we have that's been underway for the last six months and most recently into serious negotiations is with a master concessionaire for the facilities in Fairmount Park.

As I have testified previously to this concept, we would hope to improve the quality and services throughout the Park system at our catering facilities and our concession stands and provide new attractive facilities across the Park, where people can obtain refreshments and other services.

Another major initiative of the

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Fairmount Park Commission is the Fairmount Water Works. And as you can learn from my testimony, we are the recipients of numerous grants from foundations that will assist in the improvement of the -- and the restoration of the Fairmount Water Works, and that will combine very nicely with the present restoration of the Engine House, which upon completion, will be outfitted for a restaurant, which is being -- that project's being completed with $4-1/2 million of City and State funds.

The Fairmount Park Rangers continue to be an excellent resource for the Commission in providing information, interpretation, and code enforcement responsibilities. We are down to approximately 18 rangers at this time.

And, as you know, this is a program that has been privately funded. The funds, since 1987, the funds are diminishing quickly. And unless we do find additional funds, this program could be reduced significantly later this year. However, the Fairmount Park Commission, as well as the board of the Ranger Corps have committed to do everything possible to secure additional funding

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beyond the base grant from the William Penn Foundation to continue this program.

In fact, very recently, I had a conversation with the Mayor, who has indicated that he wishes to help the Commission in its fund-raising initiative to enable us to continue to support the rangers.

Actually, the City to date, supports the Rangers by approximately $100,000 a year in support of administration of Fleet Management and other in-house support services. And we will, of course, continue that support.

The Commission continues to be a site for many special events. And, as you can see from the service levels that are attached to the testimony, we'll see an increase in those special events, and we are quite proud of being the venue for many events, from family picnics to the Welcome America events along the Parkway and the major events throughout the City of parades around the Parkway and in the area of Memorial Hall.

In conclusion, we're delighted to be able to be here this afternoon, to consistently work with the Council of Philadelphia, in

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providing the services that are needed for our citizens.

Thank you very much, and I'll be happy to answer any questions.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you. The Chair recognizes Councilman Rizzo.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Mr. Mifflin, it's come to my attention that the Office of Architectural Engineering Division of Fairmount is being moved to the Capital Program Office. Is this something that you support? And could you explain the rationale, why the Office of Architectural Engineering is leaving the Fairmount Park?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Yes. The A&E Office of the Capital Program Budget Office has evaluated the productivity of the Fairmount Park Commission and has matched that against what they believe they can have produced since -- over the last year and what they can do in the future.

And it would appear in the numbers that they're producing that the Park Commission delivery of services and the productivity with our

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capital budget would improve or increase in the number of projects and shorten the timeliness that it takes to us complete the projects, so it would appear to be a benefit to the Park Commission.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: My next question is something that you've already touched on, the Park Ranger Corps. It seems as though its a group that's now of 18?

DIR. MIFFLIN: That's correct.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: That would be, in my opinion, missed by the people that visit the Park. And I would hope that we don't have to rely entirely on outside funding to keep the Ranger Corps even at this minimum number of 18.

What was its strength at one time?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Well, at one time, we had 120 rangers in the systems in the early, early years 1988, '89, and '90.

Not all of those 120 individuals were available for service in the Park. In those early years, we were completing two-year educational requirement that the supporting foundation required of the Commission.

We dropped down, about five years ago,

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to approximately 65 to 70, and we have just continued to attrit (sic) down to the number that we are at now.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Is the number of 18 even a number that's -- I guess what I'm trying to say is that, Are you really able with just this 18 to do -- what are you able to accomplish with the 18? Is that the number that you can really perform a service with? Or is there another number that we -- what is your real requirement to make it work?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Well, the 18 are very effective in providing support throughout the system but specifically in Fairmount and the Wissahickon and in the Northeast and in the Pennypack area where they are housed.

They do provide patrol measures and support throughout the other 63 parks on a very, very limited basis. More rangers, of course, would be helpful.

The past two years, they have combined with an AmeriCorp grant, and there have been an additional 18 rangers through the AmeriCorp grant -- or "junior rangers," as we refer to them --

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that have been available to the Corps during the summer months, which almost -- or just about doubled the existing staff.

It's a difficult question to answer as to exactly how many we need. As the Philadelphia Police Department has grown in small numbers, there have been additional officers assigned to the 90th and 92nd District.

But if -- you know, at one point we had a 500 Park guard entity patroling the 8900 acres. So depending on where you go back in time and identify that particular number, it's a changing number.

The rangers have been extremely helpful in code enforcement. They've been issuing warnings to people that have done everything from parking on the grass to mountain bikers on the wrong trail in the Wissahickon, and enforcing our permit system there. So they have been very helpful.

And we, like any other department, you tend to assign your resources to those critical areas.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: So what I'm hearing

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is that you would really like to keep these 18 Park rangers on duty in the Park, and hopefully, the Administration and the Fairmount Park Commission will figure out a way to make that happen?

DIR. MIFFLIN: That's correct.

COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you, Mr. Mifflin. That you, Madame Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you.

Mr. Mifflin, regarding the street tree pruning, the $1 million allocated for '98, can you tell me if the RFPs have been issued on that?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Yes, they have. We had a successful bid opening approximately two to two and a half weeks ago. I believe today or tomorrow, we are issuing the notice to proceed to the successful vendor.

We would hope to be underway in the first two weeks of March.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: And who will decide what trees will be pruned? Will we go into different sections? I mean, is it just Roxborough that's going to be considered since the Councilman fought so hard for this?

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DIR. MIFFLIN: No, we're going to --

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Are we going to have someone in every section like south?

DIR. MIFFLIN: The contractor has 20 weeks to complete his work. And at the end of the 20-week period, we will have pruned trees in each of the ten Councilmatic Districts, so it will be across the City, of equal proportions.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Well, our list for tree pruning is so old, would you like us each to send you an up-to-date list of those that we feel have top priority?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Well, we're always pleased to hear from the City Council offices, and I encourage you to send those to us certainly if you do have priorities.

We have been receiving those lists from you for, as you know --

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: I know.

DIR. MIFFLIN: -- for many, many years, so we believe we've identified those really hot spots, if you will, that have not be pruned for 10 or 12 years and are in desperate need of pruning.

In order to ensure that we were going

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after those particular problem areas, we inspected the entire City and identified the blocks in each of the ten Councilmatic Districts that are, we'll say, worse-case scenarios, where the work, you know, must be done immediately.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Will you notify us? I'd like you to notify me what you think are the locations that should be attempted to --

DIR. MIFFLIN: I certainly will.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: -- in March. Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Fernandez.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Mr. Mifflin, I wanted to follow up on the question of the rangers. Could you repeat what you said in terms of the status of the funding?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Well, the funding, it's been over a ten-year funding project from the --

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: No, I meant the bottom line right now.

DIR. MIFFLIN: I'm sorry?

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COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: I meant the bottom line right now.

DIR. MIFFLIN: We have established an endowment with the amount of funds that are remaining that would provide for about $148,000 a year income from that endowment. And that is the operating money that we have available to us for the future, beyond this year.

In order to maintain the existing staffing that we now have of 18 rangers, it's approximately a $920,000 annual budget. So we're approximately 760 or $770,000 short right now. That's the bottom line.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: And you said people were in discussions, did you say?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Both the Fairmount Park Commission has identified this as the number-one funding priority for us as commissioners.

And secondly, the court itself has its own separate 501c.(3) not-for-profit organizational board. And, of course, they have that as their number-one priority. So those two boards together have identified this as their priority.

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The Mayor has indicated -- and I believe the Chief of Staff here testified -- that the Mayor's more than willing to work with the Commission and the Board in identifying funds for the future in the private community.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: What about the public sector?

DIR. MIFFLIN: This budget does not provide funds for the Ranger Corps.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Well, I would like to suggest that if some additional funds can be fund in some private sources, that this may well be a valuable enough service that there could be some public-private partnership, some public-private match. Because your rangers are paid, what, 20 to $30,000?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Does that include benefits or not?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: While a police officer is 50-plus? And it seems to me you're going to have additional security and policing issues in not only Fairmount Park but some of the

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others neighborhood parks if the rangers are gone.

So I think we really need to take a look at what it may cost us if the rangers are there, lower-paid, yes, but also there to deal with some of the, quote, quality-of-life crimes that I know many of us have been urging the Police Department to make sure they see as part of their purview.

In addition, the rangers do some educational programs with kids and set a really nice tone and example.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Yes, they do.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: So I would like to suggest that after a major grant like that from a major foundation, that part of the exploration some include some public dollars perhaps as a match to some private dollars.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Okay.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: The other issue is, I do have problems with this word "attrit." You said people had --

DIR. MIFFLIN: Had attritted (sic), I'm sorry.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: They

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attritted. It's either cut or fired or let loose or quit. But this word "attrit," I just think it's sort of really inhuman. And to be attritted, I've heard of people saying it, but I find it rather offensive.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Okay.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: So if the program has been cut back to or is being phased out, maybe that is -- even "cut back," I guess, is pretty prudent too.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: I'm looking at your service level impact statement. I was a little surprised or couldn't quite figure out the difference between some of what your actual performance was in '97 and then how the projections for this year could be so different and sort of so far off.

To give you an example, under "Recycling the Compost," it says that in 1997, you did 17,324 cubic yards of compost went out. I assume that means you got it out to people.

DIR. MIFFLIN: That is an incorrect number. I apologize for that, it's a mistake.

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COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Oh, I see. So what was the real number?

DIR. MIFFLIN: I don't have that.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: I thought it was a mistake because it's way out of line.

DIR. MIFFLIN: It's approximately 3,000. But if you look at '96 and the original '97, it was approximately 2700.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Fingers must have slipped.

But also, there were some issues under "Interpretive Centers," for example, Fox Chase Farm. Again, maybe there's a reason, but actually you show numbers of visitors in '97 at 21,000. You projected for a goal significantly less than that, like 17,000. But, in fact, your current estimate now is it will be up to 18,000.

I don't understand in a sense how there could be such fluctuations or estimates being off.

DIR. MIFFLIN: These numbers are driven largely by the School District of Philadelphia. It has been the number-one site visitation location for schools. And as the schools provide the transportation to off-site facilities, I think

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the numbers have changed somewhat.

In addition, as you probably know, we did suffer a fire and lost the farm. It was right around the time when we were attempting to project numbers, and we weren't quite sure whether we would be able to have all four of the major public events that we have at the facility, so we were a little cautious about the number.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Okay. Thank you, Madame Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you. The Chair recognizes Councilman Nutter Chair.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Given the current situation with funding and the attempts to secure funding, do you think that the program will continue to operate in the fashion that it has in the past?

Or with the need to get additional funding, and depending on where the funding comes from, whether there would be any shift in focus or activity by the rangers, whether it's the 18 or if the program were to grow.

If I wonder if you can briefly tell us, what do the people do now and what would you like

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to see them doing, going forward?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Well, now their functions are basic patrol, which is out into the Park, walking along the paths, riding bicycles, even roller-blading on the River Drive. So they get a significant level of visitor contacts and provide information to our Park users.

During patrol, they also will issue code enforcement violations if they -- if it's appropriate.

Another major function they provide is support of our special events, whether that be for crowd control or a support of the sponsor in traffic flow, or just working the crowd, being there in a uniform, a visible presence.

Another area is interpretation of our historic areas. They provide tours of facilities.

In addition, I previously mentioned the AmeriCorp program, and we have increased the number of rangers in the Park by this program in providing support of conservation projects, among other initiatives.

There's a separate Friends group, Friends of the Ranger Corps as an example, which

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provides volunteer hours in support of maintenance of the Park.

And at this time of year particularly, we're in the school system, providing educational outreach programs for the youth.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Then you would expect, going forward, to pretty much continue the program the way you've outlined it?

DIR. MIFFLIN: If we are able to sustain this level of staffing, yes.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. The bikes, were they purchased by Fairmount Park or by the Ranger Corps through their own board?

DIR. MIFFLIN: They were purchased by the Ranger Corps funds.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. As had been mentioned earlier, the thought had also occurred to me that given some of activity of the rangers certainly is -- I mean, whether you call it "enforcement" or just giving people notification.

I did wonder whether, for instance, similar to school crossing guards who are technically under the jurisdiction of the Police

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Department, whether some possible shift in physical location and jurisdiction of the Ranger Corps primarily based on either service or funding, whether that might be an option?

In addition, naturally, we have the much-discussed natural lands restoration and education program. You mentioned an educational component that the rangers provide.

I guess, lastly, many of us also are familiar with the City Year Program, which are obviously different outfits, but providing some similar kind of function in the areas outside of the Park system.

So I just have begun two wonder whether some way through a combination of various funding sources, there might be funding that already literally exists in various departments that could be allocated for use by the Ranger Corps or you may to actually shift the program into another department.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Councilman, we are investigating all of those opportunities or potential possibilities of continuing the program.

As an example, as we've learned most

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recently about the Welfare Reform Act and the individuals that will be coming, seeking employment as they move off the ranks of welfare. And the opportunity might be there to use rangers as mentors for that program in some way, with the conclusion that -- of the program meeting some security system employment. And so that's something that we are presently considering.

The natural lands restoration project that I mentioned previously, upon completion, it will have five environmental centers. It would be a natural for the rangers to staff those facilities, and there's funding in the grant for staffing of those facilities.

These are rangers. Many of them have been here for ten years, so they could literally hit the ground running and know the Park and be able to interpret the natural areas of the Park. That's another consideration that we have.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: When there are major events at the Park, you mentioned that sometimes the rangers participate in those. I know some of the other operating departments when they are called on to provide service generally

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again with the sponsors, there is some charge.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Yes.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: That is put forward to cover the municipal costs. Are the rangers usually included in the calculation of the cost of the event?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Not all the time, but that's certainly an opportunity for us to recoup some support.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. Well, I think you know, and it was discussed in a meeting immediately prior to the Mayor's budget announcement back in January.

There is a fair amount of support, I believe, here in the Council and certainly outside of this Body in the general public for the Ranger Corps. We would like to try to figure out how to fund it and staff it properly.

But I would like you to encourage you to maybe keep open an mind about either its current focus, future focus, and where it might actually be. There may be some opportunities based on some flexibility that don't exist today.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Sure. Thank you, I

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certainly will.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Sure. Thank you, Madame Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you. The.

Chair recognizes Councilwoman Miller.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you, Madame Chair. Good afternoon.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Good afternoon.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Good afternoon, Mr. Mifflin. I just want to initially say that I support my colleagues' interest, advocacy, and requests for continued funding some way for the Ranger Corps program.

In your testimony on page 5, second paragraph, near the bottom, it says, "The Board of the Philadelphia Rangers Corps and Fairmount Park have had limited success raising new funds to continue the Ranger Program."

Can you further explain why you've had limited success with that?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Well, I -- we have tried to do a public relations campaign to increase the awareness of the rangers in the hope that a corporation or foundations would be so interested

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and so inclined to support it. We did get a small contribution from a local corporation that would sustain us for a very brief period of time, so that's the limited success.

The Friends of Philadelphia Parks has done -- has completed some fund-raising for us, and I think we're going to, you know, continue working with those organizations to, first, increase the awareness of what does a park ranger do and how valuable they are, and then really take that campaign on and start knocking on some doors to really get some cash coming in for the program.

So I think it's -- it's -- we're at a point now where the Commission really recognizes the importance of it, and we need to make this our number-one priority.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: All right, thank you.

When there is a special event that goes on in the Park, your department has special event applications at all of the District Offices, yes or no?

DIR. MIFFLIN: No. We have a Special Events Office in Memorial Hall, and the

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special-event permits engage from that office in concert with the Operations or District Offices. It would depend upon the special event that -- if you have one in mind. Or if it's a large one, it emanates from our Special Event Office. If it's a small volunteer cleanup or, you know, a small picnic, it may emanate from the District Office.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. Do you have the same type of equipment that the Managing Director's office has? If someone wants a stage, do they that they need to contact your office and the Managing Director's Office?

DIR. MIFFLIN: For a -- for a --

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: If you need a stage?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Oh, if you need a stage, I'm sorry. We do not have staging, stage equipment. We turn to the City's Special Events Office and Public Property Department which provides staging and PA systems.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. But using the Park for a special event, the Park makes that decision, not the team that needs to review special events under the Managing Director's

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Office? That's totally separate except, I guess, if you need a piece of equipment.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Well, some of the special events are a City-wide event, and the Managing Director's Office is involved in them. Obviously, all the ones along the Parkway,, some of the large community events, I'm thinking of your district and --

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Our picnic, the picnic we have every year.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Yes. Because that's so large, with thousands of people in attendance, it's considered a City-sponsored event, so we work in concert with the Special Events Office, which includes the Managing Director's office.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. I just want to understand more about tree maintenance --

DIR. MIFFLIN: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: -- versus -- wait a minute.

In your five-year plan, you called it "Maintaining Street Trees," and then in your testimony, it's "Street Tree and Street Maintenance Programs." Maintenance programs.

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I understand you prune. I don't really know much about pruning, but whatever you do when you prune, do you that to trees. And I was wondering specifically around -- I know we get a lot of constituent calls about tree that are on an abandoned lot.

And you know, one year when we were doing community cleanups, and you know, we ran into the same problem. If we were cleaning a lot, if a tree was on the lot, we had a difficult time trying to figure out -- Sanitation wouldn't help us, L&I, and they kept referring us to Fairmount Park. When we called Fairmount Park, it seems like you have to get permission to cut a tree down.

Some of the neighborhoods the cement's cracking because the roots and things are growing up out of the cement. And then dead trees in maybe the backyard of an abandoned building, are those the things of things that the Fairmount Park Commission would be involved in?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Yes. To an extent, we have jurisdiction over the street trees, so we are very much involved in the estimated 250,000 street

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trees in the City of Philadelphia. Our jurisdiction ends in that public right-of-way. So trees that are in backyards, even in alleyways or private lots are not under our jurisdiction.

We assist the City agencies and even assist homeowners with their problem in giving them our expertise. If it in fact is a City-owned lot, we'll work with the Department of Licenses and Inspections in removing that tree generally. They have contractual services available to them to do that if it's deemed to be a dangerous condition and the tree should be removed.

But our -- given our resources and the need and the concern for the street trees, we maintain our responsibilities within the public right-of-way.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Do you replant? I have a constituent right now who took a tree down, and she wants another tree in front of her house.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Will you replant?

DIR. MIFFLIN: We will. Planting is

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part of our capital project initiative.

We'll inspect the location, and that location will be placed on a list for future tree planning. It is a function of the -- actually, tree planning can be both Operating and Capital, and would be done through that program.

There is a waiting list. It's not something that we can do immediately, unfortunately, and it may take as long as two to three years, at the longest, to get a tree planted in a requested location.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay, I think I have two more questions. One is about the rowing program.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Just a general question. Are Philadelphia residents only allowed to come to these various programs and day camps and all those things, or is residency not a requirement?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Residency is not a requirement. The majority of our campers are Philadelphia residents.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. How many

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of the campers -- now, this is only a summer program, the rowing program?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Yes, ma'am. At the present time, it is.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. And what percentage comes from outside of Philadelphia versus those in Philadelphia, do you know? And how do you advertise and publicize the camp?

DIR. MIFFLIN: That particular camp -- and I'm going to do this from my own sort of personal observation. It's largely a majority of Philadelphia residents.

Our approach was to go into the, you know, inner-city and expose the sport of rowing to children in Philadelphia. So I know the majority are Philadelphia residents.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Those children come from City-wide? When I was a child, if we went to a camp that Fairmount Park ran, there were buses that would pick you up at designated recreation centers or whatnot. Are they doing that with that camp too?

DIR. MIFFLIN: We ask -- although we ask the children to get to the Gustine Recreation

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Center, which is in the East Falls section. And from there, we take them down to the river.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: One more question basically about the restoration and construction activities that you'll be involved in.

Originally when I reading it, I thought the same thing Councilman Nutter thought, that maybe the park rangers could be funded under some of this extra new help.

Will any of the restoration or construction projects be done in-house, or will you be contracting this work out to competitive bidders?

DIR. MIFFLIN: It will be a combination. It will be a combination of outside contractors doing the major heavy renovation work, and it will then be maintained by in-house staff as well as volunteers. The project, of the 26 million, roughly 15 million will go towards natural lands restoration.

And probably the biggest problem that we have in our natural lands area is uncontrolled storm water, and it's really scoured the hillsides

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from development and road construction and just years of really uncontrolled runoff.

And so we have to fix what's really broken first. And that will require some heavy equipment and contractual services.

But then once we fix the basic path or the hillside, the reforestation project, and we've completed one in the Wissahickon, can be a joint effort with the schools, universities, with volunteer groups and with Park staff.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. How many new staff people will you be hiring? And when?

DIR. MIFFLIN: How many staff people?

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: New staff people for the construction project? How many new people staff will you be hiring?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Well, we have hired five new employees as part of the grant, and they're sort of the core team As we move into the restoration projects, we'll be hiring five full-time and two part-time for each of our five districts as volunteer coordinators and trail coordinators.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Will these be

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civil service? Or what will be the hiring process?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Presently, they're not civil service. They're what we call "grant employees." We are looking at the opportunity to phase them into the Park system over the next five years.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. I'd like to get information on the types of people you're looking for in order to do some referrals.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Sure, I'd be happy to give you that information.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you, Madame Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you. Councilman Nutter, do you care to be recognized?

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Yes, very briefly, Madame Chair.

Mr. Mifflin, I've read different things over time about the Fairmount Water Works. Could you tell me in 15 words or less what the project is?

DIR. MIFFLIN: No. Okay, I'll make it 14.

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COUNCILMAN NUTTER: At least he's honest.

DIR. MIFFLIN: It's a restoration project of the Historic Water Works that shares a combination of funding from the City and State which will do the Engine House, which is the largest building on the southern terminus of the footprint. Eighteen months from now, it will be completely restored, and it will be prepared if we are successful in bringing a restaurant operator to the facility.

In addition, both the William Penn Foundation and the Pew Charitable Trusts have indicated their interest in funding improvements to the remainder of the exterior of the facility.

We'll improve the balustrades, replace the balustrades, we'll put new -- we'll improve the Greek Pavilion and the other two structures, the caretaker and the watering committee buildings on the decks. The decks will be fully restored for seasonal activities.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. You were right, you couldn't do it in 15 words.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Didn't think so.

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Something.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Lastly, Madame Chair, I think it's important to note for the record that in our excitement about the current fiscal year funding of $1 million in the street tree area which will be spent in the last half of FY '98, I think it's important to note that there is $1 million scheduled for FY '99, the entire fiscal year.

And so in the first year after the start of funding for street tree maintenance, there is already a cut in what the Park will be able to do, going from a million and a half of a fiscal year to a million for a full fiscal year.

And I think it should be noted for the record that we will not be happy about that. That was not the nature of the discussions that we had last year on this topic. And we will revisit this issue. But we look forward to the work being done in this fiscal year.

Thank you, Mr. Mifflin.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you. The Chair recognizes Councilman Mariano.

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COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Thank you, Madame Chairperson.

How you doing?

DIR. MIFFLIN: Hi, Councilman.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: All right. How we making out with my golf courses? Are we still hiring contractors or are we destroying the prevailing rates?

I mean, you and I have been over this.

DIR. MIFFLIN: No, we're not.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: For the record, we're not hiring any -- I don't want to say "nonunion" or "scab," 'cause that wouldn't sound right, but any contractors that don't work with the prevailing rate.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Certainly none that I'm aware of, no.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: How's the Golf Corp. Company doing? Ya know, that's one of my pet peeves.

DIR. MIFFLIN: We are in the final stages of negotiation of an assignment, and Golf Corp. wants to leave the City, and we'd like to make sure --

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COUNCILMAN MARIANO: No, we had Golf Corp., but were they tied up for like 25 or 20 years?

DIR. MIFFLIN: I'm sorry, what --

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: What was the length of the original contracts?

DIR. MIFFLIN: 25, mm-hmm.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: So how long are we into that?

DIR. MIFFLIN: About halfway.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: So we're like 12 years into a 25-year contract, and we're going to let them out of the contract because they're -- why? They're not making money or they're not happy here?

DIR. MIFFLIN: They wish to be. First they approached us to see if we would agree to an assignment. And as we look at what the new company is suggesting, we think it's a benefit to us.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: I don't mean to beat you up, Bill, but we've been through this with these companies, and you've been fair, you've been more than fair. I think maybe some of the

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people on your -- under you, whoever picked certain people along this process and the process that you know I'm alluding up at Juniata, which was a great embarrassment to me, being my history in the building trades.

I just think they got to think, when they're doing certain projects in certain people's areas, they got to understand what it means. Everything has a ripple effect when you're a District Councilman.

It's like being a marine in Okinawa, you're the first one off the amphibious landing vehicle and you're the first one getting shot at, and you're the last one that gets removed from the beach if you get killed or wounded. I mean, that's basically where we're at with Juniata.

I mean, I hear from the people, I hear from the tradesmen, and I hear from the golfers. I'm sure you hear the same thing.

DIR. MIFFLIN: And I do, as well, yeah.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Okay.

DIR. MIFFLIN: We will not have a recurrence of that.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: All right, thank

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you.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Sure.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Thanks a lot.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Nutter.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Will Councilman Mariano submit to questioning?

I just wondered, because your great interest in the golf situation, what is your handicap these days?

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: I'm not allowed to golf. Because if I did, Councilman DiCicco would get jealous. Everything I do, he has to do. I don't understand it, Councilman.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Oh, okay, all right.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: You'll just have to ask Councilman Mariano, and he just went downstairs for a sandwich.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, I was just wondering.

COUNCILMAN MARIANO: Thank you. Thank you, Madame Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Are there any

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other questions or comments of the Fairmount Park Commission?

(No further questions or comments for the Fairmount Park Commission.)

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you very much.

DIR. MIFFLIN: Thank you.

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COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Next is the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

(Members of Philadelphia Museum Art panel come forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Good afternoon. Please identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MS. D'HARNONCOURT: I'm Anne D'Harnoncourt.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Excuse me, would you mind pulling the microphone closer to you so that the stenographer can hear you.

MS. D'HARNONCOURT: Sure, absolutely.

I'm Anne D'Harnoncourt, Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. And I am delighted to have the

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opportunity to appear before City Council and testify on behalf of the Museum and its request for 2.25 million in operating support for Fiscal Year 1999.

With me today are Gail Harrity, our Chief Operating Officer, who joined the Museum last year, about a month ago this time, and who is part of a wonderful new team. But the new team includes also some venerable members who you have seen before at this Council meeting.

And on my immediate right is Cheryl McClenney-Brooker Vice President for External Affairs. And to her immediate right is Robert Morrone, Vice President for Operations.

I should also say that I will not take the time to go over much of our written testimony; you already have it in your hands. But this has been a major year of change for the Museum in that we lost our Chairman of the Board for the last eight years Phillip I. Berman, who was a valiant and energetic and enthusiastic supporter of all the arts in Pennsylvania, and most particularly of the Museum, who passed away on Thanksgiving eve.

And much as we mourn his departure, we

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were also, I think, extraordinarily fortunate to have on the board a veteran of the Museum's trustees, Raymond G. Perleman, who is a Philadelphia resident, who has taken on the leadership of Chairman of the Board with great alacrity and enthusiasm.

If I may, I will just summarize a few of the most important points in our testimony, beginning with the fact that it's very hard to believe for me, since the building looks ageless, that the building on the Parkway is just about to be -- sorry if I'm making booming noises -- 80 years old, and -- 70 years old. I'm corrected by the Chief Operating Officer who has her facts correct. It was open to the public in 1928, and it will have had its doors open for seven years as of this coming March.

It will also be the Museum's 125th anniversary in the year 2001. We will be 125 in the same year that the United States will be 225 years old, and we have that reflected glory because we're a part of Philadelphia. And Philadelphia, of course, was where this country was born. And our museum, as you all know, was

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born out of the Centennial Fair in 1876.

As we plan for this anniversary, it's fair to summarize the twin goals of the Museum: to maximize our service to the citizens of Philadelphia, citizens of all ages, I particularly emphasize; and to maximize the reach of our exhibits and programs to potential visitors around the world.

I think for art museums across the country in this day and age, our two mantras, if you will, are education and cultural tourism. And in education, I would just like to say, which we say in the report, but I'd like to emphasize again, that everything we know about how young people learn and particularly about how very young children learn has to do with their -- where their early exposure to the visual arts and to their -- it makes an enormous difference not only in their, obviously, their education in the arts themselves, which is so much a part of our life in society; but also in their ability to learn and understand other major fields.

To my delight -- you would think as an Art Museum director, I would have known it all my

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life, but I did not -- young children introduced to the arts in their early ages are better at math, better at history. It provides a kind of language and a way of talking about things that they perceive.

That for young children particularly with language difficulties, with disabilities of any kind, even with deprivation in their own educational circumstances, it is a way in to learning. And we at the Museum are dedicated to work with the School District of Philadelphia in order to maximize that potential.

Cultural tourism is the other very important side of what we're about. I think that we might all agree that one of the great as yet still unrealized potentials of the City of Philadelphia, the Philadelphia region, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is its great and rich diversity of cultural resources.

And we are committed to working with as many partners as we can find in this enterprise to bring those resources to the attention, first of all, to all of the citizens of this region; and beyond that, to the citizens of the world.

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And I should say that our partnerships are first and foremost with the City itself, with the Convention and Visitors Bureau, with the School District of Philadelphia, with the Department of Recreation.

You heard something about the Mural Arts Program. We're very proud to have some role to help in that.

We've also been very active on both a community level and on a broad level with small and large cultural institutions in the City from the Taller Puertorriqueno to Point Breeze Performing Art Center, and the Norris Square Neighborhood Project, as well as many of the large institutions in the City.

One of the most important facts that I can't help reiterating is that in calendar year 1997, we welcomed about 800,000 visitors to the Museum. That was a year with wonderful programs, but not with the Cezanne exhibition, not with something that was so extraordinarily well-funded and promoted to reach visitors from all over the year, but the base level of the Museum's attendance in a good year, therefore, has risen by

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33 percent over the years before Cezanne and before the serious of great exhibitions immediately preceding it.

This is a source of huge prides to us, but it only sets the goal higher. We would like to reach a million visitors in a normal year by the time we hit our 125th anniversary. And we are exploring every way in which we can increase not only our visitorship but repeat visitorship and our use in every way, by every member of the community.

We're working with new technologies, we're working with the Free Library to be part of their network. We've got a web site, which has now approximately 40,000 visitors a month. There will be a lot more very soon. And we created our first interactive CD-ROM.

What we most of all want to is reach everybody that we can with what our great collection gives us the potential, which is to effect, deepen, and enrich everybody's lives.

As you all know, the Museum itself is a not-for-profit Pennsylvania corporation, which operates the Museum facilities. And you've just

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heard that our building itself is about to be 70 years old under a written contract.

And you're also aware that the support for Fiscal Year 1998 of $2.25 million covers less than half of the cost of providing the janitorial and electrical and security and mechanical services to the Museum's main building, the Rodin Museum, and the two historic houses in Fairmount Park.

We are dedicated to increasing our reach in every way. I should just make a quick note of three of the exhibitions which will be coming up very soon in our current year. A marvelous exhibition of self-taught artists in America, ranging from Grandma Moses and Horace Pippin to the present, surveying a field which is just becoming as visible as it deserves to be, and which I think it's actually created one of the participants in the exhibition is a scholar in Moore College of Art in Philadelphia.

A counterpoint to that very large and exuberant exhibition will be a tiny exhibition focussed on our treasure by Jan Van Eyck, a 500-year-old painter, as it were, from the 15th

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century, whose works are among the most precious in the world, and which we will bring together with several other works from around the world to focus on his extraordinary talent.

And, finally, a major exhibition, the most important one arguably since the Cezanne show, which will celebrate the 200th birthday of the great French painter, Eugene Delacroix, who was, among other things, one of the great inspirations of Cezanne. The Museum will be the only venue in the U.S. for this sure show, and we do anticipate a really very a substantial audience and a substantial increase on our operating costs.

In closing, I can only just say again that it is our ambition to play an even more vital role in the arts education of our young in the lives of all the citizens of Philadelphia. And we're deeply grateful to the Members of City Council and the Administration for their support in helping us do that and in strengthening our collaborations which build on the cultural resources of this great City.

Thank you.

(Councilwoman Clark takes over the

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Chair.)

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Thank you, Miss D'Harnoncourt.

Mr. Nutter, your light is flashing. Would you like to be called on later?

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Good afternoon. I'm sorry, I was out of my seat.

First, Miss D'Harnoncourt, I wrote to you some time ago and you did respond, but I thought it important to still raise the issue.

With your great success at the Art Museum, whether pre-Cezanne or post-, there increasingly seems to be, I guess, a concern about parking at the Art Museum.

And I just wondered -- and your reaction tells me that this may be an answer that requires more than 15 words. So you can write back to us.

But are there plans to try to address the parking situation at the Art Museum? And especially, I guess, now in the context of reopening of Fairmount Water Works, other activities that take place on the Parkway, as well as Kelly Drive and West River Drive, and various

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closings that take place, and you're trying to get up over a million visitors a year. And, at times, the Art Museum seems to be at ground zero.

Are there any plans that we might anticipate to deal with parking out at the Art Museum?

MS. D'HARNONCOURT: Councilman Nutter, I thank you for your question. It's one that concerns us virtually every day of the week.

I would say there are no immediate solutions at hand, but there are a lot of people thinking hard about the problem.

Fairmount Park itself, as you say, there are a lot of new or newly-refurbished facilities in the Park, which make it an evermore attractive destination.

The Museum itself, I think our surrounding podium has something like parking for about 300 people. And on a good Sunday, we get 6,000 people, 7,000 in the door.

There is obviously additional parking around the Museum, but it's clearly not enough. However, this is -- I think the issue has gained the attention clearly of some of the people who

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write letters to you and to me. I will say we have received several as well.

It is an issue we care about enormously because the Museum's accessibility in every way, on foot, by public transportation, by automobile, any other way anybody could get to the institution is of enormous importance to us.

So there is no immediate solution in sight, but I think that we will doubtless be coming to this Council, perhaps to the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania with some requests, probably joint with other Parkway institutions and with the Park for some amelioration of this situation.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay, thank you.

That's all I have, Madame Chair.

(Councilwoman Verna takes over the Chair.)

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Are there any other questions?

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Clark.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Madame Chair, it is my pleasure to represent City Council as a

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member of the Board of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. And so in my capacity as both a Board Member and as a Member of Council, I'm interested in reporting on the progress that the Museum has had.

Specifically, Miss D'Harnoncourt, could we just talk a little more about the parking situation that my colleague Mr. Nutter raises. That parking that's at the foot of the Art Museum, is that Aikens Oval?

MS. D'HARNONCOURT: That's correct.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: How do people get from there to the building?

MS. D'HARNONCOURT: Oh, Councilwoman Clark, you've put your finger on a -- they walk. And they can walk against --

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: You mean up those little cathedral steps that I talk about all the time?

MS. D'HARNONCOURT: They have -- they have the choice. They have the cathedral steps, or they could go around the side and walk up a much more gradual slope, but it isn't easy.

And I will say, if I was permitted to dream, one of the dreams that I would have is a

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little shuttle bus.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: A little van, a little shuttle.

MS. D'HARNONCOURT: A little van going between wherever our off-site parking is. And Aikens Oval, it should be said, is by no means sufficient on a very crowded day to --

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Well, let's just spread this out just a little bit.

MS. D'HARNONCOURT: Yeah.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Because that's not just pipe dreaming. If you use the airport and you use remote parking, you're not expected to walk from the airport; you'd never make your plane. So that there are buses that you can get on at no additional cost to yourself to come from remote parking to the terminal.

Have we explored that kind of motorized assistance to get from remote parking to get to the doors of the Art Museum? And if so, what would it cost?

MS. D'HARNONCOURT: In honesty, Councilwoman Clark, we are beginning to explore that option. In fact, there are more sites of

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off-site parking than just the Aikens Oval, so it's rather a complex network of potentials. And we are trying to look at the whole.

At the moment -- and this is only my uninformed guess, and I will give you a better response to that in a real report -- the number of parking places available and the amount that would be reasonable to charge may make it impractical to have a van to just that place. But I'm only hazarding that as a guess.

I should say that there are three SEPTA buses that go past but not up to the top of the Museum; one that goes to the top of the hill but rather inconsistently, I should say, because that bus at intervals is subject to being diminished in service. Let's put it that way.

And it is a disappointment that we've registered quite often with the Convention and Visitors Bureau, that the Philadelphia Phlash Bus, that little Phlash Bus does not go beyond Aikens Oval.

But in answer to your shuttle bus suggestion, I think that this is potentially one of the great solutions. I think it would have to

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be coupled with larger areas for parking and then publicized very well to make it economically viable.

I can't tell you what it would cost on a regular basis, but I can certainly find that out.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Well, I think it's one of the things that we might need to explore to make the Art Museum accessible. As I join a group of wheezing seniors, it is very clear that standing down at Aikens Oval and looking up there makes it totally not possible to do. And so maybe those are things that you might to consider.

Now, I had another little question. Could you tell me a little bit more about the Art Museum's web site? Is it accessible to public school classrooms? How about collaborations with Bellcore scientists and the Education Management Group using digital phone lines?

MS. D'HARNONCOURT: Councilwoman Clark, it's a great question because we have a great many things going on simultaneously right now.

We have had support from Bellcore to develop some long-distance learning experiments,

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which are very exciting, which do run over phone lines.

The web site itself, of course, is essentially accessible to anyone who has a computer with a modem and is able to go on the Internet. So within, I believe, quite a short time -- I believe the testimony of the Free Library follows ours -- but I believe that it will, therefore, be accessible to anybody in any branch of the Free Library.

The School District of Philadelphia is also extremely interested in this option. And, in fact, tomorrow afternoon, it's fair to say we're having a brainstorming session, which will -- we invited and I hope they're able to attend representatives of the School District as well as a number of area -- the state college system and a number of people who are really gifted in the field of this kind of electronic communication.

My ideal ultimately would be to have the Museum's entire collection of 300,000 works of art with images on a web site and a great deal of information to boot, which could be accessed by any school child in the Philadelphia area and

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ideally by visitors and school children and lifelong learners around the world.

But the partnerships -- if I may just extend the question a little bit -- with the School District seem to be particularly vital. It's an area they are developing and it's an area which we want to be sure that how ever we develop it, it goes hand in hand.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Right. I really commend you for the collaboration at this stage. Because if we don't, we may find out that we've just built parallel lines that will just go on forever and ever and never touch or interact with each other.

Let me speak just a little bit about money. Your request this year, $2.2 million is exactly the same as in the operating year 1997. Tell me how we're doing with that, what's going on, is it adequate? And how does it relate to our contribution to your capital programming, which I understand is about what, 57 million over six years?

MS. D'HARNONCOURT: Well, I think if I may -- I don't want to put the chicken before the

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egg, but the capital program budget does incorporate or it envisions let us say, because, of course, it's really approved year by year by this Council.

But it envisions a very substantial, and may I say, rather serious expenditure of City capital funds on the Museum's building over the next six years. In areas of fire safety, fire prevention, safety measures of all kinds, supplying new equipment to get the heat, the steam system to into the radiators in front of every single window of the Museum, and there are about 500 windows.

There are really vital programs in the Museum -- and Robert Marrone can speak to them more eloquently than I -- which are not only important to do in this elderly building at this time, but they also need the sustained funding over a period of years.

If we start one of these projects and stop it midway, we will be in big trouble and they will cost a lot more as well as interrupt really important service, so we're enormously grateful for that.

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COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: They're trying to hurry me up.

MS. D'HARNONCOURT: Yeah. In terms of the operating budget, shall I answer that, or shall I --

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Marian, do you mind?

You're briefest recitation for my edification, please.

MS. D'HARNONCOURT: The operating budget essentially has been flapped for the last two years at 2.25 as well as for this coming year.

It therefore represents a diminishing portion of the major operating expenses of keeping the building going, of security and maintenance, and it is a major cause of concern to us, particularly next fiscal year when we anticipate the Delacroix exhibition will bring additional visitors, additional attention, more pressure on all of the building systems.

It does concern us but we understand the limitations that the Council and the Administration are working with.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Well, under the

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great pressure of my colleagues, I think I will let that be my last question on the record. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you. Are there any other questions?

(No further questions at this time.)

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you all very much.

MS. D'HARNONCOURT: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: The Free Library is next.

(Members of the Free Library panel come forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Good afternoon. Please identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MR. SHELKROT: Thank you. I'm Elliot Shelkrot. I'm the President and Director of the Free Library.

With me at the podium is Helen Miller, who is our Director of Public Services for the Library; Bill Roberts, who is our Administrative Services Director; and Al Johnson, who is our Fiscal Officer.

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I do want to mention that there are several members of the Friends of the Free Library still here in the audience and also the Chair of our Board, Alec Cur cure who was elected Chair of the Board just this past June.

Rather than recite what is in the testimony that was submitted to you, I'm only going to highlight some of the items that are there.

For the next year, we're requesting a total operating budget of $38.3 million, with 31.9 coming from the City and 6.4 coming from State grant funds. And this is an increase of $1.4 million.

If approved, it will first fully fund the negotiated salary increases, it will enable us to hire 24 additional people so that we can open every branch and regional library that is now undergoing renovation. And it will allow us for the for the in many, many, many years to begin a schedule of roof maintenance at our branches, preventive maintenance, something that is especially important now since we've made so many enormous strides with the Changing Lives Campaign

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of the Free Library, that public and private partnership that's bringing all of the new technology and renovations into the branches throughout the City.

This operating budget will also allow to us continue some of the extraordinary progress that your support and the Administration's support has made possible, especially in the area of children's services.

And because 1998 marks the 100th anniversary of the Free Library's services to children, I want to focus just a few moments on some of those services now.

It is probably be a surprise to many of you, just as it was a surprise to me, to realize that when the Free Library opened 107 years ago, we did not provide library service to children. And it was in 1898 that that service was first inaugurated.

In the last three years, we have designed preschool library centers in every single one of our renovated libraries to meet the needs of our youngest children, and we now have 28 of those completely renovated libraries with the new

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technology and the new interior and the structural changes. We've created many new programs for children and youth, especially using this new technology.

And one example of that, thanks to the grant from the William Penn Foundation, is a City-wide computer training program for teenagers an young adults known as "Bytes and Bits" -- no, it's "Bits and Bytes," they keep reminding me. And it combines technology, mentoring, education, and fun. College-age field trainers go from branch to branch, teaching computer skills to high school students in every neighborhood, every neighborhood library.

In turn, these high school students working part-time teach younger children as well as older adults how to use the Library's computers and online systems. Last fall, the Bits and Bytes field trainers held a workshop at the Youth Study Center, and there they introduced some 48 teenagers to job research and computer skills that can be done at computers.

In 1999, fiscal '99, we will expand this Bits and Bytes program so that our newly

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renovated libraries will also have this program, and we will continue the program at the Youth Study Center as well.

So many others programs of ours engage children on a year-round basis. "LEAP," the after-school program is offered at more than 30 branches now. And through LEAP, thousands of youngsters get help with homework, learn study skills, and receive cultural enrichment at their local branch library.

City-wide, 42,000 youngsters participated in the summer reading program last year. And I might point out that in 1990, that figure was just 5,000 children. Last summer, we conducted more than 19 of these programs at recreation centers, Housing Authority developments and communities centers, and extended the program to include a summer reading program for high school students.

In addition to this work with children, we believe Library's contribution to economic development in the neighborhood is also growing. As example is our Workplace Career Center at the Central Library. Last year, the Workplace

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answered nearly 20,000 reference questions from people who were looking for jobs looking, looking for ways to apply for jobs, looking for how to do resumes in a more successful way.

In 1998, the Workplace sponsored its first job fair, and more than 2,000 job seekers met with potential employers at that time.

As we prepare for the 21st century, improving service to the growing number of people who need and use our libraries is absolutely our top priority. To achieve this goal, we will continue to open branches six days a week during the school year, continue to recruit volunteers. I might say that in 1999, we expect more than 1600 volunteers to contribute over 100,000 hours of time to the Library.

In closing, I want to thank you, City Council, as well as the Mayor for the outstanding support the Free Library has had over the last several years. With your help, the Library has entered the information age, making sure that we have a literate citizenry because they, indeed, become an employable citizenry.

We continue to enrich people's lives,

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to enhance their educational achievement, and promote economical development in our neighbor. And we hope with your help, we can continue this in the future.

Madame Chair, I'd be happy to answer any questions that you or other Councilpeople might have.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you. I've noticed for the last several years that the cost of books remains the same appropriation.

Can you tell me why we keep it at that level? If we're doing all the renovation of the libraries, aren't we buying new books for any of them?

MR. SHELKROT: Yes, we are. Last year, as a matter of fact -- or the year we are in, I should say, there was an increase in the amount of money that was appropriated for books if I'm not mistaken. We continue to purchase books although the costs do go up.

We have been able to use a very small increase that we've received in State grant money to increase that so that our target is to keep at least to keep 12 percent of our operating budget

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focussed on books and materials that we circulate. And thus far, we've been able to hang in there and do exactly that.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: So you think it's ample?

MR. SHELKROT: What's that?

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Do you think it's ample.

MR. SHELKROT: I believe that our book budget is ample, yes, I do.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Can you explain the need for a drug-screening service at the cost of $8,000? What is that; do you mind explaining?

MR. SHELKROT: Bill, you can explain that.

MR. ROBERTS: Bill Roberts from the Free Library.

That is our portion of a City-wide contract for drug-screening new employees, particularly guards and those who work with children.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you. I see that we spend approximately $200,000 a year in postage, primarily for overdue notices. On

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average, how much in overdue fines are collected each year?

MR. SHELKROT: I'm going to ask Bill to respond to the specific amount that we receive. I would think it's important to know that the overdue notices -- we do collect fine money. The most important thing for us is that we receive the books back because the books are so valuable.

Bill what is the figure on the money we receive?

MR. ROBERTS: The Library receives almost $400,000 in overdue fines of which 277 is remitted back to the General Fund.

The collections have been off a bit because of all the branches being closed for renovation.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you. The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Fernandez.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Good afternoon -- going toward evening. You mentioned in your testimony the ways you really try to help the libraries be rich not only with books but also be a place where people

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can use computer technology to access information.

And I know when I went to see the opening of the Lehigh Library, which was beautiful, you had -- I think it was in the children's area, but there might have been an adult area right next to it where you had the terminals. And I know they were somewhere at a lower level so that the children could sit right down and use the computers.

What would happen with a parent who might come in or, let's say, a grandfather who might come in with a child, and what would happen if they didn't know how to use a computer?

MR. SHELKROT: Well, the Bits and Bytes staff that I mentioned to you earlier, the teenagers that are working after school sometimes in the evening, are there to help adults and kids as well as our own staff who are trained at that.

The interesting thing is often what happens is the youngster, even the preschooler, knows exactly how to do it shows the grandparent or the adult how the computer works. But when that isn't possible, and of course, the first

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learning that takes place, often our staff are involved in helping.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: My second question is everyone concerned about all the changes with the welfare changes and so many people needing to find a way into the job market.

Have the libraries been able to collaborate with any other groups to help people get the information and resources and contacts they may need to find their way into the job market?

MR. SHELKROT: Well, in addition to the program that I mentioned earlier, our Job Center. We've been working with --

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: That's only downtown, right?

MR. SHELKROT: That's right. We've been working closely with Donna Cooper, who's designated by the Mayor as the person to work on various Welfare-to-Work programs. We've submitted a variety of job opportunities that we hope will be part of that.

Certainly our after-school program is one that is designed to help to work with

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youngsters who are -- who have no place to go after school, have an empty home. And we hope to be able to expand that program.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: You mean the LEAP?

MR. SHELKROT: That's right, the LEAP Program.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Thank you, Madame Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Clark.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Thank you Madame, Chair. As an old librarian, I never pass up an opportunity to --

MR. SHELKROT: A former librarian.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: As a former librarian of many years, my very first branch was the Lehigh Avenue branch. And I'm very happy that all of the branches are open a minimum of six days a week. Can you tell us the steps you went through to attract the level of volunteerism that permits us to have all of the branches open a minimum of six days with, what, regional and

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central open seven?

MR. SHELKROT: That's correct.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: You must be a national model, and I would guess that there are lessons learned that would be useful to other systems who need to get to where we are. Can you tell us some of the secrets?

MR. SHELKROT: There is no single secret, and there is certainly no easy way that that has come about.

I'm delighted that we have been able to attract so many people. The use of volunteers has enabled us, as you pointed out, to open our libraries six days a week, not just with the volunteers but has enabled us to spread the staff out further because we can't just have volunteers running libraries.

I will say that the Friends of the Library have been extraordinarily helpful and represent a large pool of people who have cared for many, many years about the Library and, therefore, are people who are kind of a pool, you might say, of folks you can -- who are willing to contribute their time.

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I also want to say that the staff of the Library, after being somewhat concerned about how effective volunteers would be, have grown to appreciate volunteers and treat them as colleagues in providing services to youngsters.

That number, that 42,000 -- and I hope sometime not too long 50,000 youngsters in our summer reading program could not be done with just paid staff. We could never hire enough people to respond to the youngsters and to listen to them describe what they read and the stories that they read. So that too is an area where volunteers have enabled to us expand the program.

But I think that the Friends are probably the single most important group as we've been able to expand that.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Thank you. In your testimony, you mentioned that there's going to be approximately 24 new staff members in the budget.

MR. SHELKROT: That's correct.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: How many of those hires will be librarians?

MR. SHELKROT: I believe that that

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number is eight librarians at different levels of responsibility. And I believe there is, let's see, a number of library assistants, about twelve library assistants, and two guards.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Okay. You're short.

MR. SHELKROT: Am I short?

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Well, you have 8, 12, and 2.

MR. SHELKROT: Well, that sounds like 22. It's four municipal guards, sorry, sorry about that.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Okay. With all the technology in the branches, what is going on in Central, technology-wise?

MR. SHELKROT: That's a very good question. And the program that we call the "Changing Lives Program" has been designed to bring technology and renovation to every one of the branches.

We decide that had that's where we needed to start. That's where we needed to put this public-private partnership together. We.

Are looking to the Central Library. We

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are beginning to put in a small way some of the computers and the technology in there. Some of money in the capital budget will be going to that.

But most of all, we're engaged with the Board in a major planning effort to look to the future of the Central Library. It was built at a time when the technology certainly wasn't dreamed of as we know it today; nor, as a matter of fact, was the state of publishing.

The building was built in the twenties, it was designed in the latter part of the 19th century, when the number of books and magazines published every year was something like, you know, 3,000 different titles. And now, of course, it's 30 and 40,000 different titles. But the technology is something we're working on slowly and, above all, are putting some plans together so that we can manage that on a in a broader scale sometime in the future.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Miss Tasco left a question for you. She says, "The renovations and technology in branches paid for with public and private dollars is adding computers and web access

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to children and families. How will the Free Library continue to keep these systems up and running as technology continues to evolve?"

MR. SHELKROT: That is a challenge that we are considering. We estimate that it will cost us close to $3 million a year just to sustain the technology in all the branches as it's been put into place.

I'm very optimistic and am working very hard with the State as well as the federal government. On the federal government, you may be familiar with what is called the "E Rate," the education rate, which will allow for lower costs for technology -- lower costs for the transmission, I should say, telecommunications costs, and we hope that we -- we expect to be part of that, which will help a little bit.

You also may recall seeing in the newspapers starting with a series last June in The Inquirer about the state of libraries across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the funding problems that they are all facing.

I've been asked to be on a task force looking at some of the legislation that's been

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proposed to deal with that, and I am hoping that sometime within the next two years, there will be a change in the State Aid to Public Libraries Program that will allow us to absorb those incremental costs.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Thank you. One last question, Madame Chair.

Are there currently any programs not in effect that you believe would further serve the educational needs of our children for economic development and the goals of the City? What are we presently not doing that, in a perfect world, you would choose to do?

MR. SHELKROT: In a perfect world -- and the world's never perfect, I believe that the -- if, in the State funding area, which I anticipate will improve significantly not just to cover the technology but perhaps some of these other areas, I would anticipate the next step for us would be to make sure that our libraries are not just open three nights a week; they're open four nights a week at least. That we move to having our branches open in the summer on Saturdays as well as during the school year.

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But more than that, I would envision a staff that can go out to the various day care centers, that can go out to the housing developments, that can go out to the recreation centers, and create Library programs in those locations so that we could then enrich all of the programs, especially the day care and the preschool programs, in a way that would bring books and quality preliteracy programs into those areas.

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: Are there any underserved areas of the City which, in the old days we used to meet their needs with book mobiles? Do we have a way to go into underserved areas now? And are we doing so?

MR. SHELKROT: Well, we don't have book mobiles, as you point out.

Interestingly enough, one of the largest underserved populations of the City is that area which is the area of Center City east of Broad and between Girard Avenue and Carpenter. There's a large population there. And we have no library service in that area.

We do have -- we are able from time to

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time to go to the housing developments and to the homeless shelters. But at this time, with today's economy and the problems of vehicles, I don't see us recreating a book mobile service as much as utilizing our staff to take books and materials into the other locations so that youngsters and families can have them on a permanent basis.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Can I follow on that, Madame Chair?

COUNCILWOMAN CLARK: I yield back the rest of my time.

COUNCILWOMAN FERNANDEZ: Thinking back to the coordination would be using school libraries which, again, I think are very underutilized in a lot of neighborhood because the schools aren't open in some cases more than the school hours, certainly on weekends, and not that many elementary schools are open in the afternoons and evenings, so that might be a structure that you could use where we don't want to invest in capital for new capital for libraries.

I would love to see a much closer connection between school libraries and the public libraries.

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The other place would be -- you were mentioning reaching out as part of the Philadelphia Reads are ways to really reach out to young children. I know in Boston in the waiting rooms of doctors' offices and hospitals, they have a book-rich waiting room environment. And then the physician at Boston City Hospital and some of the others, the physician gives each child a book for each of their checkups. And it's gotten so kids are really just eager to have the doctor give them a book.

So as we're thinking about how to reach this goal of having every child on grade level and able to read by the third grade, that may be something where the Library could find some way to take initiative and work with doctors and hospitals to create that book-rich environment.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Nutter.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Mr. Shelkrot, I have one major issue which is a follow-up to a discussion that took place on the record, I believe, either last week

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or the week before during capital budget.

There was eloquent testimony presented regarding the need for gap funding for the renovation project of approximately $900,000. I believe the Mayor's Chief of Staff or Mr. Kaplan, who is here, took back a message both from many of the Members, including the Council President, that the Council wanted to see that funding put in place so that there was no question about the renovation project.

There was testimony presented that indicated that there would be a meeting soon between, I guess, yourself and the Mayor, to try to get to the heart of this and get this matter resolved.

Can you give us an update as to what's going on with that.

MR. SHELKROT: Yes. Councilman, that meeting has been set up. That meeting is set up for Monday, a week from today. And it's my understanding -- well, the meeting's with the Mayor, the Budget Director, and the Chief of Staff.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay, okay. Would

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you be in a position or should we expect that some representative from the Mayor's Office will come back during the course of the budget process to let us know what has come out of that meeting?

MR. SHELKROT: I'm sure that either the Budget Office or the Chief of Staff will get back to you in response to that question.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay. Lastly, is the Library system the recipient of a Dewitt Wallace Foundation grant?

MR. SHELKROT: We are part of that. Helen, could you respond?

MS. MILLER: I'm Helen Miller, Director of Public Services for the Library.

We do have a Dewitt Wallace grant at the Northwest Regional Library that's working with adult basic education students through a poetry program.

That has been extremely successful. It's been going on now for about a year. And all I can tell you is that it's been enjoyed but lots of students who have stuck with the program and have developed an appreciation for poetry, in addition to skills that they need for their adult

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basic education diploma.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: And that's a program operating out of the Northwest Regional Library.

MS. MILLER: The Northwest Regional Library, that's correct. It was relocated, while the Regional was closed, to one of our other Northwest branches.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Right. Do you anticipate any expansion of that program?

MS. MILLER: I really don't know. It has been very poplar. It depends on whether or not, you know, there would be some additional funding to keep it going.

COUNCILMAN NUTTER: Okay, great, thank you.

Thank you, Madame chair.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Miller.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you, Madame Chair.

Good afternoon. On page 8 of your testimony, you talk about the Library's participation with other organizations and

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representatives from the four surrounding counties on the Career Development Marketplace One-Stop Shop.

MR. SHELKROT: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Well, I guess I just wanted to know, what is this one-stop shop, how is different from the one they already have in the job centers, and is something going to be coordinated?

'Cause, see, the job centers supposedly have this concept that Harris Wofford put forward when he was Secretary of Labor and Industry. They had a one-stop shop job center where people could go and access jobs Statewide with the computer system. How is this different if it's any different? Or don't they have their anymore?

MR. SHELKROT: My understanding -- and perhaps Miss Miller could provide a little more information, but my understanding is what we have been asked to do is to support that program to be part of it, to feed it with the people who are coming to us. We provide certain kinds of information, but we would be working closely with

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them. That program does exist and it is to expand that network is what the proposal is about.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. Will you be having any on-site training for people? For instance, maybe someone needs some computer literacy. Other than the children, what about the adults? Is there anything like that that will be happening at the Library?

MR. SHELKROT: We have in many of our libraries adult literacy programs and GED programs. We don't, you know, operate the program itself. Often it's the Center for Literacy or the School District or another agency that actually does the training, but we provide the space and the environment, which we think is an enriching environment for that kind of program.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. And, lastly, I just want to thank you for the time and the number of years you've spent doing the Ogontz branch, which is very beautiful, and look forward to the official reopening of the Northwest Regional and any others in our district. Thank you.

MR. SHELKROT: We're hoping to have the

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official reopening of Northwest Regional in April. But, as you know by your comment, it is open for service now, and it is quite a beautiful place.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay, thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you. Are there any other questions or comments?

(No further questions at this time.)

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you very much.

MR. SHELKROT: Thank you, Madame Chair.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you.

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COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: The Historical Commission is next.

(Richard Tyler of the Historical Commission come forward.)

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you so much for your patience. It's been a long day.

MR. TYLER: Good afternoon. My name is Richard Tyler, Historic Preservation Officer for the Historical Commission.

The proposed budget requests $253,842. This increase of $5,667 results from a negotiated

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agreement between the City and District Council 47.

The budget will fund a staff of five. With that budget and staff, the Commission can reasonably expect to meet its major obligations of designation, permit review, and the conduct of the federally-mandated Historic Resource Assessments.

If there are any questions, I'd be glad to try to answer them.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Mr. Tyler, I know it's been a number of years that the State has been waiting for the area to be classified as an historic district. And I know that you have not had ample personnel to deal with that.

Does this budget deal with the help that you need?

MR. TYLER: Yes. And, in fact, I think you're aware of some of the personnel backgrounds, Councilwoman. Tuesday of last week, a new person started to work.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Amen.

MR. TYLER: Amen.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: So hopefully, Girard will be --

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MR. TYLER: It will be sometime next year.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Next year?

MR. TYLER: Yeah.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Are they still third on the list?

MR. TYLER: Yeah. Meanwhile, though, we are proceeding with the National Register Nomination for it, which is easier than a local nomination. And representatives of the community have been advised of that and seem pleased with that step forward.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Very well. Are there any questions from Members of the Committee?

(No questions at this time.)

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you. I guess we could have called you up a long time ago. Thank you for your patience.

MR. TYLER: Thank you.

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COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Atwater Kent Museum.

(Members of Atwater Kent Museum panel come forward.)

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COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Good afternoon.

MR. RASNER: Good afternoon Councilwoman. My name is David Rasner, and I am President of the Board of Trustees of the Atwater Kent Museum. To my right joining me is Nancy Moses, our Executive Director.

I am pleased to present the testimony in support of the proposed Fiscal Year 1999 operating budget of $200,000 and the capital budget of $1 million. I believe that you have our report before you.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Yes, we do.

MR. RASNER: It's been a long day so I won't take up a whole lot of time, just a few minutes and a few highlights.

As you may know, the Atwater Kent Museum was founded 60 years ago City Department 18. I think we have the distinction of being the only City Department per se, and we function within the Recreation Department, just so you know.

We are the official Museum of the City of Philadelphia. Since our establishment 60 years ago, we have protected the City's precious

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historic treasures, interpreted its heritage, and educated generations of children and adults.

Before detailing the Museum's objectives for this fiscal year, it's important to provide some background on why the Museum's budget has been reduced by 40 percent, from approximately $330,000 in FY '99, to $200,000 in FY '99. And with a decrease in budgeted positions from about eight members down to five members.

When the Rendell Administration entered its first term, it called for ending in '97, Fiscal Year '97, the City subsidy that had covered virtually all of Atwater Kent Museum's operating costs for its entire history.

I was placed on the Board, by the way, by the Mayor, I'm the Mayor's appointee on the Board. So I was very appreciative that Mayor Rendell one day appointed me, and the next day cut the budget.

(Laughter.)

MR. RASNER: But in response, quite seriously, we have initiated various programs that have energized the Museum, which I think in the last five or six years have been significant.

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One of the thing which I did by becoming a Board Member, a Member of the Executive Committee -- the Museum was run by six individuals. One was selected by the Mayor, one by City Council -- that's Marian Mitchell -- and another individual by the University of Pennsylvania, another by the Franklin Institute, and one by the family.

This Museum had been used to doing business in customary ways established over the past 60 years. And it really did not look upon itself in terms of enterprising itself, in going out into the community and developing support in the community. It relied on the City funding. And we all know it's a different age today, and I think the Museum has come to recognize that.

I was unhappy when I became a trustee and helped, through various efforts, including Nancy's, to expand the Board to 27 members, with each having equal voting power. Before, it was run by 6 individuals, and now be 27.

I can say that the Mayor has energized the Board. I think by cutting back on the funding of the Museum and asking us to get our act

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together, he has caused us to come together and to think in ways that we had not thought about ourselves before.

And I think the Mayor has shown his commitment to the Board and to the Museum this year by including us in his budget. Because I think this year, we were slated not to receive any operating funds from the City. And the Mayor has seen fit to provide us with support, and we're very appreciative of that support.

Energized by the Mayor's challenge, the Board of Trustees has more than met its various goals. The last five years have seen a bold effort to transform this Museum into a vibrant institution. The achievements, like I say, are documented in the Atwater Kent Philadelphia History Museum Package Progress Report from 1993-'97, which I believe is part of your package.

We have various goals, and there are three goals that the Museum has. One is tourism, the other is education, and the other is the preservation of our City's history.

Taking the last one first. Because the goal -- the mission of the Atwater Kent Museum is

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established to preserve the significant artifacts that form a part of our history.

And I think this past year, we have all read about the problems with various museums in Philadelphia going out of business, the problems confronting HSP and other institutions in the City. And Atwater Kent has really stepped up to the plate and has accepted the challenge to become the City's treasured history museum.

With respect to education, we are working closely with the Board of Education. Local history, Philadelphia history, is now required in three grades. And through the efforts of Nancy Moses and our staff, we are working collaboratively with the City of Philadelphia in those endeavors.

With respect to tourism and increasing the outward nature of Atwater Kent, the Board has taken some great steps to revitalize itself. We commissioned this past year Leslie Gallagher Dilworth to do a long-range planning study for the Atwater Kent Museum.

As such, a number of things have happened and have basically coalesced. And as

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they say in real estate parlance, "location, location, location." And with the reconfiguration of the Independence Park where the Liberty Bell is going to be moved, we are literally at the front door of American history.

As a result, we have been working with our fine corporate neighbor Rohm and Haas and have developed a plan with them which we intend to implement shortly, which is to change the front of our museum from Seventh Street to Sixth Street and have access through their walkway and courtyard onto Independence Park. And they are cooperating with us and are helping us, and that will change accessibility and visibility to the Museum.

We are also engaged in discussions to use their south lobby building space that was once occupied by a bank at that corner; it is now vacant. And we are having discussions with them to see what kind of use we can have of that building.

As Council may know, one local museum which has gone out of business was the Norman Rockwell Museum, and we managed to acquire that collection. The Norman Rockwell Museum, I think,

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had 40,000 visitors a year, and we hope to get all of those visitors coming to the Atwater Kent Museum. We are making plans to put up some of the lithographs and other works and prints that they have to show people that we now have that collection.

Our Board, as I said a moment ago, has been energized. And as part of our long-range plan -- and by the way, we believe that we can make use of the garden behind the Museum and expand our building space, which is approximately 16,000 square feet, and build an addition to the rear of the building into the garden, and provide various amenities in that building to service the tourists, the people who come there, such as a cafe, an expanded Museum store and the like, including increased exhibit space and increased educational space for the, I think, close to 40,000 visitors from the School District, the school children that we have each year.

I think this past year, we had about 35,000 school children come to visit the Museum -- no, I'm sorry. We had 9,000 school children come to visit museum, and I think we're looking to

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10,000. We've had 35 to 40,000, all told.

And with the addition of the Norman Rockwell collection and other things, we hope to double the number of visitors that come into the Museum, plus whatever foot traffic we get by creating our entrance onto Sixth Street.

We are also grateful that the Mayor has placed us squarely in the capital budget cycle. I believe that the Mayor has pledged to a maximum of $5 million. For every dollar that we raise by funding that the City will commit dollar for dollar of the $5 million for that match.

I am pleased to say that our Board of Directors, which I said earlier, has about 27 individuals. From our Board of Trustees, we have pledges of $1.6 million just from our Trustees, which I think is an amazing vote of confidence in the future of this institution.

All of this would not have been possible but for the Mayor challenging and City Council challenging us to do our job. And we are now finally at long last doing our job and more.

And we welcome continued support from City Council, and we hope that City Council will

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see to it that the $200,000 of operating expense monies in the capital budget are approved and that we continue to do great work through those efforts.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Thank you very much.

Councilman Nutter had to leave the chamber to attend a meeting. However, he asked me to express his gratefulness for the great work that you're doing. And he also suggested that I assure you of his continued support.

MR. RASNER: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Are there any questions from Members of the Committee?

(No questions at this time.)

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: Seeing none, I think you.

MR. RASNER: I thank you very much.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: And thank you for the great work you're doing.

MR. RASNER: Thank you.

MS. MOSES: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN VERNA: The Committee of the Whole will stand in recess until 9 o'clock

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tomorrow morning. That's Tuesday, February 24, 1998, at 9:00 a.m.

(Adjourned at 4:30 p.m.)

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C E R T I F I C A T E

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing proceedings of the Council of the City of Philadelphia of Monday, February 28 1998 were reported and accurately by me, and that this is a correct transcript of same.

RE: COUNCIL COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
BUDGET HEARINGS

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JOSEPHINE CARDILLO, RPR