COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

- - -

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Monday, April 12, 2010
10:30 a.m.

- - -

PRESENT:
COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNA C. VERNA
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILMAN FRANK DiCICCO
COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.
COUNCILMAN BILL GREEN
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM GREENLEE
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA QUINONES-SANCHEZ
COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN B. TASCO

BILLS 100115, 100116, 100117, 100118, 100131
and RESOLUTION 100141

- - -

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning, everyone. This is a continued public hearing of the Committee of the Whole. The first department we will hear from today will be Parks and Recreation.

Good morning. Please approach the witness table, kindly identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

(Witnesses approached witness table.)

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Good morning, Council President Verna and members of City Council. I am Mike DiBerardinis, Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, and with me today are Susan Slawson, Recreation Commissioner, and Mark Focht, Executive Director of Fairmount Park.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning.

(Good morning.)

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: We would like to start our testimony by thanking Councilwoman Reynolds Brown and Councilman Clarke for their vision and leadership around the Parks and Recreation merger. We would also like to thank this Council for their support of the new department, and we'd also like to thank Mayor Nutter and the Commission on Parks and Recreation for their continued support, work and leadership.

I would especially like to thank our dedicated women and men from the Department. Their work every day ensures safe, clean and ready-to-use facilities throughout the City. As we plan for an exciting future, our Parks and Recreation staff continues to live up to their historical mission of quality recreation and quality parkland management.

I appear before you today to present our proposed Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2011, which includes a General Fund obligation of $49,828,904 and Grants Revenue of $10,260,164. The

Class 100 request of $39,078,562 sustains the merged departments' authorized level of 689 General Fund full-time positions. The balance of $10,750,342 is contained in Classes 200, 300, 400 and 500.

Our proposed Operating Budget for FY11 represents an increase in Class 100 of $2.6 million and Class 200 of $710,705 compared to our FY10 budget, which will go to support the operations of the Robin Hood Dell and implementation of the Department's strategic initiatives, including increased tree plantings.

The Department of Parks and Recreation is committed to supporting the Administration's goal of minority, women and disabled-owned business participation in City contracting. Based on the available contracting opportunities, the Department's FY11 participation goal is 12 percent.

With its hundreds of recreation facilities and over 11,000 acres of parkland woven throughout the City of Philadelphia, Fairmount Park and the Recreation Department are community resources that serve preschoolers to senior citizens every day and in every neighborhood.

Once Fairmount Park and the Recreation Department are merged to form the new Department of Parks and Recreation, approximately 13 percent of the land in the City of Philadelphia will fall under our care. Given this importance, the process to form the new department has been thoughtful, deliberate and, most importantly, public.

As Commissioner, I am pleased to provide you with an update on where we stand.

Since my appointment in April of 2009, thousands of individuals have been engaged in discussions about the formation of the Department, along with the development of our vision, mission, goals and strategic objectives.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

Our shared vision to become the nation's premier parks and recreation system is ambitious, and we believe that together we can achieve this goal.

Our mission to offer beautiful natural landscapes, historic resources, environmental programs, along with high-quality recreation centers and programs holds true to the guiding principles of Fairmount Park and the Recreation Department.

Our goals and strategic objectives are the measurable steps and investments we need to make in order to reach our ambitious vision.

Over the course of 17 community and partner meetings held throughout the City, many attended by City Council members and staff, in addition to staff meetings, surveys, e-mails and correspondence, we have heard a lot of excitement and support around the new department and its vision and strategic objectives.

But we have also heard that if we strive towards these lofty goals, we need to continue to focus on our day-to-day responsibilities. This includes maintaining parks and recreation facilities which are safe, clean, attractive, fully functional and accessible while caring for the environment and promoting programs for all Philadelphians.

Our FY11 budget presents not only a newly formed Department of Parks and Recreation, it also details how our new department will be in service of our mission, vision and strategic objectives and the high priority we place on maintaining a unified Parks and Recreation system that is safe, clean and ready to use for all Philadelphians.

Once adopted, the merged departmental budget will allow us to continue the implementation phase of the merger. As Commissioner, I have already announced appointments to lead positions in each one of the new department's major divisions. To further inform and guide our efforts towards integrating the new department's daily operations, we have developed an 18-month implementation plan, and this plan is already in use. The schedule will include numerous opportunities for staff, stakeholder, partnership and City Council engagement and feedback, and we look forward to sharing this proposed plan and schedule this summer.

Regarding other merger benchmarks, the map of the new department's geographic management regions has already been shared with staff, stakeholders, partners and City Council. The process of populating the new departmental organizational chart is also underway, and we expect this work to be completed over the next few months. We take this responsibility seriously and will continue to proceed with the advice of the Office of Human Resources, the

Office of Labor Relations, relevant labor organizations, our staff and our various stakeholders.

This approach and timeline towards our own merger effort has been validated and confirmed by best practices, research, discussions with merger experts and visits to other major cities, which include New York, Baltimore and Chicago.

Even as we engage in the enormous task of merging these two departments, we are able to celebrate numerous successes and accomplishments which we hope clearly show the increased value of the new department.

Building off the early success of the Mayor's Splash and Summer Fund and with the support of numerous community and business partners, the Mayor and the Department have made a commitment to our community to open all operational City pools for this summer season, and that's 69 out of 70 pools, three --

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Thank you. Three of which are either being converted to spray grounds or are just in need of significant capital investment.

The Department of Parks and Recreation is partnering with the Philadelphia Phillies and Major League Baseball to create the Philadelphia Urban Youth Academy, which is set to launch this summer. This partnership will utilize renovated fields and facilities at both Franklin Delano Roosevelt Park and Marian Anderson Recreation Center to help inner-city youth reach their fullest potential on and off the field by providing quality instruction, training and education assistance through year-round programs.

The Department has also partnered with the Ed Snider Foundation to make significant investments in each City ice rink facility. In 2010, the

Department will commit to running a seven-day-a-week operation at all our ice rinks. This represents an additional full day of public programming at all our ice rinks.

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Which is approximately a 50 percent increase in our public skate time.

In support of Greenworks Philadelphia, the Department is working collaboratively to support the very ambitious Greenworks' target of planting 300,000 new trees by 2015.

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: The Department is working closely with our longstanding partner, the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, to develop new approaches in which the City aligns and engages external partners and citizens to meet this ambitious target.

We have been actively working with the Parks and Recreation

Commission's Land Use Committee around the issue of land use and preservation. We have heard this is a priority for many people as we've had our public process, and we fully support this work. The Land Use Committee has prepared a draft of a proposed ordinance related to Parks and Recreation land and facilities use. Over this summer, the Committee will further review this draft language with the full Parks and Recreation Commission, members of the Administration and City Council.

The Department is committed to ensuring our children and youth are safe, connected to their communities and ready to learn. The Department will provide leadership in developing uniform standards and evaluation measures to increase the quality of programs, but also as a strategy for building a coherent youth development system to support, coordinate and sustain out-of-school-time programs throughout the City of Philadelphia. This proposed budget will allow the Department --

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: -- to support a wide variety of programs and initiatives, including our traditional sports and cultural programs as well as outdoor recreational activities for children, youth, teens and families.

In closing --

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: In closing, we have made tremendous progress to date, but our work is not over. We will continue to engage the community, our staff and City Council in this ongoing process.

Should any Councilmember wish to engage in further discussions around any of these matters, particularly as it relates to the merger, my staff and I are happy to meet at your convenience.

Thank you for this opportunity to discuss these important matters with you today, and we look forward to your questions.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Thank you.

(Standing ovation.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I must say you're the first Commissioner that's come before us that has gotten a standing ovation. Congratulations.

Commissioner, on Page 4 of your budget, you indicate that your Class 100 budget is increasing by $2.5 million for increased tree planting. How many employees will you be hiring?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Well, the increase will, in a significant way, support our efforts to maintain and further increase the number of trees we plant annually. Another very significant portion will also be dedicated to the Greenworks objectives and to improving our safety, cleanliness of our facilities. So it's about a 50/50 mix.

But to the detail of the question, I'll give this to Mark in terms of detail of those positions.

MR. FOCHT: Good morning.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning.

MR. FOCHT: The additional two and a half million dollars will support 43 new full-time, permanent staff positions.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: What is your planned hiring schedule for these positions?

MR. FOCHT: To date, we've not developed a hiring schedule until we are assured we have a budget and the funding is actually there, and it also works into the overall work we're doing at looking at all of our staffing and how the staff fits in with the merged Department structure.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Commissioner, how many temporary and seasonal workers will you be hiring this summer? And at the same time, I'd like to know what the hiring process will be and when it will start.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Well, I could talk about -- the number, I'm going to ask Susan to try to find the exact number, but that process has begun already. So we have to begin right now to recruit and train lifeguards for the hundreds and hundreds of jobs that -- I know this: Given our Summer Splash Fund campaign and opening 69 pools, we will hire about 800 seasonal employees just around the pool operation. So that includes lifeguards, watch people, seasonal maintenance attendants. So that number is about 800 just for the pools. I don't know about the remaining --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And the process will be the same as it has been in the past --

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS:

Yes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: -- or has that changed?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: No.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Good morning, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: That has not changed, and our approximate number of hire this summer for seasonal as well as pools is 1,700.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Point of information.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Green for a point of information.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Is the Department working with the Philadelphia Youth Network, which has a huge surplus of money, for summer hiring that it likely cannot spend and will lose this year if it's not spent in terms of having them provide employees at the pools and elsewhere rather than using Class 100 funds?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Good morning, Councilman.

The Department is working with Work Ready to use some of their staff that they've been giving the Department of Recreation for years to work in our facilities.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Right. But they have a large additional funding. Can we use that to hire this summer --

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: We are working with them now to see how much additional staff we can get. That number hasn't been finalized yet, but we are trying to get additional staff.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And that should save us Class 100 funding; is that correct?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Well, you want to --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Why can't we

get them to hire the people that we would otherwise pay?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: We could, depending on how many positions we eventually get and then do we stay flat with the decreased services that we're providing over the last few years at our summer camps or -- we can stay flat or we can increase the number of camps and the number of children we support.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Absolutely. And you could increase and get some supplantation of our Class 100 funding, because they have money they're not going to be able to spend. It has to be spent.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: That's a possibility. We are working with them over the last couple of weeks where we've understood they have this -- I'm not quite sure how that works from their side, although they have indicated that they have additional money. We're trying to figure out how much of that will we get, how will we utilize it and what the positive impact that will be.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I just want us to be asking as part of that how much we can get for what we are otherwise paying Class 100.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: You got it.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Even with increased services.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Commissioner, on Page 2 of your testimony, it states, quote, "The high priority we place on maintaining a unified Parks and Recreation system which is safe, clean and ready to use for all Philadelphians," end of quote.

Does your proposed 2011 budget allow you to meet this objective?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Well, in part, yes, and I will talk a little bit about that. What has been a significant development has been the $5 million increase in the capital budget, which we've worked very well with all the District Councilpeople to leverage the City's investment. So that $5 million investment that we have had in the Department, working with Council's capital dollars, is about -- and outside investment is about $12 million. So we have this year moving forward $12 million in capital money, which is a significant increase towards the infrastructure of our system, and these dollars are, to the best that we can, are targeted towards safe and ready to use.

The additional operating dollars helps us move toward standards, and I think this is a really important feature of the merger, that a lot of the big cities have a set of operational standards around the cleanliness and fully functional -- meeting fully functional operations. So we're in the process in the merger of creating those standards, and New York City is kind of the model for this, and then managing our resources towards that standard.

Once we create the standard, I suspect that there'll be a gap between what the standards are and how much money we have, but if you don't have the standards, you're never going to get there and you'll never have a way to judge the quality of your workforce, the use of public dollars and you won't have as many non-governmental investors, whether they're institutions, corporations, state government, investing in you.

So I think it's to our benefit to create those standards and then to begin to use our existing dollars to move towards them and to show progress. I think we have to show progress in the next year or two around those standards. So it's ambitious. I suspect in the end we won't have everything we need, but we can make a good stab at it.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank

you.

Can you tell us why it will take 18 months to develop a merger plan for the Recreation Department and the Fairmount Park?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Well, the plan is all but complete, and we're moving into the early implementation phases, but until we have an operating budget that is combined, it's a little hard to do. But we're still moving in the implementation phase.

So we have our top management in place. We have our flowchart developed. We're now -- we're developing the details of the flowchart, each position, and then we will place people in those positions. And then as of July 1st, we will begin to over this year really do the knitting to get this as a -- to build us as a unified department, unified management districts, unified maintenance, operations, physically as well as structurally, and a unified program division that will merge the hefty program division in the Recreation Department and the smaller program elements of the Park together.

You know, Madam President, we studied mergers, public and private mergers, and we're actually moving faster than most big organizations. We know we have to get most of this done within the year. I mean, to have all the nuts and bolts done, and we think we will. But we will have the structure in place, our top structure in place, and then move all the moving parts within the combined budget beginning July 1st.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Can you tell us what savings and efficiencies you will achieve in FY2011 as a result of the merger?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Well, that's a good question. We are looking at those efficiencies right now, and, in fact, we're holding off on a few hires that we might have made because we think we'll have duplicative functions when we begin to move in the near future some of the divisions together. So there's actually a couple of positions.

So we're looking at where those efficiencies might be as we build this new -- populate this new flowchart. So we think we'll begin to see those efficiencies in the next quarter.

The other -- I'm reviewing every hire based on its relationship to our new flowchart. So we're just not going to hire a position because it's been a position in either one or the other departments. So we're looking at each one of those positions to see if it fits into the unified agency and is it redundant or not.

And then, finally, over the next four years, we will have about 200 to 250 either retirements, people who leave for new jobs or people who leave work because -- the work with the Department because of illness. So all of those jobs will also be reviewed for their relevance to and efficiency to the goals and objectives and efficient operations of the combined department.

So we think we have set ourselves up to do a pretty good job around that. It won't happen immediately, but over time, beginning now and over time, we will be able to find some efficiencies, redirect resources, save a few dollars and actually improve the service to the citizens.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Very well. Thank you. I have full confidence that you're going to see your vision --

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: -- come to.

I have several other questions I'd like to ask, but I don't want to dominate the hearing. I see just about every Councilmember has his or her light on. So at this point in time, I'd like to recognize Councilman Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Madam President.

Often this body gets mischaracterized as being overly critical. I don't know how that ever started, but I want to state for the record thank you, and I want to start my comments and questions with that. I'm going to thank you for your leadership in coming on to a difficult process and a lot of skepticism about how this merger would work, and I, quite frankly, didn't know how a three-headed Hydra would work, but it is working well.

I want to thank Commissioner Slawson for the Dell and the prospect that we will open on time. See, I'm giving the compliment early to commit you to that fact, and thank my colleagues, particularly all of them that put up their rec money to make that possible - Councilman Clarke, Councilwoman Miller, Tasco, Blackwell, Quinones-Sanchez and myself - for putting up the extra money, but thank you for getting it done in spite of several snowstorms and the like.

I want to thank you, Commissioner Focht, for, first of all, the tour Saturday up on River Road where you tactfully dealt with some of my constituents about improvements you're going to make to their living condition and having to deal with some of the slings and arrows and barbs that you got. But, most importantly, I want to thank you for a picture that I saw in our audience, and this is Centennial Lake. This was, better yet, Centennial Lake, and it was one of the first lakes ever to be concreted and paved over in the history of this country, and it was a dump site in my district. It was where people dumped all kinds of things, and in spite of that, the red-bellied turtle managed to exist there.

Today, to give you a sense of how that has turned around, it is the site of a national organization that has adopted it as a reclamation project that they want to -- I think it's the Garden Club of America is going to have their national celebration at that lake, citing your accomplishments. So I want to thank you publicly for that.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN JONES: So now that I've got the compliments out of the way, let's get to the good stuff.

I would like to follow up with that to find out exactly what else is going to happen with the lake and how soon we can anticipate the other work that needs to be done there.

Now, I'm going to ask another question while you figure that out. One of the things with capital projects in general is that we spend a lot of money on our aging facilities, and you do not have enough money for that. I'm going to put that out on the record. But one of the things that I think that we missed the boat -- and Councilman Clarke has been real laser-beam focused about stimulus money -- that we have the opportunity internally to stimulate a lot of neighborhoods with that work, and I want to know if we've done an analysis -- and I've asked this of the Public Property folk -- that if we were to be our own GM on some of these smaller projects, converting restrooms and things like that that we tend to bid out -- and I don't know what the threshold is, but if we were to look at it and see if there was a local component of hiring, that we could hire a crew ourselves and put some of these able-bodied men and women in our communities to work and stimulate our own local economies through our own work product, and I wanted to know if we could -- has there been any thought, analysis given to that prospect?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Commissioner, before you answer, to the best of my knowledge and memory, you did that when you were Recreation Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Here's what we did, though: We didn't hire outside. What we did is, we organized our own existing skilled trade staff around these smaller -- that would normally go to capital, but we had the supply contract and the skill base in the Department to do major renovations.

Now, you have to be careful with that, in that you could mess up your work order system, which is already pretty demanding on the skilled trades functions in both departments. But if you manage your existing load, you have enough supply -- materials and supply contracts to support it and enough overtime and straight time to do it, you in your own department can do a pretty good job on middle level and less -- what would be middle level and less capital projects.

Hiring outside -- you know,

this other idea of contracting or sort of doing community-based stuff, I'm interested in that. I just don't know -- to be honest with you, I just don't know how to do it.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Well, in light --

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Either one of these --

COUNCILMAN JONES: In light of the fact that the Obama Administration has a jobs plan, that the only challenge for us in the 5,000 jobs that we may get is a thing called supervision. I'm not talking about skilled trades. I'm not talking about things like that, but general maintenance stuff that every day I get calls about, that this fence needs to be painted and that this site needs a clean-up.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: True.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Those are the kinds of things that are, from the old CEDA program design, are designed to give people work experience that matriculates into, hopefully, God please, a permanent job. Some people that were hired under the CEDA program are retiring from City jobs today.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: No. I understand your question. I'm sorry. I misunderstood the complete intent. But we right now are working with the Workforce Development Corporation, in addition to the -- on the youth side, the adult side to begin this summer to systematically be a partner with them in workforce development. So we're doing that, and in part of our journey towards standards, at least to help us even create the standards or figure out what it takes to get to them, create them and figure out what it takes to get to those standards, we will be doing this summer with TANF-eligible adults. So, yeah, we're there and we're expanding that work.

COUNCILMAN JONES: The idea here is you between your department, Public Property, Recreation, Fairmount Park, if we work together, we probably could come up with a model that was similar to the CEDA program, without violating any workplace rules with our collective bargaining unit, but cover some areas that right now are being missed.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Right.

COUNCILMAN JONES: And you could probably use some of the Friends of the Park groups as strategic partners with that. I'm going to challenge you, the Public Property Commissioner to kind of look at that and analyze whether we can save a couple of dollars as taxpayers in the process.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Well, could I just respond to his final point?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You

can respond, but, Councilman, your time is up.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Mark, Susan and I went to New York and spent a day with their leadership of their department, and we learned -- and I heard about it and our staff knew about their operational standards, which are pretty incredible, but we also learned that they've been part of the TANF program since the mid '90s, late '90s and, in fact, have at their highest point of the year have 3,300 TANF employees working for them, and they also do the job placement. So they do training, recruitment training, and placement, and they build a lot of their adherence to their standards around that training from those workers, and they have a pretty good placement rate.

So I think -- I don't know if we're going to mimic that, but we're certainly interested in understanding how that would work and help us improve the quality of our service, as well as help people move on to permanent, productive jobs.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning, everyone. I'm looking in particular at a newly created division called Forestry and Environmental Resource Management, and there are positions within that new division that exist in every other division. So you've got Tree Maintenance Crew Chief there in this new division, which I guess is citywide, and you've got one in the Northeast and you've got one in each section. Same thing with District Park Managers you've got under that division and you've got District

Park Managers elsewhere throughout the Parks budget, and it seems to me -- first, could you describe the mission of this department and what it's going to do that is not currently being achieved?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Mark has the detail, and I think we should give you that, but in general, approximately 5,700, 5,600 or 5,700 acres of the park, Fairmount Park, is natural lands. Our ability to manage probably one of the most spectacular urban forests in the country, our ability to manage that at the highest level does require some technical skills, which we don't have. We want to create a sustainable management standard that is the highest in the country. And so part of this is about the preservation and the longevity of our urban forest. That's part of it.

The second part of this thinking here is that we're 13 percent of the City's land mass, Parks and Recreation. We also have responsibility for East Park, West Park, hundreds of neighborhood parks around the City. So that environment and the tree cover there are essential ingredients to not only the environment but the quality of life of our citizens, the maintenance and management of those facilities.

We also want to extend this idea of land management and forest management and tree cover to institutions, like the University of Pennsylvania, like the School District, like Nazareth Hospital. So we want to build the institutional connection to this, which expands its impact and its coverage. And then ultimately we want to engage citizens in working with us to maintain the tree cover in the City, not just as Tree Tenders, which is a very important role for citizens in the City, but also they can plant a tree in their yard, in their park, in their front yard, in their side yard and be part of the citizens' greening effort of the City.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

So when you look at this, you cannot look at it as a single like, okay, we're going to plant a few trees along the Wissahickon or we're going to put a few street trees in the ground. This represents an effort to not only better maintain that, and Mark has the detail about that, but also to really involve all citizens of the City, give them an opportunity no matter what neighborhood they live in, no matter where they work, no matter what institution or park is around them, to be part of the greening and maintaining the ecosystem in the City. So that's the cover.

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: And Mark will give you the detail.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Of course, those are all laudable goals and we're doing much of that today. Part of your answer confuses me because we have in the capital budget a ton of money for tree planting, which I thought was going to be the tree planting program for the City, and the capital budget testimony says that that is going to allow us to achieve our tree planting goals.

So I'm not sure why we're using operating dollars in addition to that, given that the Administration's testimony in the capital budget is that we're going to meet our tree planting goals with capital dollars. We're talking about operating dollars. And I recognize we're talking about managing that process with operating dollars, but it's my understanding that that's mostly done by outside service providers.

So with that, Mr. Focht.

MR. FOCHT: Certainly, Councilman. The two go hand in hand. The two and a half million that we have in capital monies for planting trees is literally for the purchase and installation of the trees through contractors. As you know, that money cannot fund any staff positions. We cannot possibly get to the goal of increasing our tree canopy as envisioned in Greenworks and as the Commissioner just referenced with the money only to plant the trees. We are fully appreciative of that increase, but what we need is the staff to manage the civic engagements.

Every tree that's planted as a street tree needs to be inspected by a Fairmount Park arborist. So some of the additional positions we're including in the two and a half million dollar Class 100 increase is staff positions to support the work of getting the trees in the ground.

(Applause.)

MR. FOCHT: I did want to reference you. Currently, all tree planting work, urban forestry work rests within Fairmount Park's Division of Operations, Operations and Landscape Management. In the restructuring of the new department, we're pulling that out of

Operations, raising it up because of the robust goal and creating this new Division of Urban Forestry and Environmental Resource Management. For the last 12 years, we've had a Division of Environmental Resource Management. I started my career at the Park as the Natural Lands Restoration Manager in 1997. So we've been doing that work for the last 13, 14 years as Environmental Resource Management. Actually, our largest environmental resource in the City of Philadelphia -- we have beautiful streams and wetlands and meadows, but our largest environmental resource is the forest. So it made sense to us to pull street tree work out and urban forest management work out and combine it with the other environmental resource management work we're doing.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Except that you haven't pulled positions from other places and put them in this department, because positions are not going down elsewhere to fill these positions. So you can't draw a line from moving somebody, say, from Northeast Division to this division, because that didn't happen.

MR. FOCHT: Not geographic divisions, because if someone is working in the Northeast today as an arborist, they may still be working as an arborist in the Northeast, but they won't be working in the Operations group. They're working in the Urban Forest and Environmental Resource Management group.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Right. I'll have to come back to this line of questioning.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Clarke.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Madam President.

Good morning.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

(Good morning.)

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: A couple of quick questions. Are any members of the Commission here today?

MR. FOCHT: Yes.

(Some members of the Commission raising their hands.)

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Hey, guys.

This is a new process, because traditionally Commission members are actually where you were. Well, not necessarily at that table, but -- the reason I ask that question, because during the course of the merger, there was some concern that the, quote/unquote, elimination of the Commission as it relates to the Park side would relegate them to second-class status or an advisory group and they really had no significant involvement into the Parks and Recs, newly formed Parks and Recs, and I guess it was a very sensitive issue relating to our ability to get that change ultimately, and I guess that the first time out, the preference would be to send the right signal so it would be beneficial. And I'm not suggesting that they come sit, at a minimum, up to these chairs on the inside of the rail, but I am very adamant about ensuring that the Commission be a real part of the operation of the Parks and Recs, not simply an advisory group.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So I'm a little disappointed that they're -- I don't want to call them the cheap seats, but I think that they should -- we're trying to send a signal that they're -- we actually have a nice draft that they've done. I want to commend them on working on the draft on the disposition and acquisition policy.

So it would be helpful as we move forward in this merger that every signal is sent that they're really a part of this process.

The other quick question --

that was actually more of a statement than a question.

Swimming pools. Is the opening of the swimming pools contingent on the Council passing the budget as proposed?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Well, we made -- look, we took -- yeah. Yes, in a way. We assumed -- the assumption was the City would request the same amount of last year's budget, which is 1.7 million, and then we'd raise the rest. So we got to the base, last year's base, said -- I talked to the Mayor and said if you can just propose what you sent over last year to the Council, which is roughly 1.7, then we'll raise the remaining money to get to beyond 45, up to every pool we could possibly run that's operational. So --

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: So the belief is that the external fundraising process --

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Will make the difference.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: -- will be dramatically more?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Yeah. We have to raise $600,000, which Susan is leading that work, and we're doing well in the community. It's amazing the response from all of the advisory councils and support organizations. They're raising money every day. We have a whole -- this fundraising plan that's been developed by Susan and Leo Dignam, the Deputy Commissioner, is pretty powerful and we think we're going to raise the 600,000. I'm not nervous about that. We'll do it.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: All right. I just want to make it clear, if the City Council appropriates the same amount as we did last year, then we will have all of those pools open, 69 out of 72 open?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: That's right.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay.

Getting back to the Commission

and operations -- and I want to thank the Commission again for their work on the disposition/acquisition draft ordinance. Another part of the process that we thought was very important as related to our ability to reach the goal of the first-class Parks and Rec system is our ability to have external fundraising capacity. Both internally within the government and as it relates to the Commission, has there been a process set up to work on that strategy to solicit funds from federal, State, foundations?

I'm saying that and I'm trying to focus on this budget issue, because, I mean, it's not sure that the Mayor's proposals will pass as presented, so we need to have contingency plans to make sure that we get the necessary funding for these different departments.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: In the merger process, we are looking very seriously at how do we support existing fundraising efforts like the Fairmount

Park Conservancy and how do we help them expand the amount of money they raise in support of the Parks and Recreation Department. We're also looking to build a much more aggressive approach to State and federal funding, and from my experience in Harrisburg, there's opportunities that we can explore that maybe we have not explored in the past.

So we need to get more serious and focused on federal and State funding. We need to raise our own foundation and corporation dollars through partnerships, which I think with the tree work, just to give you an example, the tree work -- if we do this straight, if we just take two and a half million dollars and do contract planting, we'll plant about between 5,800 and 6,000 trees. It's not enough. It's not enough trees. We need to bounce that two and a half million to about 12,000 to 15,000 trees. We have to leverage that money to make a difference, to really make a difference. So if we only plant 5,800 trees, I shouldn't have this job. Somebody else should have it. We need to do more with that money, if it shows up.

And then we need to figure out how in the Parks and Recreation system do we generate revenue on a continual basis through the appropriate use of the assets, the Park and Recreation assets. So that's another big feature and one that I think offers a lot of promise. And Mark can talk a little more about that, but like concession contracts, special events and things like that.

So we know that this asset -- this department has an immense set of assets that we have to explore for revenue generation and fundraising, and we're good at it, but we got to get better.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Real quick follow-up, because I know my time is up. Can you tell me if not today, at some point through the Chair, forward a document, because I agree with everything you said, but we've kind of been talking about this for a while, a detailed strategy on how to achieve that. Because it's relatively easy to talk about some of the things in terms of what we need to do, but I'd really like to know who is responsible, some combination of the Commission and the department heads and whomever is responsible for putting that strategy together.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: We'd be happy to do that, and we can show you real progress already.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: All right. Okay.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Sanchez.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank you, Madam President.

Good morning. I first want to

say that I want to congratulate you folks in the fact that this is one of those departments that helps us as a city generate incredible goodwill, and it has become abundantly clear --

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: -- abundantly clear that we cannot run this Park service and this Recreation Department without the volunteers and --

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: From the Parks Alliance. There is a real distinction between a rec center full of life and volunteers and rec centers that continue to be challenging and our ability to run programming there.

So I want to thank the volunteers and thank your staff, because managing volunteers is a hard job sometimes, because they want everything, and they should get everything, because they're paying for it. But it is an incredible feat, so I have learned to appreciate that and want to continue to work with department heads to continue that goodwill and take the Department to another level.

I want to focus this round of questioning on maintenance, though. I want to talk a little bit about last year when we were looking at the appropriations and after the re-budgeting, one of the units that took a tremendous hit was the maintenance. How does this budget for this year deal with our maintenance and the jobs that were unfilled last year?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Well, first of all, a good portion of the money dedicated to trees is tree maintenance. So that's one big -- particularly the increase. A good portion of that will go into tree maintenance.

In addition to that, we've given ourselves a little room on some of the positions, in the 43 potential new positions, that we have given ourselves room in the general definition of those positions that we'll hopefully have some wiggle room to adjust as the merger moves forward.

So we think that we'll have some meaningful ability to plug in some either skilled trades or custodial functions. We can't settle all the issues with a relative handful of positions, but we can make a dent.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: How many vacant maintenance positions do we currently have? Because I know last year we were battling over the 67 positions that had been in the budget for years but never filled. So I want to know how close are we to filling them.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: We have 18 in the Maintenance Division out of -- that's a whole department -- out of about 650, 700 jobs, which isn't bad, and we're in the process, of our total vacancies, of filling 14. So we're moving 14 jobs that are in -- 14 vacancies are moving across the -- being hired. So we have 18 vacancies in the Maintenance Division. Of our total vacancies, we're moving about 14 jobs forward right now. So the number is 18.

(Councilwoman Tasco talking without microphone.)

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: They're vacancies. So that funding has been authorized and appropriated, 689 full time, but all those positions --

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: How many?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: No, no. That's for the total Parks and Recreation Department. My apologies. That 600 number is the total department. We have 18 vacancies right now in the Maintenance Division for Parks and Recreation.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: In that job classification, you talked earlier about ensuring that the job descriptions allow you the flexibility. Are these people that are currently on a Civil Service list or are we doing any new testing, any new job descriptions?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: There will be some new positions in the combined department, but we will not -- custodians, custodial workers, ground maintenance, the skilled trades are essentially going to stay the same. But there may be -- like, for instance, like in the Urban Forestry, that's a new position. There may be some new positions, the development positions, around trying to track down federal, State dollars, move more -- get more resources from the outside coming in. There may be a few new positions there to support that new structure we're putting in place, but that base operational stuff will fundamentally stay the same --

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: You know, one of my --

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: -- in terms of job descriptions and functions.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: One of my goals, particular in those jobs going back to how do we make sure Philadelphians and particularly diverse communities have access to those jobs, I'd be looking at how are we going to ensure that particular neighborhoods where language access is an issue that we do the best we can to try to bring in folks that reflect the neighborhoods that they're working.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Well, I'm telling you, right now -- I will own this -- we're not that good at it.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I know you're not. That's why I'm asking you.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: You know it. I'm not telling you anything you don't know. And, again, what we want to do in this process -- see, these problems take years to create. They do. I mean, the system -- you have a system that -- right now I'll give you the numbers, and I'm going to own this. Out of the 685 total positions, we have 13 Latino and three Pacific Islander or whatever the correct -- Pacific Rim. I don't know what the right word is around this sort of Asian population.

So that's not acceptable. We need to -- and we can't hope that this changes. We can't hope that Central Personnel does it for us. We have to do it. What does that mean? We have to recruit vigorously for exams. We cannot just assume that people are going to get themselves to the exams.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Well, I think --

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: So we have to work really hard at this.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: You are now treading new waters in that you have a combined unit, and you now have the opportunity to write new job descriptions and update the ones we have that cause us to have a department where out of 685, I have 13 Latinos, let alone the Asian community, the Russian community and all those other communities that are now part of the City. We have to make this better.

I am going to always be the strongest advocate for Parks and Recreation. You know how strongly I feel about this in my neighborhoods.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: But this is my third budget and I have not seen us get better on this issue, and I want to make sure that as I struggle with our Council budget and our discussions about what goes into this department, that the Department in return does a better job in this. And so I hope that next year with all of these positions that you're filling, that those numbers improve. I think it's too important for our ability to get -- on the next round we'll go on to the program side, but on this maintenance side, because those are low-skill jobs and so we have to figure it out and get it better.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: And I'll make this commitment to you that next year you'll see progress on this front from us.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank you.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Tasco.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you very much.

First, let me just add to the comments made by the Tree Tenders. I want to express my appreciation to them for the hard work they're doing, particularly in my East Oak Lane and the Rising Sun area. I was there on Saturday and saw a number of trees that had been planted by the Tree Tenders. So they do provide a worthwhile service.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I have so many questions here. I want to go back to your maintenance level. You said out of 685 employees, only 18 are for --

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: They're vacant. I'm sorry. They were vacancies I was referring to.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Then how many maintenance workers do you have?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: So we have in the proposed FY11 93 skilled trades, 159 grounds maintenance around the facilities, the caretakers, custodians, 90 in the tree care, tree division, and special events contracts, planning, 80. So that's the total complement to a total of 423.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: How many do you have just for the maintenance of the buildings?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: That's 93.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: So you have to be a skilled person to do mopping?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Okay. In skilled trades, that's 93. That would be electricians, plumbers, carpenters.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: What about the --

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: And then the custodians, that's 159 total.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: So you have 159. How many centers do you have?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: One hundred fifty plus facilities.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: So do you have one maintenance worker per facility?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: We do not.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Custodial.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: We do not have one maintenance person, custodian person per facility, no. Some of our custodians are actually covering multiple facilities.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: So the strategy is, at least as it currently exists, is to have the big facilities, the A centers, which there's over 50 of them, and then there's a handful of B facilities that are pretty hefty, to have a permanent custodian placed at the facility. That's about 60 total, 60, 65. The remaining facilities are cleaned and bathrooms, floors, they're done by crews. So we'll separate a portion of the custodial staff and put them in crews, and then they clean on a regular basis the remaining facilities where we cannot have a permanent custodian placed, because we just don't have the numbers.

Occasionally -- and we're working on a new approach to this -- that the full-time custodians placed at the A centers could be called -- could be pulled out of there to support the crews a couple days a month, so to build up the amount of capacity we have in the crews.

It takes some work to do it just right, to use the available resource to get us to the highest product, but that's our approach.

So we don't have enough people for every facility, but when we don't, we create the crew system that would do regular cleaning at the smaller centers.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Who monitors the cleaning?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: There's -- well, we're into an interesting question here. We're just now as part of the merger, the custodians were managed historically -- or not historically, for maybe the last 15 or 20 years, they were managed by the crew chief, who would sort of manage part of a district or a whole district. In the merger, we're flipping that over to the rec leader now will be the manager. So it's an on-site, operations-based, program-based responsibility. So the custodian will report to the rec leader.

We think that makes the most sense. That's a pretty big change. The other way has been in place a long time. We're taking a lot of care to do it in the right way, but we think we'll get -- in my view, if you're running the facility and you're running the programs, then the maintenance has to be built around supporting the programs. Who knows that best? The rec leader. That's my view, and I've insisted on this in the merger.

So we're going to have the maintenance guys now, who used to report up the line to the Maintenance Division, reporting over to the rec leader.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: So that hasn't started yet?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: That will begin sometime this summer or early fall.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Okay. I have lots more questions. I'll come back.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I

know, but your time is up.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I know.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you, Madam President.

Good morning, everyone.

(Good morning.)

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Let me underscore the remarks shared by all of my colleagues and capture it and acknowledging how you are managing a transformational process when it comes to the merging of those two departments. So we are paying attention and are pleased with the progress to date, knowing it is no easy undertaking.

I have a lot of questions too, and I'm going to jump around. Let me try to do a quick follow-up first. Well, I have here a note to also commend you on the partnerships you're enjoying with others, particularly City Year, in trying to clean up or improve the appearance of many of our centers. Partnerships like that are tough to undertake, and when they work, it's a good thing.

Let's go to the first page of your testimony, fifth paragraph down where you speak and say that the Department of Parks and Recreation's participation goal was 12 percent. What was the actual goals established by OEO?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: That is in fact the same.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Forgive me. What did you say?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: The OEO goal and our goal are the same.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So you met your goal?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Did you?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: We think so, yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All right. We would want to know the real hard number for that. We're asking all City departments to tell us what the actual goal is and then how far you came to reaching that goal or not.

MR. FOCHT: Councilwoman, I can briefly address that for you.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please.

MR. FOCHT: In the current fiscal year, as we're still two separate operating departments, Fairmount Park and Recreation, if you look at our current projected or anticipated by the end of Fiscal Year 2010, it will be about 15 percent participation in the combined contracts of both departments.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. I need to think about that. Let me go to another item related to the same issue. On Page 3 of your testimony, last paragraph, you stipulate that the Department of Parks and Recreation is working closely with our longstanding partner, the Philadelphia Horticultural Society, around Greenworks. So what does that mean? Just tell me what that means.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Well, they organize and train the Tree Tenders. I think it's about 2,300 citizens in the City who go through a pretty serious training, and then once the Department plants street trees and trees in some of our parks, they take care of them. And the first year or two of a newly planted tree are the most vulnerable for it not to make it. So if you don't do it right, you have a pretty high mortality rate, so the money you invest, kind of you lose it.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: So that end of it, they operate and manage, and that supports and helps us do what we would otherwise have to do to make sure that we have a success in our street tree planting. So that's a very big deal.

Beyond that, we're looking for them to sort of work with a lot of institutional partners, corporate entities where they would sort of help generate dollars towards a tree goal that we couldn't otherwise do. So they would raise money through foundation and corporate sources that we would not have access to. In fact, they're applying for Pennvest money from the State that last --

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Are those Recovery dollars?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: I think they are, yeah. And they applied and they got, I think, about a million eight. I think I'm close to the amount of the grant, which supports our goal. So they apply for the money, get the money and put the trees in the ground. That supports our goal. And, in fact, they coordinate with the Water Department as well around the storm water management and to help them sort of meet their storm water management goals as well in this process.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And that

2,300 number that you mentioned are Philadelphia residents?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: I think if not all of them are, the high -- like 90, 98 percent are Philly residents. They're neighborhood folks.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. That's what I'm getting to.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Yeah, all over the place.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: People who live and work in our neighborhoods are getting the opportunity and access to that --

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Training.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes, to that training.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Back to the contract piece. Could you please provide to the Chair a listing of all contracts that the Department has let over the past year?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Yes.

MR. FOCHT: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And my principal concern is, I pay attention in the City with who is planting our trees and where the license plates are and the name of the company on the trucks, and when I see trucks that are not local Philadelphia companies, my antenna go up. So for me, it raises the question, are Philadelphia taxpayers getting access and opportunity to plant trees in our City, landscaping opportunities, et cetera.

So if you could provide that information to the Chair, that would be helpful. And I'll continue with the next round of questioning.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Miller.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you. Thank you, Madam President.

Good morning, Parks and Recreation.

(Good morning.)

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I too want to just add that I appreciate what you do, and I know you guys work hard and I know that all the advisory council folks and all the volunteers are there for our rec centers, and it's really a dedicated group of people. So I just want to start by saying thank you.

I have some questions. I did ask a question early on in our budget hearing regarding the Robin Hood Dell. Before I do that, though, I'd like to add that Councilman Jones did note that there were several Councilmembers that added and appropriated funds for the renovation of Fairmount Park and he actually left out that Councilman Clarke and myself also were those that got the call from Slawson and decided to help her out.

But I want to know a little bit more about the actual project. I know that you're doing seats and some renovations to the physical appearance and structure of the Dell. What about the restrooms, particularly the ones in the back near the stage?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Just to give some background, the original scope of the project was the replacement of the failed storm water drains and piping, rebuild the concrete paving ramps and stairs and replace all the seating. And we are actually in the process of replacing the seating now. All the concrete, the storm water, that's already been addressed.

As far as the bathrooms in the back, that was not a part of the initial scope of the work, but the maintenance staff and the skills trades for the Department of Recreation, they are going to actually do some work on the bathrooms.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Good. Because they really need it. I know the ladies' room does. I don't know about the men's room.

Is it still on point to open this season?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yes, it is on point to open this season. We actually will be closing the bid today, the RFPs, today at 5:00 p.m. for people to bring in actual acts. So July the 12th should be our first concert at the Dell.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: That will be great.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: July the 12th. July the 12th.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: That's great.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: And let me, if I can, Councilman Jones actually stole my thunder, because I wanted to thank all of you personally myself, because I did approach some of the Councilmembers - Councilman Jones, Councilwoman Blackwell, you Councilwoman Miller, Councilman Clarke and Councilwoman Tasco. I asked for a significant amount of funding, $250,000 per person, and it was needed for us to complete this project, and you all willingly appropriated the funding that I needed. So I wanted to say thank you personally to all of you.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Well, you're very welcome.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: You know, the Dell is the place that people enjoy going to. I don't go that often myself, but there are many people that that's like one of their primary sources of recreation for the summer. So we're glad that it's there and I'm glad that it's going to open. It's been closed, what, two years?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: The last

season was 2007.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. That will be great.

I did see something in the paper that you were recruiting acts. Was that just for the opening show, local acts, local talent for the opening show or for every show?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Our plan is to have eight shows for this season, and that's for every show. And so the RFP is out and people still have time and opportunity to put in for that. That's for all eight shows.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: That's great. Philadelphia does have a lot of talent.

One other question about summer employment. Are you doing summer employment? See, last year I thought you weren't doing summer employment for young people. Not Work Ready or Youth Works or whatever it's called, but directly through the Rec Department. Are you doing that this year?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yes, we are. We are doing our summer programming.

One of the things I just wanted to mention as we had the conversation earlier with Councilman Green is that we lost a significant amount of seasonal staff when we had the initial cuts. We lost 815 seasonal staff positions. And so we're talking about whether or not we'll be able to make some cuts. Some of this we will just be recouping, and some of the positions that we cut were not the positions that we're bringing in with TANF. Those are all teens. Some of the positions that we will be using this summer in our facilities are recreation specialty instructors, and they're adults. They're not young people from 14 to 17 years old.

And so I just wanted to make sure I mention the fact that although we'll be getting these additional young people to work, they won't be taking the place of our recreational seasonal instructors that we use to program our facilities.

And so we will be hiring this summer. We will be hiring young people. They can go to the facilities, as they've done in the past. And the good thing is, we expect to have additional positions for teenagers because of this additional TANF funding.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Councilwoman, your time is up. I'm sorry.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Just a tiny little question.

The age cuts off at 17?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: For the TANF?

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: For the young people.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Well, no. There are other positions that we'll

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

be hiring throughout the summer as well, but we have that large number that we try to make sure we have for our young people to keep them off the streets and also to introduce them to the workforce.

COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Just for the sake of time, if you can answer a question yes or no, please do so.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Was that for me?

COUNCILMAN GREEN: It's to everybody.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: I think it was to me.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I just wanted to clarify some things.

When we're talking about some of the questions that Councilwoman

Sanchez was talking about, the positions that would be used to help recreation centers maintain maintenance are different than what you call necessarily maintenance positions. So there is a plan to now hire, I believe, Building Maintenance Superintendent I; one electrician; painter; Painting Group Leader; carpenter position; cement finisher position; plumbing, heating and maintenance worker position; a roofer position; Labor Crew Chief position; Recreation District Caretaker Supervisor position; two Recreation Facilities Caretaker positions; six Recreation Facility Caretaker II positions. All of those positions are in this year's budget.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yes.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And have not been hired.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Some have been.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Well, we

have a chart from the Administration.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Okay. That's the November. But the answer to your question is yes.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: That's a lot of people to spread among the A and B centers that we have that we provide people for, and we're currently running those facilities without those people. So it's your commitment that if we appropriate the funds for those positions for the recreation centers this year, that you will hire those people?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yes.

MR. FOCHT: Yes.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And of the 14 people that you said were maintenance positions, how many applied to rec centers and how many applied to the parks that you're currently hiring?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Can we get back to you on that? I'm sorry.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Sure. But what I want to make clear is that this is part of the funding that was appropriated last year that you're telling Councilman Clarke that is appropriated this year, and essentially this funding is remaining constant. Without having filled these positions or with having filled these positions, the pools will be open?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Correct.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Yes.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yes. Yes.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Perfect.

So the Forestry and Environmental Resource Management Division is not at all related to pool openings?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Correct.

MR. FOCHT: Correct.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. I ask

you to say yes. You have to say correct, right?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: We're rebels.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So back to that division. It is $1.7 million. What I don't understand about it, as briefly as possible, there are already Park District Managers, District Coordinators, there are already Ground Maintenance Crew Chiefs, Tree Maintenance Crew Workers, et cetera. They're already -- basically every position that's in here is elsewhere in the Department. Rather than using the current governance structure where you have a District Manager for an area of the park, you have a District Manager, rather than sliding these people up under them, because they already supervise tree plantings, they already do the maintenance that we're talking about, this creates a whole new bureaucracy.

MR. FOCHT: No.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Well,

there's new District Managers. These are all new positions. It does, it creates an entirely new bureaucracy rather than using the current management structure to try to manage the lands that we're currently managing under that management structure.

MR. FOCHT: Certainly, Councilman. Actually, it uses the same management structure but in a different way. The additional positions that you've identified are truly titles that already exist in Fairmount Park and are partially filled. The Commissioner referenced in his opening comments the operational structure of the new department will be divided into eight geographic districts. We currently only operate in five geographic districts in Fairmount Park, managing far fewer assets than when you pull in 150-plus rec centers and 70 swimming pools. So we jointly as a senior management team have made a decision to operate in eight geographic districts.

What we want to do with the additional positions is adequately staff each of the eight geographic districts so that we can serve the public, and in the case of your questions about trees, get trees in the grounds. So we currently have four District Managers at Fairmount Park. In these additional 43 positions, there's four additional District Managers. So we have one District Manager in each of the operating districts to manage that work.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: It's additional bureaucracy because you're creating new district areas.

MR. FOCHT: Well, we need to because of the volume of work. We're simply not going to get the number of trees in the ground we need to get in the ground.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: What you're saying is the current managers are not capable of having people under them and delegating. We have to have new top-level people paid by the Department.

Nobody is against putting in maintenance workers or people who are going to take care of it, but we've created new bureaucracies, which requires new Administrative Specialist II's, which requires new Data Services Support Clerks, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, and it just -- this additional bureaucracy is part of what is so expensive about this new division rather than trying to work within the existing structure.

What I would suggest is, if we fill the 25 vacant positions that are in this year's budget that we talked about, the roofers, the painters, the maintenance workers, the Recreation Center Caretaker I and II positions, et cetera, if we fill those, we will be so much better off this year than we were last year that it will be a significant improvement without the creation of an entirely new division and bureaucracy. Can you argue with that?

MR. FOCHT: Well, I would offer -- first of all, I would just like to go on the record to say that I and we have the highest regard for the men and women that currently serve Fairmount Park as District Managers. They do extraordinary work, oftentimes seven days a week, for little thanks. So I would just like to put on the record that I'm extraordinarily proud of the men and women that work for Fairmount Park.

That being said, I do believe that in order to reach the Mayor's goal of planting 300,000 trees by 2015, maintaining the forest -- we have 2.5 million trees in the 13 percent of land that we need to maintain. We have 140-some-thousand street trees, and we're not doing -- we're doing a very good job given the resources we have.

We've been charged through Greenworks and the Mayor to really be a leading example of how to maintain our urban forest, and to do that, we simply need more tree maintenance workers, crew chiefs, arborists. Those are the men and women --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay.

MR. FOCHT: During the snowstorm in February --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So I see --

MR. FOCHT: If I may, please. During the snowstorm in February, the second of the two snowstorms, we had over 400 tree emergencies, 400 tree emergencies. These are just street trees. These are trees down on cars, on homes, damaging property. The men and women that work for Fairmount Park were out 24-hour shifts addressing that work, taking care of that work.

As we grow our urban forest --

(Applause.)

MR. FOCHT: -- we simply do not have enough staff to maintain the urban forest.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: But you'll never have enough staff for snow emergencies when there's tons of snow on trees, Mark. The point is, that's an extraordinary situation where you could have used a hundred extra tree people that day. So --

MR. FOCHT: Our budget is not built around a snowstorm, Councilman. I didn't mean to imply that.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Right. Well --

MR. FOCHT: Our budget is built around the day-to-day demand --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: But you're trying to use that as an example.

MR. FOCHT: I apologize. Probably an inappropriate example.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Right. So the point is that are there any unfilled maintenance positions today that aren't part of this division?

MR. FOCHT: Excuse me. Say it again. I'm sorry.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Are there any unfilled tree maintenance positions or Tree Crew Chief positions today that are not part of this new division?

MR. FOCHT: No.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So if we were to appropriate enough money for you to have some additional -- and, by the way, I note that even though you gave that example, the new division only has two Tree Maintenance Crew Chiefs and one Tree Maintenance Worker.

MR. FOCHT: That's to augment the existing staff so each of the ten districts -- excuse me; each of the eight operating districts will have a fully staffed tree crew of a Crew Chief, a Tree Crew Chief, and two Tree Maintenance Workers.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: If we had five districts, we'd only need five Crew Chiefs and we'd have additional workers.

MR. FOCHT: No. It's not -- no. It's not based upon the number of operating districts. It's based upon the number of trees.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Councilman, I'm sorry. I don't want to be accused of being partial, but --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Yes, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: -- your --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I understand. I will finish with this one statement.

You focused your testimony with respect to this department on trees. The total amount that we're talking about for Crew Chiefs or maintenance workers is $110,000. If I give you that, we need to -- those are the people out there doing the work.

So there's a lot of bureaucracy in this division, and we need to talk about how to get rid of some of that bureaucracy as part of this budget conversation.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Clarke.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you, Madam President.

One not budget related, but an issue with respect to, I guess -- Mr. DiBerardinis, during the course of the -- actually, after you were selected, you and I had a conversation, I think, along with Councilwoman Brown up in the office and we talked about a way of engagement as it related to people beyond the members of the Commission, and you said you had some sense of how we were going to include those 300-something plus people or other members of the various groups. Have you worked out a scenario?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: I can give you some of the current specifics, and we're not into the detail, but there's enough to talk about.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

The Commission has smartly created committees. So there's a set of committees on the Commission that's chaired by Nancy Goldenberg, and those folks who were part of those 300 applicants, that committee process has been open up to them to serve on. So within the structure of the Commission, the existing Commissioners have created a committee structure that allows interested citizens, particularly those who competed for the Commission slots, to be part of that.

So that's an exciting and a very important role for them. And I think when you look at the work that they've done already on use and disposition of parkland, revenue generation and sort of general support of the work of the Department, the combined Department right now, I think it's working. It's still in its early stages.

Beyond that, I think if we're really going to succeed -- and, again, I will say this with some qualifications, but if we're going to be a premier Parks and Recreation Department, best practices, great deal of success, help build the economy, relate to neighborhoods, connect kids to nature, run top-quality out-of-school-time programs, if we're going to do all those things, we cannot do it alone and I would say there's not enough money. There's not enough money anywhere for us to do it alone.

So what we have to do is invest in the people who invest in us. Invest in the people --

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: -- who we serve.

So that process -- and, again, I mean, Councilman Green may call this bureaucracy, but we got to build people into the system who help do that, who help build capacity of local organizations, who help fundraise with local organizations. People expect neighborhood organizations to exist without any help. Well, what company, what government exists without capacity?

So we need -- if we're really going to get a serious relationship and a serious accountability between this government and this department in particular and the citizens who care about it, we have to invest in them.

So the next stage is, besides the structural piece that's within the Commission, we need to invest more in our friends groups, we need to invest more in our recreation advisory councils. If we want them to do more, we got to invest more --

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: -- about their capacity and their ability to help us, and that capacity takes time. It takes time. It takes energy. It takes resources.

So we're committed to that, and

that's the phase that we're moving into now, and we will have a structure in place, the new department, that's dedicated to those relationships. And it's not that we haven't done a good job, but that's where we're heading.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Point of information.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

I just want to -- I would prefer to characterize myself what I consider to be bureaucracy and not obviously people working with groups of the area of the park where I was in this weekend on Saturday and Sunday. Like the Friends of the Wissahickon and other things, I would fully support. I don't consider that bureaucracy. Frankly, I'm not sure I can tell from your budget where this vision that you're talking about is reflected and what's going to be allocated, other than the Volunteer

Services Assistant positions, four of which are created, and if you could demonstrate a business plan on how that's going to help drive revenue and resources into the friends groups, who maybe ought to get additional resources, and do a lot of this work with volunteers perhaps if they had resources to have more staff at their level, et cetera.

So I'm against bureaucracy in City government. I fully support the people who are doing great work in our park system. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Clarke.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Thank you.

I'm glad to hear that -- I know you gave your commitment, and I always believe you when you give your commitment. So I'm glad to see that that process is starting to take place, and whenever you're prepared in a more formalized way to lay out -- that's great, because that was very important to a lot of the people involved, particularly those people that came down and expressed an interest. And I know Councilwoman Brown and I had a conversation. Actually, I think we introduced an ordinance at some point, so now I can just take that off the Calendar.

Somewhat budget related, in the last Administration there was an attempt, when we started having fiscal problems, to take some of these operational responsibilities of some rec centers offline as it related to the City running those facilities. I don't think you were there. Mike, you definitely were not there. The question is -- and then maybe somebody can respond -- I know that there were a number of centers, and I don't know exactly where throughout the entire City, I know in my district there were one or two, where we basically, the City, said we are contracting out or leasing those facilities to private non-profit groups to actually run the facilities with their money, and I know in some cases there were legislators or other entities that had the ability to come up with revenue to run those centers. Is there anybody here that can speak to that?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: I just --

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: The reason I ask the question is, one, was it successful, and if it was, maybe we want to look at expanding that. Two, if it was not successful, maybe we want to take them back into the system.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Councilman Clarke, I was not a part of that Administration, but I did look back at Deputy Commissioner Leo Dignam and he's not familiar with us actually leasing out any of our buildings during that time period.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Point of information.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Sanchez for a point of information.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank you.

I think Councilman Clarke is talking about where we've done partnerships with the Boys and Girls Clubs and with PAL; for instance, 4800 Whitaker.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: No.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Well, because these were rec facilities, City facilities, that we turned over to non-profits, who now run. So I have a couple in my district, so that's why I want to -- so there was in addition to like, what is it, 26 PAL centers that run in City facilities, there were other non-profits who came in and started returning programming.

So was that a deliberate

campaign? That's what he's asking.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Well, the one in my district that comes to mind was an actual lease arrangement with -- it happened to have an elected official involved, where they took over the responsibility of the operation of that facility, along with that non-profit. So we don't have any government staffing in that building.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Well, that's -- we're not involved, at least to my knowledge, in any negotiations or actual new --

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Well, they were already done in the last Administration. So my question is, has there been some follow-up to determine the success rate or failure rate or whatever?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Just kind of commenting to Councilwoman Sanchez's comment, I do know that when the past Commissioner was here, Commissioner Vic Richards, he did propose to the Police Athletic League an opportunity to take over a couple of facilities. We did not take over Rivera, but we've been housed in Rivera for over 15-plus years. We did take over Ford, which is at 6th and Snyder, and so the Police Athletic League has been running and maintaining and doing all of the operational and maintenance of that facility. But other than that, I don't think -- he's still shaking his head no. I'm looking at Leo just to make sure I'm speaking correctly.

I am familiar with what you're talking about, Councilwoman, but I'm not familiar with what you're talking about, Councilman Clarke.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: I'll tell you the rec center afterward. I mean, I know this to be a fact.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: I don't doubt that. I'm just not familiar with it, sir.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay. I'll keep going if the Council President is going to let me.

One last question, Madam President?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes, please.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: The procurement process for contracts, and I know this is somewhat related to capital, but I wanted to get a sense because of the merger. I know traditionally capital goes to various departments and requests the needs or assessments of facilities within the various departments, and as a result of the proposed merger, is there a process that the capital assets of the Parks and the capital assets of Recreation are also being consolidated in terms of the recommendations to capital?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Yes. Again, we're right in the middle of that trying to figure out how do we effectively unify the capital program.

So right now there still is money that's segregated for the Park capital use and money segregated for Recreation.

What we want to do is get ahead of that for next year and sort of work out with the Administration, Finance and Budget, Capital Office and then eventually this body how we would construct that to have a single budget with a single strategy and an approach that supports the Parks and Recreation Department and its system. So we're not there yet, but it's clearly a very important part of our merger discussion right now.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: And in addition to which -- and, Madam President, I'll stop talking after this. I know you're looking at me.

In the event, which has been proven in other instances, where there's internal workforce, as was discussed earlier by a number of Councilmembers, where you have skilled tradespersons, do you think if you were in a position well now you have the assets and resources of Parks and the assets and resources of Rec that you can have a stronger internal workforce to do a lot of this work? Because I know a lot of our rec centers have things that are in Parks and vice versa. So are you also looking at that?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Yeah. We would hope that the combined Operations Unit, maintenance skilled trades, could have some higher level capacity. Yeah, absolutely.

COUNCILMAN CLARKE: Okay. Thank you.

Thanks, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Sanchez.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank you, Madam President.

Commissioner DiBerardinis, you spoke earlier around the rec centers and the classifications. I know there was a discussion last year around the reclassification of rec centers, particularly where we close pools and converted to spray parks. Where are we with that?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Well, the reclassification of centers or the transition of some pools to spray grounds, or both?

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: The reclassifications.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Well, again, within the merger, what we're right now thinking is to do regional or district-based budgets and have the budgeting, which is new, have the budgeting go down to the field and then have the deployment of staff not be based on classifications, but be based on volume and specific needs of the facilities and give the managers on the ground the ability to respond to the demands.

So, again, that's the thinking right now. So the classifications would maybe still be there, but they'd have less importance. So if you have a very busy B center, which gets less staff than an A center, the manager would have the ability to deploy additional staff to the B center, given its volume and its complexity of its programs.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Well, my concern around the classifications is around, I think -- going to some of the points of Councilman Green, one of the things that concerns me about this budget is that it is rather top heavy. So for me, I agree with you. I want to see -- because I thought the reclassification gave us an opportunity to have more staff, but not necessarily supervisory staff.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Well, yes, and we would agree and -- let me just go back to these 40 positions, because I don't think they're completely reflective of what we'll eventually do, although they do -- they are indicative in a way. So they're not -- we had to get some stuff in with the budget. We think this is broadly reflective of the direction we're going in, broadly reflective of our interest in and the importance of the work that maintenance and tree planting, which we think is important, but some of these other positions are not set in stone, but they're indicators.

So we want to be smart and want to, and I agree, want to thin out some of the bureaucracy and some of the managers and have the money in the field, have the money on the ground. That's not a foreign thought. And, in fact, a lot of the sort of work around the flowchart, which we can share with you guys, is particularly focused on trying to move -- obviously we want all the money we can get, of course, but it's obviously about moving the money down to the operations side.

So we're not perfect at it. In fact, we're imperfect, but that's sort of one of the driving principles of the merger process.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: It's going to be important, because, again, as we get to making the hard choices, I look at budgeting in government as the people who generate revenue and the people who provide critical services, and it's always that middle that we start kind of discussing how many we need to have. So it would be important, and hopefully for next year's budget, we start moving in that direction.

I'm concerned about not budgeting more maintenance positions, and I say this because -- and I want to start asking about our older adult centers -- that we don't have maintenance staff at some of these places. So I guess my question is, are the 18 vacant maintenance positions going to be enough for us to get weekly or I know in some cases we do twice a week maintenance? I'm concerned about that in our maintenance at that level. Is it enough? Where does it take us to?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: It will make us better and I would -- I don't want to say exactly where that will -- particularly with your interest at the older adults center in your district, but it will get better. And we hope that sort of what we're doing with the merger relative to the appropriate use of the custodial and grounds maintenance staff, we will be better and we'll get higher quality cleaning across the system.

I wish I could be more detailed, but...

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: So where are we as it relates to the skilled side of that in terms of work orders? What's our backlog? How have we improved this year and where is it that this budget takes us to?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Well, actually, the backlog, I want to say that for the past 18 months, we've actually cleared our backlog more than 50 percent.

If I could just go back one second to the staff you're talking about at the older adult facility, are we talking one location?

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: No. I'm just talking about where -- because it really -- again, I don't want to talk about one center. It's about how we want to do general maintenance in those areas where we have floaters. Are we going to be setting standards to say twice a week, three times a week? I think the fact that we haven't had the staff creates this unreliability of when they come and when they don't come.

So I'm just concerned that I don't see enough maintenance in this budget to help us get to -- and I don't know what the goal is. Is it twice a week, three times a week -- in some of those facilities.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Okay. Well, the number that we're talking about for maintenance, number one, of course, we don't and won't have enough. We're trying to, of course, increase those numbers to ensure that our facilities are clean. One of the things that the Commissioner has instructed us to do when we start talking about pulling for various crews, we're coming up with a plan, a schedule. Your point is -- I don't know when they're being pulled. We don't know when they're showing up. Part of the plan is to ensure that we have specific days that we're going to pull, specific days that we're going to assign them. Since we have to rotate staff, we're making a plan for our maintenance crew that, you know, at four of your locations, they'll be there Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday as opposed to they show up whenever they want to. That's a part of this process that we're putting together currently right now.

As far as -- what was your other question? I'm sorry.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Again, I don't -- I want to make sure that we get to that point, and I just want to make sure that in your budget, you've requested enough for maintenance, because given my experience with the maintenance on the ground, I'm not sure that that's enough. I don't know what your standards are going to be. I mean, the Commissioner has talked about how we establish standards, and so I guess once we establish the standards, then we can see. In what I'm looking at, it's not enough to get us to at least a biweekly schedule of clean-ups.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: One of the things that we heard a lot about -- and the Commissioner addressed it earlier in his conversation -- was that the community members were really challenging us to ensure that our facilities were clean, ready to use, and so we have to consider making sure.

Now, do we have enough to cover all of our facilities? No. And to your point, will this 18 cover all of our facilities as far as custodians? No.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Okay. I guess --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Councilwoman, I'm sorry.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: All right.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Tasco.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you very much.

I just want to give my support to the concerns raised by Councilwoman Sanchez relative to the maintenance, and I'm talking about custodial maintenance and not so much into the skilled trades, because it's the custodial maintenance that provides the real work that needs to be done to keep these centers clean. And I would say that area is sorely lacking, and if we want our young people and citizens to use the facilities, they have to feel comfortable going there and that the facility is clean and inviting to be there.

Let me just ask you a couple of questions real quick. Camp William Penn, we no longer run that, right?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Correct.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: What took the place of Camp William Penn? What kind of camp services are you providing?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yeah. What took the place of Camp William Penn, Councilwoman Tasco, is Outward Bound and Salvation Army. What happened when it was decided that Camp William Penn would no longer run, we ensured that there was funding in the budget for these camps. They could do either overnight or daily trips that include them in being environmental programs.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: So our young people are referred to Outward Bound and Salvation Army?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: That's correct.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: And we provide financial services?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: And we support the funding, yes, ma'am.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: All right. Thank you.

The other one is, what involvement -- you talked about recruiting and recruitment for employees in the Recreation Department. What role does your office play in establishing the guidelines and the test that's given to individuals who apply?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: The tests are, at least as far as I know -- I'm trying to reintroduce myself to this, but the Central HR creates the test for Leader I, grounds maintenance. Some of them are citywide, some of them are very specific to the Department. So that's all done within the City government. Then they're posted and they're advertised.

But I think what I was trying to make the point earlier is that unless we make a special effort beyond that, our general makeup will stay the same. We have to change -- we, the Department, has to more aggressively recruit people to apply and to take the test.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: The question I have is, do you review what test, the kind of tests that are being given and are you giving a high-level skills test for someone who is going to do custodial work and they can't pass the test?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Councilwoman, no, we're not -- they're not high-level skill tests for the Recreational Facility Caretakers, which are our custodial staff. They're not high-level skill tests.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Go ahead.

MR. FOCHT: Councilwoman, if I may add, Parks and Recreation staff works with Central Personnel, HR, to develop the actual tests, so we work -- we kind of provide the content for the tests. They formulate and administer the test. So each test, whether it's a ground maintenance worker, custodial worker, tree worker, we help with the content of what that test is, and the content is geared to the appropriate level for that position.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: And Rec does the same thing?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: That's correct.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Okay. Let me just look at the organizational chart for a moment. I'm looking at the Commissioner of Parks and Recs. Then offline would be the Recreation Deputy Commissioner and the Parks Deputy

Commissioner. All of the programs - Development, Operations, Administration - come under the Commissioner's purview?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: I'm sorry. I was trying to get a look at the chart. I'm sorry.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Look at it.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: So the question again is? I looked at it.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: All of these departments under Programs - Development, Operations and Administration - all of those people report directly to you?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: No. In fact, this is not correct. The Programs would report directly to Commissioner Slawson, and the Operations would report to what will be something like Deputy Commissioner Focht.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: You're going to redo this chart?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS:

Yes. This is not where we currently are in the process. This is a dated chart. So my apologies for you guys having that. We will update that very quickly for you.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you very much.

Did the roof get fixed at Finley?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: They're working on that roof, ma'am, yes.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: All right. Programs on the weekends at the rec centers, do you have programs on the weekends?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: We do Saturdays. We have programs on Saturdays. Some of the facilities are from 9:00 until 5:00, some of them are 11:00 to 2:00. It depends on what the need of the community is, but the answer is yes. We don't have programming on Sundays.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I need to talk to you about that.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Okay.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I'm not sure that's being followed.

I think they're my questions that I have, but I need to talk to you about it.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you, Madam President.

Quick follow-up to Councilwoman Tasco's question regarding Camp William Penn. Is the Camp William Penn land still in the City's inventory?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Camp William Penn, the settlement date is supposed to be May the 31st.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Settlement between who?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: The State and the City of Philadelphia.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Provide some context briefly.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you, Commissioner. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: I wear two hats here.

But this is the State of Pennsylvania, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has purchased that parcel of land from the City of Philadelphia. The transaction will be finalized at the end of May where I think it's roughly 700-plus acres will then become part of the State forest in that -- that surrounds it.

Now, I don't know what the current situation is with them, but as I was transitioning out of Harrisburg, we were trying to figure out how do we continue the recreation programs there, and I'll be honest with you, I'm not sure where that discussion is with non-profit organizations in the region to try to continue it, but I can find out pretty quickly and let you know.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All right, then.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: There would be continuing programs, at least on a portion of that land, for Philadelphia or Philadelphia area children.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. And so we met goal with regards to the identification, recruitment and enrollment of Philadelphia young people in the summer program last year?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yes, we did.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We did meet goal?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: We did.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Let's move back to a continuing interest of many Councilmembers around inclusion and the Office of Equal Opportunity. Who created the 12 percent goal? How did you arrive at that number and who were the partners in the discussion of the identification of that goal?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: OEO comes up with the percentage that we have to meet.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So OEO determined 12 percent to be the goal?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: That's correct.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: What contracts were actually released? You're going to submit that to President Verna, correct?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yes, we will.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: How soon can I get that? Just give me a window, because so often we ask for information during budget and we look up and it's June, budget is over and it's lost its relevance.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: We could have that to you, ma'am, by Friday.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. So

if OEO identified 12 percent as the goal, what should one assume by that? Did they also determine the capacity based on their knowledge base of MBE, WBEs and the contract areas you have? What information did you provide to them to help them arrive at that goal?

MR. FOCHT: Councilwoman, I think OEO evolved or arrived at that goal in conversations with both Commissioner Slawson and I and our senior staffs looking at the historical contracts that we have in place. We have many multi-year contracts in place, like turf management, tree work, a number of other programs. Those goals are already set and they're carrying over from prior contracts, and then every year we're letting new contracts.

So I would assume in our conversations with OEO that they developed that by taking all the contractual information that we provided to them and that they have in their system and which we will provide to you and then evolved to developing that through conversation with us.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

Councilman Goode.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Point of information.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Madam President?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Goode.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you, Madam President.

Excuse me, Councilwoman Brown.

The first statement was that OEO set the goal. The second statement was that there was a conversation between OEO and the departments. The third statement was that the goal was set based upon historical contracts and that you, quote/unquote, assume that OEO did their due diligence.

I guess my simple question as I've asked other departments, if you know what products and services you're trying to procure, don't you have a responsibility to know what disadvantaged businesses exist in those fields and contract areas and go out and do your own due diligence? In other words, if OEO is setting a fake goal or has not really tried to push any harder or doesn't know what they're doing in terms of goal-setting within your department, OEO doesn't do any contracting. There are goods and services you need to provide to get your job done, and you have a responsibility to take on that job yourself and to go out and do outreach in terms of disadvantaged firms to see whether they can better participate.

So what you're saying is, first, it was OEO, it wasn't me. Then, but we did discuss it with them. But then third, no, it was just based upon what's been historically, which means that you're not going to do anything differently than what you did before.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes. Do you have a response, reaction, comment, please?

MR. FOCHT: Sure. Thank you, Councilwoman and Councilman. Perhaps my description of the process didn't capture the entire process, because indeed, again, speaking for my role as Director of Fairmount Park, we in fact do work with local businessmen, organizations, identify them. For example, on our turf mowing contract, we've worked very closely with a company actually called Minority Services -- that's the name of the company -- to get them into our four-year turf contract, and they actually -- specifically just to our turf mowing contract, currently 51 percent of that contract is minority participation for that one contract.

We've done similar work with tree care companies and we have historically done that, and we will continue to do that.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: It will be very useful in the information you submit to President Verna that you stipulate the contracts and the breakdown --

MR. FOCHT: Sure.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: -- MBE, WBE, DBE opportunities.

Who makes the decision around multiple-year contracts and is that a standard operating procedure? Speak to the background on that.

MR. FOCHT: Councilwoman, you mean the choice of whether or not we let a multi-year contract?

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes.

MR. FOCHT: Generally with our -- again, I'll speak -- our two biggest contracts at Fairmount Park are turf maintenance and tree maintenance.

They have historically been let as multi-year contracts because the learning curve for a contractor to understand exactly where to cut the grass in East Park or exactly the pruning of trees, we have traditionally found that letting one-year contracts with two or three one-year extensions really builds the learning curve and actually builds in to our operating budget savings over time, because you're not bringing in a new contractor -- potentially bringing in a new contractor every year. And also that way, we can build in the participation standard. Again, on that turf maintenance contract at 51 percent, you can build in a fairly high participation rate over multiple years.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. I'm not going to violate the clock, but I do have follow-up questions on this issue.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Just briefly back to tree maintenance. There appears to have been two unfilled Tree Maintenance positions as of the November run and one Crew Chief unfilled.

MR. FOCHT: Those are both filled since the November run.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And the Crew Chief?

MR. FOCHT: The Tree Maintenance Worker position was filled and -- one moment, please.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: There were two of those positions.

MR. FOCHT: Yes. Excuse me; positions all have been filled, Tree Maintenance Worker positions. And I'm sorry, Councilman, the second position you mentioned?

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Crew Chief,

Tree Maintenance Crew Chief.

MR. FOCHT: Crew Chief also filled.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So when were they filled? Early this year, late last year?

MR. FOCHT: I don't have the exact date. I apologize. I would assume since the first of the year.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So you have three more tree maintenance people on your staff now than you did most of last year.

MR. FOCHT: Correct.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And we're increasing capacity that way.

So I think where we may be with the budget, at least with respect to what I hear driving new divisions and things, are goals set by the Administration and Greenworks, which obviously we have to have reached goals as a city and other things, but the Department is not able to demonstrably prove that they could

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

achieve those goals even with the resources we have, and I also think that citizens have not expressed a willingness to pay for, say, 300,000 trees planted versus trash pick-up or police or fire service or other things.

So governing is choosing between competing ideas for good with limited resources, and that's what this budget process is about. And I understand why you're in here advocating for your position, but we've asked a question that we don't have answered yet, which is how many trees were you able to plant with the $300,000 of capital budget last year.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: We can tell you that. It's three hundred grand. I think 678. I'm close, I think. Mark is nervous. We'll get you the number. But, you know, Councilman, again -- give him the number.

MR. FOCHT: Councilman, last year with the normal run of $300,000 in capital, about 634 trees.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So with two and a half million dollars, we're going to plant what kind of multiple of that?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: If we do it the conventional way, 5,800. See, but that's the point. This money is not going to get us to 300,000, and you can't appropriate enough money to get us to 300,000. The point is that if we want to go to the citizens of this city, if we want to go to the corporations and the foundations and the big institutions and say, Can you help us do something good -- now, if you don't think 300,000 is a good goal, then we got an argument. I mean --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Well, 250, 300 --

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: -- if you don't think it's a worthy --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: It's a discussion you haven't had with Council.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: The point is, if someone doesn't think this is a worthy goal, then this discussion doesn't matter. But if you think it is a worthy goal, then this city can't think it's going to plant 250,000 or 300,000 trees without putting any money on the table that brings others to the room, that shows the citizens that we care, that shows the Tree Tenders we care, that shows University of Pennsylvania we care, that shows --

(Applause.)

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: -- Blue Cross and Blue Shield that we care, and that we, our obligation, is to leverage that money and not to plant -- if we plant 6,000 trees with two and a half million dollars, fire me next year when I come in here, because it ain't enough.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Mike --

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: It's not enough.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: -- nobody wants to fire you. We're all glad you're in your position, but based on what the Department has demonstrated it can achieve, you're not going to plant more than 6,000 trees next year, so I want to say I will not take you up on that offer.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: How much do you want to put on that? How much you got in your pocket?

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I will not take you up on that offer.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: I'm sorry. But, no, it's a different -- look, it's the way you look at this. It's the way you look at how the public sector behaves. If the public sector says it's going to cost us $425 to dig a hole and put a tree in, we're going to get 6,000 trees.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'm out of time. You've given your speech. You got the applause. One more question before the bell.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: That's not the point. I'm having a real debate.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Here we go: So how many of the positions in the Forestry and Environmental Resource Management position new divisions have been through the Civil Service process, there's a Civil Service exam ready for them, et cetera?

MR. FOCHT: Well, the existing staff that will be moved into that division have all been through the Civil Service process, because they're existing employees. Of the new positions we're creating, we have exams ready for almost all of the positions.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: You're not eliminating positions elsewhere, so it's not clear that there's any existing staff being moved into this division. If that's true, please provide the Chair with a chart that describes who is moving where and then where that leaves vacancies elsewhere.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS:

We'll do that.

MR. FOCHT: Fine.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Also, there's positions in here, I think we can agree, that aren't necessary, Public Relations Officer, $70,000 a year. The Mayor has six people who do public relations in his office. Maybe we can share one of those positions, et cetera. And as a practical matter, this is a year's worth of funding for 43 positions. How many positions -- if we were to appropriate all of this, how many of these positions would actually be hired on July 1st and have a full year's worth of salary?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: I don't know, to be honest with you. So, I mean, maybe these guys know, but I don't know the answer to that question.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Will half the positions be filled by six months from the end of the fiscal year?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS:

Here's what I would say: We could tell you in a very short order if -- first of all, I just want to talk -- there's some good points here about how we structured these jobs. So I think we could do a better job in using the additional money and creating the best product for the dollars. That was well articulated here in this body during this hearing, and we will reconsider the way we've put some of these -- the way we've created some of these positions. I think there's some very good points here.

But I agree that we need to -- you need to know what the process would look like and what would the sequence be and when would these positions be in place. That's a legitimate question. We owe you an answer.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And I would suggest that it's going to be half the number that's here in terms of being able to hire people throughout an entire year, 43 new people in your department. We've seen how long it takes to hire people in government. There's 18 positions we authorized last year that are maintenance/custodial positions that we haven't hired. So as a practical matter, you're asking for money that you're not going to spend, and given that --

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: I'm not sure of that, but as I say, we will let you know -- I'm not sure that's true, but we will be clear with you on the sequence.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Commissioner, I think you have company.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Pardon?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You have company joining you who would love to respond to the question.

(Witness approached witness table.)

MR. AGOSTINI: Good afternoon --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Hi,

Steve.

MR. AGOSTINI: -- Steve Agostini, Budget Director.

Councilmember, I think it's important to remember context. Last year we were going through a very significant cash problem where we were holding payments to vendors for sometimes months. There was a very significant review of all the positions that was taking place that I did on a weekly, if not daily basis. It was our intent to try and slow that process so that we could generate savings so that wouldn't turn into layoffs that were unnecessary.

I think in this context, given what I've heard from Councilmember Quinones-Sanchez and from others here with respect to the positions and the maintenance concerns here, I think it would be incumbent for us to be sure that those are positions that are moved as quickly as possible through this process so that they get filled.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So when within the budget year will all 43 people be hired?

MR. AGOSTINI: I think to the Commissioner's point, we will get back to you and let you know. I think --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: You would agree if they're not all hired on July 1st, that you don't need all the money that you're asking us to appropriate?

MR. AGOSTINI: But we account for that in salary savings in all the budgets. We already do that.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I don't understand what that means.

MR. AGOSTINI: Well, you and I have had this conversation a number of times. Each of the budgets has an assumption of some vacancies. It's the natural turnover. People will leave, people will get hired.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: These are 43 new positions.

MR. AGOSTINI: You're going to

see the salary savings number. There will be a deduction for the assumption that all positions are not going to be filled. It's just the natural friction, if you will, of people leaving, people being hired and not having a hundred percent of all positions filled a hundred percent of the time all year long.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: These are 43 new positions, though. So how quickly can we actually hire these 43 people?

MR. AGOSTINI: I think I'll leave that to the folks who have to manage that to get that to me so that I can then move that quickly and be sure that HR moves it quickly.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. So there are some savings here if we don't fill them all by July 1st; is that right, Commissioner?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Look, we're going to go as fast as we can. You'll know how fast as we can, and then you figure it out.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: We'll give it to you. We'll give the truth.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: You can provide that to the Chair.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Greenlee.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you, Madam President.

Good afternoon, everybody. I think I have just a real basic question here. I don't think it's been asked yet. Street tree trimmings, I think you're averaging -- Mark, I guess you're the best one to ask. About how many -- like how many years does it usually take to do a given block, on average?

MR. FOCHT: Councilman, we were working -- in the past when you and I have spoken about this, we were working to try and get on a seven-year pruning cycle. We're unfortunately nowhere near that. We're probably more at a 10- to 11-year pruning cycle, because funding keeps decreasing.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I understand. And who does that work? Are they Fairmount Park employees, contractors or some of both?

MR. FOCHT: They're contractors managed by Fairmount Park arborists.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And I think you kind of answered this, but in your -- in the perfect world, you would like to see seven years?

MR. FOCHT: Correct. Good arboricultural standards would have us pruning the whole street tree inventory in the City on a seven-year cycle.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Because I know that often is something we get complaints about. And it does add to other things, safety and all.

MR. FOCHT: Absolutely.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: All right. Thank you. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Sanchez.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank you.

I'm going to go back and forth with this around maintenance. Commissioner, every year the Department creates a list of outstanding maintenance issues by building, kind of your capital plan. Have you guys updated that recently?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yeah. We actually -- I actually meet monthly to update that.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: It would be important if you can submit to the Chair the listing of your building maintenance needs or capital improvement needs, because I think as part of this discussion as we discuss this budget and potentially moving things around, I want us and my Council colleagues in particular to see kind of the backlog that's created around some of this maintenance stuff that we -- oh, look, Councilwoman Tasco has her list. But I think it would be important so that we can have it in the context of this budget discussion.

And then Councilman Greenlee talked about the trees. I also think it would be important for us as part of this budget discussion to look at the backlog as it relates to dead trees, because that's an issue, those of us who are District Councilpeople, get every day, and I want to make sure that we keep that in the context of this discussion around the budget.

MR. FOCHT: Councilwoman, certainly the Parks' current backlog for dead and dangerous tree removals is 1,672 as of the middle or so of last week. That's in part again to the decreasing in funds. I'll just give you a bit of context for that.

In Fiscal Year 2006, we had $1.7 million for tree removal. So we were doing about 2,500 trees that year. This year we're down to $554,000 in tree removal money. So we're down around that 630 number.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Again, I would strongly encourage you, particularly as again you revisit some of the positions that Councilman Green had talked about, that these are some of the areas -- because I believe this is your Class 200 allocation.

MR. FOCHT: Correct.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I don't think your Class 200 allocation kind of addresses some of the issues with the backlog. Those are the issues that are important to many of us, because I think that -- again, I understand the need to create an infrastructure. If you look at us and you compare us nationally with other parks, we could be putting more money in there. And, again, we will -- I will commit again to be a strong advocate, but I do want to make sure that we're allocating money in areas that impact folks the most and I'd like to see us put more money into that Class 200 classification. I don't think this budget reflects what we hear every day.

And then there was one more issue, and I guess you could submit this to the Chair. I'd like to get a listing, because I couldn't find it in your budget as it's reflected and other budgets in terms of your grants revenue, what of the grants revenue we get that is leveraged with our general operating. I think, again, this is one of the departments that when you look at the budget, we don't see the leveraging, because this budget presentation doesn't allow you to do it, but it would be important for you to show my Council colleagues where that grants revenue is leveraged. It has to be leveraged with our general operating budget. I think that's important, particularly as it relates, for instance, to our older adult centers and how we leverage PCA money with our General Fund money. And in our programming with our Youth Works piece with the teen centers, I think, again, that's not -- there's no opportunity for you to show that here, and I think it's important that Council understand that it's our teen center and then in particularly some of the work that's been done around our ice rinks and the money that's leveraged there. Again, this budget does not allow you to appropriately reflect. And I think where you can tie in some of these positions to the leveraging of that money, I think it would be important in the conversation of this budget.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: We'll be happy to do that.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: We'll make sure we get you that information.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: People

agree that this budget does not allow you sometimes -- it limits it, but I think it's important, again, if we're going to talk about any reclassifications in these budgets, I think there's a lot of areas where we need to put more.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Tasco.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.

We're going to talk about my favorite subject, and that's the Dell. It's going to operate this summer?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yes. And actually Councilwoman Miller actually mentioned it, and I thanked you, but you had stepped out for a second, for your appropriation, your commitment to the Dell. The season will begin July the 12th. That will be our first concert. We're planning to have eight shows this season. We're excited. We're looking forward to it, and it was a result of the commitment to quite a few of the Councilmembers here.

Councilwoman Blackwell wasn't here either when I thanked you for your commitment to the Robin Hood Dell East.

And so I think you're going to have a wonderful concert season. They're in the process now of actually putting the seats in. It's going to look like a new amphitheater when you see it.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Great. Sounds great. Who is going to manage the Dell?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Well, I am. I have some assistance, some staff members that have been with the Department for years and that have been a part of the process. And our process also allows us to hire various people that have worked with the Dell for years to come in to do promotion, to do advertising. And so the RFPs are actually out right now in order for us to bring those people in to work along with me to make sure we have the right acts and we're running smoothly.

COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: That sounds real good.

I think that is my last question. I couldn't remember. I said how could I not ask about the Dell.

Madam President, I think that's it for me.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Goode.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Commissioner DiBerardinis, I made the statement a few minutes ago that it appears that you want to give the contract to the same people, after which Mr. Focht pretty much confirmed that statement. Is that what you heard?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: I don't think that's what I heard, but can I comment generally on the question? I do think we have a responsibility. I mean, I think to your point earlier about our responsibility --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: I heard Mr. Focht say that you can't change over contractors too quickly or too often, and so that says to me that he's planning on using the same old contractors.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Can I, Councilman Goode, give you an example of something that the Department of Recreation has been doing for quite a few years and I believe that --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Commissioner, if it's related to the question of whether you plan on using the same old contractors or not, because that's the question.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: It's relating to that, sir.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Go ahead.

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: And so the Department of Recreation -- I may be throwing myself under the bus here, but just to comment to what you're saying, the Department of Recreation has been using a contractor for 20-some-odd plus years, and the contract was just signed when I started in June of '08, and it's a contract -- it's a pretty hefty contract. But what we do have the ability to do and I found out because we made some changes to one of our turf contracts last year, and by making those changes to the turf contracts, we bumped out a minority participant.

And so to your comment, we do have some responsibility and we can give some input when it comes around to these contracts. Because of our input, I bumped someone out. We asked for some additional work to be done around the curb sites, around the weeding and work that wasn't being done, and because of that, the job was a little larger than the minority contractor was used to, so they didn't get the contract.

And so if I'm able to put language in the contract to bump someone out, I'm also able to put language in the contract to make sure that there's some inclusiveness as well.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: But you can't do that and Mr. Focht can't do that and Commissioner DiBerardinis can't do that if you claim that they are multi-year contracts, which by law are not legal.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: By law are?

COUNCILMAN GOODE: I guess my next question is, you claim that there are multi-year contracts up to four years, Mr. Focht, is that true?

MR. FOCHT: Councilman, I said the contract is a one-year contract with renewals.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: That's not

what you said, but that's what I understood. So it's not a four-year contract?

MR. FOCHT: No.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: It's a one-year contract that has a contract term that begins at the beginning of the fiscal year, ends at the end of the fiscal year, which means that you're not locked in to that contractor for two years or three years or four years?

MR. FOCHT: Correct.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: So if it is your plan to try to build capacity of disadvantaged businesses, if it's your plan that you're going to be able to increase participation by showing people the work that needs to be done over several years, you can start that next year. And so is that goal of 12 percent, which is still not clear who actually set it, a low number or not? And my guess is that it is, but even if it's not a low number for Fiscal Year '11, my question is, if we're going to take you at your word that you're actually trying to build the capacity of disadvantaged businesses to participate but you claim you can't do it right away because you have to actually rotate them in and it's a question about whether you're going to begin to rotate them in, then tell me what your long-term plan is. If it actually is 12 percent for next year, what is it the following year and what's the year after that, and do you actually have a real plan to increase participation? I think not. I think my statement is still true. For the most part, your plan -- and it may just be Mr. Focht -- you plan on using the same contractors year in and year out.

MR. FOCHT: On the specifics of that contract, Councilman, I apologize if I said something that misled you. That's certainly not our intent. The contracts are one-year contracts with the option for renewal, and the specific contract I was referring to has a 51 percent minority participation.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: You said all that already. So the question I'm asking is this: You made the statement -- you used the term "four years," did you not? Did I just hear that or did you use the term "four years"?

MR. FOCHT: It's a one-year contract with three one-year extensions.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Did you use the term "four years" or not?

MR. FOCHT: I may have said four years, Councilman.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Okay. You used the term "four years." You can't be honest about that. You used the term "four years" because you believed that you were going to give this person a one-year contract and then renew it three times. That's just the truth.

MR. FOCHT: Correct. That's the truth on a contract that I was referencing that has 51 percent minority participation.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: I'm done. He's not even telling the truth.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Let me try to talk as sort of my responsibility for both departments, and so let me try to put a little light on this.

Number one is that I know this was a big issue in Council, this whole question. I would say that we want to be more serious. We do have a responsibility. So we can't say Procurement, it's them. We can't point any fingers to anybody. We have to do as much as we can within the bounds that are set up. And if somebody asked me what are those -- where's that barrier there, I'm not sure, but we're going to find out, and that we will do everything in our power and within the authority which we can do to increase women and minority participation in the Department's contracts. It makes sense. It's the right thing. So we're going to do it.

I wish -- again, I'll talk for me. I'm not talking for either of these guys. I'm talking for me. This is sort of my first budget year, real budget year. We have to do better. That number is not enough.

So my expectation is, we will do more. My expectation is, we will do more. And we have to look at this, we have to look at recruitment and we have to look at sort of how people move up in our system. So there's three areas that I think if we don't pay attention to, they get away from you. They'll get away from you. No matter how good-intentioned you are, if you don't pay attention on a regular basis to those three things, women and minority contractors, recruitment of high-quality diverse employee workforce and the track of those folks into leadership, if you don't pay attention to it, you won't succeed. It's that simple.

As we build this new department, we're going to be dedicated to those three things and build the management structure, that we pay attention to them every day and that the leadership in the Department is on it every day. That's the way we'll succeed. Short of that, we won't succeed.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you, Madam President.

Let me go on record by saying we appreciate a department head making it clear that you're taking this seriously and you're not relying purely on OEO to do the due diligence, when really, as Councilman Goode has said repeatedly for the past ten years, ultimately you know what your needs are, you know what type of contractors you use for your department, so, therefore, you have to have the responsibility to move the needle. Simply move the needle.

So for you to be forthright about that is encouraging, and we would like to hear that type of commitment across City department heads. We don't have that yet.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Does your department have a contract with the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: No.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Do not?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Do not.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Have you had a chance to give any thinking to linking up Class A rec centers with schools that have no physical facilities that allow for physical fitness activities at all?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Not that particular item, but we have recently begun a series of meetings with the School District to look at both sort of where the connective tissue between the two institutions or departments and -- that institution and our department, and how do we explore sort of what we do out of school that supports their curriculum. I think that's the trick, finding -- if we're really going to work with the School District, how do we help kids be better ready to learn. I think that's the thing we have to move towards.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: So how do we do that, we're under discussion with them around that. We're also under discussion around partnering with them, in addition to the programming side, to the physical side and how do we help them green up their facilities and how do we help them become part of this big discussion about trees, be part of that campaign that could help the City green up and help us leverage our dollars to support them to be more green and plant more trees on their campuses. So we're on a couple of levels.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: In the exploration stage, at best?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Right. We're early in that discussion.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Will your department benefit at all from the tobacco dollars that are coming to the Health Department specifically around obesity-related initiatives?

COMMISSIONER SLAWSON: Yes, we are benefiting. We were allotted one staff person that will be running a health and nutrition program throughout 100 of our facilities via the Health Department's grant.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. Switch gears. Urban gardening, just give us an update on where that is within the Department.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: We

are partnering with any number of non-profits to -- particularly with the rec centers on fallow, underutilized land. So like recently at the Carousel House, Teens 4 Good. And the Department partnered up with ShopRite, Brown ShopRite, a bunch of groups that now there's a series of agricultural plazas that not only provide food for the supermarket but also help the kids sort of get sort of vocationally oriented and have some good, high-quality programming.

We want to do more of that through the system. Some of the existing farmland in the Park, we're going to convert some of that to commercial, small commercial plots. So we're trying to move us up not only around food and nutrition, not only around local production, but also around youth development as well. So we're trying to hit two or three or four big policy questions with this single approach.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So that

currently is a pilot program?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Yeah, but we hope to do more. We're in three or four -- East Poplar, Carousel House, the Manatawna, Awbury Park. So there's four or five, but we're slowly building it out. We expect this year to be a banner year in terms of how do we connect around quality food access, nutrition, education and youth development.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Keep us updated, if you will. Next year report back on what the yield is in your conversations and discussions with the School District.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Okay.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I think that is it for me.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

Are there any other questions

from members of the Committee?

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Seeing no one, thank you all so very much.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: This Committee will stand in recess until 1:45. Thank you.

(Luncheon recess.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon. The Committee of the Whole is now back in session.

Our next group to testify?

MR. McPHERSON: Is the Atwater Kent Museum.

(Witness approached witness table.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon. Kindly identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

MS. SAND: Council President Verna and members of City Council, I'm Viki Sand, Executive Director of the Philadelphia History Museum at the Atwater Kent. I am here to present testimony in support of the Philadelphia History Museum budget of $248,630. This represents no change in Class 100 funds appropriated in Fiscal Year 2010, and funds support the following positions: Executive Director, Curator, Registrar and Municipal Guard. The budget continues to include $50,000 in Class 500 funds for the consolidated, long-term collection storage facility.

I also want to recognize that the Museum receives essential administrative services from the Recreation Department, and I would like to thank Commissioner Susan Slawson and Michael DiBerardinis.

The Museum has been assisted in achieving its major goals of collection storage as well as renovation to the

Museum building by the Department of Public Property, Commissioner Joan Schlotterbeck.

Everyone associated with the Philadelphia History Museum applauds the commitment of the Mayor and Council to support Philadelphia's cultural community, and we appreciate that there are no cuts to the Museum in this year's budget, and I appreciate that. We all appreciate it. I would like to recognize the support of Councilman Frank DiCicco in whose district the Museum is located, Councilmember Bill Greenlee, who is the Council's representative on the Museum Board and has been one of our strongest advocates for re-branding the Museum as the Philadelphia History Museum, and he has been a strong voice for our public outreach efforts. I'd also like to thank Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown, the Chair of the Arts and Culture Committee, whose knowledge of education and opportunities for cultural collaboration has strengthened our community programming.

I will dispense with much of my testimony since it's there, but I do want to draw attention to our four major objectives that we have listed for Council and the work that we've been doing over the past year.

In June, I am delighted to report that our $5.8 million renovation to the Museum building is on schedule and will be complete. Approximately 70 percent of that building, of that effort, relates to increased infrastructure capacity, including environmental, safety and accessibility requirements, but for the first time in recent memory, there will be a media-driven, interactive, must-see overview of Philadelphia history and a Philadelphia Voices gallery curated by outside individuals and community groups, two new galleries, a behind-the-scenes collection study facility or area so that people can have up close and personal looks at the collection and collection objects. We have everything in this collection from the wampum belt received by the Lenape tribe to the uniform that Jimmy Rollins gave the Museum from the 2008 championship season, and as I brought two years ago, Mike Schmidt's jersey to show City Council members. I am delighted that in this, we have Jimmy Rollins' batting glove and we also have his jersey.

(Applause.)

MS. SAND: My point in sharing that is that we are not just about 17th and 18th century history. We are about up-to-the-minute history. And on Opening Day, it feels particularly appropriate.

This is also -- let me just say one thing about the renovation.

It's important to know that the Museum building was limiting every opportunity that the Museum had to build sustainable programs in the 21st century.

The building was not accessible for those with mobility disabilities. It was not possible to have both public hours and have school groups visit the Museum. Limited space meant that we could no longer do and participate in a major professional development program with the School District of Philadelphia. We had no way to regulate heat, cooling and humidification of the environment in the building to preserve Philadelphia's iconic objects, and we did not have electrical capacity or IT capacity to meet the needs of a contemporary office, let alone the kinds of interactivity that are expected of family audiences.

This year we also occupied the Collection Research Center, and for the first time in a very, very long time, the Museum -- it was able to care for the hundred thousand items that are in its collection. Not only the Historical Society of Pennsylvania collection that added to the Museum 300 -- to fill out the full 300 years of Philadelphia history, but also the Balch Institute, also the Insurance Company of North America. So we are now able to link together the histories from William Penn and George Washington to immigrant trunks, remnants of industrial history and the sporting life of the City.

We have continued during this renovation program, with greatly reduced staff, to work with middle and high school students as part of the National History Day Collaborative. We worked closely during this time with over 200 children to help them, in an intensive way, really develop their thinking skills, their research skills and all of the thought processes that better prepare them to be good students, but also to meet their personal goals as adults. This year over a thousand students participated at the National Constitution Center in March.

And I would like to also then

address the fourth point, having to do with the re-branding of the Philadelphia History Museum. This is -- while we continue to honor the Museum's founder, we believe that this new name better conveys to diverse audiences the Museum's purpose. We also believe that the grid included in the logo draws upon the City's earliest day and suggests the continuing need to review and renew the values essential for an engaged citizenry and a dynamic, vibrant environment where all people have the opportunity for social justice, economic opportunity and an understanding of a shared heritage as Philadelphians.

Last year, along with others, the Philadelphia History Museum absorbed up to 30 percent cuts in the City budget. We applaud the Administration and the Council efforts to look creatively for opportunities to generate revenue rather than to make additional cuts. In the coming year, improvements in the operating systems to the museums will add significantly to our operating budget, and we are looking at a full range of sources to support this new effort. And we would say straightforwardly that further cuts in City-supported staff and operations at the City History Museum at this time would seriously undermine our efforts to preserve core services, as the Museum is working to make the collection accessible as never before and to reopen the building to a significantly increased attendance and program participation.

Let me speak to an issue that I know many Council -- the Council is very concerned about and has raised issues, and, that is, the Administration's goal of 25 percent minority, women and disabled-owned business participation in City contracting. In 2009 as part of its preparation to receive City capital grant funds of $250,000 toward the building renovation, we met with the compliance officers of the Minority Business

Enterprise Council and filed an equal opportunity plan that was accepted at 20 percent MBE, ten percent WBE and two percent DSBE and 60 percent utilization of Philadelphia-based contractors. Because of the specialized nature of the renovation, it was agreed that this would be somewhat lower than what the City's goals were, and as of February, I've listed where we are on this. We have 17 percent MBE, ten percent WBE and zero percent DBE. It's our aspiration to meet the City's goals and other aspects of the renovation, and we are working with the Museum's construction manager towards that end. It's important that I state toward this purpose that the Museum's agent for the project is a minority-owned business and we are working to expand our pool of professional counsel, and a woman who is one of our key people in terms of our conservation effort is an African American woman.

I think that the issues of

staffing the Museum I think is critically important, and we are laying in place as we increase the staff both particularly for our visitor services positions as well as our professional staff to improve what has been the makeup of the Museum staff, and it is something that is very much central to our thinking about the future.

Before concluding my testimony, I want to express my appreciation to members of City Council with whom I have had the pleasure of working over the past eight years. Your personal kindness and commitment to help the City History Museum serve all Philadelphians has been important to our success, and I hope that you too take a good deal of satisfaction in our achievement.

This concludes my testimony and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Greenlee.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you, Madam President.

I more have a statement than a question, but I'll be brief. As Ms. Sand said, I've been on the Board either representing Councilman Cohen for a number of years or on my own, and I've seen a tremendous improvement in what is now, I'm happy to call, the Philadelphia History Museum. And with the hope that I'm not embarrassing Viki, I think a lot of people may know she's moving on. She's going to be leaving the Museum to pursue other goals, and I can really say the improvements I've seen over the years -- and there's been a lot of people involved with it, and I think once it opens up, it's going to not be a hidden treasure anymore, but a real treasure for the City. But I think if we had to wrap that up in two words about why it worked, the two words are "Viki Sand," because she just did a tremendous job in just building up the Museum and making it an important feature of Philadelphia.

So I was going to put a resolution in barring her from leaving, but I guess we can't do that, so I'll just say thank you for everything you did, both for the Museum and just for the City of Philadelphia generally.

Thank you, Viki.

MS. SAND: Thank you, Councilman.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We certainly want to thank you for all of your years of service and hard work and want to wish you the very best for your future endeavors.

Ms. Sand, has the grand reopening date been set for the Museum?

If so, when?

MS. SAND: The target date is March 2011 for the public opening. The building renovation itself will be completed -- we expect to move back into the building in July.

There are a number of environmental systems that need to be balanced out over the next two or three months before we bring objects -- after it opens before we bring objects back into the building, and it is our intention in the fall of 2010 to do a series of tours, special tours, programs and activities, but the official public opening is scheduled for March 2011.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you, Madam President.

Good afternoon. Just one question, and then I would like to echo the remarks of my colleagues. On Page 2 of your testimony, speaking to the Administration's commitment and strategic plan around OEO and inclusion, you stipulate that because of the specialized nature of the renovation, we are somewhat behind our goal. So speak to what that specialization is and provide detail. You mention that you're having difficulty finding someone with that particular area of expertise, so state what that is and then tell us what your efforts have been.

MS. SAND: The specific issues are that -- and the reason why we were granted a somewhat reduced level in terms of the goal was because of the environmental controls. So much of the work of the building deals with specialized HVAC systems, and it was recognized that there are not so many people who provide that kind of work. So that's the essential. And I'd be happy to provide you with detail of specifically who the companies are and what was done to meet that goal.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We would appreciate that. And that is customary that we're asking across City government.

MS. SAND: Right.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So then let me echo Councilman Greenlee's remarks. I had a chance to visit with the Museum shortly upon your arrival and then learned of and saw your vision, and here it is eight years later and you've achieved that and more. So know that we appreciate what I call stick-to-itiveness, because it was no easy undertaking, and deeply appreciate all that you have done to grow the awareness of the Philadelphia History Museum and bid you well with the next chapter of your life. Thank you very much.

MS. SAND: Thank you. Thank you, Councilwoman.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you, Madam President.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Madam President.

I don't have questions. I likewise want to certainly say thank you, Viki, for all that you are and the leadership you've provided and for making us excited about that Museum. It's become such a major point of Philadelphia history, and we're excited about changing the name, and whenever I describe it, I talk about you can stand on your street, and people are always excited. And it's just been that and all that is above it. It's just been wonderful. You've made it come alive for us, and we say thank you for all your years of service.

MS. SAND: Thank you. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Any other questions or comments from members of the Committee?

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Seeing none, again, thank you so very much and good luck to you.

MS. SAND: Thank you very much. I appreciate the opportunity. I must say that there's nothing that pleases me more than when Philadelphians walk into the Museum and see something of their own lives and start to smile. The Council has been an essential partner, and I really appreciate all of the courtesies that I've received.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Our next department?

MR. McPHERSON: The Free Library of Philadelphia.

(Witnesses approached witness table.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon. Welcome. Kindly identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MR. HEIM: Council President, I'm Robert Heim, Chair of the Board of Trustees.

MS. REARDON: I'm Siobhan Reardon, President and Director of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: And I'm Mike DiBerardinis, Commissioner of Parks and Recreation and special advisor to the Mayor on the Free Library.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I think we've seen you before.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Yes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Please proceed.

MR. HEIM: Council President Verna and members of Council, as I said, I'm Robert Heim, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Free Library, and I'm pleased to appear again this year and very much appreciate the opportunity to speak briefly on behalf of the trustees, which, as you know, is an independent Board under our City Charter and the governing body of the Library. Joining me this afternoon are a number of trustees who wanted to be here for the testimony. Sherry Swirsky, who is Vice Chair of the Board, is here; Stephanie Naidoff; Shelly Yanoff, all trustees are attending, as is Alla Kera (ph), former Chair of the Board of Trustees and now a member of the Foundation Board. And I'm also pleased to see that Amy Dougherty, who is the Director of the Friends of the Free Library, is here, as well as Sherrie Cohen, who is a very important member of the Friends and, of course, the daughter of our cherished longtime but unfortunately deceased former Councilmember, David Cohen.

So on behalf of the 22 members of the Board of Trustees, I first want to extend my thanks to City Council and to the Mayor and to the gentleman to my right, Michael DiBerardinis, the Deputy Mayor, for all of the support that they have extended to the Library, that all of you have extended to the Library over the course of the last year, support that has helped us keep the libraries operating and providing materials and programs to City residents. We know that you have heard from your constituents about the importance of these services, and despite budget cuts, we have worked hard to continue to deliver them. At the same time, the Board of Trustees is committed to success in new areas. We are an active body, providing not only oversight of the policies and operations of the Free Library, but also essential advocacy for the Library and engagement in a wide range of hands-on services.

And we want you to know that in these difficult economic times, the Board of Trustees has not just sat on its hands and waited for government to come to it. For the first time, we held a legislative breakfast in Harrisburg, and our goal was to inform state legislators of the range of services that the Free Library provides and to let them know how much our customers and our constituents value their investment in our work, as well as the investment of City Council and the City and the Mayor.

I am pleased to report that attendance at this legislative breakfast was substantial. It exceeded our expectations, even if it was at 8 o'clock in the morning. And we had legislators, I think some 30, 35 legislators attended from different counties, such as Blair, Centre and Lehigh and, of course, some of our own legislators attended. We talked about how important libraries are generally across the State, but we emphasized, of course, our own library and what we do here for the citizens of Philadelphia. But the interest in libraries on the part of the state legislators who attended the breakfast was high. They appreciated that we came. They appreciated that we asked them to hold our funding and not to cut it any further, and they got the message. And we intend to continue giving them the message over and over again, emphasizing the importance of libraries to the people of Philadelphia and to the people of this Commonwealth.

Another way that we're raising the profile of the Library is getting the word out about important areas of concentration. In addition to providing reading assistance, literacy services, which are so very important to our population, and after-school homework help for our children, we are targeting five key audiences: job seekers; small businesses; new Americans, new citizens, new Americans; pre-kindergarten children and the digitally savvy, which I must say are mostly young people, but there are a few of us who are kind of catching on. The success of each of these groups is

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

integral to the City's economic recovery and ongoing prosperity, an effort we are committed to help lead. Board members have joined the working groups devoted to enhancing services to each of these populations. So each one of these core groups has trustees who are working with the staff to provide ideas, to provide input and to make sure that we're staying on target, and we are excited about this new direction, and Siobhan Reardon will talk about it a little more in her comments.

I want to say -- and I think all of you know -- that a valuable way to learn about our libraries is to look to actually go out and tour them, something that the trustees have paid particular attention to in these last few years. So before or in conjunction with each trustees' meetings and sometimes in between, we get a small van and the trustees who are able to make it come out and they get in the van and we travel around to three or four libraries, and we meet with the library staff, and it is a fascinating experience. It's very insightful. I particularly like talking to the security guards, because they have such a detached but informed and interesting observations about the operations of the Library. And so we go and we visit as many branches as we can in the morning, and we encourage any City Council member who might be interested in attending one of our van trips, we offer you the opportunity and we'd love to have you with us.

As you know, each one of our 54 branches serves a distinct neighborhood and confronts different issues, and the better informed the trustees are, the better we can do our jobs.

I should mention that the trustees work hand in glove with the Free Library Foundation Board of Directors, which are charged with securing private funds to support the work of the Library.

These private funds, these dollars, allow us to launch program initiatives that we just wouldn't be able to do without their help. The Free Library Festival is one. The highly successful lecture series in which we bring authors in from all around the country to speak to audiences is another. And, of course, the Foundation has been charged with raising the funds to build a much-needed expansion to the Parkway Central Library, which we believe can be a centerpiece for learning and knowledge transfer for adults and children, I guess children of all ages. So we've raised over a hundred million dollars in that regard. We're moving aggressively to seek the necessary funds for groundbreaking, and we hope to be able to do that within the next 12 months.

So we look forward to continuing to work with City Council in the next year to ensure that all Philadelphians have access to the Library services that they so clearly value. And, once again, thank you, each and every one of you, for all that you do for the Library.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much.

MS. REARDON: Council President Verna and members of the Council, I am Siobhan Reardon, President and Director of the Free Library of Philadelphia. I am delighted to be here this afternoon to report to you that the operations of the Free Library remain strong. While this past year has been challenging, I want to commend the employees of the Free Library, the Board of Trustees, the Foundation Board of Directors and all whom have risen to the challenges to continue to deliver outstanding service to the people of Philadelphia. I want to publicly thank each and every one of them, all of you here in the Chamber and the Mayor and for everybody's efforts on behalf of the Free Library.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

The Free Library of Philadelphia has a wealth of resources in materials, programs, spaces and staff. We are committed to employing these and other assets to help lead the City to economic recovery and ongoing prosperity. We have pursued this goal in a number of ways over the past years and have ambitious plans to enhance this work in the future. To this end, we are seeking nearly $33 million in City funds for Fiscal Year 2011.

The Free Library's most noteworthy accomplishments over the past year has been the level of service that we have been able to deliver to our customers. Through a thoughtful redesign of the branch schedule and redeployment of staff, we have been able to provide library services across six days a week throughout the City. Nearby branches are paired, such as our Queen Memorial Library at 23rd and Federal and South Philadelphia at Broad and Morris, with one open Monday through Friday and the other open Tuesday through Saturday. This schedule maximizes our resources and attempts to limit the inconvenience to our customers. As we do every summer, all branch locations will be open Monday through Friday beginning June 7th, 2010. Regional libraries will continue to open Tuesday through Saturdays, and our library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped is always open Monday through Friday 9:00 to 5:00 year round.

One of the challenges in ensuring a stable schedule has been staffing, due largely to the number of positions lost in the Fiscal Year 2009 budget, along with normal resignations and attrition. A particular challenge is the availability of municipal guards, who are responsible not only for security but for the custodial tasks and general maintenance of the building. After an unfortunate delay, we expect to have eight full-time and six seasonal guards on board by the end of the month. We are optimistic that this will help to ease the number of unexpected closings.

At the Parkway Central Library, we have instituted extended hours so that we now are open until 9:00 p.m. four days a week. This is a real boon to working families and others who are not able to get to the library during the day and keeps us in compliance with State standards. We have managed this extra evening by keeping individual departments staffed when usage is heaviest and consolidating operations in other departments when they are less so. For the first time this year, the Library will offer seven-day service during the summer by keeping the Central Library open Sundays from 1:00 to 5:00. Youth and family programming will be added in order to make the library a destination and to continue to offer new entertainment options for the people using the Parkway.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

Over the past year, we have made a number of capital improvements to our branches, many of which are over a hundred years old. There are new heating systems at both the Nicetown-Tioga and Eastwick branches, a new transformer at our Overbrook Park Library, and Kingsessing has been spruced up with fresh plaster, paint and lighting. There will be new doors and a more welcoming entrance at our McPherson Square shortly. The Central Music Department has been renovated. The net effect, according to the Philadelphia Inquirer, is a brighter, more highly functioning library. All of these improvements have been critical for the safety and comfort of our staff and users.

To better serve a growing population of older adults, the Free Library has opened a dedicated space for seniors. Central Senior Services provides state-of-the-art information resources on health, the arts and business, five laptop computers, an Access Technology workstation, and materials that cater to an older clientele. We are also proud of the support we have provided to the high school and post-secondary students. The number of federal work study students has nearly doubled to 55, allowing us to place one in every single library. Additionally, each one of the last year's Teen Leadership Assistants, high school students who work in the LEAP After School Program, graduated on time, and over 95 percent went on to study at a post-secondary institution.

The Free Library continues to maximize its usage of the federal e-rate program, a program that reimburses schools and libraries for their technology improvements. With this incentive, the Free Library has built a high-speed broadband fiber network for the entire library system and improved Internet service speed by 450 percent.

We have spent nearly three and a half million dollars on these and other accomplishments, 90 percent of which has been returned to the City.

The Free Library has embarked on the development of a new strategic plan, which will guide our work in the coming years. While this process is underway, we have begun to refine our work in order to more effectively meet our commitment to lead the City to economic prosperity. We are focusing our work on enhancing our services to five targeted audiences that Bob discussed just a minute ago: jobseekers, small businesses and start-up entrepreneurs, pre-kindergarten children, new Americans and the digitally savvy. Each is critical to the City's ability to recover and to grow, and the Library has a meaningful role to play in meeting their standards.

I'm going to skip through each of the individual areas, as it's in my testimony. You can read through that. I'm going to skip over to the section called Other Initiatives.

Literacy underpins our work in all of the five targeted areas, as well as every other part of our -- and all of the work that we do, and the Free Library is reaffirming its role and commitment to its preeminence in all that we do. We have just received funding to train 60 teens to be literacy coaches this summer. They will then be prepared to work with the children in our LEAP program as the program transitions to a literacy-focused, year-round, out-of-school-time program. Our work with adults is critical as well, with estimates of the City's illiteracy rate ranging from nearly 20 percent of the City's working age population being below the most basic levels to as many as 50 percent lacking in the skills necessary to advance their careers. Numerous studies have also demonstrated the link between low literacy and truancy, dropping out of school and even incarceration. Working hand in hand with the Mayor, the Free Library is reinvigorating the Mayor's Commission on Literacy and is conducting a national search to recruit and hire an Executive Director to lead this effort.

The expansion of the Parkway Central Library will enable us to pursue these goals even more creatively and aggressively. A significantly larger children's department, discrete space for small business and entrepreneurs, a new auditorium and many more public commuters are just a few of the improvements that are being planned for the expanded campus. We appreciate the City's support of this project and are optimistic that we will be able to raise the additional remaining funds to get to groundbreaking this year.

I thank you for your time and attention, and I'm happy to answer any questions that you have.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Goode.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you, Madam President.

Good afternoon, Ms. Reardon.

MS. REARDON: Good afternoon.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Let's deal with participation goals for disadvantaged businesses. First, who set the goal of five percent?

MS. REARDON: We did it with the Office of Opportunity.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: You recommended that goal to them or they recommended that goal to you?

MS. REARDON: We recommended the goal to them.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: And you recommended that goal to them based upon what?

MS. REARDON: Just past

history.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Past history means that you don't expect history to change.

MS. REARDON: Well, I guess at the time the goal was set, yes, but I think as we advance in this current year, that we've taken a look at our contracting.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: So let's jump past goals and let's deal with what's real. There are about $2 million in contract dollars. The same $2 million last year, the same $2 million the year before, the same $2 million the year before that. It's roughly the same. What you're suggesting is that $1.9 million of it has to go to businesses owned by white men. Explain that.

MS. REARDON: We're not suggesting that the businesses --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: That's absolutely what you're suggesting. What you're saying is -- the numbers don't

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

lie. It's about $2 million. You're saying that only $50,000 to $100,000 can be given to businesses that are not owned by white men. That's what you're saying.

MS. REARDON: Well --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Explain it. You know what the contracts are. It's the same $2 million in contracts. Just explain it.

MS. REARDON: Well, it's hard to defend, and so I'm not going to try.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: It's impossible to defend.

MS. REARDON: Right. So let me just explain that --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: And you said you set the goal. You said that OEO didn't do it.

MS. REARDON: We set the goal because we have a consistent level of number of contracts that --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Very quickly. The same two million in Fiscal Year '08, OEO set a goal of 15 percent, but that goal was not reached. That goal was not reached not because the capacity was not there necessarily, but because someone chose not to try to reach the goal. And so because you only achieved 4.1 percent, you set a goal at five percent, knowing that that's not a real goal. You just don't intend on doing any more than that. You might not do any more than 4.1 percent.

So, in other words, what you're really saying in reality is that $1.95 million out of $2 million in contracts must go to businesses owned by white men.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: If I could, again, to echo sort of my earlier testimony, again, I think we -- that's the Administration, the Library, staff and the trustees -- need to look at what we can do, what we have to do in order to improve these numbers in the intermediate and certainly in the short term and intermediate and then have a long-term plan.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Let me ask a more fun question.

MS. REARDON: Can I just jump in there, too?

COUNCILMAN GOODE: I'm going to ask a more fun question. What's the $50,000 for? It's the same $50,000 you want to give to some business this year. What's it for?

MS. REARDON: It's for any number of things, and actually --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Fifty thousand dollars can't be for any number of things. It could be small order purchases, but what's the $50,000 for?

MS. REARDON: All we have our contracts for is maintenance, so it's some sort of maintenance contract. But what's not in here -- I just want to jump in. What you don't see in our numbers is the fact that we pay over $400,000 a year for a minority contractor on security guards. That's not reflected.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: I know that.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

Top of the Clock.

MS. REARDON: Top of the Clock, exactly right.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: What's the $50,000 for?

MS. REARDON: It's all over -- it's a number of smaller contracts.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: What's the 1.95 million for?

MS. REARDON: Almost all of them are for maintenance, elevator systems --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Let's start with maintenance. How is that contracting done?

MS. REARDON: We submit each year to the City's procurement officer the fact that we have a cleaning contract or a security guard contract, and the City's Procurement Office bids the project for us.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: So, in other words, if you do not see the participation in those maintenance contracts, you don't go back to Procurement and say, We need more diversity?

MS. REARDON: We have not in the past. That's not to say that we are not going to be more proactive about it in the future, which we are absolutely going to commit to.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Mr. DiBerardinis, does that make sense?

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: Well, look, clearly, these numbers aren't good. They're not good enough. And, again, look, I've been around, so we have to -- been around a year, so I have to take some responsibility for this. And, again, I think if we don't pay attention to this as a government, we're not going to move it. So I'm again -- I hate to sound like a broken record, but the leadership, including myself, Bob and the trustees and the executive staff of the Library, we have to pay attention to this day to day, so --

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: See, what we've learned in your budget process is that women and people of color can't provide daycare services, they can't mow the lawn, they can't do maintenance, and we'll find out within the next couple of days with L&I that we can't even demolish buildings.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Greenlee.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you, Madam President.

Good afternoon, everyone.

Ms. Reardon, I guess this question is really for you. On the issue of hours of the branches, I know personally I probably hear less complaints than I do, but you still hear them, that sometimes the branches are closed in an erratic kind of way. I know you say in your testimony you're optimistic that the hiring of the guards will help ease the number of unexpected closings. Could you get into that just a little bit more as far as what you mean?

MS. REARDON: Sure. I'm going to remind you that the Free Library of Philadelphia has lost over 150 positions since 2009. So keeping our library operations operating effectively, we have -- we require four people are there to operate the library, which is open an average of seven to eight hours a day. And one of the staff is a municipal guard because of the fact that that position both cleans and secures the building. When we don't have a four-person minimum, one of them being a security guard, we will not open the library, because we are concerned about the safety and security of the facility.

So what has happened is that when we don't meet that four-person minimum, we're going to -- we do close the library. But we've had an issue where we were prepared to higher the guards. We had an issue working with a Civil Service list that wasn't particularly correct. So we're hoping at the end of the month we will have everybody back in place. The municipal guards will help ease the number of hours that we're closed, but because we're down so many positions, it's not going to be the overall elixir to end the issue, but it will go a long way to keeping our libraries on a more consistent basis.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: So most of the time when these branches close, it was because of the lack of a guard? Would you say that's most of the time?

MS. REARDON: Or the staff, or the number of staff.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: So any of those four people that you refer to?

MS. REARDON: We will open with three people if one of them is a guard, knowing that the fourth person is on the way. So oftentimes you will go in the library at 10 o'clock in the morning, there'll be three people there, knowing that fourth the person, but one of them is always a guard that is there.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Sometimes that can happen like the same day, you don't know?

MS. REARDON: Yeah. We will open late. A lot of the number -- a lot of the hours that were cut were just due to a delayed opening versus closing a library for a day.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: But just an example of a good program you have or that is operated at one of the libraries, there's a group that does ESL training and they use the Wyoming branch, and there's been occasions where people stand outside and they can't get in. And I know sometimes you can't foresee everything, but some of these people now are reluctant to whether they want to keep doing it or not, because they don't know.

MS. REARDON: No. I understand. We've become much more acutely aware of the programming effort that's going on, and where we know that there is a program that needs to take place, we're going to start moving around people so that they'll be open.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Point of information.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I have a point of information too, if you don't mind.

How many vacancies did you have with the guards? I know you said that you're going to hire eight full time and six seasonal.

MS. REARDON: Right.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Now, does that fill the complement for the guards?

MS. REARDON: It does. We have 14 vacancies and this now brings us to right where we need to be.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Well,

why was there a delay? You said it was Civil Service. What is the problem?

MS. REARDON: Well, we were working with a Civil Service list that was out of date -- that was an expired Civil Service list or the wrong list for our position, and so when we made the appointments, we had to let the folks go and start all over again with the right list and go back through the interview process.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm sorry. The Chair recognizes Councilman Green for a point of information.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Can you tell me when the policy requiring a guard to be present and the policy requiring four people to be in a branch to have it open were put in place?

MS. REARDON: When I started in September of 2008.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: In September of 2008 those policies were put in place?

MS. REARDON: Right.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And what was policy of the Free Library prior to -- first of all, I don't believe that's correct, but I think it was after December of 2008. When the lawsuit was lost, it was early 2009.

But what was the policy of the Library, according to notes of Board minutes of the Library and labor management discussions of the Library, with respect to having guards and staff there prior to 2009?

MS. REARDON: I don't believe there was a policy.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: The written policy or the policy shared in writing with the labor unions was that three people were required to open a branch. Can you explain why the Administration changed policies in early 2009 to make it four people and a required guard?

MS. REARDON: Including the guard, right. Four people including a guard.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Right.

MS. REARDON: Right. Because from my perspective, the minimum number of people -- you needed the guard in order to clean and secure the library. You needed at least a librarian, because as the professional -- we want a professional organization, and that you minimally need two library assistants to help reshelve, restock, check people out, check people in of the material that they have. In my professional opinion, that's the right way to run a library.

MR. HEIM: And if I could add to that, Councilman Green, the requirement of having a security guard present was something that the trustees looked at as we toured around and talked to security guards on our visits, because we were interested in what the experience of security guards were with children and with adults in the library, and what I learned as I toured and talked to security guards at different libraries in all different parts of the City was that most of the security guards would say, We can deal with the kids pretty well. The children, they can be unruly at times, but they're pretty good and we know how to handle the children. But as the recession got more pronounced and more and more people were out of work, adults coming into the library for a lot of reasons, including trying to get help with job applications online and other library services, tended to -- some of them tend to be angry and frustrated and upset with their lives and they presented more of a security problem than the children, and we thought that it was really important to make sure that the patrons of the library were safe.

The security guards do a great job. The women and men security guards do a terrific job. And in some of the libraries, as you know because you've been good enough to go around and look at them, some of them the spaces are such that we have spaces downstairs or upstairs where you can't see easily what's going on in those spaces unless somebody is walking around and looking. And we are determined to do everything we possibly can to make sure that there is never, or to the extent we possibly can, that there's not an incident in some space where the librarian who's at the desk or the librarian who's shelving books can't see what's going on in that area and some child or some adult runs some security issue, some risk.

So the security guards are absolutely critical to what we do in these libraries, and I think that's part of why security guards are so important.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Well, okay. It didn't seem to be a problem before 2007. But at any rate, the Holmesburg Library for most of 2007 was one of the busiest branches in our system. It also had for most of 2007 only three people staffing it, just as an example. In other words, we're creating blanket rules that reduce our flexibility, which doesn't seem to -- a rule for, say, the Chestnut Hill branch or this branch or that branch that doesn't seem to make a lot of sense to be stringent with respect to it, black and white versus being able to make some sort of judgment call that if three people are there, that perhaps that library can stay open that day.

MR. HEIM: Right. I don't disagree with that at all. I don't disagree with that, and as I think Siobhan said, as long as one of those three is a security guard now, if we have a fourth person on the way, we are tending to open that library. We're tending to make individual judgments, and especially if there is a program that is about to take place at that library, we're tending to make individual on-the-spot judgments.

I mean, being 140 or 150

positions down is a challenge, but I think we're getting there. I think we're actually -- I think the level of satisfaction is pretty high with the libraries. We're not perfect. We're not even close to perfect, but we're getting better and better, and we're trying to make those judgments on the fly so that if there's three people there, we don't have the fourth, we're going to get them later, we'll open the library.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Well --

MS. REARDON: And the other piece, which is essential --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I think I've pushed my point of information to the limit.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Oh, you certainly have.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I will come back to this.

MS. REARDON: Can I respond?

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I would like you to respond to Councilman Greenlee's question.

MS. REARDON: I really would like to respond for just one second, because one of the critical pieces of work when there's only three people in the library is that we're not getting out into the community, which is a major piece of our work. So when you only have three people there, you're tied to the building, and libraries are more than just buildings or books. It's about a relationship with the community. You know that as well as anybody. And if we're not going out to the schools, if we're not going out to the daycare centers, that's a major piece of work that's not occurring.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Unfortunately, you're not in the community at all if the library is not open.

MS. REARDON: Well...

MR. HEIM: That's certainly true.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Councilman Greenlee, please take your time.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you, Madam President.

I will second Councilman Green's point, that he pushed that point of information. And I was going to ask a similar question, but that's okay.

The Central Library expansion, I know in the end you say you hope they raise the additional funds to get groundbreaking, and then I think you added verbally this year that is the goal?

MS. REARDON: That's the goal.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: How much approximately do you need when you're talking about remaining funds?

MS. REARDON: Seventy million dollars.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Seventy million.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

And with this expansion, I know you say some of the things are going to be added. Just in the pure number of books, will there be more or are you going in a different direction with the expansion?

MS. REARDON: Well, there's going to be far more technology in the building. What we're going to do, which is the benefit of the expanded campus, is that we're actually going to bring books that are hidden in the stacks and hidden in the attics and hidden in the basement out for the public to have better access. So, for instance, we have a fabulous theatre collection, which is hidden away behind our Rare Book Collection, and so now when we create a visual and performing arts library, we will be able to now have for public access to these kinds of materials.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay. All right. Thank you.

Thank you, Madam President.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

I'll take a portion of your time.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Point of information.

Ms. Reardon, how many emergency closings have you had year to date?

MS. REARDON: I can tell you year to date we've lost about 5,000 hours overall. We have about -- annually we open over 103,000 hours a year, public libraries are open to the public, and to date, we've lost about 5,000 hours.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Please tell us what is the process that you have to go through to hire an employee and how long does that take?

MS. REARDON: Well, I'm going to have -- right. When we have a list -- and this has been critical for us this year because we've had extended vacancies. When we have a list for each of the titles, it takes about two months from the moment we submit the paperwork to the moment the person is actually brought on board.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: What is the time lapse between the time somebody takes the test and you're able to hire?

MS. REARDON: Two months. Well, they take the test and then they're rated and, of course --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: They're on a waiting list.

MS. REARDON: Yeah.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: How many vacancies do you presently have?

MS. REARDON: Thirty-five full-time City-funded employees. He said eight are about to be hired, and those are the municipal guards.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay. Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you, Madam President.

Good afternoon. Last year I and others raised questions about the diversity of the Board and the diversity of staff.

MS. REARDON: Right.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Give us an update on what has happened in the last 12 months on those two issues.

MS. REARDON: Well, I'm thrilled to talk about the diversity of the Board in particular. We're approaching -- with the next governance committee meeting, 41 percent of the Board are people of color, up from less than 30 percent last year. And on staff we've not -- because we've not hired, we've only had one promotion this year, and that is to the regional librarian and that was to a person of color. So our management rank still looks exactly the same as it did last year, with the exception of one additional person and that's a person of color.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: What about women on the Board?

MS. REARDON: The Board is split 50/50 men/women. I actually have that somewhere. It's 50/50 men/women, and then we're 41 -- in June we will be at 41 percent with the filling of the vacancy that we have now. And then, of course, from a professional standpoint, we're across the board between non-profit, legal, corporate and other. So we have a pretty diverse mix from a professional standpoint as well.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you for that update.

Let me just commend you on the new services under the strategic plan, particularly the services you're providing for jobseekers and the small business community, which I believe is vital given where we are with our economy.

And, lastly, let me underscore

Councilman Goode's observations. Know that every single department gets those questions every single year, and that's going to continue.

Then, lastly, I'll point out that in your appendix for the Philadelphia Free Library, it mentions that -- you state that the bulk of the money we spend is on maintenance contracts, which are bid out on a citywide basis, and computer leasing, which is a multi-year sole source agreement.

Who or what process made the decision for it to be multi-year and then, secondly, sole source?

MS. REARDON: Well, because -- we lease the computers. So this is all 900 public access computers that we have in the neighborhood libraries. We ask for it to be a multi-year contract just because we're on a three-year replacement cycle with all of our public computers, so this past summer every single public access PC was replaced. So that was our request, to have it a multi-year contract just because of the replacement cycle.

So we fill out the requirements as to the type of contract we would like, and then we work with the Procurement -- the City's Procurement Office in the bidding process.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: With the sole source, does the paperwork or the -- does the form stipulate that there should be some OEO goals when it is a sole source agreement?

MS. REARDON: I believe it does.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Could you please find out.

MS. REARDON: Why don't I find you out for you, yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And make sure that the Chair gets that. And that information, we would want every single year the details about -- you know what, the details about all the contracts, submit that information to President Verna, if you would.

MS. REARDON: Will do.

Councilwoman Brown, what I was just told was that this was not a sole source contract. It was a bidded contract.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Point of information.

MS. REARDON: So we will get to you the information about that.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Point of information.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Councilman Goode for a point of information.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: I believe Mayor Nutter when he was a Councilman basically outlawed sole source contracts, which is why I found it strange.

MS. REARDON: Right. It's not -- it was a bidded contract.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Well, can

you explain why it said sole source?

MS. REARDON: I have no idea. Why don't I find out for you. Really, I have no idea. It shouldn't say that, because I remember the process.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: You can imagine what we would think that means.

MS. REARDON: Absolutely.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Is that someone intended to give someone a contract.

MS. REARDON: No. We --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: And actually bid it as a sole source.

MS. REARDON: No, we did not, because it was -- the only criteria we have is that you're able to -- you have the funding so that we can lease the computers, and it would be a multi-contract because it would go through -- because that's the end of our replacement cycle.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: What's the contract term?

MS. REARDON: It's three years.
Right, Jim?
It's four years.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: And that contract did not come through City Council?

MS. REARDON: It went through a number of reviews.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: So it's actually a one-year contract.
Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Brown.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Commissioner -- Deputy Mayor. Forgive me.

COMMISSIONER DiBERARDINIS: I'm both. I go by both.

COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: We will look to your leadership on this important issue, and trust that -- we won't beat a dead horse today on the issue. Thank you very much.
Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I think, Mr. DiBerardinis, we probably should consolidate all of your titles into Grand Puba or something like that, Deputy Mayor, Special Advisor and Commissioner.

So at any rate, I want to say I know it's been extremely difficult to manage with the resources you've had, and I know that you, Siobhan and the Board and your team are doing the best you can, and I recognize that it's been difficult.

So the 35 unfilled positions, how many of those are in the branch system?

MS. REARDON: I would say most of them.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Most of them, okay. So these are positions that are in the FY10 budget that are unfilled and are in the FY11 budget?

MS. REARDON: Yes, at the moment.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And Class 100 was zero-funded year to year, but actually with the same budget, you're going to have 35 more positions if you actually hire people?

MS. REARDON: If we're given the approval to hire the positions, we will hire immediately, yes.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So do you not have the approval to hire these people even if we appropriate the money?

MS. REARDON: Oh, yes. Yes.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So we're going to fill these 35 positions?

MS. REARDON: Yes.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Are there current lists that you can pull from if we authorize?

MS. REARDON: That's the problem. The lists are dated. We would have to actually -- the tests need to be offered and the lists need to be developed for a number of positions.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So why don't we have the test now so that we have current lists on July 1st?

MS. REARDON: Well, that's whomever -- I guess it's a --

(Witness speaking without microphone.)

MS. REARDON: So that's Joe McPeak, who is the Associate Director of the Free Library, saying the exams have been announced for the remainder of our titles that need to be hired.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Great. So if we authorize this funding, you can hire 35 people on July 1st?

MS. REARDON: That would be awesome.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Now, what will that do to the closures of the branch system to have -- what's the total number of employees in the branch system budgeted?

(Witness speaking without microphone.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm sorry. You're going to have to identify yourself for --

(Witness approached witness table.)

MR. McPEAK: I'm sorry. My name is Joseph McPeak. I'm the Associate Director of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

Councilman, on top of my head, I don't have it broken out by General Fund, State grants, part time, full time. I know that the FTE authorized for the branches approximately 385 employees. Give me a few minutes, I can actually figure out what the vacancy is.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So basically we're giving you a ten percent increase in your resources.

MR. McPEAK: Not all 35 are there.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

MS. REARDON: Right. All 35 goes across -- it's staff in the neighborhood libraries, staff in the Central Library.

MR. McPEAK: I'd say about ten of them are in the Central Library and about three or four more in maintenance areas.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So we're giving you a six percent increase in resources for the branch systems in terms of personnel. With that increase, can you commit -- can you provide this Council with a service-level agreement essentially, just your word, as to what you're going to be able to do with respect to keeping libraries open?

MS. REARDON: Well, if we are able to hire the remaining people, we will get -- the libraries will stabilize at five days. Absolutely.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And they'll be open?

MS. REARDON: And they'll be

open.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And you'll have enough guards, you'll have enough --

MS. REARDON: Right. Absolutely.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Great.

(Witness approached witness table.)

COUNCILMAN GREEN: With respect to -- you have a new division, Book Mobile Division, $380,000. Have book mobiles been purchased?

MS. REARDON: No. We have written the specifications for the book mobile and we're designing the program right now.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Are you aware that the book mobiles, at least as far as we can find, are no longer in the Department of Public Property's budget or Fleet's budget for FY11?

MS. REARDON: Are we aware of that? No, we're not aware of that.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So that is

380,000 additional or a total of nine positions that you could add to the branch system.

MS. REARDON: Actually, those nine positions have been in the schedule and we've been using them to support the neighborhood operations.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'm sorry. It didn't look like any of them were filled in the detail we got.

MS. REARDON: We have always used them to balance out the schedule. We've had the nine positions for a year now.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So these nine positions are in the branch number of positions you described?

MR. AGOSTINI: That's correct.

MS. REARDON: Yes.

MR. AGOSTINI: They've been there for a while. I just want to --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Steve.

MR. AGOSTINI: Steve Agostini,

Budget Director.

Sorry, Madam President.

I'm a little confused. I'm trying to understand what you're talking about in terms of an increase to the resources of the Library.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: They will actually spend all the money that we appropriate, so essentially --

MR. AGOSTINI: So it's not an increase.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: It's increased resources as a management tool for Ms. Reardon and her team, because they will now be spending everything that we appropriate.

MR. AGOSTINI: Okay. But not an increase. I just want to be sure on the record.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: There was a zero increase in Class 100, as I said, before I asked my question.

MS. REARDON: That's right.

MR. AGOSTINI: I just wanted to

get that sorted out.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: But filling the position will increase the resources available to the management team to keep libraries open.

MS. REARDON: To stabilize the operations for sure, yeah.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And to stabilize the operations.

MS. REARDON: Right.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Great. Can you explain what impact it's going to have on the Library's book purchases, the extra $2 million in State money you got for that?

MS. REARDON: We actually lost $2 million this year.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Is that right?

MS. REARDON: Yeah. We had a 24 percent drop in our State funding this year. So we've had a 40 percent loss in our book budget year over year from 2009 to 2010.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'm almost confident the budget detail indicates a $2 million increase that we were delivered.

MS. REARDON: We'll take it.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: State-supported services is $2.1 million increase.

MS. REARDON: It's not an increase. For sure it's not.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Well, according to the budget detail I'm holding in my hand, which is Section 31, Page 5.

MS. REARDON: I'll take a look at it. I know it's not an increase, because we're scheduled for another two percent reduction at the State level as well for Fiscal Year '11.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Well, if you could please provide the Chair with that information.

MS. REARDON: We will.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Because we'd

love for you to have the resources.

MS. REARDON: And we would love to have it, too.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: This is a $2 million increase. Thank you.

MS. REARDON: Okay. Thanks.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Councilwoman Blackwell, your light was on. Did you want to be recognized?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: No.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Sanchez.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank you, Madam President.

Good afternoon. Can you clarify for me as it relates to your work staffing what is our requirement with our unions about staffing levels?

MS. REARDON: There is no requirement with the union on staffing level.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: There is no requirement for the unions around staffing levels. I'm trying to get at the requirements for staffing at the branch level. So I wanted to make sure it didn't conflict with any of our bargaining units.

MS. REARDON: No.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: It is not.

In terms of the four-person, one of them being a guard, are you going to readdress that as it relates to the smaller branches? Because McPherson, by no means, needs the same amount of staffing as Kensington, my Kensington branch. So in light of the fact that we've had this discussion back and forth, are you guys going to readdress that or are you going to hold to this four number?

MS. REARDON: I'm going to hold to it, and let me explain McPherson, because that is a library that's in need of services and so we are looking at the library. And, actually, McPherson is not a small library. I would not consider

McPherson a small library.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: And that was my point. We can't compare McPherson's campus compared to Kensington Library. So I'm trying to get at the need to require --

MR. REARDON: But interestingly enough, Kensington, while it appears small, actually isn't small, because it has a lot of rooms on the side. So it has a computer lab there and it has a conference room to the rear.

So there are within every single facility sort of hidden-away spaces, particularly relative to wherever it is we have the reference desk. Those two are great cases, because those are two areas where we're really focusing a lot of energy, particularly when we are working with the Mayor's Commission on Literacy, to add all kinds of literacy, and whether it's English as a second language or GED classes. And so necessarily the staff is needed there to help put the program together, make sure that everybody knows where they're going, at a minimum.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I was just trying to get at -- you guys are getting good at giving long responses. I was just trying to get at where we got the number, because there's an issue of when we arbitrarily set numbers versus what we actually need as it relates to keeping the branches open. Of the 35 vacancies, how many of those are going to be security guards?

MS. REARDON: We're just about finished on the hiring all the guards. So most of them are library assistants, librarians. We have building maintenance and then our library supervisor, which is a promotional position.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Will this allocation allow you to ensure -- what's your goal with this allocation in comparison to closures this year for next year? Is that going to be enough personnel?

MS. REARDON: If all 35 positions are hired, it will be sufficient to stabilize the operation at five days.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: In the year 2009, we had a separate contract to the tune of $270,000 to provide emergency security guard services. Is there any reason why we don't keep the buffer to allow us the flexibility?

MS. REARDON: It's there. We do have a contract for security services in addition to the guards.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Where is that listed? Because it doesn't come out --

MS. REARDON: It's $270,000.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: It comes out budgeted for 2009, but I don't see it in the 2011 allocation. So if you can tell me what page. In Section 31, Page 45, there's no allocation in 2011. Is that because we're going to a different contractor?

MS. REARDON: We're going to let you know what page it's on, because it's there.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Is it because you moved it from your Executive and General Supports to another department?

MS. REARDON: We did move money from our security guard contract from the, whatever, 200 series into the 100 series so that we were able to have sufficient guards to cover the losses we had in the 2009 budget. So we did move money out of the security guard contract into staff.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Okay. I just can't see it here. It's not reflected, so I'll wait for you --

MS. REARDON: Okay.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: -- to get it to me.

In terms of your -- let me understand your schedule, public hours versus administrative hours. One of your issues as to why you want to stick to this four staffing requirement is because you need people for shelving or whatever. How many administrative hours versus public hours do we allocate per branch?

MS. REARDON: Of the 37 hours we're open, the staff works 40 hours. So two and a half hours a week is for administration. The rest is all public service.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Per week?

MS. REARDON: Per week.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: How is that broken up?

MS. REARDON: Say more on your question. I'm not sure I understand.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: How is that broken up? Is that half an hour a day, a half an hour before, after?

MS. REARDON: We open the -- so on our days where we're open 10:00 to 5:00, the staff reports at 9 o'clock.

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: So that's the hour that they're supposed to use for administrative time?

MS. REARDON: Right.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: You're saying you're filling these positions. In light of the fact of the diversity throughout the City, how are you going to ensure that some of these positions reflect the City?

MS. REARDON: We have just put together a pretty impressive training program that encourages staff at all levels to get involved with their own professional development, but in particular, we are inside a multi-year Institute of Museum and Library Services grant, IMLS grant, where it's called Growing Your Own. And so we have a number of staff that join the program, we put them through college, and these are, I want to say, 60 to 70 percent of them are people of color, are staff of color. About --

4/12/10 - WHOLE - BILL 100115, etc.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: How about language as it relates to language access, how many languages in terms of your staff?

MS. REARDON: My goodness. We have staff that speak up to 30 different languages and we have actually a central listing, so that when a patron comes in and speaks Monk, we will know where to go to that staff room to get the proper services for that.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Can you submit that chart to the Chair? I'd like to see --

MS. REARDON: Sure.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: And how that staff is spread out among the branches.

MS. REARDON: Will do. Happy to.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank you. My time is up.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I have been talking to the Board of Trustees of the Library and its leadership and Grand Puba about a topic, dedicated library funding, and I'm just wondering where that conversation is within the Free Library.

MR. HEIM: Well, as you know, we had a very interesting, provocative and I think in-depth discussion with you, because you were good enough to come to a Board of Trustees meeting and talk to us about it. It's difficult for me to say where the trustees would wind up ultimately. I think it's -- and this is just my judgment -- that it's reasonably certain that the trustees would support a dedicated funding mechanism that provided sufficient assured, unrestricted funds for current and future operations. It would surprise me if the trustees didn't do that. But as you know and as we said at the meeting, there's always some truth in two cliches, and those cliches are "be careful what you ask for" and "the devil is in the details." So until we get to a final resting place with a bill that would do those things, I think we probably wouldn't take a position with regard to it. So we'll be interested to see what the final resting place is.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

That's all I have, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Are there any other questions from members of the Committee?

(No response.)

MR. AGOSTINI: So as not to leave that last item out there, the Administration would have some very significant concerns and reservations about any kind of dedicated funding like that, and we would clearly be interested in reviewing it. But absent some details, as Mr. Heim said -- yes, indeed the devil is in the details -- we'd have some significant concerns and reservations moving forward on a proposal like that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Fine. Thank you.

Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: For the record, Madam President, I'd just like to state that the Board of Trustees of the Free Library is an independent body that can make these decisions on their own when they'd like to.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Gentlemen, thank you very much.

Thank you, Ms. Reardon.

MR. McPHERSON: The next department is the Philadelphia Art Museum.

(Short recess for court

stenographers to switch.)

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

(Second-shift stenographer Josephine Cardillo relieves first-shift stenographer Michele Murphy.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Committee of the Whole is now back in session.

Good afternoon. Kindly identify yourself for the record. And proceed with your testimony.

MR. RUB: Thank you. My name is Timothy Rub. I'm director and chief executive officer of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. And with me today is Gail Harrity, who's our president and chief operating officer.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good afternoon.

MS. HARRITY: Good afternoon.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Please proceed.

MR. RUB: Thank you.

Before delivering the Museum's budget testimony for the first time, I would like to excess my admiration and esteem for my predecessor, Anne d'Harnoncourt, who served in this same position for 26 years and did so much to advance the cause of the arts in Philadelphia.

I knew Anne well and am honored to have been chosen as her successor. I also look forward to building upon her legacy of extraordinary public service.

Today, the museum is bustling with activity, as it has throughout the past year. Our current exhibition, "Picasso and the Avant-Garde in Paris," is a success by any measure, with more than 110,000 tickets issued to date and with the busiest four weeks of the exhibition still ahead of us.

Picasso has also earned a great deal of attention in the media, with the reviews in the New York Times, the Philadelphia Inquirer, and the Wall Street Journal, Washington Post; and also is a major feature in Amtrak's monthly Arrive magazine, which will have been read or seen by over one million travelers along the northeast corridor routes by the time the exhibition closes, in early May.

Philadelphia's ever-expanding social network on the web has also embraced the Picasso exhibition. The museum's Facebook page has received over 4,000 page views, and we've added almost 2,000 followers on Twitter.

I'm also pleased to report that in order to keep up with demand, we've increased the exhibition's capacity, extending hours on weekends and adding an additional week to the run of the exhibition now through early May.

What should not go unremarked here is that the Philadelphia Museum of Art is one of the few museums in the world that can organize exhibitions of this type and quality from its own collection.

This point underscores an important fact: Our collection is a virtually inexhaustible resource and one of the City's most significant cultural assets. Caring for it, creatively tapping its potential for education and enjoyment, and strengthening it over time is not only our obligation as responsible stewards; it is also a wise and economical investment in the future of our city.

I look forward to seeing all of you over the summer, when the museum presents "Late Renoir," an exhibition that premiered late last year in Paris, where it drew over 420,000 visitors. Philadelphia will be its only venue on the East Coast, and rightly so: Between the museum's own holdings and those of the Barnes Foundation, the collections in Philadelphia have more works by Renoir than those of any other city, including Paris.

In the year ahead, we will be celebrating all things Italian at the museum:

In the fall of 2010, we will present exhibitions dedicated to the work of Michelangelo Pistoletto, a leading international figure in contemporary art, and Alberto Alessi, whose design firm produces some of the world's most innovative household objects.

And the following spring, we will offer an exhibition of works by the legendary Italian designer Roberto Capucci, who set new course for Italian fashion in the decades after World War II and is admired throughout the world for his extraordinary creativity and his exceptional technical skills.

The museum's exhibitions serve our local communities as well as tourists from across Pennsylvania and indeed around the globe, putting heads in beds and contributing to the economic vitality of our city.

I would impress upon you that the Art Museum is one of this city's anchor cultural institutions, with a global research in our programming. In Fiscal Year 2009, we recorded over 19,000 international visitors from 110 countries; and in general, international visitors account for between 6 and 8 percent of all general admissions to the museum.

Right now, masterpieces from the museum's great collection are on view at the Busan Museum of Art in South Korea, earning recognition for Philadelphia's cultural vitality across East Asia.

Moreover, in today's economy, in which companies' employes have more flexibility than ever before as to where they choose to do business. We know that a great art museum creates a sense of identity for a city and encourages business attraction and economic growth.

Of course, it is impossible to quantify certain aspects of economic impact. How, for example, can we assign a value to how much our art museum educates and nurtures the creativity and self-expression of generations of Philadelphians and Pennsylvanians. You know the answer as well as I do: It matters.

However, in order to present in greater detail some of the aspects of the museum's economic impact that we are able to quantify now, I would now like to introduce my colleague Gail Harrity.

MS. HARRITY: Thank you, Timothy. And thank you, Madam President and members of City Council.

In reporting on the museum's economic impact, I will start by asking you to recall our exhibition "Cezanne and Beyond," which was on view at this time last year, in spring 2009. "Cezanne and Beyond" generated approximately $29 million in economic activity over a three-month period, attracting tourists from near and far, including international visitors from all continents except Antarctica.

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

Economic-impact studies that the museum prepares in collaboration with Urban Partners, an independent financial consulting firm, show that every dollar spent by the museum produces nearly $4 in economic activity. In Fiscal Year 2009, the museum:

Generated $209 million in total economic activity;

Created 2,980 full-time job equivalents from museum- and visitor-related spending;

And 331 full-time job equivalents from construction spending.

The museum generated a total of $15.3 million in tax revenue, which breaks down to $8.1 million for the City, and 7.2 million for the Commonwealth.

The cumulative economic impact over the last five fiscal years totaled more than $1.2 billion.

We take heart that Mayor Nutter and his chief cultural officer, Gary Steuer, and this City Council recognize that the arts are an economic investment and an investment in our city's future, attracting businesses to Philadelphia, driving cultural tourism, and creating the high quality of life that Philadelphians in all neighborhoods enjoy.

Several major capital projects were completed on time and on budget in this past year, in fulfillment of the museum's master plan.

A thorough renovation of the exterior of our main building, which is owned and maintained by the City, included the repointing, cleaning, and repair of its limestone-clad exterior, polychrome terracotta ornamentation, and bronze window grills designed by Tiffany Studios, as well as the repair of its 80-year-old four-acre roof.

This important and long overdue work also enabled us to address a number of issues that threatened the safety of the public and represented an essential step in the preservation of this great civic landmark.

This past September, Councilman Clarke and many others joined us to inaugurate our new sculpture garden, which is integrated structurally with our below-grade parking facility. This was constructed according to green principles, with absorptive substances and natural ventilation, which results in minimal utility load.

To honor this project as a model of sustainability, the museum received an official Commendation for Ecological Sensitivity from the federal Environmental Protection Agency; a Citation of Merit from the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Architects, and the 10,000 Friends of Pennsylvania Silver Award from the Commonwealth for design and, quote, smart urban growth.

Construction spending on these completed projects totalled over

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

$20 million in fiscal '09 alone, and $109 million over the last five years, supporting nearly 400 full-time jobs annually in construction.

The museum is proud of the percentage of contracts awarded to minority- and women-owned firms, which is anticipated to be 42 percent in Fiscal 10 and which essentially matches the actual percentage of 43 percent in Fiscal '09, a substantially higher -- and these are, of course, substantially higher than the City's 25 percent goal.

We will soon commence work on the next phase of the master plan, an $81 million project to relocate our loading dock from the north side of the museum on Kelly Drive to the south side of the building at the Spring Garden Street Bridge, thereby creating easy access from the expressway for over 6,000 trucks that make deliveries to the museum each year.

This project will not only

replace the old and substandard loading dock, with which we have been burdened for decades; it will also dramatically improve circulation of all types -- pedestrian, vehicular traffic, bicycles, tour buss, and school buses around our main building, and it will greatly improve public safety.

Among the principal goals of our master plan is the need for additional capacity to serve educational needs of our community.

And I would now, like to return the microphone to Timothy to conclude our testimony and describe the museum's accomplishments in the area of education.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

MR. RUB: Last year, the museum served approximately 200,000 children, college students, individuals with accessibility needs, adults, and seniors, with education programs, including approximately 900,000 school children in classroom groups and 500 teenagers from across Philadelphia who participate in our after-school programs.

As you know, we annually raise funds from private foundations in order to serve Philadelphia's public schools free of charge and to provide public and parochial school teachers with free curricular materials.

Moreover, we launched Art Speaks in September of 2008, with four other Philadelphia museums. Now, in its second year, this new program is well on its way to providing a museum experience to each of the 14,000 4th graders in this city's public schools. This program is funded through a federal grant and corporate support from Target.

I would like to extend an open invitation to all members of City Council museum Wachovia Education Resource Center. Opened in 2007, the center now serves 3,500 teachers from across the region, with electronic access to curricular materials and an array of lesson plans that integrate the visual arts into the full range of Pennsylvania's curricular subjects, including history, English, social studies, and math.

None of this work -- the presentation of great exhibitions and the provision of a broad range of educational programs -- would be possible if we do not make an ongoing and substantial investment in the maintenance and improvement of our facilities, housed in five City-owned buildings -- our historic main building, the Rodin Museum, the Perlman Building, Mt. Pleasant, and Cedar Grove.

And with responsibility to care for City-owned collections, the museum has depended on annual operating support from the City to pay for the fundamental operating costs of security and building maintenance since it opened the doors of its magnificent main building in 1928.

At that time, the City committed to fund one hundred percent of our security and maintenance costs on an annual basis.

As recently as Fiscal Year 1992, the City's appropriation of $4.6 million still covered security and maintenance costs in full. However, by Fiscal Year 1996, in the midst of another period of economic challenge, the City's operating appropriation to the museum for security and maintenance was reduced roughly by half, to $2.25 million.

It remained at that level through Fiscal Year 2004, then increased to a high of $3 million, proposed by Mayor Nutter for Fiscal Year 2009, and has now been reduced to $2.3 million for Fiscal Year 2010.

At this time, the museum security and maintenance expenses are estimated at $5.7 million in total for Fiscal Year 2011, or more than double our proposed appropriation.

Through this same period --

that is to say, since the early 1990s -- successive mayors and city councils have impressed upon the museum the necessity of diversifying its sources of revenue; and the museum did just that.

It undertook a campaign to build its endowment and successfully developed or strengthened its relationships with foundations, corporations, and individual donors.

The museum also made strategic investments that generated a substantial amount of additional earned income, expanding our membership, retail and food service programs.

In these and other ways, the museum more than doubled its operating budget over time, raising one-third of its operating revenues from endowment and public support, another third from earned revenue, and the final third from contributed income.

Now, this was the relatively successful model we maintained until the crisis that crippled our economy 18 months ago. At that time, the museum's endowment dropped significantly; individuals, corporations, and foundations substantially reduced their support for programs and exhibitions; and previously robust sources of earned income from the museum's gift shops and restaurants were weakened.

This was a decline in revenues that made the management of the museum's budget enormously challenging and, as you can well imagine, very unpredictable.

Now, given the need to cut costs and enhance revenues, while maintaining our commitment to public service, we made some very tough choices that helped us steer the museum through this storm.

Although painful in the short run, these have enabled us to preserve the solid fiscal foundation upon which we can rebuild our budget as the economy becomes stronger. The measures we undertook included the postponement of exhibitions involving costly international loans, cutting departmental budgets, freezing positions, salary reductions, and the painful elimination of 30 staff positions.

In comparison to the staffing of peer museums across the country, we have always been lean and productive. Accordingly, the budgetary reductions we went through during the last year did not trim fat; it, rather, cut into bone.

But as challenging as this work has been, we recognize that the recession has affected every department within our city's government. And for this reason, we are deeply grateful for the proposal that $2.3 million in operating support be allocated for the museum in Fiscal Year 2011.

This is a relatively modest contribution to our operating budget, far smaller in percentage terms than the support we enjoyed from the City in the past, but it is nonetheless very important; for without this funding from the City, we would be forced to institute even more dramatic cost-cutting measures such as a decrease in open hours, exhibitions, and educational programs; thus diminishing our service to the community and the strong impact we've had for a very long time on the City's economy.

With your help, the museum and all of Philadelphia's arts and cultural organizations will continue to thrive and contribute to the vitality of our great city, enriching the lives of its citizens and attracting visitors and businesses from beyond its borders.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Goode.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you, Madam President.

Good afternoon, Mr. Rub and Miss Harrity.

In your written testimony as well, as the remarks you gave, you talked about construction spending and the goals you've reached in Fiscal Year '09 and Fiscal Year '10.

You did not talk about your performance in terms of contracting with disadvantaged businesses for non-construction spending. Can you tell me what you've achieved in Fiscal Year '09 and Fiscal Year '10 and what your goals are for Fiscal Year '11.

MS. HARRITY: In the construction business --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: For non-construction spending.

MS. HARRITY: For non-construction spending. I think that we -- we take enormous pride in having exceeded our goals for -- in the construction area and for non-construction spending.

I don't have those figures in front of me, but I will say that the museum's trustees and leadership are deeply committed to participation and a number of -- and I can supply the exact numbers.

But just to give you a sense of where the non-construction spending is, for the security contract and for our larger contracts, such as security, it is the museum's requirement that we include a 10 percent of women-owned businesses, 10 percent of African-American-owned businesses --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: So your non-construction spending is not as aggressive in terms of diversity as your construction spending.

MS. HARRITY: For -- it varies. It is -- I would say it is a strong commitment. It is probably not going to reach 40 -- in excess of 40 percent.

But for security, for maintenance, for the museum's insurance

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

contract, it's very aggressive in terms of --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Ms. Harrity, if you don't have any numbers, you're not being helpful. So could you just forward those numbers through the Chair.

Let's start with security contract. When was that bid? Did you have any disadvantaged businesses submit proposals as a prime contractor or a subcontractor? And what was the level of participation on the security contract?

MS. HARRITY: We have a single security contract. And part of our provision is to -- it requires both minority-owned and women-owned businesses.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: So what is the level of participation in the security contract?

MS. HARRITY: Ten percent of -- is women-owned for the gallery guards and ten percent for Scotland. So a total of 20 percent.

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

COUNCILMAN GOODE: And why is the goal 20 percent?

MS. HARRITY: The goal is 20 percent, um, because we think that that is a substantial number, and we continue to, you know, look at it from year-to-year. That's the goal for the current year, 20 percent.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: So the contract is put out to bid on a year-to-year basis?

MS. HARRITY: The contract, um -- we currently have a month-to-month contract. The contract in the past has been a multi-year contract --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Your contract is currently a month-to-month?

MS. HARRITY: Yes, it is.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: And how is it bid?

MS. HARRITY: We have -- and I'll ask -- we put it out to bid for three different proposals than last time. And it is currently, uh -- you know, we send out an RFP.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Okay. Did the RFP put out have wage requirements?

MS. HARRITY: The RFP, to my knowledge, did not have wage requirements.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Are you familiar with the City's minimum-wage and benefits law?

MS. HARRITY: I am from -- yes, sir.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: And do you believe that the Art Museum falls under that law?

MS. HARRITY: I believe firmly that the museum will make every attempt to comply with all --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: The question is whether you believe the Art Museum falls under the City's minimum-wage and benefits standard.

MS. HARRITY: The answer is, our legal counsel has said it does not fall under but we do --

(Booing by some audience members.)

COUNCILMAN GOODE: And why does your legal counsel say you do not fall under it, and why was that opinion offered? Why did your legal counsel offer an opinion?

MS. HARRITY: I think that the museum has made a -- you know, I think that we have -- we have looked at both the ordinance, and we -- the museum -- the museum's counsel is -- we are a 501(c)(3), a private entity, for which --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: You're a 501(c)(3), but the law states who actually falls under the law. And it says:

"Recipients of City leases, concessions, or franchises or subcontractors, thereof which employ more than 25 employees."

Why that not cover the museum?

(Applause.)

MS. HARRITY: I -- we will

review that again. And going forward, we will look to see -- and certainly get back to you with regard to the reading of the law.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: The law does not just apply to City agencies; it applies to the City of Philadelphia, its agencies, departments, and offices; it applies to for-profit service contractors (indiscernible); nonprofit service contractors; City financial aid recipients; public agencies; and recipients of City leases.

I'd be very interested in finding out why you believe you don't fall in the provision of people who receive leases and have more than 25 opinions.

And if you have a legal opinion from your legal counsel, I ask that you also forward that through the Chair.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Greenlee.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you, Madam President.

Good afternoon, everyone.

First, congratulations on the Picasso exhibit. We look forward to the Renoir in the summer.

Unfortunately, I have to touch on just what is, unfortunately, a little negative subject, the issue with the security guards, which, I think, a few people here might be interested in.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: As you know, in October of last year, the work of the security officers at the museum voted to be represented by the Philadelphia Security Officers Union. And since that time, their employer Allied Barton, has done what I feel is everything they can do to try to hold up what is basic people's rights to be represented by a union if the majority votes that way.

Now, I do want to note for the record and thank you, because we've had some conversations about this subject, that you did write a letter recently to Allied Barton, and you did put in there what I feel, in all fairness to you, is a definitive statement where you urge Allied Barton to recognize the union and to begin negotiating. So I thank you for that.

I will ask you -- because after that, I know both the union attorney and myself wrote to Allied Barton to support your position on that issue.

Have you received any official response from Allied Barton on that?

MR. RUB: We have not, to my knowledge.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay. Yeah, neither have we.

And this is more of a statement; and if you'd like to respond at all, you can.

I just think when a -- first of all, Allied Barton, in my opinion, not is only doing right by the workers; they're not doing right by you --

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: -- because they're putting a negative attention on something that you shouldn't -- you shouldn't have any negatives because you've done a lot of very good things; you're a positive entity in the City of Philadelphia. And -- but Allied Barton apparently doesn't care about that or the image of the City.

And what I would just ask you to seriously consider -- and not just you, but anybody else that employs Allied Barton at this point. If they don't care about their workers and aren't going to adhere to basic rights, then I don't think they should be in the City of Philadelphia.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And, again, if you want to have any response, but I would just say -- and, again, I'm -- you're here. I can't yell at Allied Barton, so I apologize for that. I wish they were here, but they probably would want have the nerve to come in.

I would just ask you to seriously consider -- you and anybody else that's listening that employs Allied Barton, that if they continue to go against just the basic will of the people, then I don't think they should have a part of Philadelphia. They're a big company, and they can be somewhere else.

Thank you.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

(Applause.)

MR. RUB: Council President, may I respond briefly to Councilman

Greenlee?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: please.

MR. RUB: Thank you for your remarks.

Just a few things. First of all, I would emphasize for the record that the museum is a third party to this dispute between Philadelphia Security Officers Union and Allied Barton.

However -- and this is something we underscored in conversation with you as well, Councilman -- we do respect due process in this matter, as regulated and supervised by the NLRB. We recognize that there has been a vote and that eventually whatever disagreements there are between the union and Allied Barton will be adjudicated.

In that regard, we have urged good-faith negotiations between these two parties. And we will respect and, in due course, address the outcome of any negotiations that take place between the two. And that is what we indeed must do under the circumstances.

(Booing by some audience members.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Goode for a point of information.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you, Madam President.

Mr. Rub, you said that you are simply a third party in this matter? Let's move back to the issue of economic opportunity as it applies to City contracting.

The museum made a point of stating in its testimony that it supports the Mayor's goal of 25 percent. It then went on to highlight that it has exceeded that goal in terms of construction spending. It went on to say that it has not exceeded that goal in terms of security contract but put what I believe to be arbitrary, an arbitrary 10 percent number in there for minority businesses and an arbitrary 10 percent number for women-owned businesses.

Were you required to put that in the RFP?

MR. RUB: I can't speak to that; perhaps my colleague can. I was not hear when that RFP was issued several years ago.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: But --

MS. HARRITY: No, we were not -- and just to respond, we were not required --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: So that would --

MS. HARRITY: It was the museum's initiative several years ago.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: So there's nothing to suggest that, in support of the Mayor's 25 percent goal for disadvantaged business contracting, and since you took it upon yourself as a third party to put in a 10 percent for minority businesses and a 10 percent goal for women-owned businesses, you could equally put the City's minimum-wage and benefits standard in your RFP; is that correct?

MR. RUB: If we chose to do so, yes.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: And why would you choose not to do so?

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN GOODE: And why would you choose not to do so?

MR. RUB: We haven't reached that point. We put out an RFP several years ago, we have an contractual relationship with Allied Barton, and we have chose not to alter that at the present time.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: The previous testimony was that the contract is month-to-month.

When you go back to put out an RFP, as you make future decisions about contracting, do you believe that a security officer should be paid at least the Philadelphia minimum-wage and benefits standard, which is at least $10.87 an hour? You can make yourself a first party in that decision.

MR. RUB: I can't say at the moment what I would decide on that; I'd have to study it a bit further.

(Booing from some audience members.)

COUNCILMAN GOODE: So, in essence, you're not really a third-party bystander. You make the decision of what you want to put in your RFP --

MR. RUB: We make a --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Just like you decided to set a 20 percent DBE goal for the security contract, you could set a wage quality, a job quality standard as well.

MR. RUB: Well, we --

COUNCILMAN GOODE: There's nothing wrong with that, and that's particularly consistent with the City's goals, the standard the City has set, and consistent with how we want the money spent that we give you.

MR. RUB: That seems that such a contract is subject to the City requirements. And we said we would get back to you on where we were with City Council on that, with the RFP.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: You don't have to get back to me on it. Clearly, if you think you're not subject to the City's economic opportunity standards or minimum-wage and benefits standards and you think you can do whatever you want, then that's fine.

But don't say you're a third party because you've already made it clear that you make the decision of what economic opportunity standards you want to set within your contracts and within your RFPs, and you clearly can set a wage standard within the next RFP if you choose to.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Councilman Greenlee.

COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: No.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You'r e finished?

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Madam President.

Over the years, we've been overjoyed with our museum, and we have done nothing but praise them. But this is a serious issue.

We don't have this many people down here in Council if there's not a serious employment issue. And we, who live and work in the City and who represent the citizens here, have an obligation and a responsibility to do our best to protect them.

Once the union met and they have decided who they are and they're unionized, then certainly, it's up to this company -- in this case, the museum, who pays them -- to be inclusive and to allow them to exist as a union. I mean, it's a union city. That's --

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: And certainly, Councilman Goode is excellent at explaining the issue, but it's unconscionable that we're here and that the museum can say they haven't thought about it or they haven't made a decision, like it's an arbitration.

When you're the company, you hire them and you can make them behave. You can make this issue go away if you so desire. And that is what we expect people that we fund, that we have anything to do with; we expect them to be fair by the citizens of the City who come in here and who demand justice from us. We demand it of you.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: It seems to me the issue is a matter of the company. It's their RFP, as Councilman Goode has said, as well as Councilman Greenlee. There are a whole lot of companies out there.

I was very dismayed when I listened to Councilman Goode earlier say that minorities can't babysit, they can't cut trees, and they can't even clean. Oh, my goodness. It's so unconscionable.

And certainly, we expect that if companies are not willing to be inclusive -- it's obvious that the museum is included in this -- that if they want our support, then they have to support these people and get rid of a company that won't work in good faith with the citizens of our city.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I hope that they'll respond, Madam President. We would like to know what we're dealing with as we're asked to support them.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Do you care to respond?

MR. RUB: No. I think that the statement I made before stands.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

Councilman Goode, your light was on. And then there was a point of information.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Just one clear message.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Okay.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: We've made it very clear that you're not a third-party bystander, that you can decide who you want to contract with, you can decide what to put in your RFP.

And if you choose to accept the City's minimum-wage and benefits standard, you can put that within the contract, which means that these workers would have to be paid at least 150 percent of the federal minimum wage, which is currently 10.87.

But the law also says that if they strike a separate collective-bargaining agreement that entitles them to more money, then the collective-bargaining agreement would entitle them to that under the same minium-wage and benefits law.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Sanchez.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank you, Madam President.

I want to ask both the director and Gail to look back at the signs, because I think there's an important piece of this discussion.

Those signs say, "We love our museum." The workers at the Art Museum love the museum, do you not?

And it is very disheartening for us, who work in government, to be in a position where we are told that we can't make things differently.

And I'm a supporter of the Art Museum. I think it's a world-renowned museum. And I think that in light of the fact that these workers -- and I wanted to make note: Workers, many of them women, single mothers. That we send a message that we value the love and dedication that they bring to the museum, because they're the first point of contact with the folks who come in, and we want them to be proud, and continue to be proud, of working at the museum.

So I just want to echo what my colleagues have said, that, you know, we, in city government, recognize that we need to be supporting this museum more, and we will work towards that.

But it is important, it is important, that we support the workers and that -- you know, I watched the City shelters use contract loopholes to cut salaries in half of security workers, many of those minorities who live in my district. And we can't use contracting schemes to balance budgets.

I'm a tax-and-spend Democrat, and I don't want to ever balance my budget on the budget of a single mother or a worker who works and is as committed as these workers are.

So I want to add to -- you know, this museum is too important to us, it is too important to this region and to who we are in Philadelphia to be blemished and to allow one company, one company, to do this to the Art Museum.

So I want to implore you to go back on this month-to-month contract and use the hammer that you have and say, "We're not going to take this." There are other providers in the City of Philadelphia who are not union-busters and who respect their employees. Please go to someone else.

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Councilwoman Brown was unable to attend the meeting this afternoon. However, she did leave a statement, which she asked to be read for the record, which reads as follows:

"I support investing in the Philadelphia Museum of Art because we know from the museum's testimony and from the work of Urban Partners, an independent financial consulting firm, that every $1 invested in the Philadelphia Museum of Art results in $4 in economic development."

So -- but she asks that that be read.

Are there think other questions or comments from members of the committee?

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I have

one more.

In addition to the annual allocation that we have, I know that the Art Museum -- and I want to put it for the record -- had applied for federal recovery money, and we were not successful.

And I wanted to ask the Art Museum if there was any other way that the City could support the museum for this upcoming year, what would that be?

MR. RUB: Thank you.

The first thing I would say, in response to your generous question, is that whatever the City can do to increase its operating support to the museum would be most welcome; and, indeed, it is a very necessary ingredients for growth and for our ability to secure additional contributions from many other sources.

As I noted in my testimony, the fact that the City's support has not increased materially since the early 1990s, at a time when many costs --

including security, utilities and the like -- has made it difficult for the museum to support its facility and to grow its operations accordingly. So that would be the first thing I would ask for. And it would give us much needed relief.

As we look to the future, I would like to applaud those members of the City's Capital Budgeting Office here for the work they do with us year in and year out to take into account the museum's capital needs, which are significant.

Our physical plant, counting all of the properties we manage, now numbers over 1 million square feet, and the annual capital costs of maintaining that physical plant are enormous.

The City's current capital contribution makes -- or goes some way towards helping us cover the basic costs of maintenance but is nowhere near what we need. And we'd be happy to provide you with what we feel is a reasonable number for maintenance on an annual basis that would help us keep our heads above water.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair again recognizes Councilman Goode.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you, Madam President.

I just want to clarify for the record a request I've made for information to be submitted to the Chair.

1. I'd like a copy of the RFP.

2. I'd like a copy of the legal opinion from your legal counsel on whether you believe that the City's minimum-wage and benefits standards should be applied to the RFP and contract.

And, lastly, I'd like a copy of the contract as well.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank

you.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Any further questions?

(No further questions.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Seeing none, the Committee of the Whole will stand in recess, at which time we will have public testimony.

Thank you.

MS. HARRITY: Thank you very much.

(Committee stands in recess at 4:27 p.m.)

(Proceedings resume at 5:50 p.m.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good evening, good evening. The Committee of the Whole is now back in session.

And our first witness is...?

MR. McPHERSON: Jack Butler.

(Witness comes forward.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good evening, sir. Please identify yourself for the record.

MR. BUTLER: I'm Jack Butler.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And proceed with your testimony.

MR. BUTLER: I'm here, representing myself.

I'm a lifelong Philadelphian and I love the city very much. And I'm pleased to have a chance to testify before City Council.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We're glad to have you.

MR. BUTLER: Thank you.

Now, I'm an ordinary citizen. And like most ordinary citizens, we really have -- I have no idea, you know, what the City's budget process is, what it's like.

But I do have a question, and who should I address this question to, because it is directly about, you know, budgeting. I mean --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: What is the question, sir?

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

MR. BUTLER: The question is this: In the budget, on the revenue side, how much is included as an estimate of overdue taxes and fees such as real-estate taxes, sales taxes, business taxes, and the interest and penalties involved in delinquencies, traffic violations?

Is there an item on the budget, on the revenue side, that estimates how much could be collected for all of these delinquent taxes and fees?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Mr. McPherson is here; he'd be happy to show you a schedule.

MR. BUTLER: Show me a schedule? Okay.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Mm-hmm.

MR. BUTLER: But what puzzles me is that over the years, you know, the citizens of this city have heard about scoff laws, absentee landlords who have not paid their real-estate taxes, other money that's owed the City. And, you know, these are stories that we've heard many, many times.

So I would surmise that there is a lot of money that is owed the City that has not been collected.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Sir, we not too long ago had very extensive hearings on the delinquency issue. The problem is that some of those delinquencies for property taxes go back more than thirty years. Now, there is no business that I know of that would keep delinquencies on the books that long.

I am certain that many of the people -- they're vacant properties, the owners have passed away, they don't have heirs that would take over the property. And I know that the Administration is looking into that, and I know that -- I didn't see you, Steve.

And we're doing a tax amnesty program, which I'm sure you have also read about.

Mr. Agostini is here. He is our budget director, and I'm sure he'd be happy to show you and share with you the schedule that Mr. Butler is interested in seeing.

MR. AGOSTINI: I could do that. And for the record, Steve Agostini, Budget Director.

And your comments are right on point. There's been the issue of very old accounts -- decades, as you mentioned.

We do have the amnesty. We had put in the 2010 budget approximately a $30 million estimate for what we thought we would receive through the amnesty. We indeed, as part of the 2010 and 2009 revision to the 2009 budget, also increased a number of items -- property taxes, wage-tax collections -- in our effort to collect from delinquents filers.

So -- and I'm happy to share all of that.

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: That would be great.

So Mr. Butler, when you're finished with your testimony, Steve will be there.

MR. BUTLER: Okay. You know, I could ask for an estimate of, you know, like how much is owed the City. I mean, I don't know how far back we want to go.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Well, as I said, he will show you the schedule.

MR. BUTLER: And, you know, I mean, look, the City government is a large bureaucracy, and large bureaucracies are, by nature, prone to inefficiency, you know, disorganization, poor management, whatever.

And, you know, I think the citizens of this city have a right to be angry when they are asked to pay more out of their income for sales taxes; we pay 2 percent more than anybody else in the state except Pittsburgh.

We probably have still the

highest city wage tax of any city in the country; if we don't, I'm sure it's probably second or third.

Our business taxes are very high.

There's that debilitating gross-receipts tax.

And it's no wonder that, you know, many people who would consider moving into the City decide not to, because they hear about these crises going on year after year.

We are told that the crisis is partly to blame for the weak economy. But as a person who has lived in the City for well over sixty years, this is something that I've heard continually.

So I think what we need is some -- a little more transparency, a little more accountability from the City government saying, Look, before we ask you to shell out more in your income, we really need to do all we can do to collect money that is owed the City.

And one item that I know a lot of people have been complaining about is the ten-year tax abatement. Now, believe me, I'm thrilled if we can do that because I love to see people moving in. You know, there are so many -- I mean, you have seen condo buildings going up. Unfortunately, you know, some of them are not selling too well.

But the fact is that people are coming in because they hear about the ten-year tax abatement. But if, you know, we're in such dire financial straits, I feel it should be considered too. You know, maybe trim down the tax abatement; you know, five years, six years, which certainly would be a very good benefit. If we are so strapped, I think that's something that should be considered.

A very good friend of mine -- I'm very, very sorry. Could you excuse me for a second?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Sure.

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

MR. BUTLER: Sorry about that. A very good friend of mine who is very active in her neighborhood in Overbrook, and has really done a lot to upgrade the neighborhood and to get the neighbors together, you know, to improve the neighborhoods, when we heard about the proposal to impose a trash-collection fee -- and by the way, you know, here's a city that has probably at least a 25 percent poverty rate, and we're asking people to now pay a trash-collection fee? I think that's a bit of a burden.

Anyway, this friend of mine wrote to the Inquirer: Instead of imposing trash fees on law-abiding citizens, how about enforcing the anti-litter laws so that we can clean up this city. Deputize block captains to hand out tickets; we know who our are dirty neighbors are. Many block captains do this for free. This would not only raise money for the City but clean it up as well.

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

You know, I mean, I see litter all over the place. How do you enforce the anti-litter laws? You know, I mean, I don't know. But the fact is that many people see that they're not being enforced.

I thank you for your time. But, you know, I just feel that I would expect that in City Council -- and in your staff, you have a lot of expertise on how to deal with, you know, budgetary matters.

You know, I appeal to you: Before imposing these extra fees and taxes to, you know, just do all you can -- and I'm sure you are making an effort, but to do all you can to see where city government can save money, how uncollected delinquent money can be collected before asking the citizens who are already hard-pressed to pay any more in taxes or to have to accept any cuts in vital services.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank

you very much, Mr. Butler.

MR. BUTLER: Thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We appreciate your coming in.

MR. BUTLER: My pleasure.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And we, believe me, sometimes feel the same frustration you do.

MR. BUTLER: Of course, I'm sure.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. Thank you very much.

MR. BUTLER: Thank you very much for letting me testify.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our pleasure.

Yes, Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I just want to say that I'm proud of the work that we've done on City Council in the last year, holding hearings on these very issues, trying to hold the Administration accountable to collecting as many taxes as we can, to try to explain the fact that most of these debts are uncollectible and should have been written off a long time ago, and with respect to the hearings that we're holding in this budget, where we're focusing a lot on efficiencies in department, in unfilled positions, and other places that won't impact citizen services, to see where we can save some costs.

So I just want to say that I think all of us agree with the gentleman's testimony and want to assure him that we've been working hard on it all year.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

Our next witness?

MR. McPHERSON: Harvey Portner.

(Witness comes forward.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

evening, sir. Kindly identify yourself for the record.

MR. PORTNER: Thank you, Madam President. And I also want to address this august body of Councilpeople, men and women. I guess the rest are still at the Phillies game, but we'll disregard that.

I am here because I have a school, Professional Health Care Institute, that deals directly with every shelter in the City through the Office of Supportive Services, and I'm here to ask all of you to please consider making no cuts at all and finding a way to get the extra funding that's needed for budgetary consideration.

Madam President, I'm the longest-serving commissioner in Cheltenham Township. I deal with budgets every day and every year, so I know what aggravation all of you are going through.

And it's simple to say let's cut this and let's add this. But the bottom line is: How are we going to help the people we serve? And specifically, those who are in shelters.

And I see this every day with the clients that we have that come and take one of our courses. They graduate and we help put them into job placement, and they are successfully working. We've been doing this for 13 consecutive years.

And I don't think that OSH can afford a 7.5 cut across the board even though it's a department we're talking about one-on-one.

And so, I plead with all of you to -- I'm not here to criticize the numbers or the taxes that you want to put on.

It's interesting, just as an aside. And Cheltenham is not a comparison to the City of Philadelphia. We're only 8.7 square miles, but we've had a refuse tax that's put into the taxing mode for quite a few years, nominal. But then, again, we're not the

City of Philadelphia. And so, I understand completely how each and every one of you must be aggravated in some form or another.

I can only extol the Office of Supportive Housing by saying they do a magnificent job, and we are very happy and fortunate to be a part of that operation.

And I thank you for the time, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: We appreciate your coming in and taking the time to testify.

Thank you.

Our next witness?

MR. McPHERSON: Amanda Colini, with the group ACT UP.

(Witnesses come forward.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good evening, gentlemen. Please identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MR. YABOR: Good evening, Madam

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

President, esteemed Councilpeople, fellow citizens. My name is Paul Yabor. I'm with ACT UP Philadelphia, the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power.

MR. BENNETT: Good evening, Madam President, Councilpersons, and colleagues and friends of Philadelphia. I am Henry Bennett.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm sorry. What is your name?

MR. BENNETT: I am Henry Bennett. I am a person living with the AIDS virus. I come here to speak on behalf of those persons living with the virus who are homeless and afraid to speak and acknowledge their status.

I come here as a member of the activist group fighting for a person living with the virus: ACT UP Philadelphia. I'm lending my voice and my face to their cause on behalf of those persons living in fear and stigma because of acknowledging the fact of their status.

I come here today because I want to make you aware of those persons living with the virus in the City who need your help and understanding. I'm speaking not for myself but for all of those hundreds of persons living in shelters, on the streets, in the parks, and under the bridges because they can't or are afraid to come to you and ask for your help to put money in the budget for AIDS housing.

I could give you hundreds of horror stores that are pitiable, sad, embarrassing about the experiences that they've had in the shelters and living on the streets.

Myself, I am the old man who lives in the brown tent on the side of the road at 15th and Vine. I do this because this is a better alternative than the shelters or living in Suburban Station or sleeping under the bridge.

In my tent, I'm not hassled by the police who ticket me for being homeless, and I'm not hassled by the shelter workers who are supposed to be helping me, who take my meds, who abuse me physically, mentally, and emotionally.

In my tent, I'm not around the sickness such as colds, TB, scabies, scarlet fever that are found in the shelters. I'm not sleeping in the same room as hundred of men coughing and sneezing.

You know, sometimes having a roof over your head is not worth it.

I'm not saying that my disability should put me ahead of the needs of anyone else living with a disability. I just want to make you completely aware that a person with a disability that compromises your immune system should not be living in a shelter.

Honored Councilmembers, Madam President, please hear my plea.

And when you're thinking about this budget, I want you to think of all of the hundreds of persons who can't speak who are -- who I am the voice for in coming here. I'm asking that City Council provide safe and affordable housing for persons living with HIV and AIDS.

Thank you for your time and attention.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you, Mr. Bennett.

MR. YABOR: Excuse me, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes?

MR. YABOR: A summation of the state of affairs of homelessness and HIV and AIDS.

What is the need for housing for people with HIV and AIDS in Philadelphia? HUD has determined that there are 8,000 households with people with AIDS in need of subsidized housing.

Why is subsidized housing especially important for people with AIDS? The average price for a one-bedroom apartment in Philadelphia is

$803. You may be aware that SSI recipients get $674.

How long is the waiting list for housing with HIV and AIDS? Presently, there is a waiting list of 165 to 200 people on the waiting list. It takes approximately two years for a person who applies for housing to receive the housing. If at any time during that period -- application period the application is interrupted, most of the time they have to start over.

So, where is the money for housing coming from? Well, the federal government, in Fiscal 2009, gave $7.2 million to the City of Philadelphia. The City of Philadelphia has contributed zero dollars. Not only has the City of Philadelphia contributed no money towards HIV and AIDS housing specifically; they never have.

How much money does -- we went over how much money is provided.

Why should people with HIV and

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

AIDS get specific resources for housing? That's a good question.

People with HIV and AIDS are more likely to get infections, opportunist infections and -- in shelter systems, within the shelter system. On the reverse side, we find that people who are housed with housing vouchers have less chance of getting opportunist infections, higher (indiscernible) counts, and lower viral loads. They're somewhat less infectious. And are more stable and less likely to participate in risky behavior.

Isn't housing for people with HIV and AIDS expensive? That's the best part about it.

On the low end, we find that it is more cost-effective to house people with shelter -- excuse me, with housing vouchers than it is in a shelter. In fact, on the low end, we find that it costs approximately $8,550 for a shelter to shelter a person for one year;

whereas, to give that same person a housing voucher, it's $8,500. So there's a savings of close to $500 [sic] per person in a more stable environment that puts less stress on our health system and provides a greater degree of public safety.

Another factor involved here is that all people with HIV and AIDS, as my associate Henry has testified to, are not counted in the shelter system. In fact, a number -- a great number are also involved in recovery facilities, in prisons, and as well as on the street.

So summarize the facts: It's cheaper to put people in housing, it's better for the people, it's better for the public. We find that it's not acceptable that our great city should not respond to this growing health crisis. And we beg Council to hear our plea.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much.

Good evening, sir. Kindly

identify yourself for the record.

MR. WILLIAMS: Good evening, Madam President. My name is Clifford Williams. I am also testifying on behalf of an HIV-infected consumer and on behalf of ACT UP Philadelphia.

I'm a person living with AIDS, who is also homeless. I would like to tell you a story of some of my major problems I have faced in my journey.

I have been homeless off and on for several years. While living in the shelter, I developed scarlet fever and also was bitten by fleas. As a person with a weakened immune system, the shelter is not a safe place for me to stay.

While I've been trying to get subsidies through institutions like ACCO (sp?), I have been given the runaround, told to first enter the shelter system, prove that I am homeless, then told by the shelter that they would not give me any papers to show that I am homeless. I was finally told that the papers that I did get was not enough.

I also have been told that my proof of an AIDS diagnosis expired because certain portions of the application process expires. My illness does not expire.

It is an extra burden to have to be run around the City getting papers after paper signed to prove that my diagnosis is something that does not go away.

These systems have failed me. Last February, my wife was in a shelter and I was in a shelter, and she also had cancer, and she was infected with the virus also. She passed last February 25, 2009.

And the shelter is not a real germ-friendly [sic] environment for people with the virus. You risk infections of TB and other HIV-related illnesses, you know.

So we are here, pleading and

asking that some funding be put into the budget for such an epidemic, which has turned pandemic, as we know. So if you'll just hear our cries.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. Mr. Williams, we appreciate your coming in to testify.

Gentlemen, thank you.

MR. YABOR: Thank you, Madam President. And thank you, City Council.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

Our next witness?

MR. McPHERSON: Nancy Goldenberg.

(Witness comes forward.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Hello. Nice seeing you.

MS. GOLDENBERG: Here are copies of my testimony.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Hi. Nice seeing you. Please proceed. Please identify yourself for the record.

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

MS. GOLDENBERG: Good evening, Councilmembers. My name is Nancy Goldenberg. And joining me is my colleague Pete Hoskins.

Together, we represent the 15-member Commission on Parks and Recreation. And we thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of the proposed budget for the Department of Parks and Recreation.

The budget importantly calls for an addition of over $3.2 million in the department's budget.

We are well aware that some may consider this increase an extravagance that the City can ill afford given its current deficit, but we believe otherwise: We believe that this increase is a wise and timely investment of necessity if Philadelphia is to prosper in today's competitive economy, an economy that is far more reliant on a green infrastructure and health and well-being of its citizens than ever before in our lifetimes.

Becoming the greenest city in America, as Mayor Nutter declared in Green Works Philadelphia, is an auspicious goal, but we believe it is achievable. Let's not forget that William Penn labeled Philadelphia "a green country town" for a reason. But over time, others have surpassed us in the use and maintenance of their green infrastructure, and it paid off for them.

The proposed budget is a clear endorsement of Philadelphia's commitment to reclaim its number-one position and a recognition of our parks and recreation system as an economic generator.

Specifically, 2.5 million in new funding would be used in part to accomplish the challenging goal of planting 300,000 new trees in order to increase the tree canopy in every neighborhood by 30 percent, which the Commission supports.

This initiative responds

directly to the work of thousands of park and recreation advocates and gets us ever closer to being an amenity-rich city that can compete in today's economy.

New funds will also be used to help achieve another Green Works goal, that of adding 500 new acres of open space by 2015 so that all residents can live within a ten-minute walk of park or open space.

Furthermore, the additional dollars will help increase the department's capacity to work as a unified agency to help ensure that all services and programs, particularly those for our youth, are top-notch and connected in meaningful ways to the exploration of the outdoors.

Even with this increased level of City funding, however, the Department of Parks and Recreation cannot be successful if it remains largely dependent on municipal services and resources.

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

Because of its ability to attract tourists and recreational enthusiasts from throughout the region, the department has an extraordinary opportunity to capture revenues from new sources and entrepreneurial activities.

Learning from other cities, the Commission stands ready to support the department in defining new funding strategies to supplement and leverage City dollars by raising the additional money it needs, not just to meet today's needs but to a achieve the vision of becoming the nation's premier park and recreation system.

I'd like now to turn the microphone to Pete Hoskins for a few brief comments particularly focused on revenue enhancement.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

MR. HOSKINS: Thank you, Nancy. And thank you also, members of City Council for having us here today and for being a part of creating the new Parks and Recreation Advisory Council.

As chair of the Commission's Revenue Enhancements Committee, I too support the Mayor's proposed budget for 2011 to add nearly $3.3 million to the department's budget in support of important investments in our parks and recreation system.

In a normal economic environment, it might be pressing to suggest increasing the budget of Parks and Recreation; but at last, there's a clear recognition that municipal support of Philadelphia's parks and recreation system, which can be an extraordinary resource for increased tourism, enhanced retail opportunity, higher property values, and environmental mitigation, has fallen far behind inflation over the last three decades. At last, there is demonstrated a determination to do something about that.

Fortunately, over the years,

the former Fairmount Park Commission and the Recreation Department had helped make up a portion of that deficit with private funds developed through public-private partnerships with a wide range of organizations, including the Fairmount Park Conservancy, the recreation advisory councils, sports associations, concessionnaires, historic preservation organizations, and organizations promoting special events.

Revenue from these activities not only adds enormously to the maintenance and programs of the now-new Parks and Recreation Department but also encourages private donations not otherwise possible for the City, totalling nearly $8 million in operation funds and additional millions for capital improvements.

Having many years of experience in Fairmount Park myself, and now in the private and nonprofit sector, I can assure that continued encouragement of entrepreneurial activity to augment the General Fund will be successful if the City continues its promise to add investments as well.

As members of the new Parks and Recreation Commission, I can report that we are working hard to develop policies and guidelines that employ the best practices of successful parks and recreation departments across the country.

In doing so, we have the benefit of using the thoughtful work done in recent years by the Park Reform Task Force, the Fairmount Park Alliance, and others in developing models of public/private support for parks and recreation programs that augment the City's commitment.

We understand the delicate balance between accountability, accessibility, equity to all citizens, and entrepreneurship in a public environment.

The new Parks and Recreation Commission is dedicated to encouraging new bases of financial support and acting as a bridge to the Mayor and City Council to assure that in the end, it is the citizens of Philadelphia who get the best parks and recreation programs possible. Our citizens deserve nothing less.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank you both for your testimony. It's important to hear from the new commission, and I want to thank both of you for serving on it. It's a very important thing we do in Philadelphia.

I hope you understand that I think Philadelphia is number one today. We have -- we don't needed to achieve most of what is in the great green works plan to be number one. We have more park land than any other city in the country; we may not be maintaining it as well as we need to; that's something we can certainly agree on.

But governing is choosing between competing ideas for good, with limited resources, and we're going to have to make some tough choices this budget year. And I would suggest that when the economy rebounds and we're not asking people to pay more in taxes that I'll be fully supportive of what comes out of the Commission.

You know, I think it is great to have reached goals, and I'll look forward to seeing us plant 60,000 trees every year for the next five years compared to our 678 a year last year, over the next few years. If that money is allocated, 2.5 million in the capital funds, I expect that that will survive in the Capital Budget. And if you can show us you can plant 60,000 trees next year, I can't imagine that we won't be excited about this in the future.

Thank you for your testimony.

MR. HOSKINS: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you very much.

MR. HOSKINS: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our next witness?

MR. McPHERSON: Amy Dougherty.

(Witness comes forward.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good evening.

MS. DOUGHERTY: Good evening.

Before I go any further, happy National Library Week, which started today.

(Applause.)

MS. DOUGHERTY: Good evening, President Anna Verna and members of City Council. My name is Amy Dougherty, and I am the executive director of the Friends of the Free Library of Philadelphia.

I want to thank you for holding public hearings on the budget and also would like to acknowledge City Council and Mayor Nutter on your hard work and dedication in maintaining City services under these extraordinarily difficult financial precious.

Given the limited resources facing every City department, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge your commitment to your constituents and that of the agency that I and 50 library friends groups know and love, the Free Library.

Despite headlines such as the one that appeared in Friday's New York Times, which said, "Why So Glum? Numbers Point to a Recovery," our city has not yet experienced the rebound. So I am aware of the difficult choices that you have before you.

As you go about finding ways to fill the City's $120 million revenue shortfall and the best use of our resources, I would like to take a few minutes of your time to highlight some of the findings just recently published in the Gates Foundation's report, "Opportunities For All: How the American Public Benefits from Internet Access in U.S. Libraries." And then I'll briefly update you on what's happening in Philadelphia regarding library services.

A brief executive summary of "Opportunities For All" states the following:

Nearly one-third of the U.S. population over the age of 14 used library Internet computers and that Internet access is now one of the most sought-after public library services. Those in poverty relied on these resources even more.

Forty-five percent of the 169 million visitors connected to the Internet using a library computer or a wireless network during their visit.

Although many types of

residents use public library computers and Internet services, these resources are particularly effective in addressing the needs of families who lack access elsewhere.

Technology draws teens to the library. Now, isn't that a wonderful place for our teens.

Social connections. Overall, people perform both life-changing and routine tasks regardless of income. They apply for college, secure government benefits, learn about critical medical treatments, connect with families and friends, manage bank accounts, apply for permits, start local clubs, and read the daily newspaper.

Two-thirds of all users logged on to help others.

Education. Public libraries are an extension of the nation's educational system. Forty-two percent, or 32 million library visitors, reported using library computers for things such as doing homework, searching for and applying for GED or graduate programs, completing online courses and tasks, applying for financial aid; and more than half of library patrons who use libraries computers to seek financial aid received it.

Two-thirds of people who use library computers received help from library staff.

Forty-two percent of 14- to 18-year-olds use library computers to do school work.

Employment. Forty percent of respondents, or 30 million people, use library computers and Internet access for employment or career purposes, 76 percent of whom use library computers specifically for job opportunities, 66 percent submitted job applications online and 40 percent worked on their résumés.

Health and wellness. Thirty-seven percent, or 28 million people, use library computers for health and wellness issues: 53 percent for information on medical procedures, 83 percent for information about disease, illness, or medical conditions, 60 percent for information about diet and health, 53 percent to learn about medical procedures.

Fifty percent used online services at libraries to find a doctor or health-care provider, 83 percent to change their diet, and 84 percent to change their exercise habits.

So the study goes on.

Clearly, both local and nationally, people -- excuse me. People use libraries to link to governmental agencies, both local and national, laws government forms and services.

Community and civic engagement figures were interesting, as 33 percent using library computers learned about politics, news in their community.

Nineteen million people logged on for commercial needs or to manage their personal finances.

The Gates Foundation's recommendations in their executive summary notes that the results of the report demonstrates that libraries have been a silent partner in workforce development, educational achievement, health-information delivery, and bringing government services to citizens.

And the report notes that significant public benefit of investment in library technology and calls on policy-makers to more fully integrate libraries' role in achieving positive public outcomes.

So how are we doing here in Philadelphia? I will leave you to decide that with these few facts:

Far too many of our library branches are not open consistently. In FY 2010, out of 157 days that my staff was able to check on library branch openings or closings -- because we don't do this on Saturdays or holidays when we're not in the office -- there were 756 branch closures, or an average of 4.8 closures every day, and 269 branches with limited hours, for a total of 1,025 instances of library-service interruptions, or a total average of 6.5 instances of closures or limited hours each day.

So clearly, we don't have enough staff at our library branches or something.

So we are to understand from the testimony provided by the Free Library today that 35 additional staffers will be hired to fill the gap, and this will stop the unscheduled closures, all with no additional General Fund or Class 100 dollars.

If this is so, why have we seen, for three quarters of the year, an average of 4.5 scheduled closures -- unscheduled closures per day? Has it taken all year to hire 35 staffers?

I am baffled, I am confused,

I'm skeptical. And I suggest that in reality, we not -- we will not see 35 additional staffers with the same 32 $32,968,000 in the Library's budget.

Therefore, I am requesting an additional 2.5 million more dollars for the Library's General Fund, for a total of $35,368,000 in order to make sure that all branches are open five days per week on every day that they are scheduled to open, so that our children, students, job seekers, and every one of us who needs electronic resources for job searches, educational resources, or to get connected to our government services or health-care providers can get the access to information that we need at our publicly-funded free library.

2.5 million more dollars would look like this:

$1,750,000 would go towards Class 100 staff. Approximately 38 new staffers, in a combination of full- and part-time seasonal and regular staff in order to stabilize service at five days a week. And if that works so well, to move slowly towards six days per week.

$750,000 for materials to be allocated to collections in order to build back the system's collection, which, in some branches, is severely strained, even given the thousands of dollars per year that our Friends groups raise to augment the Library's material budget.

That ends my testimony, and thank you for your time.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Your testimony has really been very informative. Thank you so much for coming in.

MS. DOUGHERTY: You're welcome.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our next witness?

MR. McPHERSON: Is a panel for the Coalition for Central Services.

(Witnesses come forward.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

Please identify yourself for the record. and proceed with your testimony.

MS. CLARKE: My name is Katrina Clark, and I'm a member of the Durham Library. And I want to thank everyone for coming; I know it's late.

First of all, I just basically want to reiterate what Miss Dougherty said, but definitely, from a more personal perspective, out of Durham, we are really dealing with some issues with inconsistency with hours, especially due to guards. The four-employee rule, that you must have four employees right now at a time where staffing is lower has really been a struggle for us, especially when you cannot have a substitute guard there.

Seasonal guards were just cut down two-thirds, to eight hours per week, and that really limits the possibility of having our guard when our guard is absent due to illness, death in the family, or any other personal reason. Thus, it's been very difficult for our community members to know when exactly our library is open.

As a teacher, just the other day, our smallest children at Montessori Genesis Two were just lining up to go to the library, and I said, "Oh, Miss Brown, please call them first because we just don't know when our library is going to be open."

I believe that at any point, when a business or an organization just cannot have consistent hours, that is a clear sign that it is hanging by a thread, it is not thriving the way that it should.

Recently, at Durham, we tried to go above and beyond to provide our community's children with free enrichment programming on a Saturday; we are not a Tuesday-through-Saturday branch; we're Monday through Friday.

And we even raised money. In fact, Miss Blackwell gave us some money to help -- have -- to pay for our guard ourselves, and people from all over donated up to $450 just so we could pay for a guard, and we're all volunteering to be there. And then we were told we still can't do it, we cannot do it. Because of the red tape, we cannot provide our community with the free services for our children that we believe that they deserve.

Children in the suburbs can do these things, they have the money; our kids don't have it. We raise the money so that they can have it, and we still can't give it to them. Our library is for our community, and we're struggling to give them what they deserve.

The last point I want to make is that what looks good on paper is not necessarily the same thing as having a strong system. Technically, on paper, we have a 20 percent cut, and I understand that that's supposed to be a shared sacrifice.

But what that really in reality

has come to mean is that it has busted the morale of all of the staff in the library, it has decimated the ability of our libraries to meet the needs of the citizens in our system.

So I am asking for a restoration of funds so that we can do the job that we were told that we would be able to do. Just like Miss Dougherty said, we need to funding in order to just stay open to five days per week. At this point, the average is below five, and that's not what we were promised.

So if we could have the funding that we need to go through and say and do what we were told we would be able to do, then I'd be happy. But right now, it's been a lie to us, that we would be able to take care of the citizens in our communities.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

(Applause.)

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our next witness?

MR. KNOWLING: Good evening.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good evening.

MR. CHRISTMAN: Sorry to interrupt. We're not the Coalition for Essential Services; right now, we're the Coalition to Save the Libraries.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

MR. KNOWLING: Good evening. My name is Jerome Knowling.

To Mayor Nutter and staff -- AND I know he's not here -- Council President, City Council members, Superintendent of the Library --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Sorry, sir.

MR. KNOWLING: Yes?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Would you mind pulling the microphone closer to you; we can't hear you.

MR. KNOWLING: Okay, okay. Let

me start again. My name is Jerome Knowling.

To Mayor Nutter and staff, Council President and City Council members, Superintendent of the Library, and esteemed staff and esteemed guests, I'm here to testify about the conditions that exist in the David Cohen Ogontz branch of the library.

There are many concerns I would like to address, if permitted, major concerns such as unscheduled closings. Our library is closed or open late two to three times a week, without warning -- lack of staff for opening, lack of guards. On any given day, these are some of the issues that plague our library.

This year, the usership for our library was up, but the services have not been up. Because of these scheduled and unscheduled closings, patrons, young adults, senior citizens, and day-care centers have been denied access to the services.

On behalf of the Friends of the Free Library, David Cohen Ogontz branch, and the Coalition to Save the Library, we ask that you restore full services to the library.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

MS. GOULD: My name is Susan Gould; I am here representing the Fumo Family Branch Library, in South Philadelphia.

In an e-mail today, I got two very, very ironically pertinent e-mails today. One was from the Historical Society saying, "Help us celebrate National Library Week," which, as Amy Dougherty mentioned, began yesterday, and I hope that we have enough libraries to keep celebrating National Library Week on a consistent basis and that these libraries are open when they're supposed to be.

And I got another e-mail from a

friend from out of town, who just recently moved to Philadelphia. I had said what I was going to be doing today, and she said, "Are the libraries still in danger? I thought this was something that happened several years ago."

And then I had another e-mail from a friend here, in the city, who knew more about what had gone on but still said, "Save the libraries? Didn't you do you that already?"

And I've had comments over the past year like, "Isn't everything back to normal? I thought someone got them to be open all week, including Saturday. Oh, well, it was only 11 branches, wasn't it? Didn't you save those 11 branches?"

Well, yes, indeed, all of that is true. And we heard a great deal of important statistics that Amy Dougherty brought up, so I will skip anything that I was going to say that she already did so well.

But I will specify the

situation in my neighborhood. It's not just the Fumo Library, which was the only one that was threatened in South Philadelphia, but we have an odd circumstance of three libraries within a relatively reasonable distance of each other: the South Philadelphia branch at Broad and Morris, the Fumo branch at Broad and Ritner, and the Whitman branch, which is Snyder Avenue at 3rd.

Now, that seems as if they're not too far from each other. But as we talked about this also last year, and we've brought this up frequently, and it's even more of a problem now.

When you get a little card from the library that you usually visit, and it gives you the specific times and days of the week that that library is open, it's still not enough because you really have to call each time before you go just to be sure that the library is really going to be open.

Or, in my case, I had to go to

the post office at Broad and Morris, so I thought, Oh, good. While I'm there, I'll stop in and I'll do some -- look up some books; there was a particular book I needed to take out. And if there's space at the computer, although I have a computer at home, when I'm out and I'm out for a while, I can at least check things that I'm expecting to do in business on my computer.

It was supposed to be open that day. I hadn't called, and there was a "closed" sign.

Now, that's hard enough for somebody like me, but imagine senior citizens who really can't walk around that much and children, daycare children, or even a little bit older, they're not going to toddle from one library to the next, and the senior citizens are not going to drag themselves from one library to the next to find the one that's open.

Not everybody has the little cards that they -- they didn't always pick them up from the library. Not everyone thinks of calling. There are many, many, many circumstances that make it really difficult for people to keep track of what's going on.

The library at Broad and Morris is the only one that's accessible by subway. And do you know, even for me -- I'm not that old -- but going up and down those stairs at Broad and Morris is really a pain.

And suppose it's not a beautiful day: Suppose it's raining, suppose it's snowing, suppose it's awfully hot. Public transportation is not brilliant, as much as you'd like to think it is, but it's not. And so, if you have to wait for the C bus or the 79 on Snyder to go to any one of those libraries, you really want to make sure they're going to be open.

The library at Broad and Morris also has a special significance to the South Philadelphia branch: It's the only one which is very much dedicated to the community that's the largest in the area, the Cambodian community. We have -- they have a Cambodian librarian who, at one point, was the only one in the entire country. And the Cambodian children are always there, doing their homework, using the computers at tables. And there are all sorts of facilities specifically for them and for their parents, language services also.

If that library is closed one or two or half or three days during the week, that's terrible for that specific group; there's no place else that offers those services -- not just in the area but in general.

The other thing that I thought of was: On Dr. Seuss's birthday, a few weeks ago, what if the Fumo branch had had to be closed that day for lack of guard or staff? We would have not had Siobhan Reardon there, reading to the children; or anybody else reading to the children, for that matter.

But I have to say that Miss Reardon did a marvelous job. I went and she -- I asked her how she -- where she learned to read so well to the children. She said, "Teaching Sunday school."

And I stayed for several people's reading. And the excitement of the children, the looks on their faces as they sat absorbing the pictures, the words. And if that had been one of the days when, Oops, the guard couldn't be here, or two librarians couldn't be there, they wouldn't have been able to do that.

I've heard that the long-promised solution for the guard situation has been undertaken; I hope this is not just an urban legend, I hope this is reality.

And, again, as everyone has said so far -- I'll just conclude by saying: Please do not cut anymore. And, as a matter of fact, bring back, reinstate, give us the funding we need to keep our libraries open at least five consistent full days a week.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good evening.

MR. CHRISTMAN: Good evening. My name is Andrew Christman. Thank you for having me and the Coalition to Save the Libraries here this evening.

I'm not going to repeat so much, although I have a lot of the same stories. As an educator, I'm a teacher, a high school teacher in Kensington, and we depend on the Kensington library and have many of the same problems with being able to close our -- I mean, we can't provide trips with our students who don't have a library a trip to the library because the library is often closed.

And also, I'm a member of the Fishtown Friends group, and I'm very proud of my library, very proud of being a part of the Fishtown Friends group because my -- because the library and the Friends group both to me represent the best parts of Fishtown; it's a true cross-section of what Fishtown is right now, at this moment, which is very exciting.

And it frustrates me that because of the problems we're having with keeping the library funded that the library, which is sort of emblematic to me of our community right now, can't keep up the pace with the changes that are happening around them.

So, for example, the library is presently the most diverse place in Fishtown, I can say. And not only is it diverse, but people of different races, economic backgrounds, ages are engaged with each other. And every day that that's not happening is a loss for Fishtown and for the community.

And I fear that the library is becoming a place that people are exited about, where they say, Oh, I'll meet you at the library to go and talk to so-and-so; or, I'll meet you at the library to go find my book about airplanes; I'll meet you at Fishtown to go look for a job. And people are excited and exhilarated about the prospect.

That those conversations now end with, "I'll meet you at the library -- if it's open." And I think that that exasperation is being felt across the City now. And the Fishtown library's just sort of a microcosm of that happening.

I think that's about all I'll say.

I will say -- I want to say one positive anecdote, which is, I took a student to the library, and this is a student that has been traditionally truant. I teach at an alternative school, and he had really struggled with his decision to come back to school, after a long absence from school.

And we went to the library and we ran into a former mentor of his, who was a teacher when he was in elementary school. And because of the connection being rekindled and them running into each other at the library, I think this was -- this person was an ally for me as a teacher to keep the students in school now. And now we go to the library regularly for him to read.

And I think that these meetings that happened in the community is very important and very powerful. And, again, every day that the library is closed is a day that an opportunity like this is lost.

And, you know, I'm saddened to think that there are other students like this student that are missing those opportunities when the library is closed.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. Thank you very much so much for coming in to testify. We do appreciate it.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And we're hoping that things will get better.

MR. McPHERSON: Our next witness is Joshua Vincent.

(Witness comes forward.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good evening. Kindly identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

MR. VINCENT: Certainly. My name is Josh Vincent. I'm the executive director of the Henry George Foundation and the Center for the Study of Economics based AT 413 South Tenth Street, in Philadelphia, 19147.

And shockingly, I'll talk a little bit about land-value tax tonight. But essentially I'd like to follow up a bit on the testimony I gave on March 17th about the flat property tax fee that's being proposed on the revenue side.

And I'm here because of our concerns about the very real budget gap and the hard choices that must be made to plug that gap. And because of the varying scenarios presented by Council, the Administration and others, there is still no clear way forward. Therefore, we'd like to put our idea into the mix and show how it would work.

Now, a flat garbage fee is regressive in Philadelphia. There should be an option in more homogeneous towns, but not here. The low-income protections proposed will, based on experience, elsewhere fail due to noncompliance. Like other flat fees, it is not eligible for any kind of writeoff on higher forms of government taxation.

The attached charts break the matter down for residential parcels, along with the proposal to use the standard property tax and our land-value tax alternative.

I demonstrated pretty clearly,

I think, on March 17th that the flat fee would actually have exceeded the current City share of the property tax for many homeowners indeed throughout the City, particularly in District 3 and in District 7.

The property tax proposed in Councilman DiCicco's Bill 100198 is certainly a better alternative on the surface, as it is the basis of a small percentage of the City tax, although the main source of school tax. Yet serious and concrete concerns about valuation have existed for decades and must be addressed.

The new values, while appearing to be a vast improvement, are still in the rough-cut stage, to say the least, and are far from a final result as we read daily in the newspapers.

We suggest, therefore, that aspects of the Council's plan could be enacted for this year, giving municipal government time to establish protections from bad tax policy, bad property valuation, and too few tools to protect poor taxpayers.

It's our position that when we look at the land values versus building values of the property assessments that currently exist, they are not accurate by any stretch of the imagination, but residential land values are more consistent from one property to the next in a particular residential area. And I think that can be the key to an alternative to help us roll into a tax on lands values.

While we all eagerly await the new BRT data with protections for homeowners, we must make choices. The land-value tax can be implemented now, and a careful, parcel-by-parcel study indicates that the vast majority of residential properties would see a tax reduction from current proposal, most of them in areas that are simply not prepared to pay the flat fee and would take a greater burden, using the standard property tax.

So with this one-time proposal, there will be correlating tax relief, or at least less of a tax increase, for those neighborhoods who have, frankly, felt the brunt of poor tax policies in the past, such as Olney, Juniata Park, Northeast, Kensington, Port Richmond; I could go on.

Our city faces immense fiscal challenges in the near future. The unspoken worries that this recession is deeper and worse than Philadelphia than a rising stock market might indicate, the job recovery is going to be a lot longer in this city. And without the wages to pay taxes and extra taxes, people won't be able to make it.

The need for revenue for programs, from school improvements to safer streets, must be counterbalanced by new approaches that maintain revenue flow without resorting to policies that have

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

put Philadelphia at a disadvantage for years. I think LVT can help Philadelphia in this effort, and I think our city doesn't have to face the false choice of either/or.

This adaptive compromise can be adopted as a one-offered event, like the proposed property increase sunsetting after five years. Yet I suspect that the evidence will demonstrate that this revenue program will not drive away business, hurt the poor, or elderly, nor punish the best and brightest of young families who want to stay in Philadelphia.

In closing, I just would like to add that what we tax matters just as much as how much we tax, and I'd like to thank you very much.

And I think the most significant -- I don't go through my charts; I know I'm too much of a chart and number guy, so I will spare you.

But we compared the flat trash

fee to the property tax and then to the land charge only, and it's my last page. And you can definitely indicate how non-progressive the flat tax is broken down by neighborhood.

The bill proposed, 100198, is better, but we believe that the trash tax paid for by a land-value charge is far more progressive in neighborhoods that simply can't afford it.

And I thank you very much for your time.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

The Chair recognizes Councilman Goode.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you, Madam President.

Good evening, Mr. Vincent.

MR. VINCENT: Good evening.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: One quick question. In your estimation, how long should it take to straighten out the assessment system?

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

MR. VINCENT: Honestly, considering what we've seen throughout the rest of the country, and considering it's about 550,000 parcels, about a year to 18 months.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Okay, thank you.

Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You're welcome.

Any other questions from members of the committee?

The Chair recognizes Councilwoman Sanchez.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank you.

Good evening.

MR. VINCENT: Good evening.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Clearly, one of the reasons this land value works better is because we -- one, the numbers are better, but what is the impact on commercial, and which of the commercial get impacted the most?

MR. VINCENT: We've done research on the aggregate level, and if there's interest -- hint, hint -- we'll do it on a parcel-by-parcel level.

The commercial sector that would pay more would be Center City commercial. When we looked at it -- in fact, we haven't published it yet, but we're about to in the next couple of days, break it down by neighborhood and by Council District.

And it's a wash for District 7, for District 3. But when you get into Center City, then it becomes less of a wash, because that's where the land values are, even under a terrible assessment system.

COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank you. I look forward to looking at that data.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you for your testimony.

I guess you've looked at all of the data that's come out with respect to the initial cut at full-value taxation in the City.

MR. VINCENT: Right.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And you would agree with, you know, the conclusion that based on just that cut, that our system is non-uniform and unfair, currently.

MR. VINCENT: Nobody can disagree with that.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. So given that, wouldn't it make more sense for us to continue assessing properties even on a one-property-at-a-time basis rather than a full-value initiative basis such that we can, at least with respect the properties we can get to, provide the proper value and have it be at least for those citizens uniform and fair?

I'm sure some would go down, some would go up.

MR. VINCENT: Well, at full

AVI -- in other words, every parcel done at the same time essentially -- is by far preferable.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Sure. But while we're not doing AVI, we're not -- the unilateral decision has been made not to do that, we're not doing it.

While we're not doing it, wouldn't we be moving towards more of a uniform, fairer system if we did assessments?

MR. VINCENT: If we did assessments, my concern -- and we've worked with a lot of Bella Vista residents, as you know; as a matter of fact, you were down there at a meeting.

When one block is picked and another block is not picked --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Sure, but with respect to the block that's picked, they're going to be at the proper value, right?

MR. VINCENT: I -- I don't think so based on what we did with

Kimball Street. In other words, the rolling reassessments that we looked at, we helped them with their appeals, and you would have a house that hadn't been fixed up since 1960 -- and this is not an exaggeration.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Sure. And that's why we have an appeals process.

MR. VINCENT: Pardon me?

COUNCILMAN GREEN: That's why we have an appeals process. An assessment's not final until it goes through the process.

MR. VINCENT: Yeah. She didn't appeal her assessment; she should have. And that's part of the unfairness of the system, is that people don't know what to do, they don't know how to even fight their assessment.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Well, with full value, we're going to have 570,000 appeals a year.

(Laughter.)

MR. VINCENT: Well, if the BRT

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

did a job on the other side -- in other words if they went to Olney, say, and they reduced values to a level to where they should be, then that would be, I think, a good process and --

COUNCILMAN GREEN: So bottom line, what is your testimony; that we should try to raise some revenue by switching to just a small portion of land value today?

MR. VINCENT: I think land value is more reliable overall, and I think that you could raise revenue, increase revenue, if you will, from that source. And also, the tax-abated properties would then pay more of their fair share as well.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: And if we increase real-estate taxes through changing the land value formulation, would that be more progressive or more regressive?

MR. VINCENT: That would be more progressive, the bottom line.

4.12.10 - COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE (BUDGET)

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you.

MR. VINCENT: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you. Thank you very much.

MR. VINCENT: Thank you so much.

MR. McPHERSON: Our next witness is Robert Vance.

(Witness comes forward.)

MR. VANCE: Good evening, Madam President and members of Council.

I'm appearing today as the president of the board of directors of the Friends of the Wissahickon.

The Friends of the Wissahickon is the oldest and largest of the nonprofit volunteer groups that is active in the Fairmount Park system. For over 85 years, the Friends have been stewards of Wissahickon Valley Park, which is the beautiful northern stretch of Fairmount Park. That should be familiar to most of you.

Our members maintain and

preserve trails and historic structures, care for native plant and animal species, and protect the watershed.

I am here today to add the voice of the FOW to the chorus of individuals and organizations that are calling on City Council to vote yes on the proposed Operating and Capital Budgets for the new Department of Parks and Recreation.

The spirit of reform that resulted in the creation of the Department of Parks and Recreation must be safeguarded, and that can only be accomplished if you vote yes on its proposed Operating and Capital Budget.

The proposed $3.3 million increase in the Operating Budget for the department, the $5 million Capital Budget for Recreation, and the $5.4 million Capital Budget for Fairmount Park are critically important because all Philadelphians deserve safe, clean, green, accessible parks and recreation.

And in particular, our children need healthy, fun activities and inspiring, inexpensive, and positive entertainment options.

In the Wissahickon, the proposed Operating and Capital Budgets will assist the Friends of the Wissahickon in partnership with Fairmount Park in continuing to carry out a number of projects that already have proven to be important to the care, maintenance, and preservation of the park.

For example, flooding and excessive storm-water runoff are major problems that severely impact the health of the Wissahickon Creek. Many of FOW's projects focus on alleviating the negative effects of storm-water runoff on the park. The recent installation of a rain garden in front of Valley Green Inn is one example.

Secondly, FOW's Sustainable Trails Initiative is a multi-stage project to help make the 50 miles of natural-surface, national recreation trails in the Wissahickon an environmentally and socially sustainable system that works for everyone. This project will take a minimum of seven years and cost between 5 and $10 million.

Two phases of the project already been completed. And in each phase, FOW worked closely with Fairmount Park as well as over thirty stakeholder groups representing different users throughout the park.

FOW also is actively involved in restoring the park's many man-made structures, which mirror its diverse history and heritage. For example, FOW works to maintain and restore works projects administration structures, which are a series of park guard shelters, toilet facilities, and other structures that were constructed by skilled craftsmen under a federal program created during the Great Depression to help put the country back to work.

FOW has also committed to a long-term, multifaceted program of education, again, in conjunction with Fairmount Park cleanup and ongoing maintenance of Devil's Pool, which is a very popular, albeit illegal, swimming area in the Wissahickon.

FOW has mounted trash cleanups and cleaned graffiti from the area through its volunteers and paid summer interns.

And FOW has also committed to replant and preserve the Houston Meadow -- again, in conjunction with Fairmount Park -- an important environmental diversity and recreational area.

Now, the bottom line for us is that by making a small and critical investment in the department now, the City will reap huge dividends in the future in the form of a vibrant and meaningful recreation system and a unique urban-park system that meets the cultural, educational, and recreational needs of its residents.

So on behalf of the FOW, I urge you all to vote yes on the proposed Fiscal Year 2011 Operating and Capital Budget for the new Department of Parks and Recreation.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

MR. VANCE: Thank you, Madam President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I want to thank you for your testimony. I spent Saturday and Sunday in the park, from Valley Green down to, well, I guess, about two miles towards the City and back again. It was lovely on all the trails.

You guys do a tremendous job and we want to do everything we can to support your effort and to support your ability to maintain those trails and achieve your goal of 50 miles in seven years, et cetera.

I'm not sure that this year can be the year for your full -- for everything the Administration's requested; we haven't made those decisions yet. And I'm not suggesting that my opinion is how things are going to go.

But I do want to explain that -- I don't know if you were here before. What I like to say about government is that it's choosing between competing ideas for good, with limited resources.

And when you look at the pot allocated to Parks and Recreation, you could make the argument that we are putting an addition on a house whose roof is leaking, because we have rec centers with leaky roofs, and we have rec centers with broken bathrooms and structures that need to be fixed up.

And a lot of the money

allocated, at least in the current budget presented to us, for the parks is for things like press officers, managers, supervisors, data clerks, things that are not going to be boots on the ground, making either rec centers better or the parks better.

And so, we are going to work hard to try to get boots on the ground and eliminate the bureaucracy, but that doesn't necessarily mean that it will be the same level of funding that is requested by the Administration, but it is our goal to get boots on the ground and to get more resources to groups like yours because you deliver your service far more efficiently than we can as a city government.

So thank you for everything you do.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank you.

MR. VANCE: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank

you, sir.

MR. McPHERSON: The last witness that I have is Zachary Hirschman.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Is Mr. Hershman here?

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Do we have anyone else to testify?

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Seeing no one, this committee will stand in recess until tomorrow, Tuesday, April the 13th, at 10 a.m.

Thank you very much.

(Proceedings end at 7:15 p.m.)

* * *

C E R T I F I C A T E

WE HEREBY CERTIFY that the proceedings of the City of Philadelphia Council Committee of the Whole are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me on Monday, April 12, 2010, and that this is a true and correct statement of same.

____

MICHELE MURPHY,
Registered Professional Reporter

____

JOSEPHINE CARDILLO
Registered Professional Reporter

(The foregoing certification of this transcript does not apply to any reproduction of the same by any means, unless under the direct control and/or supervision of the certifying reporter.)