

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Wednesday, April 19, 2023
10:20 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR., VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILMAN MICHAEL DRISCOLL
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILMAN JIM HARRITY
COUNCILWOMAN QUETCY M. LOZADA
COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL
COUNCILMAN ANTHONY PHILLIPS
COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS
COUNCILWOMAN SHARON VAUGHN

BILLS: 230144, 230145, 230146, 230147,
230148, 230149
RESOLUTION: 230162

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Good morning to you all. Before we
4 begin the public hearing, I'd like to
5 make the following announcement: Due
6 to the continuing threat of the
7 public health from COVID-19, City
8 Council Committees are currently
9 meeting remotely. We are using
10 Microsoft Teams to make these remote
11 hearings possible.

12 Instructions for how the
13 public may view and offer public
14 testimony of public hearings and
15 testimony are included in the public
16 hearing notices that are published in
17 the Daily News, the Inquirer and the
18 Legal Intelligencer prior to the
19 hearings and can also be found on
20 PHLCouncil.com. I now note that the
21 hour has come.

22 Mr. McDermott, will you
23 please call the roll to take
24 attendance. And Members that are in
25 attendance, please indicate by saying

1 present.

2 THE CLERK: Councilmember

3 Bass.

4 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Was that

5 me? I'm sorry. I'm here.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good

7 morning. I'm present.

8 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Oh,

9 sorry.

10 THE CLERK: Councilmember

11 Brooks.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Good

13 morning.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

15 Good morning.

16 THE CLERK: Councilmember

17 Driscoll.

18 COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: Good

19 morning. Present.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

21 Good morning.

22 THE CLERK: Councilmember

23 Gauthier.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Good

25 morning, Council President and

1 colleagues and everybody watching.

2 Present.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

4 Good morning.

5 THE CLERK: Councilmember

6 Gilmore Richardson.

7 (No response.)

8 THE CLERK: Councilmember

9 Harrity.

10 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: I am

11 present and accounted for.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

13 Good morning.

14 COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Good

15 morning, Council President.

16 THE CLERK: Councilmember

17 Johnson.

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good

19 morning, Council President. Good

20 morning, colleagues.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

22 Good morning.

23 THE CLERK: Councilmember

24 Jones.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: I am

1 present. Good morning, everyone.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Good morning.

4 THE CLERK: Councilmember

5 Lozada.

6 COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Good

7 morning, everyone. I'm present.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

9 Good morning.

10 THE CLERK: Councilmember

11 O'Neill.

12 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Good

13 morning, everyone.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

15 Good morning.

16 THE CLERK: Councilmember

17 Phillips.

18 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Good

19 morning, Council President,

20 colleagues and the viewing public.

21 Good morning. Happy to be here to

22 serve.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

24 Good morning.

25 THE CLERK: Councilmember

1 Squilla.

2 (No response.)

3 THE CLERK: Councilmember

4 Thomas.

5 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good

6 morning, Council President. Good

7 morning, colleagues. Good morning to

8 the listening public.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

10 Good morning.

11 THE CLERK: And,

12 Councilmember Vaughn.

13 COUNCILWOMAN VAUGHN: Good

14 morning, everyone.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

16 Good morning. Thank you very much.

17 We have established our quorum. This

18 is the continued public hearing of

19 the Committee of the Whole regarding

20 Bill Nos. 230144, 230145, 230146,

21 230147, 230148, 230149, and

22 Resolution No. 230162.

23 Mr. McDermott, please read

24 the titles of the bills and

25 resolution.

1 THE CLERK: Bill No. 230144,
2 an ordinance to adopt a Capital
3 Program for the six Fiscal Years
4 2024-2029 inclusive.

5 Bill No. 230145, an ordinance
6 to adopt a Fiscal 2024 Capital
7 Budget.

8 Bill No. 230146, an ordinance
9 adopting the operating budget for
10 Fiscal Year 2024.

11 Bill No. 230147, an ordinance
12 amending Chapter 19-1500 of The
13 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Wage and
14 Net Profits Taxes," by revising
15 certain tax rates, under certain
16 terms and conditions.

17 Bill No. 230148, an ordinance
18 amending Chapter 19-2800 of The
19 Philadelphia Code, entitled
20 "Pennsylvania Intergovernmental
21 Cooperation Authority Tax on Wages
22 and Net Profits," to provide for the
23 continuation of the tax and to make
24 other conforming changes, all under
25 certain terms and conditions.

1 Bill No. 230149, an ordinance
2 amending Chapter 19-2600 of The
3 Philadelphia Code, entitled "Business
4 Income and Receipts Tax," by revising
5 certain tax rates, under certain
6 terms and conditions.

7 Bill No. 230162, providing
8 for the approval of the Council of
9 the City of Philadelphia revised Five
10 Year Financial Plan for the City of
11 Philadelphia, covering Fiscal Years
12 2024 through 2028 and incorporating
13 revised changes with respect to
14 Fiscal Year 2023, which is to be
15 submitted by the Mayor to the
16 Pennsylvania Intergovernmental
17 Cooperation Authority, pursuant to
18 the intergovernmental operation
19 agreement authorized by an ordinance
20 of this Council approved by the Mayor
21 on January 3, 1992, by and between
22 the City and the Authority.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
24 Thank you. Today we continue the
25 public hearing of the Committee of

1 the Whole to consider the bills read
2 by the Clerk that constitute proposed
3 operating and capital spending
4 measures for Fiscal 2024, a Capital
5 Program and a Forward-looking Capital
6 Plan for Fiscal 2024 through Fiscal
7 2029.

8 This morning we will hear
9 testimony from the Mayor's Office of
10 Children and Families, Parks &
11 Recreation and the Department of
12 Human Services. This afternoon we
13 will hear from the Office of
14 Sustainability and the Energy
15 Authority and the Free Library.

16 Mr. McDermott, the first
17 person to testify is?

18 THE CLERK: The first person
19 to testify from the Administration is
20 Vanessa Garrett Harley, Deputy Mayor
21 of the Office of Children and
22 Families.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
24 Good morning.

25 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

1 Good morning, Council President.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 How are you?

4 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

5 Good morning, Council President

6 Clarke and members of City Council.

7 I'm Vanessa Garrett Harley, Deputy

8 Mayor for the City of Philadelphia's

9 Office of Children and Families.

10 Joining me today are my First Deputy

11 Jessica Shapiro, Nadine Perese, who's

12 the Chief Financial Officer,

13 Christine Piven who is the Chief of

14 Prevention Services and Sean Perkins,

15 who's the Chief of Early Childhood

16 Education.

17 I'm pleased to provide

18 testimony on the Fiscal Year 2024

19 operating budget for the Office of

20 Children and Families. As Deputy

21 Mayor for OCF, I oversee the

22 Department of Human Services or DHS,

23 Parks & Recreation and the Free

24 Library of Philadelphia.

25 In addition, the Office of

1 Children and Families has its own
2 operating programs, including
3 PHLpreK, Community Schools, Out-of-
4 School Time, WorkReady, Adult
5 Education and Food Insecurity
6 initiatives. Funding for our
7 specific programs is reflected in the
8 Department of Human Services'
9 operating budget. Our priorities are
10 to keep children and youth safe, to
11 support strong families and to
12 support schools and communities.

13 Our Fiscal Year '24 budget
14 requests reflect our continued
15 commitment to serving all
16 Philadelphians and supporting our
17 most vulnerable populations. We are
18 requesting funding to support an
19 additional 950 free PHLpreK seats,
20 which will bring the total number of
21 seats to 5,250. We have distributed
22 these seats across more than 228
23 locations throughout the City.

24 In fact, almost 1400 of the
25 seats will be located in priority

1 neighborhoods, which means that the
2 neighborhood has a higher number of
3 children under 5 living in poverty, a
4 higher number of early childhood risk
5 factors and lower numbers of
6 publicly-funded high-quality
7 preschool seats. Not only does this
8 program support high-quality learning
9 and activities for 3 and 4-year-olds,
10 it also supports many local,
11 minority, women and disabled business
12 owners.

13 In fact, 63 percent of the
14 providers self-reported that they
15 were M/W/DBE businesses. Working in
16 collaboration and consultation with
17 the Department of Behavioral Health,
18 we are requesting additional funding
19 to support trauma initiatives for
20 children under 6 to counteract the
21 detrimental effects of adverse
22 childhood experiences.

23 In order to better support
24 our larger Community Schools,
25 particularly our high school

1 programs, we've requested additional
2 funding to assign two Community
3 School coordinators instead of the
4 one that is currently at, at least
5 five schools. This investment will
6 help us to deepen our community and
7 school partnerships and to ensure
8 that we are supporting the daily
9 needs of our students.

10 This year to sustain a wage
11 of \$11 per hour, we are investing
12 additional funding to support the
13 WorkReady program for students ages
14 12 to 24. We work closely with the
15 leadership of the Philadelphia Youth
16 Network to ensure that procedures are
17 in place both on the City side and at
18 PYN to avoid payment problems to both
19 young people and to the providers
20 that support them.

21 Finally, although the
22 Commissioners of the Department of
23 Human Services, Parks & Recreation
24 and the Director of the Free Library
25 are all present for the hearings

1 today and available to answer
2 questions as needed, I want to
3 highlight a few of their critical
4 budget requests.

5 Both the Free Library and
6 Parks & Recreation are working to
7 increase their weekend hours to offer
8 children and adults and families
9 opportunities for recreation and
10 learning in safe spaces. As you will
11 hear from their leaders, both
12 departments are well on their way to
13 being able to offer this full
14 service.

15 Parks & Rec is already
16 operating 65 centers on Saturdays and
17 40 on Sundays with plans to reach 100
18 centers in FY24. The Library began
19 offering Saturday hours at 10
20 neighborhood locations this spring
21 and has already served thousands of
22 patrons. Beginning in the fall as
23 more staff are hired, more branches
24 will be open on Saturdays.

25 Finally, the Department of

1 Human Services has requested \$2.6
2 million in additional funding to
3 support our work at the Philadelphia
4 Juvenile Justice Services Center.
5 Specifically, this additional funding
6 would pay for additional staffing,
7 food for the residents, a concrete
8 goods fund to support young people
9 when they exit our center and for
10 security and facility management
11 services. As we move into the summer
12 months, Office of Children and
13 Families has been focused on leading
14 the charge to engage children and
15 teens in fun and positive and
16 enriching activities.

17 OCF through our Parks & Rec
18 camps, Out-of-School Time summer
19 programs is funding over 14,000
20 opportunities for children and youth.
21 Parks & Rec will once again host
22 hundreds of Playstreets throughout
23 the City. Additionally, with our
24 partners at Philadelphia Works and
25 private investors through PYN, we are

1 working towards funding 8,000 summer
2 jobs for youth.

3 We've created a one-stop
4 website for families to find
5 activities for youth to engage in,
6 which can be found at
7 phila.gov/it'sasummerthing.

8 Additionally, at the suggestion of
9 Councilmember Gilmore Richardson, we
10 are also working on producing a paper
11 document or directory which will list
12 programs hopefully in a more easily
13 accessible way.

14 Finally before I conclude,
15 I'm asking for your help to encourage
16 parents and guardians to enroll their
17 children and teens in one of the many
18 summer programs that are offered
19 throughout OCF. We've dropped off
20 promotional materials at your
21 offices. Please share them with your
22 constituents and your networks.

23 We are excited about making
24 this a great enriching summer for our
25 City's children and youth. My staff

1 and I are available to answer any
2 questions. We have submitted to
3 Council a more detailed testimony.
4 But for purposes here today and time,
5 I'll stop there and we'll answer any
6 questions that you have. We thank
7 you for your support and
8 consideration.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

10 Thank you. Thank you so much. And
11 good morning to you.

12 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

13 Good morning.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I

15 got a couple of questions. We'll
16 start with one that is kind of near
17 and dear to our hearts, this
18 Community Schools initiative,
19 something that goes way back in terms
20 of the conversation actually working
21 with the schools.

22 And the prior Administration
23 actually before Mayor Kenney got in,
24 we looked at a number of models
25 across the country, particularly in

1 Baltimore and other places and we
2 found out about Cincinnati. And the
3 model of Cincinnati was like the
4 Mercedes-Benz or the Cadillac,
5 whatever, however you want to
6 characterize a version of Community
7 Schools. And the Mayor and I --
8 newly-elected Mayor, myself and some
9 other officials went out to
10 Cincinnati. And the Mayor, he likes
11 to talk about the fact that this was,
12 like, it's semirural. We had to take
13 one of those ferries, it was like a
14 little wooden ferry that you put the
15 cars on. We were scared we were
16 going to fall in the river. It was
17 pretty interesting. But it worked,
18 you know. And at the end of the day,
19 what we saw was really awesome.

20 And this particular Community
21 School, they had an eyeglass division
22 where children could go and get their
23 eyes checked and you actually got to
24 pick out glasses. It was like you
25 were in a store. Across the hall

1 they had a dental component. Down
2 the street they had a mentoring
3 room -- I'm sorry, down the hall
4 there was a mentoring room where
5 children would spend time. And this
6 is something that we wanted to
7 replicate here in the City of
8 Philadelphia.

9 Can you tell me briefly just
10 how we are in terms of being able to
11 replicate that Cincinnati model in
12 some scale?

13 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:
14 So we're working extremely hard to
15 try to get to that. You're right,
16 Cincinnati is kind of at the top of
17 the pinnacle of Community Schools as
18 one of them, and they've been in
19 existence for quite a number of
20 years. So we don't necessarily have
21 what you just described, which is to
22 be able to go in and be able to get
23 eyeglasses or whatever.

24 But I do think we're doing
25 well. And in a matter of time we

1 will continue to do even better. We
2 currently have 20 Community Schools.
3 Out of those 20 Community Schools, 5
4 of them are high schools in the City.
5 I think all of the schools were
6 appropriately selected, both because
7 of the need in that school community
8 and/or the surrounding community, but
9 also because of the willingness of
10 the principals and the school
11 community to work with us in that
12 fashion.

13 We right now spend
14 approximately 8.9 million in
15 Community Schools, which turns out to
16 be somewhere around 775,000 per
17 school. Different schools have
18 different services that they offer
19 depending upon what the needs are in
20 that particular school community.
21 But in general, some of the stuff
22 that we consider to be basic or
23 standard in every school is we have
24 general case managers that will work
25 with families to make sure that they

1 get appropriate referrals.

2 We have what we call
3 attendance case managers because one
4 of the cornerstones of Community
5 Schools is trying to help those
6 schools address truancy problems. We
7 know that young people cannot learn
8 if they're not in the building or in
9 the classroom, so really trying to
10 help improve the attendance at school
11 is a key model.

12 Some of the Community Schools
13 have what's called the STEP program,
14 which is a behavioral health
15 component that works with them. And
16 also the general case management,
17 many of the schools have food
18 distribution programs where they help
19 to administer food not only to the
20 school families, but to surrounding
21 communities. That's in the form in
22 some schools of pantries or other
23 stuff that families or folks that are
24 in need can come in.

25 Some schools have, for lack

1 of a better word, clothing closets or
2 places where people come in and get
3 whatever clothing or whatever they
4 need. It just depends on the school
5 and what they need. Each school has
6 a Community School coordinator that
7 is a City employee that works
8 directly with the principal, the
9 staff but also the surrounding
10 community, and then they build
11 relationships with other community
12 organizations to bring in whatever
13 the referrals are that's necessary.

14 We also have Out-of-School
15 Time in our Community Schools. We're
16 really intentional about trying to
17 make sure that the Out-of-School Time
18 services are being utilized in those
19 schools for the summer. We're really
20 intentional about trying to make sure
21 that WorkReady is in particular being
22 utilized in the Community High
23 Schools so that we target those
24 students that we think are most in
25 need of services.

1 And so, we just try to work
2 with those schools and support them
3 in any way we can, and a lot of it
4 has to do with what feedback we get
5 both from the parents and our
6 community about what their needs and
7 services are.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

9 All right. Got a couple of quick --
10 I'll combine the two questions, and
11 then I'll turn it over to my
12 colleagues. One, can you tell us, if
13 any, and I would hope the answers are
14 positive and affirmative, what level
15 of private sector contribution we're
16 getting because we have limited
17 resources as a government and to make
18 this thing work, we always talk about
19 the public-private partnership?

20 And two, a part of the goal
21 is community participation in a
22 Community School, meaning parent
23 participation because we always hear,
24 I know I do, about the parents and
25 their role in providing support to

1 their children inside of the home,
2 outside of the home and in their
3 particular community? So if you can
4 tell me, one, private sector
5 involvement. And if it's not
6 adequate, what we can do to make sure
7 given all of the various institutions
8 that we have in the City and large
9 businesses, what we can do to assist
10 the intuitive parent participation
11 side?

12 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

13 So I'm going to try to answer you,
14 Councilman, generally. And I'm going
15 to ask Christine Piven who's my Chief
16 of Prevention at Community Schools,
17 which comes under her to perhaps add
18 some stuff that I won't remember or
19 don't know immediately. There is
20 definitely involvement from private
21 sector.

22 Now, whether it's at totally
23 the level we would like it to be, I
24 think there can always be more in
25 different schools, and school

1 communities is different depending
2 upon what businesses and other things
3 are in that immediate community. For
4 example, I went and visited --
5 Southwark is a K to 8 school that's
6 in South Philadelphia that has
7 developed a number of partnerships.

8 There is the building next
9 door, I don't know the correct name
10 for it, but it's the old Bok School
11 that has a number of offices and
12 other things in there. They do a lot
13 of interplay with them. And with
14 those, there's a restaurant in there,
15 there's a number of things in there
16 that they do a lot of interplay with.

17 There are a lot of community
18 groups and organizations that the
19 Community Schools coordinators do
20 partner with and bring in. And so,
21 they get a fair amount of donations
22 and other things with them. The
23 other thing that we try and do is
24 leverage anything else that we have
25 under the City or existing other City

1 contracts, particularly in OCF, to be
2 able to bring in additional services
3 there.

4 But I'm going to ask
5 Christine Piven to give you some
6 additional details around your
7 question.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
9 Thank you.

10 MS. PIVEN: Thank you,
11 Vanessa. This is Christine Piven,
12 Chief of Prevention. In terms of the
13 funding, as Vanessa said a lot of it
14 is leveraged in terms of in-kind
15 investments from alternate
16 organizations. So for example,
17 partnerships with St Joe's. And we
18 can give you a list of the various
19 partnerships at each of the schools
20 so you can see those investments and
21 how we're leveraging that in-kind to
22 really expand and deepen the
23 partnerships and the investment in
24 Community Schools. So that's one
25 piece that we can share with you

1 after these sessions.

2 In addition, parent
3 engagement is strong. One of the key
4 pieces of the coordinate work is to
5 build and support parent engagement.
6 So again, we can give you information
7 at each of the schools and what's
8 happening with parent engagement, but
9 that is a key rule for the
10 coordinator as well.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

12 All right. Yeah, that'll be helpful
13 if you can give us the list of all
14 the schools and the various
15 partnerships, because I think that's
16 a role that we can play in giving
17 some support. People always say they
18 want to contribute to the welfare of
19 the City and neighborhood, so we need
20 to give them every opportunity to do
21 that. The parent --

22 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

23 Council --

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: --

25 participation part --

1 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

2 Oh, I'm sorry, Councilman. I was
3 just going to add looking at some
4 cumulative numbers, it looks like for
5 fall of 2022 reportedly we had over
6 700 partnerships between those 20
7 schools that were engaged with
8 various organizations and also over
9 38,000 different supplies and stuff
10 were distributed, so that gives you
11 some example of the magnitude of
12 where we're heading.

13 Also, for Community Schools,
14 you may know this, in June we're
15 having the major Community Schools
16 Conference kind of from the national
17 level. They picked Philadelphia
18 because they think our model is going
19 well and they want to showcase some
20 of the stuff that we have here. So
21 it will be at the Convention Center.

22 Certainly, we will keep you
23 and other Council Offices informed,
24 but they have been here and we have
25 been talking. And we're also

1 learning from them other things we
2 can do by looking at Cincinnati and
3 other schools too, but they feel like
4 that we are well on our way to
5 becoming one of the more model
6 Community School cities.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
8 Okay. Thank you. And the parent
9 participation part?

10 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:
11 So the Community Schools coordinators
12 to my understanding work very hard
13 with the principals to try to enhance
14 parent participation. And in fact, a
15 lot of the volunteers are parents.
16 We use a sort of volunteer model in
17 terms of helping with everything from
18 the food distribution to any special
19 activities or fairs that they may
20 have at the school to any
21 enhancements.

22 Some of the schools do things
23 like learning or reading partnerships
24 and all that kind of stuff. They use
25 the parents to model. From what I

1 understand, the parent engagement in
2 the Community Schools seems to be
3 outpacing the parent engagement in
4 the schools that are not Community
5 Schools because it's a myriad of
6 things that we offer in different
7 interests that are peaking the
8 parents' interest, and they can come
9 at different times because Community
10 Schools, some of the activities are
11 during the day, but there are many
12 things that are done in the evenings
13 and at other times when parents might
14 be more available or more accessible.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

16 All right. Okay. Thank you.

17 Chair recognizes Councilman
18 Johnson.

19 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
20 you, Council President.

21 How are you doing, Vanessa?
22 Hope all is --

23 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:
24 Good morning, Councilman.

25 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank

1 you to you and your team for all the
2 work that y'all are doing. I just
3 have a question for Parks & Rec and I
4 also have a question regarding summer
5 youth jobs, right.

6 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

7 Yes.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And part
9 of my Save Our Youth initiative that
10 I'll be advocating around for this
11 particular budget is expanding the
12 opportunities for young people to
13 receive summer unemployment. And
14 from the numbers that we have from
15 last year, more than 17,000 young
16 people applied for WorkReady
17 applications, and 4,000 young people
18 were unable to provide the necessary
19 documents that were needed. Another
20 5,000 young people didn't do a
21 follow-up to the notices that were
22 given to them. So that's about 9,000
23 young people we would have to follow
24 up with the proper ID and criteria to
25 apply and others, and an additional

1 other group of individuals who didn't
2 actually just follow up.

3 So basically, I just want to
4 get to what are we doing to close
5 that gap? What would it cost to fund
6 the full 17,000 young people if they
7 all applied and have the proper
8 information and actually also
9 followed up?

10 And then my question for
11 Parks & Rec as a follow-up -- hey,
12 Kathryn, always good to see you.
13 Give a special shout-out to you and
14 your team as well as Frank, Phoebe
15 and Aparno and Francesco and the
16 whole team over there at Parks & Rec.

17 But also, I want to know in
18 terms of -- I'm also advocating
19 particularly for District
20 Councilmembers who receive ITEF
21 funding to specifically focus on the
22 maintenance of our Parks &
23 Recreational facilities, capital
24 maintenance of our Parks &
25 Recreational facilities. How are we

1 doing?

2 I believe we do need to
3 increase as it relates to inflation.
4 If we're going to do 40 million for
5 Rebuild, I think it's 40 million for
6 Rebuild. For the parks that aren't
7 Rebuild, we want to still maintain
8 and continue to build new playgrounds
9 and build new basketball courts, and
10 that 1.5 million just isn't getting
11 it. And so, I just want to put that
12 on the record.

13 But, Vanessa, can you start
14 please?

15 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:
16 Absolutely. Thank you, Councilman,
17 for that question. And I also want
18 to thank you for your interest in
19 young people that you've always had
20 and your interest around this
21 WorkReady ensuring young people have
22 summer jobs. That question you
23 posed, you know you and I have talked
24 about it a little bit. And frankly,
25 you brought it to my attention. As

1 you know, I just sat in this seat a
2 little less than a year ago.

3 And so, last summer was one
4 of the first experiences that I had
5 at this level with it. So what we're
6 trying to do to make sure we can
7 address some of the issues that
8 you've raised, which are accurate and
9 real issues, is we now will pay
10 for -- first of all, some of the
11 barriers to young people getting the
12 correct documents, and we know that
13 people lose documents. Some families
14 are transient. Some kids just, you
15 know, have it in a backpack and they
16 lose it or whatever.

17 But some of the barriers are
18 it costs to get those documents.
19 When we talk about the vital
20 documents you need, your birth
21 certificate, you have to pay when you
22 go to get a new one or a Social
23 Security card or anything. So we're
24 now making available what we call a
25 support gift card, which means we

1 will pay the fees for those young
2 people to be able to go and get
3 whatever those documents are that
4 they need so that is no longer a
5 barrier.

6 I know that almost 200 gift
7 cards have been distributed already
8 and we're really just beginning the
9 registration process, and folks are
10 working with young people to try to
11 make sure that they have all of the
12 documents that you need. PYN or
13 Philadelphia Youth Network as you
14 know are our intermediary that
15 actually manage it. And the Summer
16 WorkReady process, they've already
17 hosted about 16 different recruitment
18 sessions. And I know about 5 more
19 are scheduled. Because one of the
20 things is some of the young people do
21 have difficulty filling out these
22 applications and stuff, right.

23 They are available online.
24 Instructions are available online,
25 but that doesn't mean sometimes

1 people need a different level of
2 assistance. So we are going out of
3 our way to make sure that we host
4 more I don't want to call them
5 orientation sessions but I'll say
6 information sessions so that somebody
7 is there that will physically help
8 you.

9 There's all also a PYN
10 hotline. That number just for the
11 record is 267-502-3900. Young people
12 or their parents can call that number
13 and they will walk them through
14 processes on how to do the
15 application or answer any questions
16 that they have besides there being
17 step-by-step instructions online as
18 well. The other thing that is out
19 there is that the providers, the
20 actual WorkReady providers this year,
21 we are requiring them to host at
22 least two inperson sessions a month,
23 which would result in over 100
24 inperson sessions between the months
25 of April, May and June.

1 When you add up the number of
2 providers, and the benefits of this
3 is these providers are all over the
4 City, so it makes it more convenient
5 for kids and/or their families to be
6 able to find a provider somewhere in
7 the geographical neighborhood that's
8 easy for them to get to that will do
9 the same thing that PYN was doing,
10 which is helping them do the
11 application.

12 I really want every young
13 person that we can afford to be able
14 to get a summer job, because you and
15 I both know the best thing we can do
16 is not have an idle kid and to give
17 them some positive interaction, but
18 summer jobs are even more important.
19 I think back to when I worked them
20 myself through a WorkReady or a
21 similar program here in the City.

22 It puts money in your pocket,
23 so for some kids it will help for
24 those that may potentially be headed
25 the wrong way or sometimes kids do

1 stuff, crimes of economic opportunity
2 because I want what another kid has.
3 It would put some money in your
4 pocket. For some kids, they actually
5 use this money to help them with
6 necessities like school uniforms or
7 other things. It will do all of that
8 stuff, so we want to make sure that
9 happens.

10 You asked the question around
11 what would it cost to potentially
12 fund all 17,000 --

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes.

14 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:
15 Yeah. Now, these are rough estimates
16 and I will have calculations and
17 budgets done and get back to you with
18 something in writing that's probably
19 more accurate. But to give you an
20 example, we are fighting very hard to
21 get funding. The goal for this
22 summer was 8,000 summer jobs, right.
23 That's going to be approximately 17
24 million. So I'm just guessing that
25 if we multiply that, you would be

1 somewhere around 34 million if you
2 were talking about 17,000. And those
3 like I said are rough estimates, and
4 I will get better estimates for you
5 on a budget.

6 The other thing depends upon
7 primarily most of the summer jobs are
8 in person this year, although also
9 working with Parks & Rec around doing
10 some hybrid stuff, a little bit of
11 hybrid so that we may have some young
12 people who have mobility issues or
13 whatever. And so, that's the other
14 thing.

15 If we have somebody who has a
16 mobility issue or something, that may
17 still -- we want to give them the
18 opportunity to be able to enjoy the
19 WorkReady program too. But again,
20 I'll get you more accurate budget
21 numbers, but I hope that gives you a
22 rough idea of kind of what we're
23 working with.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.
25 Thank you.

1 And, Kathryn.

2 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:

3 Hello, Councilman. Kathryn Ott
4 Lovell, Commissioner of Philadelphia
5 Parks & Recreation. I just echo
6 everything Vanessa said. At Parks &
7 Recreation, we are the single largest
8 employer of teens through the
9 WorkReady program in the City, and
10 each year we have anywhere between
11 1200 and 1300 teens working with us.

12 Councilman, I agree with you
13 and Vanessa that the application
14 process can be burdensome. I say
15 this as a mom whose 14-year-old
16 daughter applied through the program
17 last year, so it is -- certainly a
18 level of support is required. We
19 have a system in our department as
20 one of the largest providers to
21 really work one-on-one with each of
22 those 1200 to 1300 kids.

23 So first, it's a facility
24 supervisor who recruits the young
25 people and therefore works with them

1 to get their paperwork in. If that
2 individual has an issue, they're then
3 bumped up to our WorkReady team,
4 which is three people in the
5 department that work one-on-one with
6 families, with the students, with
7 their parents, with their
8 grandparents.

9 There is a woman who works
10 with us. Her name is Willicent Wise,
11 huge shout-out to her. We call her
12 Mickey, and she's been doing this
13 work for decades. And she knows kids
14 by name, she knows grandparents by
15 name and she will help you get
16 whatever you need to get onboarded
17 for this job, so we do everything we
18 can to support the kids. We will
19 absolutely continue to do that.

20 Not only is it an important
21 opportunity for young people to have
22 this job, it's a critical need for us
23 at Parks & Recreation. They are the
24 camp counselors, you know, working
25 underneath our Recreation specialty

1 instructors to make our summer camps
2 happen. It would be a real challenge
3 for us to make all of our summer
4 camps happen for 10,000 kids every
5 summer without those youth worker
6 jobs. It's a win-win for us both.

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Can you
8 follow up in regards to --

9 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: And
10 then --

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Can you
12 follow up in regards to the capital
13 projects --

14 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
15 Yes.

16 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: -- that
17 aren't Rebuild-related? I'm
18 advocating for an increase in the
19 funding that's provided particularly
20 for District Councilmembers that have
21 Parks & Rec agendas that don't fall
22 in line with actual Rebuild.

23 I know inflation goes up.
24 But at the same time we're still
25 trying to -- it's like the demand for

1 new recreation centers -- I mean, for
2 new playground equipment, for new
3 basketball, and we keep trying to
4 catch up. I know you know because
5 I've been calling on a day-to-day
6 basis, so I'm like we got to do
7 something different moving forward
8 because we're trying to keep up. So
9 can you just give me an idea of where
10 are we?

11 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:

12 Yeah. So you call, Council President
13 Clarke calls, everybody has our cell
14 phone numbers, and appreciate you
15 giving that shout-out to our great
16 capital team at Parks & Rec, but it
17 is a challenge. And you are 100
18 percent right in your initial
19 question, you know, or comments that
20 the Rebuild initiative is
21 extraordinary.

22 However, it is funding 72
23 sites. And of those 72 sites, not
24 100 percent of what needs to happen
25 at those sites. We're having to make

1 some very difficult choices even to
2 keep within the budget for those
3 sites. So we do everything we can to
4 keep up with the maintenance of these
5 facilities. However, they are aging
6 facilities. We have over 500
7 buildings in our system at Parks &
8 Recreation. 170 of them are rec
9 centers, but we have buildings at
10 playgrounds. We have 900 ball fields
11 and courts. We have over 250
12 playgrounds, 150 spraygrounds.

13 I mean, we are blessed as
14 Philadelphians with a massive system
15 and certainly struggle with how we
16 continue to manage and maintain those
17 assets given all of the needs of our
18 City and the use that our system
19 gets. So certainly, have to
20 acknowledge that additional support
21 would be welcome.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay. I
23 just wanted to put that part on the
24 record primarily because I know all
25 around not just in the City of

1 Philadelphia but all around the
2 country, right, and we have to do a
3 deeper dive on this, our young people
4 are just restless. So what you saw
5 on Market Street is not germane to
6 just the City of Philadelphia. We
7 saw it also in Chicago, right.

8 And all of us are on this
9 phone -- all of us who are on this
10 call, we're all from Philadelphia,
11 most of us are, and we grew up in
12 neighborhoods. And those parks and
13 recreational facilities are our safe
14 havens. Obviously, we have to work
15 and make sure that we keep them safe.
16 Obviously, that's a part of the
17 equation. I'll ask those questions
18 in my second round.

19 But a lot of us don't have a
20 chance to go down to the shore,
21 right. A lot of us stay in the City
22 of Philadelphia and our families
23 enjoy these parks and recs. I go to
24 Chew. I go to Wharton Square Park.
25 I go to Starr Garden. I go to Seger,

1 take my children there on a regular
2 and daily basis. And for us, it's a
3 safe haven, right. But I also know
4 the maintenance and the upkeep,
5 right, because I get calls from my
6 constituents regarding how some of
7 our courts look and what parks need
8 to be revitalized or what sprayparks
9 that we need to have, and then
10 obviously it's always a challenge to
11 make sure that we're advocating for
12 the resources to do it to keep our
13 young people safe.

14 So I just want to put those
15 two things on the record. I'll
16 finish up on my second round. So I
17 just want to thank you, Vanessa, and
18 thank you, Kathryn.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
20 Thank you, Councilman.

21 Chair recognizes Councilwoman
22 Gauthier.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
24 you, Council President, and good
25 morning.

1 I have a few questions for
2 Children and Families and Parks &
3 Rec. First, of the 8,000 summer jobs
4 budgeted for this fiscal year, what
5 is the expected timeline for filling
6 the positions?

7 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

8 So we started -- the registration
9 process started a few weeks ago.
10 We're trying to hit it hard now and
11 by May most of the jobs, I believe
12 the work starts end of June. There
13 may be some that starts beginning of
14 July, so the timeline is to certainly
15 fill them before the first day the
16 work actually starts, but we'd love
17 to fill them as quickly as possible
18 because then you would know how many
19 providers you actually have.

20 We have received already from
21 my understanding about 4,000
22 applications, which is relatively
23 early in the process, so that's
24 great. Part of what we're trying to
25 do, I'm trying to be intentional

1 about getting the word out. I do
2 think in some years, you know, I
3 spend a lot of time in different
4 communities here, born and bred in
5 the City, go to church in certain
6 neighborhoods and all that kind of
7 stuff, talking to young people. A
8 lot of people I say to them, you got
9 a summer job, and they didn't know
10 about it, right.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay.

12 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:
13 So that's a problem that we have to
14 address. So one of the things we're
15 trying to do is be very much more
16 intentional about getting the word
17 out. We are partnering with our
18 other folks over at the Office of
19 Violence Prevention and at CCIP, at
20 PAAN and all of those places, because
21 those folks are in the community
22 daily going door-to-door. We created
23 palm cards that we're giving them
24 that they give out to people.

25 And although we have a lot of

1 stuff electronically on the website,
2 I think we just did some blogs and
3 other stuff about it, not everybody
4 uses that as their media for getting
5 information, so we're trying to put
6 it out whenever we can. I've done
7 some interviews with the media and we
8 try to spell that out there as well.

9 I know that Parks & Rec is
10 having a job fair. I believe it's
11 this Saturday at the Dell
12 specifically about WorkReady and this
13 information, so we're trying to --
14 we're partnering with the School
15 District, everything that we can to
16 hopefully get this word out in all of
17 the places where we think is needed
18 most to make sure that enough kids
19 know about it and that the
20 applications start flowing earlier
21 even than they did last year.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Have
23 we thought about ads on social media
24 like on YouTube or other social media
25 platforms?

1 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

2 Yes. And so, I'm lucky. I just
3 relatively recently got a new Chief
4 of Communications, Sheila Simmons.
5 And so, they are considering all of
6 these types of outlets and
7 advertisements as well. Yes,
8 absolutely, because we know young
9 people pretty much adhere more to
10 their cell phone or those kinds of
11 things, so we're trying to do that.

12 We are also working with and
13 partnered with, and I want to thank
14 Council President who has agreed to
15 have Council partner with us and have
16 sponsor, but on May 6th we plan to
17 have a very big what we call a Parent
18 Resource Fair at the Convention
19 Center, which will have myriad of
20 tables there. Because not only will
21 we have folks there from PYN and
22 WorkReady and maybe some providers,
23 but we'll be talking about various
24 summer planning programs and we'll
25 have our various departments and

1 folks there for those parents who
2 feel like I need to talk to somebody
3 so that I can make a decision about
4 the best programs to put my kid in or
5 the best way to fill out these
6 applications or something. So that's
7 another avenue that we're trying.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank
9 you so much. And please do let all
10 of us on Council know how we can be
11 helpful.

12 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:
13 Absolutely.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I
15 have some questions or a question for
16 Parks & Rec. First, Commissioner,
17 I'd like to thank you for the work
18 that Parks & Rec has done to create
19 aquatic programming for our youth.
20 We know that when our kids have fun
21 safe programming to participate in
22 during the summer or other times when
23 they're out of school, it decreases
24 the likelihood that they will be
25 involved in activities that put

1 themselves or their communities at
2 risk.

3 And so that being said, can
4 you tell me how Council can be
5 supportive to Parks & Rec in creating
6 and expanding these kinds of programs
7 and what needs to be done to get
8 every pool ready for the summer
9 season?

10 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:

11 Thank you for that question,
12 Councilmember. This is again Kathryn
13 Ott Lovell, Commissioner of
14 Philadelphia Parks & Recreation. We
15 are very grateful to all of the
16 support we've been provided both by
17 the Administration as well as City
18 Council around getting our pools
19 open. We have tried hard the last
20 two summers, and I don't think there
21 is anybody in the City who knows that
22 we haven't been challenged by the
23 lifeguard shortages, both the
24 national lifeguard shortage as well
25 as our local lifeguard shortage.

1 That said, I am here with
2 some good news, that the Office of
3 Human Resources helped us to initiate
4 a hiring bonus. This year we
5 announced that hiring bonus at the
6 first Annual Philly Freeze, where
7 your colleague Councilman Curtis
8 Jones jumped in a --

9 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I
10 know. I'm so proud of him.

11 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: --
12 pool of water on the coldest day of
13 the year. It was a sight to be seen.
14 And we announced this initiative of
15 hiring bonuses for lifeguards and it
16 is working. We have more lifeguard
17 applicants. We have five times as
18 many lifeguard applicants than we've
19 had this time over the last two
20 years.

21 We have over 200 lifeguards
22 who have applied. We have over 130
23 lifeguards who are already certified.
24 That is literally five times as many
25 as we have had for the past two

1 seasons, so we are very grateful that
2 the Administration made that
3 available to us. People are really
4 taking advantage of it. There is
5 still time. You can still get a 500
6 hiring bonus if you apply for the
7 position by May 15th.

8 So to answer your question,
9 Councilmember, lifeguards are the
10 most important thing. We cannot
11 offer aquatics programs unless we
12 have lifeguards. We cannot open the
13 City pools unless we have lifeguards.
14 It is the only barrier that we have
15 right now. And we are praying and
16 hoping that we will have all of our
17 pools open this summer.

18 There are a few pools that
19 will be down because of Rebuild.
20 They are undergoing the Rebuild
21 transformation as you know, but it is
22 our goal to have 61 pools open this
23 summer. That is as many as we can
24 open and that's our goal. A couple
25 things that we've done: We have

1 absolutely advertised. We have
2 received millions of dollars in
3 earned media because we've been
4 promoting the lifeguard hiring.

5 We've done paid ads for all
6 of our summer jobs but also
7 lifeguards on social media on all of
8 the channels and we just started with
9 TikTok. We have removed other
10 barriers. You do not have to pay for
11 the certification. The Office of
12 Children and Families has covered the
13 cost for certifications for
14 lifeguards for 16 to 24 years old.
15 That's huge. That was a huge
16 barrier. It's \$120 that you had to
17 pay to get certified. This year they
18 also made it possible for us to cover
19 the clearances, so your background
20 clearances are also covered if you're
21 under the age of 24.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:
23 That's great.

24 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: One
25 more thing that we're doing that's

1 exciting for this year is for the
2 first time ever for all of our summer
3 camp participants, we are going to
4 mandate swim lessons. So if you come
5 in for summer camp and you don't know
6 how to swim, you would go to a pool
7 but you might not be able to swim.
8 Now, you're going to take a swim
9 lesson for 30 minutes when you're at
10 that pool, and that's going to help
11 us build the pool of lifeguards in
12 the future.

13 Too many kids, especially
14 kids of color, in communities don't
15 know how to swim and having pools
16 closed season after season is only
17 perpetuating that problem. So we're
18 going to really heavily, heavily
19 encourage all of our summer campers
20 to do official swim lessons.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

22 Great. From a Philly girl who does
23 not know how to swim, I think that is
24 a great idea.

25 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: It

1 is not too late. It is not too late
2 for you.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yeah.
4 Okay. I love everything that you're
5 working on. I'm counting on you,
6 Commissioner. I have a walkthrough
7 this Saturday with Mr. Ellis and
8 Ms. Effie to walk through 39th and
9 Olive. They are holding my feet to
10 the fire around this pool being open
11 this summer. And Ms. Effie is very
12 fierce as you know, and there's that
13 passion in every other neighborhood.

14 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
15 Councilmember, we have guards for
16 39th and Olive. It's opening.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yay,
18 awesome. Then we will have a good
19 walkthrough this Saturday. Thank you
20 very much.

21 And thank you, Council
22 President.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
24 Thank you, Councilwoman. Good news
25 is always welcome.

1 Chair recognizes Councilman
2 Phillips.

3 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank
4 you, Council President Clarke.

5 Very excited to be meeting
6 with you, Deputy Mayor, because the
7 Office of Children and Families means
8 the world to me. It's actually the
9 primary reason why I decided to do
10 this work and God has blessed me to
11 do this.

12 So I just wanted to let you
13 know I used to work at WorkReady. I
14 was one of the WorkReady Directors
15 with Philadelphia's Urban Affairs
16 Coalition years ago. And one of the
17 things that I've seen is that there's
18 been a number of students in my time
19 working there, a number of students
20 who want occupations and so forth --
21 excuse me, summer jobs, they would
22 like to have summer jobs. However,
23 one, we're short.

24 But then the other thing is
25 that I was always greatly concerned

1 about the level of training that the
2 students receive as well as
3 professional development that
4 students receive at these particular
5 job sites. So I would come back, I
6 would ask students how was your day.
7 And they'll say, oh, Mr. Phillips, we
8 just kind of sat around today.

9 So the question is what are
10 we doing to make sure that our young
11 people are having many meaningful
12 experiences that can carry over into
13 their careers after they graduate
14 from high school?

15 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:
16 So thank you for that question,
17 Mr. Phillips. And I know how much
18 your interest is in this work and
19 certainly appreciate your expertise
20 and other information that you've
21 given us in this area. We are trying
22 very hard and PYN is trying very hard
23 to make sure that some of the
24 providers that we are recruiting,
25 that we are relaying that message to

1 them, that it is important and really
2 critical for these young people to
3 have a meaningful work experience or
4 almost a meaningful internship
5 experience.

6 So sometimes your summer job
7 may be what helps you decide what you
8 want to do later in life, right, or
9 where you want to be at a later time
10 in your life or whatever, so trying
11 to be more intentional about those
12 that we recruit to give summer jobs
13 and also part of the experience is
14 that most of the young people will be
15 working Monday through Thursdays. On
16 Fridays now there will be another
17 part that is like a training for the
18 young people that's not necessarily
19 at that job or job site, but that we
20 will be creating to do some of what
21 you're talking about, which is get
22 some feedback from them as to how
23 well they think it's going or not
24 going and also to do some sort of
25 professional development or other

1 kind of developmental trainings that
2 we hope will work.

3 So the model is kind of
4 really around them working maybe the
5 four days a week, so for some it
6 might be three days a week, but on
7 those Fridays we will actually do
8 those trainings. And we're also
9 working on solidifying weekly
10 training for those kids who will be
11 working at Parks & Rec as well to do
12 the same type of thing, training, the
13 professional development, getting
14 feedback. And this isn't necessarily
15 stuff that we did before with the
16 intentionality, but also just around
17 PYN also working with those employers
18 that we are recruiting to try to help
19 us as much as we can.

20 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank
21 you. Thank you. And I also want to
22 ask -- I want to provide a question
23 around Philadelphia, the Pre-K
24 program.

25 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

1 Yes.

2 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: So
3 currently there are I think 38,000 or
4 maybe roughly over 30,000 slots for
5 our 4-year-old children in
6 Philadelphia in the Pre-K program and
7 it serves about 4300 children. At
8 the same time I've heard from early
9 childhood providers that they would
10 like to offer a PHLpreK in their
11 program, but we're not able to secure
12 the slots.

13 Can you tell us a little bit
14 more about how the Administration is
15 addressing ways to expand the Pre-K
16 slots to 6,000 seats this year?

17 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:
18 So I'll just tell you generally,
19 Councilman Phillips, and then I know
20 you saw Sean Perkins who's our
21 resident expert on our early
22 intervention in the Pre-K jump on the
23 screen and he can certainly give it
24 to you in much more detail and
25 thoroughness than I can.

1 But in general, we are
2 expanding the slots for PHLpreK here
3 at the City by about 950 slots this
4 year. That will take us to a total
5 of 5,250 slots from where we were.
6 We're currently at around 4300 or so,
7 maybe a little more, but we're going
8 to expand by 950. That will take us
9 to that 5,250 and that's an
10 additional investment. That
11 expansion is costing us a little over
12 \$10 million.

13 I'm going to have Sean sort
14 of explain to you in more detail on
15 what that process is and we do
16 recognize that there are a number of
17 providers that want seats and kind of
18 what that process looks like and what
19 we're doing to try to help those
20 providers that maybe didn't meet all
21 of the qualifications kind of pull up
22 at a level where they can meet it.

23 So, Sean, would you answer
24 for me?

25 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank

1 you.

2 MR. PERKINS: Thank you.

3 Absolutely. Thank you, Deputy Mayor
4 Garrett Harley as well as
5 Councilmember Phillips, about the
6 question of providers in our Early
7 Learning Centers being prepared for
8 PHLpreK because we know that high-
9 quality early learning is the goal
10 here and that leads to the most
11 important outcomes for children long
12 term.

13 We run an application process
14 every year to identify our centers
15 that are prepared and ready to have
16 high-quality early learning and we're
17 proud to see those applications
18 continue to increase year-over-year
19 because we think it's a sign of
20 success of the program and certainly
21 the demand of the families who are
22 accessing those seats, but we also
23 know that many of these are small
24 business owners, in particular women
25 of color are owning and operating

1 these businesses who did not have all
2 the same advantages of some of the
3 other business owners. And we have a
4 quality support center that works
5 with a list of we call them
6 pre-qualified centers.

7 You heard Deputy Mayor
8 Vanessa talk a little bit more about
9 that we're expanding into our
10 priority neighborhoods. We run a
11 data-driven analysis as well as a
12 qualitative series of engagements
13 with our families and with our
14 providers to understand what are
15 their needs and what are the needs of
16 our communities to make sure we are
17 expanding in those places that we
18 need more seats and we need more
19 high-quality seats.

20 So we work with those centers
21 with our Quality Support Center to
22 get them on our pre-qualified list so
23 that they're ready to go and they're
24 improving their quality. And we've
25 seen a lot of success in that.

1 Certainly not as much as we would
2 want to have in a perfect world, but
3 we see incredible amounts of success.

4 In fact, this year we saw six
5 of our centers move up in its quality
6 standards as evaluated by the state,
7 and we have another list of about 21
8 sites we're working with for next
9 year as well to be prepared for any
10 additional allocations that this City
11 Council adopts to expand.

12 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank
13 you. And my final question is around
14 the City's Parks & Rec Centers.
15 Recently in our District in
16 Lawncrest, we had a shooting that
17 took place and we were greatly
18 concerned about the safety of our
19 children. And normally, the police
20 department has a responsibility to do
21 check-ins at rec centers regularly.
22 And that's not happen -- according to
23 some documents I was able to review
24 or hear from the Director at the
25 Lawncrest Rec Center, the police,

1 there wasn't patrolling taking place
2 in terms of signing a log book. Now,
3 there's more log book reviews every
4 day basically going into that center,
5 but because there was a shooting.

6 What are we doing to work
7 closely with the Philadelphia Police
8 Department to ensure that our rec
9 centers are constantly monitored for
10 safety purposes because that's really
11 important that we make sure that our
12 children that use the rec centers
13 they're safe as well?

14 As well as our seniors -- and
15 I also want to learn more about how
16 we're increasing senior programming
17 at all of our rec centers in the City
18 of Philadelphia because that's
19 important as well?

20 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:
21 So, Councilman, I'm going to start
22 off and then I'll hand it off to
23 Kathryn. And I'm going to start off
24 because I have personally been doing
25 a lot of the interaction with the

1 Police Department leadership because
2 we are very concerned about safety
3 around our rec centers. We want to
4 ensure that our young people that are
5 going there as we're encouraging them
6 to go are safe, right, as well as our
7 staff. We are very concerned about
8 the safety of our staff and anybody
9 else that frequents those facilities.

10 I have been talking to --
11 you're right, there is a program
12 where the police do routine patrols
13 at the rec centers and go inside and
14 sign the log books. Now, I will say
15 to you that some of those patrols
16 have been going on and you will see
17 the cars come by. They're outside.
18 They don't always come in and sign
19 the log book though.

20 However, I have been working
21 recently, particularly after the
22 incident you mentioned and a few
23 other incidents that we recently had
24 outside of let's say some of our rec
25 centers. Luckily none of them have

1 been in the actual buildings, but on
2 adjacent sidewalks or the immediate
3 vicinity. Working directly with
4 First Deputy Stanford at the Police
5 Department, we have asked and they
6 have agreed and have started to
7 increase patrols at the rec centers.

8 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Good.

9 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

10 So the increased patrols will be
11 additional times during the course of
12 particularly a period of time when
13 the rec centers are open or active
14 for police to come. They will be
15 increasing the number of times they
16 go in and actually sign the log book.
17 But just that police presence, the
18 cars driving around more frequently
19 or being in that area and in some
20 areas it may be more than just the
21 cars as they're working on. We're
22 also talking about presence will be
23 greatly increased as we move to
24 summer, and obviously we have
25 concerns as weather gets warmer and

1 kids are out of school and there are
2 more young people and other issues
3 that are happening, so in these areas
4 there will be increased police
5 presence around both our rec centers
6 and the pools, in particular pool
7 areas.

8 When incidents occur at the
9 rec center or whatever, obviously we
10 call 911 like everybody has to for
11 police assistance. But we have also
12 now worked out a program where we
13 will have in addition to our staff
14 calling 911, there will be a direct
15 liaison where the staff will be
16 calling directly to the police
17 district and able to have direct
18 contact so that we can make sure that
19 the level of response and attention
20 is there and it also allows us to
21 create a format for our after-working
22 plan if there's some lessons to be
23 learned after that particular
24 incident or something like that
25 happens.

1 I will be going and talking
2 to the police captains. There's a
3 meeting that occurs every week or
4 every other week, police captains. I
5 have been invited by Deputy Stanford
6 to come because it's a two-way
7 street. I want to be able to be
8 helpful to police and also tell them
9 about some of the programming and
10 other things that we have for young
11 people that may help them when they
12 encounter young people on the street,
13 that they could maybe help with
14 referring to or whatever, but also so
15 that we can talk about our needs and
16 making sure that it's a village.

17 And a lot of it is about
18 establishing the relationships with
19 those District captains and officers,
20 and due to the recent police
21 promotions there's been a lot of
22 movement so we want to ensure that
23 our staff, that's the other thing,
24 we'll probably be reinstituting, I
25 think what occurred a couple of years

1 ago where the staff at these Parks &
2 Rec facilities actually met directly
3 with the districts, and that's still
4 occurring in some communities, but we
5 want to make sure that we connect
6 those ties for people who may be new.

7 There also is a direct
8 communication between community
9 relations officers at the police
10 districts and the recreation center
11 staff that we want to continue to
12 (inaudible). So when these incidents
13 occur, I know Kathryn talks to
14 police, but I have become more
15 involved and directly talk to them as
16 well, and police are very aware.

17 The other thing I'd like to
18 point out just so that it's on the
19 record and just to remind people,
20 that the Managing Director's Office
21 and the Mayor a little while ago
22 right after we had a shooting outside
23 of one of our rec centers where a
24 couple of people got shot last
25 summer, we put up a reward program

1 that's like \$10,000 for anybody that
2 gives information that directly
3 relates to the arrest or conviction
4 of someone who did a shooting in the
5 vicinity of what we call Safe Zones,
6 which would be rec centers, schools,
7 libraries, places where we think kids
8 should be.

9 I'm only reminding folks of
10 that because the intent of putting
11 that out there was, one, to help us
12 get information to catch the
13 individuals who are so callous as to
14 do this in an area where they know
15 where kids will be, but, two, so it
16 would hopefully be a deterrent so
17 that people know that it's a safe
18 zone area and will be monitoring
19 them.

20 Again, the other thing I
21 would just add for safety, and I just
22 want to thank Council President
23 Clarke and others on City Council
24 that have been pushing this, is the
25 program where Council is helping us

1 with money and Mayor Kenney as well
2 around the installment of additional
3 cameras outside of Parks & Rec
4 facilities.

5 We have identified a certain
6 number of particularly high-need ones
7 where the cameras are outside and
8 there's a direct program working with
9 the City's IT Department, but also
10 they will be linked to the cameras
11 that can get monitored and/or feed
12 information at the Police Department
13 DVIC, because there were many rec
14 centers that really didn't have those
15 kind of security cameras outside.
16 And so, that process is taking place.
17 So I really want to thank Council for
18 that as well.

19 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank
20 you.

21 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:
22 Kathryn, do you want to answer
23 particularly around the senior
24 programming that we have? I think
25 that was the second part of the

1 Councilman's question.

2 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: This is
3 the family's part.

4 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:

5 Sure. No, thank you, Councilman, for
6 your interest and your concern around
7 Lawncrest. We absolutely want to
8 make sure that our sites are safe,
9 and I really appreciate the Deputy
10 Mayor Garrett Harley for all of her
11 support and of course the police for
12 their support and making sure that we
13 step up those patrols.

14 We do keep a log of the log
15 books so we have our facility
16 supervisors submit their log book
17 reports on a monthly basis, and then
18 we do have those conversations with
19 police to ensure that we maintain a
20 level of consistency with signing the
21 log books. As Vanessa said, things
22 happen and maybe they can't go
23 directly into the center. But we do
24 think it's important not just to have
25 the check-in from the police from a

1 safety standpoint, but also having a
2 police officer come into your center
3 on a day-to-day basis just builds
4 that relationship between the
5 officers and the staff at the center,
6 which I think is equally important
7 and can foster that sense of safety
8 in community as well. So we'll
9 continue, and as Vanessa said, to
10 work very closely with police to
11 ensure that we get as much support as
12 possible.

13 In terms of the senior
14 programming, we have six senior
15 centers that operate around the City.
16 They are beloved institutions and so
17 well-utilized. But we have also
18 branched out into providing some
19 senior programming at our recreation
20 centers as well, not in every one of
21 our recreation centers. The hours of
22 our recreation centers are 1:00 to
23 9:00, so often times senior programs
24 want to happen in the morning.

25 And so, we do open some of

1 our recreation centers to allow that
2 senior programming to happen in the
3 morning, but not at all of our
4 recreation centers. So it's really
5 on an as-requested and as-needed
6 basis. But that said, there are some
7 programs that happen in the early
8 afternoon and the evening for
9 seniors. We can get you a list of
10 those sites, and then we're always
11 open to ideas if there are sites in
12 your District or any of your
13 colleagues' Districts where you know
14 there is an interest in additional
15 senior programming, we're happy to
16 work with you on that. We have a
17 wonderful relationship with PCA
18 Corporation for Aging. We do our
19 annual Senior Strut with them and
20 they're just huge supporters of our
21 senior centers. We're always looking
22 for other ways to collaborate,
23 especially with intergenerational,
24 multi-generational programming with
25 the young people. So happy to talk

1 with you further about that.

2 COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank
3 you so much. Yeah, I'm definitely
4 interested in learning more on how we
5 can fund and support expanding hours
6 and even activities for our seniors
7 in some capacity. So thank you.

8 Thank you, Council President.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
10 Thank you, Councilman.

11 Chair recognizes Councilman
12 Jones.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank
14 you -- thank you, Mr. President. I
15 had to get my buttons straight. I
16 remember when we went up to Trenton
17 and we were able to talk to their
18 Administration. And one of the
19 things that amazed me was two things.
20 One, how far advanced we were within
21 our Recreation Department and system,
22 but how far they were able to go on
23 the amount of money that was
24 appropriated, and I'm not even going
25 to say how much that was, but you

1 remember, Mr. President.

2 One of the things that we
3 also looked at was their integration
4 into government and not just as a
5 place where kids safely played, but
6 where they were safe while they
7 played and that they were a part of
8 the police, they were a part of the
9 anti-violence, they were an integral
10 part of that. And I'm beginning to
11 hear in this budget hearing that
12 we're moving vigorously in that
13 regard.

14 So my first comment,
15 question, inquiry is that the event
16 that happened on Market Street with
17 the 200 young people, a staffer for
18 the City who will go nameless because
19 I don't want them to be suddenly
20 unemployed, contacted me and said
21 that there might be a correlation
22 between there was an article about a
23 group of young people that were
24 living out of one of DHS's offices
25 because of the lack of beds and

1 sometimes they come down, they get a
2 good meal, they take a shower and
3 they are not required to stay, and
4 therefore they leave.

5 And one of the places that
6 they sometimes gather was Delaware
7 Avenue. And some of the activities
8 along Delaware Avenue weren't the
9 best activities, and that they were
10 also in communication with people,
11 young people that were interested in
12 violating curfews, having "fun," and
13 some of that activity that goes on is
14 a result of what was the flash mob on
15 Market Street.

16 So my question becomes what
17 is the status of that arrangement
18 within DHS's office and the Children
19 and Youth process that happens there?
20 And have we made headway on finding
21 alternative lodging?

22 COMMISSIONER ALI: Thank --

23 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

24 So I was going to say I'm going to
25 have Commissioner Ali address at

1 least part of that, and then I'll try
2 to answer some of your more general
3 questions around safety.

4 COMMISSIONER ALI: So thank
5 you for that question, Councilmember
6 Jones, and for the information
7 because I did not receive information
8 that some of the young people were
9 young people who were known to the
10 child welfare system. And so, just
11 to give you a picture of the child
12 care room as we call it, the DHS
13 building that housed the child care
14 room operates 24 hours, 7 days a
15 week.

16 Our building has always been
17 in operation 24 hours, 7 days a week
18 because at any given time young
19 people who are victims of abuse and
20 neglect, we receive them in order to
21 determine whether or not we can
22 reunify them with their families or
23 if placement is necessary, then place
24 them with kin. And so, we do have
25 young people who come into our child

1 care room.

2 The young people that come
3 into our child care room, what we
4 know about the young people, they are
5 young people that have disrupted or
6 had some instability in their
7 placement, and there's a number of
8 reasons for that. It could be the
9 fact that, number one, they don't
10 even want to be in placement, right.
11 And so, they yearn in order to return
12 home to their families. And if
13 that's the case, we work closely with
14 the young person as well as with our
15 court system and the advocates to
16 make that happen.

17 There are other reasons.
18 Some of the reasons that also young
19 people land into our child care room
20 is the fact that the young person
21 that we are seeing now is simply a
22 more complex young person. This has
23 been compounded by COVID. We had
24 young people who were isolated, young
25 people who have been traumatized and

1 they simply want an out.

2 And so, we have been working
3 closely with our partners at DBH and
4 CBH in order to offer those services
5 to young people to meet their needs,
6 but also to train our kinship
7 caregivers and our foster parents
8 around how to handle this more
9 complex young person. We will never
10 turn a young person away from DHS.
11 We do offer them when they come, we
12 have showers at DHS, we have sleeping
13 quarters at DHS. We have a state-of-
14 the-art kitchen at DHS, so we will
15 never turn a young person away.

16 We also provide services
17 onsite in the child care room. We
18 have our older youth staff who
19 primarily work with young people from
20 the age of 14 to 21. They are
21 actually in our child care room
22 engaging the young person to get a
23 sense of what they want in terms of
24 their plan.

25 And most recently, one of our

1 behavioral health providers Merakey
2 also is doing evaluations onsite at
3 our child -- sorry, virtually in our
4 child care room. The young person is
5 onsite and they have a virtual
6 session with Merakey in order to
7 determine what behavioral health
8 supports that they need.

9 So in terms of how we're
10 addressing this issue, we're
11 addressing the issue a number of
12 ways. The first is that we had to
13 make sure that we are engaging the
14 young person. Hence, why I talked
15 about our older youth programming so
16 that we can get them involved in
17 terms of what their next step is. We
18 also talk to that family so that we
19 can reunify them with their family or
20 place them in kinship care.

21 We just awarded a contract to
22 a provider, a Second Chance, Inc.,
23 kinship care navigators who will be
24 working closely with some of our
25 difficult-to-place young people in

1 order to identify kin, but more
2 importantly offer support. As I
3 indicated, these young people are
4 more complex and they simply need
5 more. And so, we want to work
6 alongside our provider, a Second
7 Chance, Inc.

8 We also increased the
9 emergency foster care rate and the
10 emergency kinship care rate so that
11 we can get kinship care providers and
12 foster care providers to accept the
13 young people on the same day and not
14 the next day because we don't want
15 any young person to sleep in our
16 child care room.

17 Additionally in FY24, so in
18 July 2023 we have a provider that we
19 have identified who will be providing
20 short-term respite up to 21 days, in
21 addition some behavioral health
22 supports to the young people until we
23 find a more appropriate placement.
24 This is a top priority for DHS.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES:

1 Commissioner Ali, see, I knew that
2 was going to happen. I want you to
3 know, and I've told Vanessa Harley
4 this, every time in every role that
5 you've had I could not do your job.
6 You see our young people and families
7 on their worst days and I applaud the
8 work that you guys do. My inquiry
9 and comment was more to make sure
10 that you were aware, and I agree that
11 those young people are way more
12 complicated than the young people I
13 used to counsel at the House of
14 Umoja.

15 But there is a theory that
16 they are getting that shower, getting
17 that meal and then going out at night
18 and recruiting others to be a part of
19 a less-than-reputable night club
20 group. So I want you to be aware of
21 that. And I want to make this
22 statement, that whatever we need to
23 do to assist you with that whole
24 operation down there, I want to do.
25 And I want to commit to working with

1 you to do because those are our most
2 vulnerable. I'd rather them get a
3 shower and a meal with you than with
4 some predator. So therefore, we have
5 to make them comfortable enough to
6 want to stay, comfortable enough to
7 want to change some of their risky
8 behavior.

9 So whatever that is -- so my
10 bringing this up because it was
11 dumped in my lap is to say to you
12 that as Chair of Public Safety, I am
13 willing to work with you and
14 whomever. We've been in tight
15 quarters before at JJC, and I know
16 you are not a stranger to dealing
17 with tough problems, but I am worried
18 about that flow of young person on
19 the streets of Philadelphia and we
20 have to help them in spite of
21 themselves. And that's what I had to
22 say.

23 COMMISSIONER ALI: I couldn't
24 agree with you more, Councilmember
25 Jones. And thank you, and I will

1 take you up on that offer.

2 COUNCILMAN JONES: You got
3 it.

4 Just real quick and I'll put
5 this out there and let someone else
6 go. I am encouraged by the fact of
7 the questions of Community Schools,
8 Mr. President. I'm excited that you
9 asked that because we meet with our
10 principals once a week in Monday
11 morning roll calls. And Commissioner
12 Ali literally went on that call to
13 explain the 15, 20 different programs
14 that are offered, and there is a
15 disconnect in communications about
16 understanding how to utilize them.
17 So I was happy that you said that and
18 want to get a list of where those
19 schools are and how many of them are
20 in the 4th Councilmanic District.

21 Thank you, Mr. President.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

23 Thank you, Councilman.

24 Chair recognizes Councilwoman
25 Bass.

1 (No response.)

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Councilwoman Bass, are you here?

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I am
5 here. Good morning, Mr. President.
6 My apologies.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: No
8 problem.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So I just
10 had a couple of questions. Good
11 morning, Vanessa. How are you?

12 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:
13 Good morning, Councilwoman. How are
14 you?

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I'm doing
16 very well. Thank you. I just had a
17 couple of questions. And actually I
18 wanted to start with Parks &
19 Recreation.

20 And so, I was really glad to
21 hear about the swim lessons. And I
22 don't know, Kathryn. Am I safe to
23 assume that some of this around the
24 swim lessons and the build-up of a
25 bench for future lifeguards came from

1 our conversations from 2017. Yay,
2 all right.

3 Well, thank you so much. I'm
4 so glad to see that this is
5 implemented. And I was very
6 interested when I heard you talk
7 about it. My ears really perked up.
8 But I said, that sounds just like our
9 Ready to Swim program. So can you
10 talk a little bit more about that
11 program in detail? And I know when
12 we had talked about it, the idea was
13 to make sure that we had a full bench
14 of potential lifeguards so that when
15 our current crop of lifeguards, which
16 are usually college students, when
17 they go back to school, that we have
18 some folks who can still step up,
19 step in and fulfill the duty for not
20 all the summer, then for the rest of
21 the summer so we don't have to close
22 in early August when it's still
23 really hot outside. So can you talk
24 about that for a little bit?

25 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:

1 Yeah. Thank you, Councilmember.
2 Kathryn Ott Lovell, Commissioner of
3 Parks & Rec. Yes, absolutely. You
4 know, you have been championing this
5 initiative for years, I mean for at
6 least five years. And we started a
7 little pilot of this last summer. In
8 the sites where we were struggling to
9 get lifeguards, we started to
10 offer -- we've always offered free
11 swim lessons at all of our sites, but
12 we started --

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes.

14 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: --
15 and I'm using the word mandate
16 lightly, but we just basically
17 started incorporating them into the
18 summer camp. All of our summer camps
19 go to pools, right. All of our
20 summer camp kids go to a pool --

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes.

22 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: --
23 but they just go for an hour and have
24 fun. And so, we just said you know
25 what, for the kids that can't swim or

1 aren't strong swimmers, for 30
2 minutes of that hour we're just going
3 to instruct them because the
4 lifeguards are trained instructors,
5 right. So we basically at those
6 sites where we have been struggling
7 to get guards, we piloted this
8 program where we offered mandate swim
9 lessons for the kids that were in
10 those camps, right.

11 And then over the year just
12 said, well, this was doable and it
13 worked, so why don't we do this for
14 all of our camps now. Now, if a
15 parent doesn't want their kid to
16 learn how to swim, of course they can
17 opt out. But I totally agree with
18 you that this is the only way, this
19 is the only way that we're going to
20 increase that pool, is if we work in
21 those neighborhoods, get kids to see
22 themselves as swimmers and just to
23 bridge that gap. It can be really
24 daunting to think about becoming a
25 lifeguard, you know.

1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes.

2 Yes.

3 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: I

4 mean, it can be scary and daunting.

5 And we got a lot of grief when we

6 were launching our lifeguard

7 recruitment campaign. I don't know

8 if you saw it, but there was I'm

9 going to say a snarky article out

10 about how you can be a lifeguard in

11 the City and you don't have to know

12 how to swim. And you know what, that

13 was not true because of course you

14 have to know how to swim to be a

15 lifeguard. But we have said over and

16 over again, and I'll reiterate it

17 today, if you are not a strong

18 swimmer, we will train you. We have

19 water safety instructors that if you

20 want to come in and learn how to

21 swim, we will do that for you.

22 And we now are at five or six

23 different pools. That's another

24 gamechanger for us, is that thank God

25 schools, private schools, the Prep,

1 Penn Charter have opened their doors
2 to us, Friends Select, to allow us to
3 use their pools for trainings. That
4 has been a huge difference that this
5 year has made. So we are offering
6 sort of basic swim lessons for people
7 that want to be a lifeguard but that
8 can't swim. We will train you up.

9 Now, you still have to pass
10 the screening. You still have to get
11 certified, right, but it shouldn't be
12 a barrier to anyone. And if we start
13 the kids young enough, then they're
14 going to see this as a pathway to
15 them. You can be a youth worker at
16 the age of 16. You can make \$11 an
17 hour or you can be a lifeguard and
18 make \$16 an hour. And if you apply
19 soon enough, if you look at that
20 hiring bonus amortized over the seven
21 weeks of being a lifeguard, that's an
22 additional \$4 an hour. You're
23 looking at a \$20-an-hour job for a
24 16-, 17-year-old in the summer. I
25 mean, that's --

1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Right.

2 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: --

3 we have to do a better job of
4 connecting kids to the opportunity
5 and sort of demystifying it for them
6 and building up their confidence.
7 And that's what we hope to do.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well,
9 excellent. And listen, I'm not sure
10 where that snarky article was, but I
11 thank you for clarifying that
12 information because sometimes people
13 actually believe that stuff that's
14 printed is true. And I know for a
15 fact that that's not always the case.
16 But I thank you for bringing forward
17 this program and I'm really excited
18 to see that we're going to have more
19 and more swimmers, particularly in
20 our Black and Brown neighborhoods
21 because we know that those are the
22 kids who don't have access to quality
23 swim instruction and who are much
24 more likely to drown on a regular
25 basis.

1 And I think that the number
2 of -- I can't remember the exact
3 percentage of folks who drown who are
4 African American. I think the
5 number --

6 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
7 They're three times, Councilmember.
8 They're three times more likely to
9 die of drowning in their lifetime
10 than a White person, yes.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes, yes,
12 yes. So thank you, thank you, thank
13 you for doing that. And I don't
14 think that this is necessarily in
15 your department, but I did want to
16 talk about funds for Rebuild. So now
17 as we know with the cost of supplies
18 going up, supply chain issues and
19 inflation issues, I just wanted to
20 see what we are doing around the
21 Rebuild initiative and also around
22 cost in general.

23 I have a project in my
24 District, Barrett Playground, which
25 is scheduled to be rebuilt, which

1 went from a 7 million to a 10 million
2 to about a \$15 million project now
3 (inaudible) --

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
5 Councilwoman --

6 MS. STRONG: Councilmember
7 Bass, good morning. This is Kira
8 Strong, Executive Director of
9 Rebuild. Hello, everyone. Pleasure
10 to be here this morning. And thank
11 you, Councilwoman. You're always --

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And thank
13 you for being here. And you know,
14 you and I have had extensive
15 conversations and we thank you for
16 being --

17 MS. STRONG: Absolutely.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: -- really
19 just a great partner in this and
20 really trying to help us figure it
21 out. But as you know, we have had
22 some really serious increases in the
23 cost of supplies to finish these
24 recreation centers. And what we've
25 done it seems is rather than the City

1 sort of ponying up the additional
2 monies, we say, okay, well, we're
3 going to cut back here and cut back
4 there, and that's just really not
5 acceptable, especially when we
6 promise Rebuild. We promised X and
7 now we're delivering Y and people are
8 expecting X.

9 And so, I'm wondering what is
10 the plan for that? How are we going
11 to use this budget to address that?

12 MS. STRONG: Thank you,
13 Councilwoman. And I do want to thank
14 you for your advocacy. And I think
15 it's shared. I certainly know other
16 Councilmembers and the Administration
17 similarly share the goals to really
18 make sure that we're supporting these
19 really important public spaces and
20 facilities across the whole City. We
21 recognize their importance and
22 certainly we know our partners and
23 residents and constituents have been
24 vocal and advocating to make sure
25 that we meet the needs of the

1 residents we serve.

2 So I think there's been a lot
3 of collective strategy and
4 brainstorming. You've been a part of
5 that and we have a lot of partners in
6 the room today that have been helpful
7 with us around frankly how do we
8 raise additional funds, how do we
9 make sure we're bringing the
10 appropriate assets and resources to
11 these facilities. I would say a
12 couple quick things and then to
13 Barrett specifically, one is we've
14 been fortunate to raise -- we're
15 nearing about \$41 million in total
16 for the program. Recognizing about
17 two years ago that we were seeing
18 these really big disparities between
19 the hopes, dreams and needs of the
20 facilities and the budgets that we
21 had. So there's been a lot of
22 support on the local and state level
23 to help us fill some of these gaps.

24 We've raised about 17 million
25 just in this past year. And our goal

1 for Barrett specifically is to make
2 sure, you know, we're seeing a really
3 wild -- and I know others on this
4 call are familiar with this too,
5 maybe even more so than we are -- but
6 we're seeing a really wild
7 construction environment and bidding
8 environment.

9 We're seeing our bids come in
10 on projects anywhere from I'd say 10
11 to 15 to 45 percent over what our
12 professional third-party cost
13 estimates are. So to that end, we're
14 trying to put in, and you've been
15 really helpful here, safeguards to
16 make sure that when we go to bid and
17 we receive these bids back, that
18 we're very nimble and flexible both
19 in terms of bringing more dollars to
20 the project, but also in making sure
21 that our construction documents have
22 the ability if we have to pull
23 something back, which is not our
24 goal, we can -- but that if we're
25 able to make sure we can do

1 everything possible at that facility,
2 that we have already designed it
3 because our goal is to really get
4 these facilities at this point online
5 as fast as possible.

6 So to that end, for Barrett
7 we're very hopeful that we're going
8 to have the full support to be able
9 to make sure that that full site is
10 implemented. And I would just say
11 you're aware, I think the Mayor did
12 propose additional funds in this
13 year's budget to ensure also that if
14 we come up short for projects in this
15 coming fiscal year, there will be
16 some dollars to fill those gaps as we
17 get those bids back. So I hope
18 that's helpful.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: That is
20 helpful. Thank you very much. I
21 know that the bell has rung, so I'll
22 come back for my second round. Thank
23 you.

24 THE CLERK: Clerk recognizes
25 Councilwoman Lozada.

1 (No response.)

2 THE CLERK: Okay. Clerk
3 recognizes Councilman Johnson for a
4 second round.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes.
6 Thank you very much. I have a
7 question for Kathryn as well as Kira
8 Strong. And, Kathryn, I just had a
9 question, and I'm going to take a
10 page out of Council President Darrell
11 Clarke's book who went to New York
12 and looked at the model of public
13 safety officers to complement what
14 the City of Philadelphia Police
15 officers are doing here in the City
16 of Philadelphia. Now, we have public
17 safety officers that are going to be
18 doing a variety of different services
19 here in the City as it relates to
20 public safety.

21 Is it possible to look at
22 that type of Parks & Recreation model
23 for our Parks & Rec system? Because
24 again, when we have a really
25 straight-up transparent reality

1 conversation in a lot of the areas
2 where we see high crime and gun
3 violence, right, and we're building
4 up these nice facilities and
5 basketball courts, there is the issue
6 of public safety. And the reality is
7 we don't have enough manpower
8 officers to cover just about every
9 rec center that's in those high zip
10 code areas. And I know we kind of
11 work as well to try to cover as much
12 as we can, which I do know we have
13 been doing that.

14 But could there possibly be a
15 model in the future where we have
16 Parks & Rec/civilian public safety
17 officers? Not people carrying guns,
18 but a lot of times just the
19 visibility, right. It's just knowing
20 somebody of authority is there to
21 kind of prevent an incident from
22 taking place. And honestly, a lot of
23 our Parks & Recreation facilities
24 people gather and hang out, which
25 they're supposed to do. But

1 sometimes that extra level of
2 authority and presence kind of have
3 people like, okay, let me be mindful
4 of what I'm doing. So that's one
5 part of my question.

6 And then also for Kira, and I
7 guess this dovetails in the capital
8 as well. I be getting these calls,
9 as we tear down certain buildings,
10 like I have Myers, I have Vare,
11 right, do we have a Plan B for where
12 these children are going to go
13 temporarily in the meanwhile, right?
14 Because although they're getting a
15 great building, which I'll tell them
16 when they call, I say, that's great,
17 you're going to have a brand new
18 building. And they say but,
19 Councilman, what are we doing in the
20 meanwhile to still stay occupied.
21 And so, has that been thought out as
22 we go through this process? So
23 that's a two-part question.

24 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:
25 So, Councilman, I know you addressed

1 the first part of your question to
2 Kathryn --

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes.

4 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

5 -- but I just wanted to jump in to
6 kind of put on the record, I think
7 you bring up a point that we have
8 been thinking a lot about. We kind
9 of think alike. We have been
10 flipping around, and I just mentioned
11 to Kathryn the other day that we may
12 need to start thinking about whether
13 or not we have to try to -- we'd have
14 to come up with the funding because
15 I'll be honest, right now I don't
16 have the funding, but I'll have to
17 come up with the funding to try and
18 think about whether or not we need to
19 do some private security in some of
20 the Parks & Rec facilities just as a
21 way of supplementing the level of
22 enforcement that police can do just
23 because we all know that we are all
24 suffering with some manpower
25 shortages or work shortages. So that

1 is something that we're talking
2 about.

3 And I am also discussing it
4 with Tumar, the Managing Director, as
5 we're thinking about trying to be as
6 intentional as we can and trying to
7 keep all of the folks that visit our
8 facilities, in particular the young
9 people that visit, safe. So that's
10 something that we are exploring, in
11 answering your question around is it
12 a potential model or something. I
13 don't know that it'll look exactly
14 like public safety officers, but it
15 is certainly something that we are
16 thinking about and need to explore.

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
18 you. The Plan B for our youth won't
19 have the opportunity to go to
20 Kingsessing, they won't have the
21 opportunity to go to Myers because
22 obviously brand new buildings are
23 being built. What do our children do
24 in the meanwhile while these
25 buildings are being demoed and shut

1 down?

2 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: I'm
3 happy to take that, Councilman. This
4 is Kathryn, Commissioner of Parks &
5 Recreation. So we fortunately have
6 already had to deal with that as you
7 know with Vare Recreation Center and
8 other centers that have been closed
9 to the public. So what we do months
10 in advance and working closely with
11 the Rebuild team to get a sense of
12 timing for a project is months in
13 advance we begin to work with our
14 staff at the site as well as the
15 Advisory Council to begin to talk
16 about what the alternative is going
17 to be, and we're doing this right now
18 for several of the sites that are
19 closing this summer and some in your
20 District.

21 So we look at all of the
22 programs, look at the whole calendar
23 and programs for the year, and we
24 begin to identify alternative
25 locations. So, for example, at Vare,

1 that incredible gymnastics program is
2 rehoused in another one of our rec
3 centers. We also got them additional
4 time at Temple. That was a huge lift
5 because it involved moving all of
6 that equipment and making sure the
7 kids had a way to get there.

8 So we don't just look at
9 where the enrolled programs go, but
10 we also look at opportunities for
11 open gym, and we have a very good
12 partnership with the School District
13 who's allowed us access to their
14 facilities and our ability to permit
15 those facilities. So we do make sure
16 that either at nearby centers,
17 schools or, you know, et cetera, that
18 100 percent of the programs are
19 rehoused. And it really wouldn't be
20 possible without access to some of
21 the School District facilities to be
22 completely honest.

23 We're also talking with other
24 partners as we look at potentially
25 four facilities in West Philadelphia,

1 your District included, closing over
2 the next, say, three to six months.
3 We're talking with some University
4 partners as well about gaining access
5 to their facilities in West
6 Philadelphia and we'll do whatever we
7 can to rehouse the programs.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yeah.

9 Let me know if you get any pushback,
10 right, because everybody talks about
11 this issue about gun violence and
12 crime and our young people, and this
13 really is a moment in time where we
14 all have to roll up our sleeves and
15 participate in addressing this issue.
16 So please don't hesitate to give me a
17 call if any of the institutions or
18 the partners that you want to engage
19 give any type of resistance or make
20 1,000 excuses as to why they can't
21 help our young people, because at the
22 end of the day it's all about moving
23 the City forward and that's going to
24 take everybody trying to figure out
25 what can I do, right. No elaborate

1 fees, right, to allow our young
2 people to use their facilities.

3 The insurance, I understand,
4 but don't try to charge up the City
5 of Philadelphia gazillion dollars to
6 have our young people have an
7 alternative temporary site. I get
8 the insurance part, but don't try to
9 make a dollar off our young people
10 when at the end of the day we're
11 trying to have a safer city for our
12 youth. And so, with that being said,
13 thank you.

14 And because I have a little
15 extra time, I want to push Kira to
16 talk about those great diversity and
17 inclusion numbers that Rebuild has
18 significantly accomplished since this
19 project has started. What is the
20 diversity inclusion numbers regarding
21 Rebuild?

22 MS. STRONG: Thank you,
23 Councilmember. And before I answer
24 that if I can, I just want to give
25 Kathryn and her team a shout-out

1 because they have been incredibly
2 flexible and wonderful to work with
3 around the relocation. As we all
4 know, construction schedules can
5 change and they've been really
6 fabulous in making sure kids are
7 first and that programs land. So I
8 just wanted to acknowledge that. And
9 thank you, Councilmember, for the
10 question because it is really
11 important that those programs stay
12 running.

13 So we're really thrilled
14 around our participation. And knock
15 on wood, here our goal is to keep
16 this strong precedent going. We have
17 a nearly 65 percent minority and
18 female participation for our
19 contracts, both construction
20 contracts and professional services
21 contracts. Happy to break that down
22 if that's helpful. But I would
23 just say minority participation is
24 36.5 percent and female or woman
25 business enterprise participation is

1 25.2 percent between both our
2 professional services and
3 construction. So I'm really pleased.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Can you
5 tell us how much of those
6 professional services contracts and
7 construction contracts went to
8 particularly African American and
9 Latino firms?

10 MS. STRONG: I would need to
11 get back to you on that.

12 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Black
13 and Brown companies.

14 MS. STRONG: Let me give you
15 the breakdown. Yep, I can follow up
16 with that.

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And I'll
18 wrap up on this. The reason why I
19 say that is because I know we're
20 doing a lot of great work as a City.
21 There was a recent report from the
22 Philadelphia Economy League that
23 showed particularly in the African
24 American household since 2010 to
25 2023, household incomes have been

1 stagnant, have only increased in the
2 amount of \$2,000 where other ethnic
3 groups went from \$15,000, \$14,000 to
4 \$7,000 respectively from White, Asian
5 and Latino, which really begs the
6 question, specifically African
7 American households aren't increasing
8 in terms of their income.

9 And so, when we talk about
10 diversity inclusion and the contracts
11 that we're doling out and making sure
12 that our products are diverse and
13 inclusive, these numbers we have to
14 be even more intentional to make sure
15 we're leveling the playing field and
16 providing opportunities for this
17 particular population of individuals
18 which the numbers show roughly from
19 2010 to 2023 really isn't making any
20 strides, and we do a lot of good work
21 here in the City of Philadelphia.
22 But those numbers based upon that
23 report shows that there's a
24 disconnect somewhere in terms of
25 improving the quality of life and

1 wealth, particularly in the African
2 American households.

3 And so, to you and your team
4 I just want to say continue to keep
5 up the good work in this area
6 surpassing your initial goals. And,
7 Kira, as always keep up the good
8 work. Thank you, Vanessa. And a
9 shout-out to Kimberly Ali before I
10 roll, from South Philadelphia, DHS
11 Commissioner who's doing a great job
12 from the "P". Peace.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
14 Thank you, Councilman.

15 Chair recognizes Councilwoman
16 Gilmore Richardson.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
18 RICHARDSON: Okay. There it is.
19 Good morning, Council President.

20 And good morning, Vanessa
21 Garrett Harley and the team at the
22 Office of Children and Families. I
23 apologize if any of this is a repeat.
24 You can let me know if that's the
25 case as we are all working and going

1 on roller skates.

2 So I wanted to circle back to
3 the Community Evening Resource
4 Centers. And obviously, I'll have a
5 more specific set of questions for
6 the Department of Human Services who
7 have really been our allies along
8 with the Police Department in
9 ensuring that we can get the CERC
10 centers for short up and running.
11 But I just wanted to know how you all
12 from the Office of Children and
13 Families are working with the
14 Managing Director's Office, are
15 working with DHS?

16 And I see our Commissioner
17 there, Commissioner Ali, and I thank
18 you for just all of your work on the
19 CERC centers. We would have never
20 gotten through this without you.
21 But how are you all working around
22 the sort of overall violence
23 prevention strategy for this summer
24 and utilizing the CERC centers and
25 ensuring that they are fully utilized

1 as a part of this community strategy?

2 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

3 So thank you. Good morning first of
4 all, Councilwoman Gilmore Richardson.
5 It's not a repeat question, but we're
6 always --

7 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

8 RICHARDSON: Okay.

9 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

10 -- happy to answer your questions
11 even if it is a repeat. And we do
12 want to thank you for championing the
13 CERC centers and all the work that
14 you do with us, with young people
15 both at OCF and at DHS, so thank you
16 for that. I will say around just the
17 summer planning in general, and I
18 think you know one of the number one
19 priorities for the Administration and
20 City as a whole is safety. We're all
21 concerned about safety, particularly
22 the safety of our young people this
23 summer.

24 And so, I have convened
25 summer planning meetings as I call

1 them, which are multi-disciplinary
2 meetings that have pretty much all of
3 the different agencies across the
4 City who have some summer program or
5 anything that would affect children,
6 because what I want to make sure is
7 that we have always done some good
8 work, but sometimes as a City we tend
9 to be siloed in that work. And I
10 want to make sure that the work
11 aligns, everybody supports each other
12 and that we can utilize all of these
13 things that we have to leverage
14 better outcomes or more progressive
15 outcomes for our young people.

16 Now, having said that at the
17 table and in the summer planning
18 meetings besides DHS and OCF and
19 Libraries and Parks & Rec and all of
20 our agencies, it's the Police
21 Department, the School District and
22 others, right. And so, the CERCs is
23 something that we certainly count on
24 as a supportive mechanism. Because
25 while one of the aspects of the CERCs

1 is so that the police have somewhere
2 to take young people who may be out
3 past curfew that they encounter, what
4 the CERCs have turned in for us and I
5 am very happy about it and excited
6 about it, and I know you are too, it
7 is a positive outlet in many of these
8 communities that offers really great
9 programming.

10 We have really done -- I
11 think DHS has done a great job and
12 the providers of the particular CERCs
13 have done a really great job of doing
14 community outreach. And most of the
15 kids that are coming into the CERCs,
16 you know, they come in on their own
17 or their parents --

18 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

19 RICHARDSON: Right.

20 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:
21 -- are sending them or whatever which
22 is a great thing, particularly
23 because those CERCs are open from
24 7:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m., some of the
25 most critical late hours for

1 somewhere for kids to go. You know
2 we currently have the four CERCs and
3 we should very soon be making final
4 decisions on the selection process
5 and we will have two more up and
6 running for this summer so that there
7 will be from a geographic perspective
8 across the City different CERCs and
9 different services that are open.

10 But it is an integral part.

11 And when we talk to police,
12 we certainly talk about how we
13 integrate that into when they
14 encounter young people. We certainly
15 don't want any young person who does
16 not have to be arrested or there are
17 some alternative where we can direct
18 them in a better direction, and the
19 CERCs will definitely play a key part
20 in that.

21 I think I said a little bit
22 earlier, I'm not sure if you were on
23 yet, that I am working closely with
24 police leadership around summer
25 planning, how we're handling

1 juveniles this summer and stuff of
2 that nature. I'll be going to talk
3 to the police captains soon because
4 we want to make sure that they are
5 aware of all the things that
6 available to them, and CERCs is
7 certainly one of the things on the
8 list that we will definitely be
9 talking about on how we develop them.

10 I don't know if Commissioner
11 Ali wants to add anything or Deputy
12 Commissioner Gary Williams may want
13 to add something I missed.

14 COMMISSIONER ALI: I do.
15 Good morning, Councilmember Katherine
16 Gilmore Richardson. How are you?

17 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

18 RICHARDSON: Good morning. How are
19 you, Madam Commissioner?

20 COMMISSIONER ALI: I'm doing
21 well. I'm doing well. I just want
22 to give you a sense really of the
23 numbers because we do recognize the
24 CERCs as being a vital part of our
25 prevention continuum as well as our

1 intervention prevention in the sense
2 as Deputy Mayor Vanessa Garrett
3 Harley indicated is that most of the
4 young people who come to the CERCs
5 come by way of their own or their
6 family or community outreach.

7 And so, from January 2022
8 until March 2023, there were 742
9 young people who took advantage of
10 the services at the CERCs, but that
11 equated to 2,740 visits. What that
12 means is that we are engaging the
13 young people and they are coming back
14 for services, and that is the main
15 purpose when we talk about wanting
16 young people to have something
17 positive to do. So we are very happy
18 about that.

19 As Vanessa indicated, we have
20 two more CERCs that'll be online. We
21 anticipate that they will be online
22 prior to the end of the school year
23 in June that will be located in the
24 East Division as well as the
25 Northeast Division of the City. And

1 so, we are looking forward to making
2 an announcement on those providers
3 relatively soon.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

5 RICHARDSON: Excellent. Excellent.
6 Okay. Well, thank you for that
7 update because my concern is that we
8 are getting the word out across City
9 departments regarding the CERC
10 centers. A lot of times I've been
11 going places now recently and people
12 will say, I didn't know anything
13 about it. Now, we've done mailings
14 to all the Registered Community
15 Organizations. We've done mailings
16 to all the new Police Captains and
17 Inspectors. We've done mailings by
18 Internet. Every type of
19 advertisement you can think of we've
20 done that for the CERC centers. So I
21 just wanted to ensure that we're all
22 working across departments to get the
23 word out about the CERC centers.

24 If there's any way that we
25 can work together to figure out an

1 advertising campaign, because back in
2 the day when I was a teenager in the
3 City, there used to be the chart that
4 would be up in businesses and it
5 would just say curfew real big, and
6 then it would have the numbers. But
7 even if we could just put the
8 information about the curfew, but
9 also more so about the Community
10 Evening Resource Centers, because now
11 I'm hearing this narrative that I am
12 going to reject, that is saying that
13 young people have absolutely nothing
14 to do. I disagree with that.

15 I do think that we have some
16 really good programming. Could we do
17 more? Yes, we all can do more. But
18 I do think that there's a level of
19 programming available. We just have
20 to get the word out and we have to
21 remove the barriers for young people
22 to participate in the programs, which
23 is why the CERC centers have the
24 transportation component for the
25 young people.

1 So I just want to ensure that
2 from a City perspective we are doing
3 all that we can to get the word out.
4 And even if it's going on social
5 media, even if it's doing radio
6 advertisement, even if it's
7 advertising on podcasts and stuff
8 that young people listen to, even if
9 it's doing like new OTT advertising
10 because they all have a streaming
11 service and are typically not
12 watching the television shows that we
13 may tend to watch, I want to ensure
14 that we are doing everything we can
15 to get the word out.

16 I did hear the bell. I will
17 be respectful of the clock, but I do
18 want to circle back around OST
19 programming, which I think is through
20 OCF, and then also about child care
21 and our child care compensation for
22 those employees. Okay. Thanks.

23 Thank you, Council President.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

25 Thank you, Councilwoman.

1 Councilwoman Lozada, did she
2 come back yet?

3 (No response.)

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

5 Not back. Okay.

6 Councilman Thomas.

7 (No response.)

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

9 Councilman Thomas, did you have a
10 question?

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good
12 afternoon, Council President.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Go
14 ahead. Chair recognizes Councilman
15 Thomas.

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Good
17 afternoon. Good afternoon,
18 everybody. Thank you to all the
19 folks that are on board and thank you
20 to my colleagues for all the good
21 questions. A lot of the questions
22 that were asked by my colleagues were
23 similar questions that I had. So I'm
24 going to condense some of my remarks
25 this afternoon so we're not as

1 repetitive. And if there is
2 something that I ask that's already
3 been asked, I just ask that you
4 charge it to my head and not my heart
5 and I do apologize.

6 I thought I heard something
7 said that spoke specifically about if
8 we get into an interesting situation
9 this summer, and I know that I've had
10 dialogue with a lot of you all about
11 this summer, preparing for this
12 summer, making sure that we have
13 programs.

14 And one of the things that
15 I've been asking for is for some type
16 of emergency funds to be available.
17 Clearly, most dollars coming from
18 government are restricted. But I'm
19 thinking about something maybe
20 through the Mayor's Fund that might
21 give us a little more flexibility.

22 What is it that we can do to
23 prepare for this summer in situations
24 where an emergency presents
25 themselves and we have to act

1 accordingly, whether it's -- I think
2 it was you that mentioned providing
3 security at rec centers as an example
4 of that, right? What other examples
5 are out there like that and what
6 funds can we set aside that can be
7 available this summer to assure that
8 if conflict presents themselves,
9 we're able to respond?

10 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:
11 So good afternoon, Councilman. Thank
12 you for that question. I would say
13 there are different pots of money
14 that is available for certain types
15 of emergency. But as you
16 acknowledge, many of these pots have
17 some level of restriction on them.
18 Now, certainly there are certain
19 emergency funds at DHS that are
20 utilized in a certain way around
21 trying to prevent a young person or a
22 family from having to come into care,
23 whether that means us having to help
24 with basic needs like just buying
25 food or some housing problems or

1 something like that.

2 There's also a fund for
3 emergency, we call it relocation,
4 that has some funds that was
5 appropriated both by the City and by
6 Council. When we think about the
7 violence aspect, sometimes we get
8 information or we know that a certain
9 young person or someone may be a
10 target of some violence or something
11 like that, those are those funds that
12 we can utilize to help that person
13 relocate if they want and their
14 families.

15 Those fundings are all also
16 available for FY23. And I know we
17 asked for in the FY24 budget, but of
18 course that would start though in
19 July which would still be around the
20 summer session. I know one of the
21 increased asks around juvenile
22 justice services at DHS was for
23 Concrete Goods Fund, which would
24 allow us to be able to buy some more
25 of those goods or needs that some of

1 our young people have maybe as
2 they're exiting the PJJSC or as
3 they're being reintegrated back into
4 their communities if, for example,
5 they have been away in detention or
6 placement. So there are some
7 emergency funds out there. I think
8 it just depends on what the type of
9 emergency is that we are looking at.

10 It's a little bit difficult
11 to quantify those dollar amounts
12 because they're in different pots, so
13 to speak. But there are some funds
14 and we do try to make ourselves
15 nimble enough to be able to address
16 certain emergencies as they come
17 forward.

18 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Yeah. I
19 mean, you and I know that in the
20 summertime is when we tend to see an
21 uptick in some negative activity.
22 I've heard a lot of my colleagues
23 talking about making sure young
24 people have positive things to
25 participate in the summer and making

1 sure that that message delivers.

2 I'm wondering what is your
3 advertising budget. How much money
4 does your office plan on spending as
5 it relates to marketing summer
6 programming and free summer
7 initiatives that can land directly
8 with our young people?

9 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

10 Councilman, I want to give you an
11 accurate figure. And to be honest, I
12 don't know that, a number right in
13 front of me. I mean, I have some
14 ideas in my head. I'm not sure
15 they're accurate. I will get --

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: No, no.
17 That's okay.

18 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

19 I'll get with my Chief of
20 Communications though and give you
21 that number. I can tell you that I'm
22 lucky that we just got one and we are
23 doing some increased advertising both
24 in social media and electronically as
25 well as trying to do some things in

1 person as well as newspaper print and
2 everything else. So I can kind of
3 get you a list of what that
4 advertising looks like and what the
5 correlating budget will be.

6 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Well, I'm
7 going to be advocating for that.
8 I've talked about it in all
9 departments. We know that 1 out of
10 every 5 jobs in the City of
11 Philadelphia right now is vacant, and
12 that has a lot to do with some of the
13 issues that we're facing.

14 And so, I've been advocating
15 as it relates to advocating for more
16 HR dollars as it relates to hiring,
17 but I've also been advocating for it
18 as it relates to digital marketing.
19 And I know one of my colleagues
20 talked about it earlier, but I've
21 also been consistent in my message,
22 and I know other Councilmembers has
23 been as well, that these resources
24 need to be available on children's
25 phones, at the kitchen table. The

1 same way that we communicated that
2 there was a water emergency in the
3 City of Philadelphia is the exact
4 same way I could say over a longer
5 period of time, it's the exact same
6 way that we should be communicating
7 the resources and the opportunities
8 that are available for our children
9 this summer.

10 I think if we all can agree
11 that the crime issues that we're
12 facing in the City are an emergency,
13 right, and if we can also agree that
14 we have seen the numbers drop for
15 every age group but our children,
16 then I think that we should really be
17 as proactive as possible as it
18 relates to making sure that we're
19 advertising and marketing every
20 option that young people have as it
21 relates to positive activities that
22 they could participate in this
23 summer.

24 So whenever that number
25 comes, please let me know --

1 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

2 Absolutely.

3 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: -- and my
4 office and I will be fighting for
5 probably more based on the
6 information that we've been given
7 thus far, so that we can make sure
8 that these items and resources are
9 readily available for our children.

10 On the Parks & Rec side, I
11 heard a lot of questions around
12 issues as it relates to Rebuild stuff
13 and things of that capacity. First
14 of all, Commissioner, you know I
15 appreciate you and your team. I
16 spend more time in your rec centers
17 than I probably should be.

18 But I'm specifically looking
19 at FDR Park. I had a constituent
20 reach out to us to talk about
21 concerns around turf and the health
22 hazard that building so much turf at
23 FDR Park could create. Now, I have
24 to be honest, you know, Commissioner,
25 I've advocated for spaces like Cecil

1 B. Moore where we know a lot of our
2 teams use that field which is a turf
3 field. And I know we have other turf
4 fields across the City. I'm not
5 going to pretend to be a health
6 expert, but I will ask what do you
7 know about health issues related to
8 possibly building so much turf and
9 what are we doing about those
10 possible problems?

11 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:

12 Thanks for that question, Councilman,
13 and thank you of course for all of
14 your support of Parks & Rec and young
15 people. So we are proposing in the
16 plan for FDR to build 12 performance
17 turf fields. So that is definitely
18 the intent. Performance turf we
19 feel, which is artificial turf, so
20 just non-grass fields is -- and you
21 know this as a coach -- just
22 increases the utility, the
23 playability of those fields by
24 tenfold. It is a natural grass
25 field.

1 For every artificial turf
2 field, it equals three natural grass
3 fields in terms of the amount of
4 playability, and that for us is just
5 a real priority. Right now we have
6 five artificial turf fields in our
7 system. That's it, just five. And
8 they are incredibly oversubscribed as
9 you know and heavily, heavily used.

10 So what we are committing to
11 though is to really look into turf
12 fields at FDR that are fields that do
13 not contain toxic chemicals such as
14 PFAS, and we have already begun
15 researching with our partners who are
16 leading this project at the Fairmount
17 Park Conservancy, the potential
18 vendors for those non-toxic products.
19 So there are several companies who
20 are producing turf products that meet
21 those guidelines and that's what
22 we're looking to implement at FDR, if
23 at all possible.

24 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Okay.
25 Great. So, Commissioner, what I'm

1 going to do is I'm just going to make
2 sure that we send you over some of
3 the concerns that was sent to us.
4 And if you can get us a response back
5 to some of that stuff so we can make
6 sure that folks understand that we're
7 moving in a way that's in the best
8 interest of the City --

9 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:

10 Absolutely.

11 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: -- that
12 would be appreciated. It was news to
13 me. It was information that I wasn't
14 aware of. And you know I'm a sports
15 person all the way through and
16 through. But it was information that
17 I said that I would definitely put on
18 the record and communicate to you
19 today, and I'll make sure that we get
20 you much more information in-depth,
21 in writing.

22 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:

23 Thank you.

24 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: And of
25 course, thank you to you and your

1 team, Sudha and everybody over there,
2 all of our Rec leaders across the
3 City who do great work. I spend so
4 much time with folks. I don't want
5 to start naming everybody's name. I
6 probably should in the future.
7 Actually I will.

8 But thank you, Mr. Chair.
9 And thank you to the entire team for
10 all you do. It's very much
11 appreciated.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
13 Thank you. Thank you, Councilman.

14 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Oh, I'm
15 sorry, Council President. I seen our
16 Majority Leader there so I thought I
17 was thanking him. Thank you, Council
18 President.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
20 No, that's good. I'm back. I'm
21 back. I only took one day off and I
22 didn't -- I'm back. Thanks,
23 Councilman.

24 Commission Ott, so this whole
25 turf field issue, and I try to take

1 my role seriously as a Council
2 President so I try not to be as
3 biased towards my District Council
4 role as I would be if I were not the
5 Council President. So I have to look
6 at things in a global perspective.
7 But I got to look at the District
8 Council perspective, particularly
9 when I have a Hetzell Field that you
10 know about. We're having this
11 discussion and you talk about
12 overprescribed to the point where
13 they're looking to go to Lighthouse
14 Field to play soccer and some other
15 type of sports, which is a
16 significant distance away from
17 Hetzell Field. And I have another
18 one on the other side of my District,
19 and I'm always told about the cost
20 associated with these fields.

21 And as was referenced earlier
22 by Councilman Johnson about this ITEF
23 funding where you literally get
24 enough money to fully fund maybe two
25 rec centers in your District at best,

1 and our ability to get a turf field
2 with our ITEF funding is problematic
3 at best. And what I hear about the
4 FDR field, I understand that where
5 it's located and all of that and I
6 guess the citywide significance, I
7 guess.

8 I do have to say that I'm a
9 little concerned about getting 12
10 turf fields at FDR, but I can't get
11 one at Hetzell because I don't have
12 enough money. I know that's not you
13 calling the shots on that, but I
14 guess I'm just sending a signal that
15 that is going to be a real
16 conversation prior to us concluding
17 this budget process. I just can't do
18 it with my ITEF. So we need to, you
19 know. How much was going in the FDR
20 total?

21 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
22 There's \$50 million from the City
23 over the course of the project. I
24 will say that we're still raising
25 funds for the field. So right now we

1 have funding for five, but we don't
2 have funding for -- I mean, this is a
3 10-, 15-year plan for FDR. So we
4 have funding or I should say we're
5 still raising funds to do the initial
6 set of five fields.

7 And I totally agree with you,
8 Council President. We have a field
9 crisis in the City of Philadelphia.
10 It's not a crisis that is unique to
11 South Philadelphia. South
12 Philadelphia fields are (inaudible).
13 There is one turf regulation field in
14 all of South Philadelphia that serves
15 20,000 young people between the ages
16 of 5 and 17.

17 There is not one
18 Councilmember who doesn't hear from
19 constituents, from youth football
20 teams, from soccer teams, from track
21 programs, you name it, who aren't
22 struggling with the field crisis. We
23 have teams, football teams, soccer
24 teams who raise money to play their
25 games in the suburbs, in Upper Darby,

1 in Camden because they don't have
2 access to high-quality fields.

3 We have leagues who look at
4 our fields and say, they're not good
5 enough, we can't have a regulation
6 game here because the field is in
7 such a state of disrepair. We spent
8 over three-quarters of \$1 million
9 annually to maintain our fields. We
10 could spend quadruple that and quite
11 frankly it still wouldn't be enough
12 because the way that the demand of
13 our fields, the demand is on our
14 fields -- and this is a good problem
15 to have, right.

16 We want youth football
17 programs. We want more of them. We
18 want more kids in soccer programs.
19 We want more kids in baseball
20 programs, but the pressure that that
21 puts on our fields is really
22 significant in terms of the utility
23 and the playability. If it rains,
24 technically you should not use a
25 field the next day. That doesn't

1 happen in the City of Philadelphia.
2 We don't have the luxury of just a
3 Pop Warner team can't just cancel a
4 game when they have 10 teams playing.

5 And I will say the other
6 pressure on this is when a charter
7 school is built, and we know how many
8 charter schools have come up in the
9 last 10, 15 years, they don't come
10 with fields. So now all those
11 charter schools are using our fields,
12 right, which puts more pressure on
13 our fields and more conflict between
14 community groups and the charter
15 schools.

16 We have, you know, some of
17 the public and Catholic schools who
18 use our fields. So there's pressure
19 coming at us at all angles. And what
20 artificial turf allows us to do is to
21 increase the playability, utility of
22 that field. You can play on that
23 field 24/7/365, right, and it will
24 still be a high-quality field.

25 So understanding that we have

1 to keep safety of young people in
2 mind, top of mind, I do believe that
3 there is a way to have an inventory
4 of artificial turf fields while also
5 maintaining safety for young people.
6 And I think we have to do it and we
7 should be doing it in every
8 neighborhood of the City. Thank you.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

10 All right. Thank you. So you've
11 made my case. We need to put more
12 money in artificial fields. I'm
13 getting the Commissioner to agree
14 with our request for additional
15 funding.

16 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:

17 Well, I wouldn't say -- I support it.
18 I support it.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

20 All right. No, I mean I'm just
21 saying, no, you're right though. I
22 mean, it's important. You can't
23 encourage and request and require to
24 some degree that young people get
25 involved in positive activity and

1 then we limit it because of the
2 inability to put the appropriate
3 resources on the table that have
4 overprescribed fields, like you say
5 is a great thing. But I don't know.
6 I mean, like we said sometimes money
7 can't be the issue, right. I mean,
8 you just got to spend the money
9 because the downside is it's much
10 more challenging than the upside of
11 spending more money on recreational
12 activities.

13 So I think we'll have a
14 little more conversation during the
15 course of the next two weeks before
16 we conclude this budget process.
17 Well, thank you, Commissioner.

18 I believe, Councilman Jones,
19 you're on your next round. Do I have
20 that right?

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: (Nodded
22 affirmatively).

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
24 Yes. Chair recognizes Councilman
25 Jones.

1 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
2 Mr. President.

3 As we drill down from the
4 macro down to the micro, meaning
5 what's going on in my District, as we
6 deal with Rebuild and I know that's
7 not directly attributable to you, but
8 I was pleased to know that Shepard
9 Recreation Center wasn't going to be
10 shut down for the summer, that we
11 were going to delay renovations to
12 October in order to let kids enjoy
13 the pool at Shepard and some of the
14 other amenities at the rec center.

15 What I would like to know is
16 what is the alternative space plan
17 when we do begin renovations and
18 construction? And I understand the
19 Daroff School was being considered
20 for certain activities. Do you have
21 any specifics about the types of
22 activities of the notification that
23 will be given to young people to say,
24 hey, this door is closed but the
25 other door across the street is open?

1 And keep in mind, that is the
2 same rec center where we had a shoot-
3 out. There were over 100 shells
4 found on the ground. Fortunately, no
5 one was hit. And the police in the
6 19th District valiantly chased that
7 car down and made an arrest. So in
8 light of that space being critical in
9 the fight for safe places to play,
10 what is the plan for that alternative
11 site during construction for this?

12 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
13 Yeah. Thanks, Councilmember.
14 Kathryn Ott Lovell, Parks & Rec
15 Commissioner. Yes, that is the plan
16 right now. We are very grateful to
17 the School District because they
18 recognize the need and they are
19 working with us to make Daroff
20 available to us.

21 Daroff would be an ideal
22 space. There's a gym there. It's a
23 great-sized gym. We have classroom
24 space. So we could effectively
25 rehouse all of our programs from

1 Shepard over to Daroff, and it just
2 works out incredibly well that Daroff
3 is not being used right now. So it's
4 available for us and we're working
5 out those details in that agreement
6 with the School District literally as
7 I speak.

8 And that is, again as I
9 mentioned before, that's our plan for
10 all of the Rebuild sites, is how do
11 we make sure 100 percent of that
12 programming is available nearby and
13 make sure that all of the program
14 partners who are helping us with
15 programming or working on programs at
16 that center are aware and involved in
17 those conversations. So we don't
18 have it signed on the dotted line
19 yet, but we're really encouraged by
20 the conversations we're having with
21 the School District and hopeful that
22 that will be our solution.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: So as you
24 fine-tune what programming fits
25 within the school and its building

1 facilities, can you make that kind of
2 synopsis of what is available so that
3 we can put that out to the community
4 to say, yeah, there's good news about
5 activities at the school and even
6 better news that we're going to spend
7 money to open up a modernized
8 facility? But that communication
9 needs to be one where parents and
10 young people and seniors all kind of
11 know.

12 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Of
13 course. Absolutely, we'll work with
14 your office on that, Councilmember.
15 Thank you.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
17 so much, Commissioner.

18 Thank you, Mr. President.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
20 Thank you, Councilman.

21 Next up we have Councilwoman
22 Gilmore Richardson.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
24 RICHARDSON: Thank you, Council
25 President. Thank you very, very

1 much.

2 I wanted to circle back to
3 just some questions I have regarding
4 PHLpreK. And I noted and saw in your
5 testimony that the expansion of
6 PHLpreK will be about 950 seats to
7 over 5200 spots. And I just want to
8 be very clear, we love PHLpreK. I
9 think it's a great program, just
10 wonderful, wonderful program.

11 Relative to this 950 seat
12 expansion, will you expand to
13 additional site locations or are you
14 just expanding within your existing
15 footprint?

16 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:
17 So thank you for that question. We
18 will be expanding to additional site
19 locations. I have as you see Sean
20 has just popped on the screen, and
21 he's our Director of Early Childhood
22 Intervention. I'm going to ask Sean
23 to give you the more detail
24 explanation to your question.

25 Sean.

1 MR. PERKINS: Yes. Thank
2 you, Deputy Mayor. Thank you,
3 Councilmember Gilmore Richardson.
4 The answer to your question is both.
5 We work with our centers that we have
6 been working with. In particular, I
7 could probably call out 20 of them
8 that we have been working with over
9 the year to expand at those sites,
10 but we'll be adding an additional 52
11 sites across our City. In every
12 single Council District we'll see
13 increases in both seats and in site
14 locations.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

16 RICHARDSON: So to your point, I'm
17 very familiar with the program, and
18 give a special shout-out to Methodist
19 Services, which I think is under the
20 umbrella of EduCare. But as far as
21 the pay for the PHLpreK teachers,
22 would you say that their salary is
23 competitive sort of with the private
24 market and how are we looking at
25 helping those workers to reskill,

1 upskill so that they could be able to
2 move into different positions of
3 leadership and responsibility in that
4 area?

5 MR. PERKINS: Yeah, that's a
6 great question. I think that the
7 salary and the pay, which I also want
8 to say also just the general respect
9 that are afforded to our teachers,
10 could always be improved and the
11 values that they are the cornerstones
12 of our future, right. They are
13 developing our --

14 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

15 RICHARDSON: Right.

16 MR. PERKINS: -- future
17 leaders and our youngest generations.
18 The pay I'd say is competitive with
19 private scale. However, that depends
20 on a lot of things like the
21 socioeconomic status of that
22 geography or that location. So
23 relative to where the location is I'd
24 say it is competitive.

25 It should be better I will

1 advocate. And I would say anybody
2 who is in this field would advocate
3 for it to always be better. Proud of
4 this City for increasing its rate for
5 reimbursement for this program. We
6 are now at \$10,000 a seat. We were
7 at \$8750 just a year and a half ago.
8 That's incredible. More can and
9 should be done.

10 I also want to make sure I
11 touch base on your question about
12 advancement, career advancement.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

14 RICHARDSON: Right.

15 MR. PERKINS: As I mentioned
16 earlier, we have a Quality Support
17 Center that works with our teachers
18 to ensure that their classroom
19 experiences for the families as well
20 as for the teachers themselves are
21 improving. And the State or the
22 Commonwealth has designated a
23 professional development organization
24 in Philadelphia and we work in
25 collaboration with them.

1 They do exactly what you
2 mentioned. They ensure that the
3 career development of the teacher is
4 improving, that some of our teachers
5 who may not have a Bachelor's Degree,
6 for example, are working towards
7 those and taking advantage of the
8 T.E.A.C.H. scholarships that we have
9 available.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

11 RICHARDSON: Right. So what I really
12 wanted to drill down on because I've
13 been just reading a few things and
14 anecdotally just speaking to people
15 on this issue. Do we know what the
16 average pay is for the teachers who
17 are teaching in the PHLpreK program?
18 And if so, what is it?

19 MR. PERKINS: Yeah. I'd want
20 to make sure I get that exact number
21 for you so I can provide it to you.
22 But I can tell you what the floor is.
23 This Council passed a minimum living
24 wage requirement of which all of our
25 programs are required to adhere to,

1 and that is the work that we do.
2 That floor is not enough, \$15 an
3 hour. But that is in accordance with
4 the living wage requirement that this
5 Council did adopt. I would say the
6 average salary is certainly above
7 that, but I'd want to double check to
8 make sure I get you accurate
9 information.

10 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

11 RICHARDSON: Okay. So if you could
12 just circle back to us on that
13 because I will register the concern
14 that I am concerned about pay for
15 child care workers in the City. As
16 we know in a number of different
17 industries, it has been very, very
18 hard to retain good people, and
19 there's been a lot of turnover,
20 particularly since COVID. And I can
21 tell you that from just firsthand
22 experience. I don't need a report or
23 anything to tell me that because I've
24 experienced it personally. We have a
25 lot of little people in my family.

1 So I just wanted to know if
2 you could circle back to us on
3 average pay for the workers. But if
4 you could give us a detailed report
5 for all the places and all the sites
6 that PHLpreK funds, how much do the
7 workers get paid at each one of those
8 sites. And also, I think we have to
9 make sure it's parity in that system
10 as well if we are funding this
11 program.

12 MR. PERKINS: Councilmember,
13 we'll do our best. I also want to
14 just make sure I add that it is
15 complicated, that they don't just
16 receive their funding from just the
17 City, that there are multiple funding
18 streams for child care and preschool.
19 So it's complicated. It's a bit
20 messy, but we will absolutely do our
21 best to provide you with the
22 information you're requesting.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

24 RICHARDSON: Okay. And then I heard
25 the bell. But I just want to

1 register for Office of Children and
2 Families is the issue around child
3 care and the ability to find good
4 quality, affordable child care for
5 families. And in addition to the
6 families we know who may qualify for
7 the subsidy for child care purposes
8 from the state, but there are a
9 number of families in Philadelphia
10 who are also struggling to pay child
11 care because they may not qualify for
12 the state subsidy. And because of
13 the rates the providers charge
14 because of the subsidy, you're
15 literally paying double, triple,
16 quadruple the amount of what some
17 people receive just for the subsidy.

18 And so, I just wanted to know
19 how you all are thinking about
20 providing and working with these
21 providers because many of them not
22 only do PHLpreK, but they do child
23 care as well? How are you working
24 with these folks to ensure that we
25 have a process to allow families to

1 have affordable child care and
2 quality child care? It is very
3 difficult to find.

4 I mean, I just have to be
5 honest. Even when I was a staffer
6 working in City Council, my mom fell
7 and broke her hip so it was no one to
8 watch my daughter. I had to bring my
9 baby in for a couple months until I
10 could find a place for her to go, but
11 not everybody has that flexibility.
12 So what are we doing to help people?

13 And also, I just want to
14 mention this. Are you all working
15 with or have you ever worked with the
16 courts and FJD because there is a
17 line item that they receive funding
18 for the establishment of child care
19 for people who are utilizing City
20 facilities?

21 For instance, if someone's
22 going to do business at the Municipal
23 Services Building and they need a
24 spot to house a child, if they have
25 jury duty, there is a budget for

1 that. Have you all ever worked with
2 them to determine how we could have
3 child care within the Quadplex in
4 City government?

5 And I know that years back,
6 about four or five years ago, there
7 was an agreement in the budget
8 process for my predecessor Blondell
9 Reynolds Brown to have a study done
10 around the feasibility of having the
11 child care facility at the Quadplex.
12 And for whatever reason upon further
13 investigation, the money was never
14 transferred in order for the study to
15 be completed. But I will be circling
16 back to that issue because I think
17 it's exceedingly important. But I
18 just want to know how you all are
19 thinking about affordable quality
20 child care.

21 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:
22 I think, Councilwoman, you bring up
23 some real issues. We do know that
24 affordable child care is a huge
25 problem for many families. The

1 PHLpreK was the first step and some
2 would say a drop in the bucket
3 because you also have a significant
4 number of kids that are not 3 or 4
5 years old and therefore wouldn't
6 qualify but their families need help
7 with.

8 I'll be honest with you, this
9 is something I'm really going to have
10 to look into and we'll have to do
11 more exploration. We have not worked
12 with First Judicial District
13 specifically around a child care
14 facility in the Quadplex. The only
15 thing I could say to you is that we
16 work pretty well with Family Court
17 and there is some child care
18 provisions somewhat within that
19 structure for families that are going
20 into the Family Court building or for
21 sort of certain types of supervised
22 visitation that may occur in Family
23 Court, but that's not necessarily
24 available in the way that I think
25 you're talking about which any

1 layperson coming downtown to do
2 business, right. That is not part of
3 a system or not having to go within
4 that. But it is definitely something
5 that I can explore and look into.

6 I think I remember a little
7 bit about that feasibility study that
8 you're talking about. But it's been
9 so many years ago I'm not sure what
10 happened to it or where it went. But
11 it's something that we certainly can
12 talk about and I'll be happy to work
13 with your office as we think about
14 how can we be sort of more proactive
15 in this space. It's a difficult one.

16 And I think you also brought
17 up an important issue, the pay that
18 not only Pre-K teachers but child
19 care professionals, the assistant
20 teachers and everything else gets
21 difficult. There is real workforce
22 shortages in those areas that we're
23 cognizant of and trying to be as
24 instrumental as we can in helping to
25 promote some stuff in that arena too,

1 but it is very, very difficult
2 because unfortunately they are some
3 of our most important members of
4 society, but they certainly don't get
5 paid that way. And we recognize
6 that.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

8 RICHARDSON: (Muted).

9 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

10 I think you're muted, Councilwoman.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

12 RICHARDSON: I apologize. Thank you
13 very much. I will circle back with
14 you all directly on that issue, but I
15 do think also that it would be
16 advantageous even to our City workers
17 who are working down in the Quadplex
18 as well.

19 So thank you, Council
20 President.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

22 Thank you. Thank you very much,
23 Council Lady.

24 I don't think anybody else
25 has teed up for questions. So,

1 Commissioner Ali, Commissioner Ott
2 and Deputy Garrett Hartley, I know
3 that we had scheduled testimony by
4 all of you individually, but we have
5 been all over the place in our
6 questioning. So if there is anything
7 that you think you may gain by giving
8 your summarized testimony, you can do
9 so or would you prefer to quit while
10 you're ahead?

11 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

12 Absolutely, Councilman. Council
13 President, absolutely. We know how
14 to take cues. But in all
15 seriousness, both Commissioner Ali
16 and Commissioner Ott Lovell have
17 submitted written testimony that
18 certainly has details on any other
19 areas that we are seeking funding.
20 But I do think you and Council have
21 done a good job of covering questions
22 for all of those departments this
23 morning. And I'm not sure what more
24 benefit it would be to for individual
25 testimony from the departments.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

2 Okay. So it appears that
3 Councilwoman Gilmore Richardson has
4 some additional questions.

5 Chair recognizes Councilwoman
6 Gilmore Richardson.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

8 RICHARDSON: Yes. Thank you so much,
9 Council President.

10 I'm going to start with Parks
11 & Recreation. First, thank you so
12 much, Commissioner Ott Lovell, for
13 your work and for the work of your
14 office. Giving a special shout-out
15 to Sudha and to all the professionals
16 in PPR who have been working with us.
17 It's too many to name, but
18 particularly the tree professionals
19 who have just been excellent.

20 I mean, we've gotten so many
21 calls over the last year and just
22 everybody at Parks & Rec. I don't
23 want to forget anybody because you
24 all really are important and I
25 certainly appreciate each and every

1 one of you. Also have to mention the
2 issue that we're working on relative
3 to helping some of the groups over
4 the summer. So I want to thank you
5 with that as well.

6 But I wanted to circle back,
7 one, two, and say thank you for -- I
8 don't know what that event was on
9 Saturday because I'm a busy working
10 mom, but I know my son was there and
11 he was excited to be there with you
12 all for what the announcement was. I
13 think my husband took him to his
14 football practice and he happened to
15 find a press conference with PPR
16 with my colleague Councilmember
17 Thomas. So I just want to say thank
18 you for that.

19 But at any rate, I wanted to
20 talk about the Tree bill and
21 providing an update on the
22 implementation of our Tree bill and
23 how you all have spent or are
24 spending the initial sort of \$1.8
25 million that we allocated last year

1 for the Tree Plan implementation?

2 And then what resources you all will
3 be requesting this year sort of
4 moving the program forward?

5 And then I'll circle back
6 after that just to ask about sort of
7 the implementation of the Tree Plan
8 because of that announcement from the
9 Biden Administration where they said
10 they're going to put \$1 billion in
11 funding trees and urban heat island
12 mitigation. And you know how much I
13 care deeply about that issue.

14 So I just wanted to get the
15 sort of full update on the Tree bill,
16 the Tree Plan, the Urban AG Plan and
17 everything regarding trees at PPR.
18 And then I'll go from there.

19 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:

20 Well, Councilmember, we can't thank
21 you enough for your support of all
22 those great plans, environmentally-
23 focused plans. And it was wonderful
24 to see your son David. I did not
25 know he was your son and I texted you

1 that. I sat there the whole event,
2 our FDR Football Day, and was this
3 little boy 6 years old, was front and
4 center. So well-behaved, so
5 adorable, so on point. I turned to
6 my colleague and said, this little
7 guy is going to be Mayor some day,
8 you just watch him. He was amazing.
9 So did not realize he was your son
10 until later, but you've got a charmer
11 there and he's ready.

12 But, yeah, thank you so much
13 for your support. We are so excited
14 about the Philly Tree Plan, which as
15 you know is a 10-year plan to
16 basically restore, protect and grow
17 the urban forest throughout
18 Philadelphia. And we were so
19 grateful to the Administration for
20 giving us funding this year to begin
21 implementing that plan, close to \$1.8
22 million. And that is going to go to
23 the following areas:

24 Number one, to create a City
25 Forester position and their support

1 team. This is the first ever
2 position of City Forester that will
3 be introduced into the Administration
4 and the City. It will reside in
5 Parks & Recreation, but it will
6 have -- it will liaise with City
7 agencies throughout the City,
8 everyone from Health to
9 Sustainability to Licenses &
10 Inspection. And we'll have a support
11 team that really enables us to be as
12 collaborative as possible. Really
13 think about it as a one-stop shop for
14 trees.

15 Right now it can be quite
16 mystifying for a constituent to
17 figure out and to navigate that world
18 as well as for developers and people,
19 you know, they have to go to a bunch
20 of different agencies. So this is
21 the idea about really centralizing
22 and modernizing that office.

23 The second area that funding
24 will go to will be to increase our
25 street tree maintenance in those

1 priority areas. So as you know in
2 advance of the Philly Tree Plan, we
3 did a significant amount of
4 scientific and environmental studies
5 to determine where the areas of
6 lowest tree canopy are. And sad to
7 say, those areas of lowest tree
8 canopy are also our poorest and most
9 underserved neighborhoods and the
10 neighborhoods with the highest heat
11 vulnerability.

12 And so, we will be doubling
13 down our efforts to provide street
14 tree maintenance and plantings in
15 those priority areas. We will also
16 increase our capacity as a department
17 to restore our natural lands. So
18 often, especially you and your
19 colleagues in City Council receive
20 outreach from constituents around
21 street trees. Street trees are
22 incredibly important, but so are the
23 trees in our natural lands. And too
24 often they go unnoticed and therefore
25 underresourced.

1 And so, we'll be putting a
2 significant amount of funding into
3 key projects to help to manage and
4 restore those natural land areas. We
5 will also have work in tandem with
6 communities. The Philly Tree Plan
7 was probably one of the most robust
8 engagement processes in terms of
9 community that we've ever been
10 involved with, and we have
11 significant projects that the
12 community has requested in some of
13 those priority areas. So we will be
14 working to implement those projects.

15 We will also -- a big chunk
16 of the money is going to improve our
17 communication and customer service
18 around tree-related inquiries. So of
19 course, we have 311. But we want to
20 increase additional support and not
21 just be reactive, but really move
22 towards being proactive in terms of
23 our outreach to constituents around
24 tree issues. So not just wait for
25 people to call us and say, this tree

1 is about to fall down outside of my
2 house, but really to be as proactive
3 as possible and to engage people not
4 just in the problems around trees but
5 in the benefits of trees.

6 So we are hiring these
7 positions. This is a lot of staffing
8 for us. And as you know, it has been
9 challenging to move through the
10 hiring process, but we are hiring
11 those positions at a clip, and we
12 look forward to being able to have
13 all those positions on board over the
14 next few months.

15 And then we also received
16 funding, Councilmember, in the
17 midyear transfer to address the
18 backlog in trees which is in tree
19 removals, which is a huge deal for us
20 at Parks & Rec. We have had a
21 significant and historic backlog in
22 our tree removals. And the
23 Administration graciously gave us \$1
24 million to be able to chip away
25 significantly at that backlog.

1 We will be able to remove
2 almost all of the street trees in our
3 backlog using that \$1 million, not
4 all of the stumps. And mind you,
5 it's just a snapshot in time because
6 every minute of every day a tree is
7 dying. So we will be able to get a
8 huge portion of those trees removed
9 using that funding, and it's really
10 going to again sort of create a new
11 baseline for us to begin moving
12 forward and advancing the Tree Plan
13 implementation.

14 The Philly Tree Plan has
15 robust and significant dollar amount
16 that we're going to need consistently
17 over the next 20 to 30 years in City
18 government to really meet our goals
19 of that Tree Plan, so we are excited
20 but also cautious that we need to
21 continue to see a high level of
22 support for the implementation of
23 that plan moving forward.

24 You mentioned the federal
25 money. We are very excited about

1 this federal grant program and we
2 have brought together our partners at
3 PHS as well as the Fairmount Park
4 Conservancy. As recently as two days
5 ago, we had a meeting in my office to
6 talk about our combined application
7 for that funding.

8 We hope to bring together
9 partners, community grassroots
10 partners as well as those nonprofits
11 that really lead this tree work to
12 put together a collaborative
13 application for \$50 million, and that
14 would be -- I mean, the timing of
15 this is perfect. The idea that we
16 just completed a Tree Plan for the
17 first time ever and that this federal
18 opportunity specifically for trees,
19 and if you look at that RFP that the
20 USDA put out, every single criteria
21 that they want is already in our Tree
22 Plan. So we are poised to be
23 hopefully a great recipient for that
24 grant.

25 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

1 RICHARDSON: And that's why I thought
2 it was important to sort of give the
3 background and to talk about the work
4 that has already been done. But I
5 wanted to know how you all, and you
6 said PHS, but how you all are
7 thinking about pulling together that
8 application, who will the partners be
9 on the application and to make sure
10 that we are going full steam ahead
11 for that opportunity, because I think
12 this is the way for us to fully fund
13 the work that we are seeking to
14 accomplish?

15 And you all know and I tell
16 you this all the time, the engagement
17 that happened through the Tree Plan
18 engagement was some of the best
19 community engagement I've ever seen
20 from any department in government
21 relative to incorporating the
22 community in a planning process. So
23 I thought it was just stellar. But I
24 just want to make sure that we have
25 all the partners and those in place

1 who we will need to utilize in order
2 to best put forth the best
3 application from the City of
4 Philadelphia to the federal
5 government.

6 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:

7 Yes. Thank you, Councilmember. We
8 actually have a meeting on the 21st
9 with a dozen or so different partners
10 involved in that application and we
11 will keep you posted on the progress.
12 And just again, I think the stars are
13 aligning around trees in the City, in
14 the region. So we will do whatever
15 we can to make sure we catch those
16 stars as they fall upon us.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

18 RICHARDSON: Right, it's finally our
19 tree time. Really quickly, and I
20 didn't hear the bell, so really
21 quickly I just wanted to mention this
22 because I've been stopped on the
23 street, I was stopped at an event
24 last week by two folks in another
25 community group, but they have

1 stopped me and have reached out to me
2 and have sought meetings with my
3 office regarding the signif -- I hear
4 the bell, but I just want to get this
5 on the record and then we can circle
6 back on Round 2 -- but regarding
7 significant concerns with flooding
8 and the wetlands with the FDR Park
9 project.

10 And I know some of the groups
11 that participate even in the
12 Environmental Civilian Advisory
13 Committee have asked about it. So I
14 just wanted to get that on the record
15 and just sort of get a response. But
16 I heard the bell. I'll circle back
17 on the next round, but I have been
18 stopped even as late as this week
19 about this issue.

20 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Did
21 you want me to respond now or does
22 the bell mean I have to wait?

23 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

24 RICHARDSON: I heard the bell. So
25 thank you, Council President. We'll

1 come back on the next round. Thank
2 you.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
4 Councilwoman, yeah. I'm not sure
5 anybody else is teed up.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

7 RICHARDSON: Oh.

8 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: I
9 can answer then?

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

11 Well --

12 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:

13 No --

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: --

15 yeah.

16 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: --

17 okay.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I
19 think we had started and you had got
20 on a little late. Yeah, we had
21 basically did a round-robin all of
22 the various testi -- both
23 Commissioners and the Deputy as
24 opposed to going one-by-one.

25 But go ahead. Just finish up

1 with your question.

2 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:

3 Thank you. Thank you, Council
4 President. Councilmember, thank you
5 for that comment about FDR. We know
6 that there has been outreach done by
7 some activists around concerns around
8 FDR and we continue to meet with
9 those individuals to work with them
10 and talk with them about the plan for
11 FDR.

12 We are happy to meet with
13 your office individually and go
14 through with you the plan itself as
15 well as the very, again similarly to
16 the tree plan, robust community
17 engagement that has been done around
18 this plan over the last five years.
19 It is one of the most environmentally
20 conscious plans that has plans for a
21 public space that has ever been done
22 in the City of Philadelphia.

23 We have incredible
24 environmentalists, landscape
25 architects working on this plan. We

1 did a completely separate hydrology
2 study funded by the William Penn
3 Foundation to ensure that our that us
4 as well as our partners at the
5 Airport, which are doing a major
6 wetland restoration project there are
7 working within all of the appropriate
8 environmental guidelines. And --

9 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

10 RICHARDSON: Commissioner, I
11 apologize for interrupting you. I
12 just want you to know I asked the
13 Airport about their project as well
14 because I know it goes into the
15 Tinicum Township portion of the
16 Airport property.

17 So I want you to know I did
18 ask them this yesterday, but I wanted
19 to make sure that I followed up with
20 you all today because like I said, I
21 was stopped at an event even last
22 week about this issue. And I know
23 that you all do great community
24 engagement because I saw it play out
25 with the Tree Plan.

1 I just want to make sure we
2 do that this particular time and that
3 the community feels that they are
4 being heard and have the opportunity
5 to provide feedback as a part of this
6 process. But also, what I asked them
7 to do was to send me a list of
8 questions that I could then send to
9 your office that we can get written
10 responses to so that they feel as
11 though they have added put
12 information on all the questions that
13 they have, because I'll be honest, I
14 couldn't answer the questions. I did
15 not know the answers. And I didn't
16 want to give them incorrect
17 information.

18 So I just ask that if we're
19 able to transmit those questions for
20 response for the group that's -- I
21 don't even remember the name of the
22 group. I have to get it from my
23 staff, but they stopped me at an
24 event, and I want to make sure that
25 we are being responsive to them, that

1 they feel as though they are engaged
2 and involved in this process and that
3 their voices can be heard and
4 whatever meetings are had or whatever
5 opportunities to provide engagement
6 or had and that the feedback is
7 incorporated in whatever the plans
8 will be.

9 Okay. And I haven't met with
10 you all about this individually so I
11 really don't know, and I look forward
12 to doing that meeting. But I just
13 want to make sure from a community
14 perspective that we're being
15 responsive to people and registering
16 their concerns.

17 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
18 Absolutely. I appreciate that,
19 Councilmember. We've received those
20 questions and we'll get those answers
21 back to you by Friday at the latest.
22 And then we'll also schedule a
23 briefing with your office and your
24 staff. Thank you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

1 RICHARDSON: Okay. That'll be great.

2 Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: You
4 got it.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
6 (Muted).

7 THE CLERK: Council
8 President, you're on mute.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I
10 was having a good time talking. I
11 think we concluded the testimony and
12 the questions for these members. I
13 want to thank you all very much. As
14 always, be prepared for callbacks.
15 We will take a recess until
16 2 o'clock, at which time we'll come
17 back for our afternoon testimony with
18 the Energy Authority and our Office
19 of Sustainability.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

21 RICHARDSON: Okay. Thanks, CP. I
22 had questions for DHS, but I'll
23 submit them for the record. Okay.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
25 Oh, okay. Thank you, Councilwoman.

1 Thank you.

2 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

3 Thank you.

4 (Lunch recess.)

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

6 Good afternoon to everyone. We are
7 reconvening our FY24 budget hearing,
8 Week 4.

9 This afternoon's version, we
10 will be hearing the Office of
11 Sustainability, Philadelphia Energy
12 Authority and the Free Library. If
13 you all are already, let's start our
14 testimony.

15 Mr. McDermott, who's the
16 first one up to testify?

17 THE CLERK: First person to
18 testify is Elizabeth Lankenau,
19 Interim Director of the Office of
20 Sustainability.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

22 And then followed by?

23 THE CLERK: Emily Schapira,
24 President of the Philadelphia Energy
25 Authority.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

2 Thank you very much and good
3 afternoon. You all please proceed
4 with your testimony.

5 MS. LANKENAU: Thank you very
6 much. Good afternoon, Council
7 President Clarke and members of City
8 Council. I am Liz Lankenau and I
9 have served as Interim Director of
10 the Office of Sustainability since
11 March 20th. With me today I have Don
12 McGraw, Deputy Director of Municipal
13 Energy Services; Nidhi Krishen,
14 Deputy Director of Climate solutions;
15 Genevieve LaMarr LeMee, Senior
16 Advisor for Environmental Justice;
17 Abby Sullivan, Senior Advisor for
18 Climate, Science and Risk
19 Communication and Korin Tangtrakul,
20 our Program Manager of Place-based
21 Initiatives.

22 To begin, I want to take a
23 moment to acknowledge the Office of
24 Sustainability's prior Director
25 Saleem Chapman, who was recognized in

1 2022 with Resolution 220779. I
2 valued our collaboration while I
3 served as OTIS' Director of
4 Infrastructure Program Coordination,
5 and I was honored when he recommended
6 me to lead the Office of
7 Sustainability.

8 We all congratulate Saleem
9 and look forward to working with him
10 in the Shapiro Administration.
11 Fortunately, amid this recent change
12 in leadership, there is strong
13 continuity with the smart,
14 compassionate and dedicated
15 Sustainability team, and working with
16 them has brought me back to my core
17 values.

18 This interim position
19 presents exciting new challenges to
20 equitably further the City's
21 sustainability goals, whether through
22 improving municipal energy
23 performance, elevating quality of
24 life through just climate-related
25 policy and planning or building a

1 more just food system.

2 Through the support of
3 Council, the Administration, the
4 budget process and our partners, the
5 Office of Sustainability has made
6 amazing strides. This week we filled
7 our last staff vacancy. Trial
8 installations for the Philly
9 Streetlight Improvement program have
10 begun, which puts us on our way to
11 further reduce our carbon emissions
12 while improving public safety. The
13 Adams Solar Project will provide
14 renewable energy to nearly a quarter
15 of municipal buildings by late 2023
16 with another Renewable Power Purchase
17 Agreement under way.

18 We are working to compete for
19 and strategically optimize federal
20 dollars available through the
21 Bipartisan Infrastructure law and the
22 Inflation Reduction Act to start, the
23 Office of Sustainability has applied
24 to the EPA's Environmental Justice
25 Government-to-Government Program and

1 is working with the Delaware Valley
2 Regional Planning Commission to
3 prepare a climate action plan for
4 EPA'S Climate Pollution Reduction
5 Program.

6 We anticipate being eligible
7 for many more funding opportunities.
8 We launched a place-based resilience
9 planning effort in Eastwick to
10 deliver community-driven solutions to
11 long-stalled flood mitigation in
12 partnership with City, state and
13 federal partners.

14 The Office of Sustainability
15 submitted an application to FEMA's
16 Building, Resilient, Infrastructure
17 and Communities Program to build a
18 comprehensive and integrated flood
19 resilience strategy in Eastwick. The
20 state approved the application for
21 federal review and we expect an
22 announcement this summer.

23 We will scale our efforts to
24 alleviate energy burden for residents
25 through a City-funded strategic plan

1 that will leverage federal funding to
2 help all residents across access
3 energy benefits and participate in
4 the City's transition to an equitable
5 clean energy future.

6 In 2023, Mayor Kenney signed
7 Executive Order 2-23 establishing the
8 Philadelphia Environmental Justice
9 Advisory Commission. Funded for five
10 years, the Commission will
11 collaborate with the Office of
12 Sustainability staff and an
13 Interdepartmental Environmental
14 Justice and Climate Resilience
15 Working Group to inform just
16 decision-making and improve equitable
17 access to environmental amenities.

18 The William Penn Foundation
19 is providing a 2-to-1 match to the
20 City for Community Resilience and
21 Environmental Justice Grant Fund,
22 which will distribute \$10,000 grants
23 to 15 community organizations
24 annually, with the Environmental
25 Justice Commission operating as the

1 Selection Committee.

2 There is always more work to
3 be done. For the foreseeable future,
4 the climate crisis will be
5 predictable. In its unpredictability
6 of increasingly hotter and hotter and
7 wetter weather events, the office
8 will continue to do all that it can
9 with the resources available to
10 prepare our City for the climate
11 challenges expected to impact our
12 public mandates. We'll update our
13 partners on climate science data,
14 associated vulnerabilities and seek
15 ways to reduce risk and will ensure
16 that the environmental justice and
17 climate preparedness are threaded
18 throughout policy planning and
19 implementation decisions. Thank you
20 and I'm happy to address any
21 questions you may have.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

23 Thank you. Ms. Schapira.

24 MS. SCHAPIRA: Thank you so
25 much, Council President, members of

1 Council. Good afternoon. I'm Emily
2 Schapira, President and CEO of the
3 Philadelphia Energy Authority. I am
4 really pleased to provide testimony
5 for our first time on PEA's Fiscal
6 Year 2024 operating budget. We are a
7 nimble team of 11 up on the 5th Floor
8 of City Hall. We work to build a
9 robust and equitable clean energy
10 economy in Philadelphia.

11 In 2016, I think everyone
12 knows with the leadership of Council
13 President Clarke, we launched the
14 Philadelphia Energy Campaign, a
15 pledge to invest \$1 billion in energy
16 efficiency and clean energy projects
17 to create 10,000 jobs over 10 years.
18 Through 2022, we have supported \$380
19 million in projects and programs and
20 helped create nearly 3,300 jobs. We
21 expect to nearly double that impact
22 in 2023 and 2024 with \$375 million
23 more in projects breaking ground this
24 year.

25 PEA leverages clean,

1 efficient, affordable energy as a
2 tool for impact to advance the four
3 main goals of the Philadelphia Energy
4 Campaign. Those are spurring
5 economic development, creating jobs,
6 alleviating poverty and improving
7 public health. We do that by holding
8 long-term contracts on behalf of the
9 City, which are common and necessary
10 in energy work, and we facilitate and
11 support project development and
12 execution for municipal and
13 institutional clean energy projects.

14 This includes projects like
15 the Streetlight Improvement project,
16 the School District's Energy Savings
17 projects and Adams Solar, which Liz
18 mentioned will provide about 25
19 percent now of municipal electricity
20 needs starting in 2024. We also run
21 programs that address similar issues
22 in housing, commercial and industrial
23 buildings and small businesses.

24 Those programs include
25 Solarize Philly, which has supported

1 over 1300 homeowners to add solar
2 onto their roofs, our Water and Sewer
3 Service Line Protection program,
4 which serves 90,000 households across
5 the City and has saved consumers over
6 \$45 million in repairs, C-PACE or
7 Commercial Property Assessed Clean
8 Energy financing, which has
9 facilitated over \$160 million in
10 energy projects in commercial and
11 industrial buildings across the City
12 in Kensington, Germantown, the Navy
13 Yard, West Philly and Center City and
14 then lastly, Built to Last, our
15 Low-income Home Preservation
16 initiative which in the past year
17 restored 50 homes to safe, healthy
18 and affordable condition, many with
19 electric heat pumps which provide
20 both heating and cooling and solar
21 for long-term affordability and
22 resilience. Built to Last has a
23 current pipeline actually of 317
24 interested qualified homeowners at
25 the moment, so we have a little bit

1 of a wait list.

2 PEA has received an average
3 of \$796,000 annually from the City
4 over the last six fiscal years which
5 has catalyzed an average of \$63.3
6 million per year of clean energy
7 investment over the course of the
8 Energy campaign. That is an 80x
9 return on every dollar the City has
10 invested in PEA.

11 Last summer the federal
12 government passed the Inflation
13 Reduction Act, the IRA. And in doing
14 so, has given Philadelphia the
15 opportunity to bring literally
16 billions of dollars to clean energy
17 projects and initiatives in our City,
18 from installing solar batteries in
19 electric vehicle chargers to
20 retrofitting commercial buildings and
21 converting homes to electric heating
22 and cooling.

23 This is a historic moment in
24 federal funding with the IRA and
25 Bipartisan Infrastructure law, and

1 PEA's goal is to bring \$5 billion to
2 Philadelphia in the form of formula
3 and competitive grants, rebates and
4 tax credits, which are now available
5 not only to for-profit companies and
6 individuals but also to government
7 institutions and nonprofits.

8 PEA has to build critical
9 capacity to be able to manage the
10 increased scale, so we are asking
11 this year for an increase to the
12 City's investment in our work from
13 FY23's City allocation of \$1 million
14 to an FY24 allocation of \$3 million.
15 At that level, City funding would
16 account for 31 percent of PEA's
17 annual budget, an investment in line
18 with the percentage of our budget the
19 City has funded in previous years.
20 And we've raised over \$6 million in
21 other funds for FY24, so we make sure
22 to really leverage every dollar that
23 we receive from the City. I'll leave
24 it there. And if there are
25 additional questions or details

1 anyone would like to get into on any
2 specific programs, I'm happy to share
3 that. Thank you so much.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

5 Thank you. Thank you both for your
6 testimony.

7 I'd like to start with the
8 Energy Authority. I can recall, it
9 seemed like it was yesterday,
10 Inauguration Day, not this past time
11 but the time before, I guess seven
12 years ago, I stood on the stage and
13 we put out this robust plan and
14 strategy said we're going to create
15 10,000 jobs. And they said, that guy
16 Clarke needs to be committed,
17 something's wrong with him, right.
18 But we haven't reached 10,000. But I
19 see you're on a path to achieving a
20 significant amount of that goal.

21 So for that, I want to thank
22 you and your team so much for the
23 work you've done and your
24 contribution to the City and moving
25 the City into the direction for the

1 future. And talk to you about the
2 jobs, and we actually just did a
3 thing with Patty Jackson. I do this
4 thing every week, we call in to Patty
5 where we talk about this opportunity
6 for some of the green job
7 opportunities that are going to be
8 presented, and I want to thank you
9 for your commitment.

10 What could we do other than
11 the requested dollars that you just
12 asked for to move you closer to that
13 1 billion and that 10,000 job
14 commitment that we've made many years
15 ago?

16 MS. SCHAPIRA: Thank you so
17 much for that question. I'm really
18 grateful to be able to do this work
19 the way we've been able to do it,
20 which has been to be sort of laser-
21 focused on moving projects and
22 programs forward. So we're able to
23 take really the strategic guidance of
24 the Office of Sustainability and sort
25 of the Administration's vision of the

1 future for the City of Philadelphia
2 and focus on taking concrete steps
3 forward each year by helping to
4 develop those projects and programs.

5 So we've been incredibly
6 grateful for the support of Council
7 and your support specifically,
8 Council President. I think that
9 financially obviously capacity-
10 building is the magic for us this
11 year. We need to make sure that we
12 have the capabilities to be able to
13 manage the complexity of federal
14 grants that we're receiving and the
15 complexity of the IRA process itself
16 where we'll need to actually apply
17 for grants, we'll need to build
18 coalitions around grants.

19 The Inflation Reduction Act
20 is different from typical federal
21 funding bills. So for example, the
22 Bipartisan Infrastructure law is
23 really a traditional funding bill
24 where all sorts of different federal
25 departments and administrations are

1 putting out specific calls for
2 funding, and you can apply directly
3 to those with IRA. All of them sort
4 of cross silos and require a lot of
5 collaboration not only across
6 different types of departments in a
7 City government for example, but also
8 with nonprofits and community-based
9 organizations with research entities,
10 with the private sector. And so, it
11 really requires some centralized
12 coordination in a way that other
13 federal funding bills have not.

14 And so, both the Office of
15 Sustainability and PEA will need the
16 resources to be able to do that level
17 of coordination in order to draw down
18 that \$5 billion to Philly. And so, I
19 think financially that's incredibly
20 important. We also have really
21 valued the support of Councilmembers
22 in their Districts and citywide of
23 really helping us to communicate our
24 work to key stakeholders to help
25 drive impact with people like the

1 School District with PHA and really
2 helping us to move those projects
3 forward. So we're grateful for any
4 support Council can provide.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

6 Awesome. Thank you.

7 Real quick, if you could talk
8 to me about -- this is for the Office
9 of Sustainability -- can you talk
10 about the buildings? I guess we have
11 this Resiliency initiative, climate
12 resiliency of government buildings.
13 We talked about funding is similar to
14 the FY23 funding. What buildings
15 were we in a position to implement a
16 program on kind of resiliency? The
17 bottom line is what's our strategy
18 for retrofit or our own inventory in
19 the City of Philadelphia?

20 I know we're promoting, and I
21 don't know if Ms. Lankenau or
22 Ms. Schapira would answer that
23 question. It all should start at
24 home, and I know we had a proposal
25 for the School District many years

1 ago, and now they understand the
2 wisdom in our requests. But can you
3 talk about our own buildings?

4 MS. LANKENAU: For sure. For
5 you know us as a City leading by
6 example is incredibly important. We
7 can't ask of others what we don't ask
8 of ourselves. And I think I'm going
9 to pull on Dom McGraw who runs our
10 Municipal Energy Program to give a
11 little more detail about that. Thank
12 you.

13 MR. MCGRAW: Good afternoon.
14 Yes. So we work with various
15 different departments, Department of
16 Public Property are great partners,
17 and we've been really kind of
18 assessing what we can do. A lot of
19 our resiliency work with municipal
20 buildings ends up being how can we
21 reduce the energy capacity so that
22 way backup generators in crucial
23 buildings have the ability to last
24 for longer if we see power outages or
25 transformer issues in the area.

1 That's been a key issue for us.

2 We've noticed it in a lot of our
3 health centers.

4 So we're working right now
5 with our health centers to really
6 kind of look and analyze how the
7 buildings are performing over time,
8 and then we'll really know what
9 systems need upgrades and repairs.

10 So that's through our Building
11 Monitoring program that we're
12 actually working on now.

13 And we are working on an RFP
14 or Guaranteed Energy Savings Act
15 project to go after our four large
16 downtown buildings and then also our
17 health centers as well, them being
18 crucial facilities within
19 neighborhoods.

20 MS. SCHAPIRA: And I can just
21 jump in to add to Dom's note, that
22 Dom's team creates a list of all of
23 the potential projects across all
24 City buildings, and then we sort of
25 go through them methodically to scope

1 them and to put together projects
2 that we think can pay for themselves.

3 All of our energy efficiency
4 projects have been -- all of our GESA
5 projects have been budget-neutral.

6 And so, we have to sort of put the
7 right combination together. So this
8 Round 2 of the Quadplex plus the
9 health centers is coming up next.

10 And part of the IRA process will be
11 to continue scoping those projects so
12 that as grant opportunities come up,
13 incentive opportunities come up, we
14 can jump on those quickly and get
15 those subsidies to make them work.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

17 One last question. I want to ask you
18 about something that we talked about
19 before. We were kind of looking at
20 every imaginable opportunity and
21 there was this discussion about
22 utilizing our river to generate
23 power, hydroelectricity device of
24 some sort. And I know people are all
25 over it. Did that ever make any

1 sense and did it go beyond just a
2 conversation?

3 MS. SCHAPIRA: Yeah. In
4 20 -- aww, man, what year was that.
5 In 2019 we did an RFI -- 2018, for
6 power utilizing our waterways. At
7 the time the only project that made
8 financial sense was -- at Flat Rock
9 Dam in Manayunk, there is a dam
10 safety project happening. And when
11 that project is complete, there will
12 be sort of the right-sized hole,
13 which is this loose-way and then
14 through this loose-way you could put
15 about 1 megawatt hydrogenerator right
16 there, and that is a project we are
17 still hoping to do.

18 They started dam construction
19 on the safety project this year. So
20 fingers crossed that'll get done soon
21 and we can take a closer look at
22 that. We have a feasibility study
23 from that as well, so we're close to
24 being able to go forward. The other
25 types of projects like run-of-river

1 type or title, you know, energy,
2 those kinds of things, at the time
3 we're not ready for prime time. But
4 there's been a lot of changes in that
5 technology, so it's something that we
6 continue to look at because I think
7 we've really missed a lot of
8 opportunities to mine the existing
9 resources that we have in
10 Philadelphia.

11 One of those big
12 opportunities is with the Water
13 Department. They have a
14 co-generation plant at one of the
15 treatment plants, and there's a ton
16 of potential to make that even more
17 efficient, produce more renewable
18 thermal credits or renewable natural
19 gas or more electricity. There's a
20 lot of options there. And across the
21 Water Department footprint, there
22 continues to be more ways to mine the
23 resources that we already have in the
24 City. So those are definitely things
25 we're continuing to look at.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

2 Okay. All right. Well, I'm sure
3 that Majority Leader Jones will get
4 you over the hurdle, so to speak, on
5 that waterway Manayunk project.

6 Figure out a way to get that 1
7 megawatt device, pump out energy so
8 we can utilize our assets to benefit
9 the citizens. Thank you. Thank you
10 all.

11 Chair recognizes the
12 aforementioned Councilman Jones.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
14 Mr. President. And I remember the
15 inauguration of the Energy Authority.
16 I remember you making sure that that
17 was a priority. I remember the
18 opening of the Office of
19 Sustainability.

20 And when I sit back and
21 listen to some of the progress that
22 has been made, I am further the
23 belief of what we do grind slow, but
24 it grinds fine and eventually things
25 actually catch on and actually make

1 progress. So you have restored my
2 faith in new initiatives and that
3 they can actually grow and mature and
4 make a difference.

5 My question, and I'm excited
6 about the Manayunk co-generation
7 opportunity there, I want to do
8 whatever I can do to get that dam
9 funded and moved into the right
10 direction. But I'm intrigued about
11 the Water Department.

12 When we look at the Water
13 Department, and this was actually
14 brought up by now Mayor Jim Kenney,
15 that there was an opportunity to
16 place solar panels on the roofs of
17 our treatment plants because they're
18 flat, exposed to the sunlight. And
19 the fact that electricity is the
20 number one expense involved in
21 processing our water, was there any
22 movement on that concept or idea?

23 MS. LANKENAU: Emily, do you
24 want to take that? I know there is a
25 solar array, but I think you're more

1 familiar with the status.

2 MS. SCHAPIRA: Yes, totally.

3 I'm happy to take that. So thank you
4 so much for that question,
5 Councilman. We love to talk about
6 rooftop solar. So in Philadelphia,
7 rooftop solar has had a hard time on
8 the commercial side because of the
9 way we buy electricity.

10 So as a City through Liz's
11 office, Dom McGraw's team is
12 responsible for purchasing
13 electricity and they have a very
14 sophisticated operation that buys
15 extremely well. So for commercial
16 buildings or government buildings
17 like those at the Water Department,
18 we're paying a pretty low rate for
19 that electricity. And so, solar
20 really has to compete, right, in
21 order to make it more affordable.
22 And it's only in very recent years
23 that solar has become affordable
24 enough to be sort of at parity with
25 those electricity prices.

1 So a few years ago we looked
2 at more rooftop solar for government
3 buildings, couldn't make it pencil.
4 But we're ready to do it again. So
5 that's something that Dom's team and
6 our team has been working on to put
7 together an RFP for something like a
8 Master Services Agreement where we
9 could contract to look at all City
10 rooftops that are in good enough
11 condition to include solar on them
12 and go forward as we have projects
13 that can pencil.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Well, I'm
15 looking forward to that because our
16 electricity is affordable today and
17 does not mean it'll be affordable
18 tomorrow. And we should plan while
19 we can, so that if something tragic
20 happens, that we're ready for it and
21 moving forward. So thank you for
22 that update.

23 So maybe 10 years ago I
24 remember everybody had an energy
25 conservation package they wanted to

1 sell the City of Philadelphia. We
2 will come in and retrofit your
3 building and we will get our money
4 back based on the cost savings that
5 we were able -- so fast-forward to
6 now. Have any of those concepts
7 proven fruitful? And if so, how?
8 And if so, how much?

9 MS. SCHAPIRA: Liz, I can
10 start there and maybe I'll pass it
11 back to you guys also.

12 MS. LANKENAU: Okay.

13 MS. SCHAPIRA: So I remember
14 all of those meetings. There was
15 like a rush maybe five years ago, six
16 years ago where all these
17 infrastructure finance companies were
18 coming in and saying, we'll basically
19 pay for all the repairs and
20 essentially we'll lease back your
21 building to you, and that's how
22 you'll pay for those repairs and
23 it'll pay back from energy savings.

24 And at the time, the City did
25 not think that was a good idea. The

1 idea of sort of public buildings
2 being leased in this strange way made
3 everybody uncomfortable. So instead
4 what we did was to follow sort of the
5 strict protocol of the state
6 Guaranteed Energy Savings Act, really
7 similar idea but instead we finance
8 it just through a regular municipal
9 or green bond.

10 And so, that's what we did
11 with the first Quadplex project, with
12 the Art Museum project that we
13 finished a couple years ago. That's
14 what we're doing with the Streetlight
15 Improvement project as well. And so,
16 we designed the project so that the
17 energy savings and the maintenance
18 savings pay for the upfront cost of
19 doing the work, and we issue a bond
20 so the energy savings will more than
21 pay for the debt service.

22 In the case of streetlighting
23 for example, that project has about a
24 nine-year payback, so we'll be
25 getting positive cash flow from Day 1

1 on that project. And we'll have that
2 completely paid off pretty quickly.
3 So it works is the answer. I think
4 the complex financing structure that
5 a lot of those guys were pitching
6 wasn't one that was very appealing to
7 either the City or the School
8 District, but I think all of that
9 continues to evolve. And there are
10 other options besides doing municipal
11 bonds. And especially in a high
12 interest rate environment, some of
13 those options might get more
14 appealing as we keep going.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: And since
16 I'm going retro, at one point in time
17 everybody wanted that. What was that
18 sexy energy rating that everybody
19 wanted? It was a LEED, I think it
20 might have been. And looking back on
21 that, everybody wanted to build to
22 that level of energy efficiency. To
23 what degree have we retro-engineered
24 some of our buildings to pass a LEED
25 standard?

1 MS. LANKENAU: Sure, I can
2 take that one. So we do have a LEED
3 ordinance and the Office of
4 Sustainability is working with the
5 departments to really message how to
6 change from going from LEED silver to
7 LEED gold and what that means. And
8 so, everyone here understands that.
9 Our staff is hosting trainings to get
10 departments up to speed.

11 And we're working with
12 Rebuild and the OEO and U.S Green
13 Building Council to host Green
14 Building 101s to really introduce
15 LEED training for contractors, and
16 we're focusing a lot on minority
17 contractors to get them into the
18 field. So that is something that has
19 been a recent change and something we
20 are working on in our office.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: So I guess
22 a lot of the LEED issue stopped being
23 so unique because of the building
24 materials. Everybody was trying to
25 build to that standard. We have

1 supplying materials that would help
2 that process.

3 My final question is, there
4 was a time when PECO offered
5 discounts for reduction of uses
6 during peak hours. Is that still a
7 thing and can we kind of work with
8 them to kind of reduce our electric
9 bill based on reductions during their
10 peak usage hours?

11 MS. LANKENAU: Sure. I'd
12 love for Dom McGraw in our office to
13 answer for municipal buildings.

14 MR. MCGRAW: Yeah. So
15 there's a few things at play. So
16 PECO offers rebates whenever we
17 install new lighting fixtures or
18 other things, so we get rebates for
19 those. We also have there's a peak
20 load contribution charge that comes
21 on our PECO bill. So we work with
22 all departments and we're alerted by
23 one of our contractors when we should
24 be reducing in order to lower that
25 cost, and that will reflect in the

1 following years, so the following
2 summer. If we reduce this summer,
3 we'll see the reflection next summer.

4 And then lastly, we have our
5 Demand Response Program, which is
6 hosted by our grid operator PJM. So
7 instead of them turning on dirty
8 peaker plants in case of emergency,
9 they'll instead pay us to just
10 reduce. And so, we're heavily
11 involved in that program and we work
12 with our partners. The Water
13 Department's been great partners in
14 there, DPP and others. So it's been
15 super helpful moving that forward.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: And just
17 between us, and no one's listening,
18 is there somebody that adjusts our
19 thermostat in the MSB and City Hall
20 and kind of tortures us a little bit
21 to save energy; is that true?

22 MR. MCGRAW: We're not trying
23 to torture anyone, no. We're trying
24 our best to make sure all the systems
25 are functioning appropriately, but we

1 have a building monitoring program
2 that kind of analyzes all that to
3 make sure that all the temperatures
4 are reflecting the way it's supposed
5 to and the systems are working
6 appropriately.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.
8 I'm going to take that as a yes. All
9 right.

10 Thank you, Mr. President.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
12 Thank you, and thank you for that
13 question. I get it.

14 Chair recognizes Councilwoman
15 Gilmore Richardson.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
17 RICHARDSON: Okay. There we are.
18 Thank you so much, Council President.

19 And thank you to the Office
20 of Sustainability. Thank you to PEA
21 for all of your great work, for your
22 collaboration. I think having you
23 all together should be the standard
24 for Budget hearings moving forward.
25 But I truly appreciate the work that

1 you all have done.

2 And this is really, you know,
3 CP was talking about seven or eight
4 years ago when everyone stood on the
5 stage and Council talked about
6 creating 10,000 jobs and you all have
7 certainly been a significant portion
8 of the jobs that have been created
9 thus far. And I'm encouraged because
10 they're primarily green jobs, and we
11 know that we have to figure out what
12 the transition continues to look
13 like. So I'm just really, really
14 encouraged by the work that you all
15 have done.

16 But it's also full circle for
17 me because more than eight years ago
18 I worked on the legislation to make
19 the Office of Sustainability a
20 permanent part of City government
21 when I was a legislative aide for
22 Councilmember Blondell Reynolds
23 Brown, who was truly one of our
24 visionaries around the environment,
25 sustainability and climate change.

1 So I have to start there by giving
2 thanks for all of your work, but just
3 how full circle this moment truly is
4 and how much I appreciate you all.

5 I want to start with the
6 Office of Sustainability because I
7 have talked about this issue even on
8 the first day of Budget hearings
9 relative to staffing. We expect and
10 anticipate a large output of work
11 product from you all, but we
12 recognize that you can only do that
13 with human capital. And we also
14 recognize that if we're looking at
15 our peer cities across the country,
16 that our staffing levels don't always
17 match up with the same level of
18 staffing output that they have.

19 And so, I wanted to start
20 with OS and ask you how many of your
21 staff are grant-funded versus
22 temporarily-funded? Meaning, how
23 many are under Class 100 from the
24 City, how many are through grants or
25 other special projects?

1 MS. LANKENAU: Sure. Thank
2 you for that question. So we have 20
3 through the General Fund and then we
4 have an additional 4. So we have 2
5 employees through a settlement
6 agreement that sort of passed through
7 funding through PEA in our Energy
8 Office. We have 1 additional staffer
9 through a William Penn Foundation
10 place-based grant and then we have
11 1 -- so the quick answer is we have 4
12 more in addition to the 20, and then
13 the last one is a Merck-funded
14 employee with our Food Policy
15 Advisory Council group.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
17 RICHARDSON: Okay. And if you could
18 just give us the breakdown so that we
19 can look at the percentages. Is it
20 50 percent or 30 percent of your
21 staff is grant-funded, whatever it
22 is? But we want to look at the
23 breakdown so we understand that
24 there.

25 Councilmember Jones talked

1 about sort of the preparation,
2 particularly for our City buildings
3 around the updated LEED ordinance.
4 And so, we've upgraded the LEED
5 ordinance so that we can upgrade our
6 City facilities and infrastructure as
7 well. But how are you all working to
8 sort of directly train and prepare
9 the staff sort of in every City
10 department? Because what I've found
11 is over the years any question that
12 comes up around the environment,
13 sustainability, climate change,
14 climate, period, all roads and all
15 fingers are pointed back to the
16 Office of Sustainability. But you
17 know in order to effectively do this
18 work, that everyone has to have a
19 stake in caring about this issue
20 across departments.

21 So how are you all
22 interfacing with other departments
23 and training their team members
24 around the upcoming projects for the
25 upgrades that will happen as a result

1 of the updated LEED ordinance?

2 MS. LANKENAU: Sure. We
3 don't have a dedicated person to do
4 the training as a thing by itself
5 right now. But I would like to have
6 Dom McGraw pop back on to talk a
7 little bit about how his office has
8 worked with other departments.

9 MR. MCGRAW: Absolutely,
10 yeah. So we have taken over our
11 management of the LEED portal, the
12 USGBC. And so, we manage all the
13 staff throughout the City that are
14 signed up through that. So we have
15 about over 70 signed up through this
16 portal. We have over 25 staff
17 throughout City government that are
18 LEED-credentialed, and we're hoping
19 to --

20 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

21 RICHARDSON: Can I ask you --

22 MR. MCGRAW: Yeah.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

24 RICHARDSON: I apologize for the
25 interruption. But you said you have

1 25 team members who have LEED
2 credentials. But can you break that
3 down by department because 70 people,
4 it sounds really good which is great,
5 it's many more than we had years ago,
6 but we have a total sort of
7 complement of thousands of employees,
8 so just for reference.

9 MR. MCGRAW: Yeah, I can get
10 that back to you. But that is beyond
11 OS. That's full City, and hopefully
12 we'll get more as we go. And so, we
13 are conducting trainings with our
14 partners at Green Building United,
15 and we've been doing them semi-
16 regularly and hope to do more and
17 trying to get more involved. But
18 we've been seeing a lot of
19 departments, DBP, specifically,
20 Rebuild as well, very interested in
21 these trainings and being involved.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

23 RICHARDSON: Okay. That'll be great.
24 If you could just keep us updated and
25 sort of tell us where the LEED

1 professionals are. I imagine there's
2 probably a lot in Water and in some
3 of the other departments and more
4 concentrated. But if you could just
5 tell us where they are and what they
6 do and sort of their role in this
7 process, that'll be helpful.

8 We know that typically you
9 all are always looking for other
10 opportunities. I heard Emily talk
11 about how every dollar that's
12 invested, it's like an 80, you know,
13 full giveback for the City of
14 Philadelphia. But what additional
15 resources have you all assigned to
16 compete for any of the IRA-funding
17 opportunities? And as a result of
18 that, is there any work that's
19 suffering because of it or is it
20 something that we need to sort of
21 look at through this process?

22 I really want to understand
23 that. And I've asked most of the
24 City departments about the federal
25 funding, even PPR with this new

1 announcement around the \$1 billion
2 for trees and increased tree canopy
3 and trying to eliminate urban heat
4 islands. But you all know that
5 there's a ton of opportunities that
6 will come on board. So how are you
7 all working to go after those
8 opportunities?

9 And again, going back to that
10 original question around staffing,
11 what is sort of necessary to really
12 ensure that we can meet this moment
13 and utilize this moment to help us
14 meet the goals that this Council has
15 laid out seven or eight years ago?

16 MS. LANKENAU: Sure. Yeah,
17 thank you for that question. Right
18 now we're a very scrappy team and do
19 what we can with the resources we
20 have. And -- do I continue?

21 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

22 RICHARDSON: (Nodded affirmatively).

23 MS. LANKENAU: Yep. Okay.
24 So right now for instance with the
25 Environmental Justice to Justice

1 grant, I think we have about four
2 staffers working on that together,
3 I've worked very, very hard. One of
4 the things that I want to look into
5 in the sort of next budget cycle is
6 doing a strategic plan for our group
7 so that we really understand all of
8 those needs.

9 In addition to that, we have
10 money set aside being processed
11 through the Energy Authority both for
12 the Energy Authority to look at a
13 strategy around the infrastructure or
14 the Inflation Reduction Act and we
15 too are going to put out for an RFP
16 to get some technical advice on the
17 energy burden alleviation work and
18 all of the money that we can get
19 through the IRA.

20 So with that for the City
21 side and that RFP, we are looking at
22 grant management support, but we
23 expect that there's just going to be
24 a lot of money. It's a \$370 billion
25 project, 5 billion coming here. So

1 we're going to do what we can, but
2 we're in a strategy mode right now.

3 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

4 RICHARDSON: Okay. That'll be great.
5 Well, you walked right into my next
6 question. I'll circle back on the
7 next round because I did hear the
8 bell. But I do want to get in-depth
9 more around the strategy and the
10 coordination across City departments,
11 because I do again fear that because
12 sometimes we work in silos, we all
13 don't work together to ensure that
14 we're maximizing these opportunities.
15 So I'll circle back on the second
16 round.

17 Thank you, Council President.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

19 Thank you, Councilwoman.

20 Chair recognizes Councilman
21 Johnson.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank
23 you, Council President.

24 Hello, everyone.

25 MS. LANKENAU: Hello.

1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I just
2 had a couple questions first for the
3 Energy Authority and then for the
4 Office of Sustainability.

5 For the Energy Authority, I
6 know some time ago there was a plan
7 put forward to update LED lights in
8 certain parts of the City of
9 Philadelphia, and I just want to get
10 an update on that particular project.
11 Particularly with all the crime and
12 violence that's going on, I think
13 highlighted areas will contribute
14 toward addressing some of our public
15 safety needs.

16 And then next for the Office
17 of Sustainability, we recently had a
18 meeting with EPA, your office, and
19 other City agencies around coming up
20 with a strategy and plan for the
21 Eastwick part of my District and a
22 flood mitigation plan. I just want
23 to get an idea of what your office is
24 going to be doing for that particular
25 project, but also just in general

1 regarding flood mitigation as we move
2 forward?

3 MR. LANKENAU: So, Emily, do
4 you want to take the first one?

5 MS. SCHAPIRA: Yeah, sure.
6 So thank you so much, Councilman, for
7 that question. I love talking about
8 the Streetlighting project, so that's
9 been moving forward rapidly. So one
10 of the great things about energy
11 projects is that we have the
12 Guarantee Energy Savings Act, which
13 allows us to do a different kind of
14 procurement than you normally do.
15 You got to pick your partner and then
16 they go and complete an investment-
17 grade audit.

18 So we actually have audited
19 every single light fixture that is
20 outside in Philadelphia over the last
21 few months. That was 133,000
22 fixtures. So a human being has
23 visited each one of them. We have
24 details on what's going on at every
25 single one and a really cool set of

1 data where we've been able to overlay
2 nighttime crime, Vision Zero issues,
3 pedestrian and vehicle crashes as
4 well as other demographic information
5 so we can really prioritize which
6 parts of the City go first in the
7 construction schedule.

8 We are very close to being
9 done all the way with the investment-
10 grade audit. We're getting ready to
11 issue a bond for that project. So
12 once we receive the final proposal
13 from Ameresco, our partner on this,
14 we will be able to go forward with
15 ordering equipment and getting ready
16 to start construction. So our
17 expectation is that construction will
18 begin this summer, probably late
19 June, early July. And it has a
20 24-month construction schedule which
21 will be in 8 to 10 different
22 neighborhoods at a time, so we'll
23 have crews working in multiple
24 places.

25 Our website will have a

1 two-week look ahead on construction
2 so everybody will know when it's
3 coming to their community. We're
4 replacing every single roadway light,
5 every single alleyway light in the
6 City. And then we're hoping to also
7 be able to do pedestrian scale
8 lighting on commercial corridors as
9 well, but it'll depend on the final
10 pricing, whether we have enough money
11 to do it budget neutrally.

12 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And how
13 will we prioritize high crime areas?

14 MS. SCHAPIRA: Yeah. That
15 formula of the overlay of how does
16 this intersect with high crime, high
17 Vision Zero impacts and then sort of
18 equity index as well, so that's how
19 we'll prioritize. And if there are
20 particular areas in any District
21 where people know there are problems
22 specifically that you want us to
23 focus on, let us know.

24 We're also overlaying the
25 DA's 57 blocks data as well just to

1 make sure that we're really focusing
2 on those areas where it might
3 particularly help nighttime crime.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And in
5 terms of the Built to Last, Solarize
6 Philly program, how are we going
7 about advertising and educating
8 individuals that this is the best way
9 to have an energy-efficient home?

10 I had a good friend, actually
11 Senator Williams. We watched him get
12 his house at one time solarized, so
13 to speak, right, and then we saw the
14 impact on -- I'm just telling this
15 guy's business, but it's for a good
16 cause. We watched the impact on the
17 energy bill basically go down, right.
18 And he would use it as a teaching
19 moment talking about the importance
20 of solarizing your house and so forth
21 and making it more energy efficient.
22 How are we advertising to get more
23 people involved in that type of --

24 MS. SCHAPIRA: I love that.
25 So our Built to Last program is

1 low-income home restoration, so it's
2 for folks under 60 of Area Median
3 Income. So that is a program that
4 coordinates all of the existing home
5 repair programs, and then we layer
6 onto it some health measures, so like
7 mold remediation, anything where
8 there's lead or asbestos or that kind
9 of stuff in the home.

10 And then additionally, we do
11 pest-remediation, electrification
12 where it's appropriate to do heat
13 pumps for heating and cooling, and
14 then we add solar for exactly as
15 you're saying that long-term
16 affordability. Solar keeps you from
17 having to have an electric bill
18 basically and now that provides both
19 your heating and your cooling.

20 So that program's been going
21 great. We have done 50 homes so far.
22 We have 317 homes in the pipeline at
23 the moment. We haven't advertised
24 that a whole lot because we don't
25 have enough funding to meet the need,

1 so we're continuing to fundraise
2 there. And the state's Whole Home
3 Repair program has really given us a
4 big boost this year. So this year's
5 funding gives us enough to do about
6 270 additional homes. And then we
7 have additional funding from the
8 federal government to get us up to
9 about 400, so we're hoping to
10 continue to advocate at the state
11 level for more funding for that
12 program.

13 And then Solarize Philly is
14 always open, solarizephilly.org.
15 This is Earth Week, so this is a good
16 time to be thinking about it. We do
17 all sorts of programming outreach to
18 community organizations. We do a
19 little bit of online advertising, but
20 not a lot since we don't have the
21 budget to do a ton. But our
22 installers are the ones that are
23 really out there pushing.

24 So in the last year we did
25 about 500 homes through our Lease

1 program, which is a fantastic program
2 for low-income folks or people with
3 less-than-great credit because
4 there's no upfront cost. It's
5 literally a 20-year lease and it's
6 cheaper than PECO, so a great deal.

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Good.

8 Okay. Well, thank you very much.

9 And, Elizabeth, Office of
10 Sustainability.

11 MS. LANKENAU: Yes, Eastwick,
12 it was great. I did a field view
13 with Corinne on our team last week
14 and Justina, her strategist in the
15 group. And just such great work that
16 they're doing, and I was very
17 grateful to see a lot of this on the
18 ground. And also, really want to
19 thank you for convening the meeting
20 with the federal and state partners a
21 couple weeks ago because the analysis
22 paralysis, and it's a lot of
23 important planning work that's going
24 on, but now it's really time to see
25 what we can do to start doing short-

1 term interventions to get to those
2 bigger long-term solutions, so
3 Corrine has been working to get the
4 City, state, federal interagency
5 meetings on the books and ready to
6 go.

7 There have been community
8 days that they're doing to really not
9 only just focusing on the flooding,
10 but really all of the City services
11 that are needed in this community
12 from streetlight repair, trees that
13 are falling down, all kinds of
14 things, making sure that the
15 community is connected to all of our
16 City resources in a very fine touch
17 kind of way because we do know that
18 sometimes our City services can be a
19 little hard to navigate, so that I
20 think has been a real value added to
21 a lot of this process. So there's
22 even more. Again, we're waiting for
23 the announcement this summer on book
24 funding, which is something that will
25 really help move real solutions, so

1 there's a lot going on in Eastwick,
2 very exciting.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I just
4 want to thank you and your team as
5 well as the Energy agency as well for
6 your hard work regarding making the
7 City of Philadelphia a more
8 sustainable city. So thank you very
9 much for your testimony.

10 MS. LANKENAU: Thank you.

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: You're
12 welcome.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
14 Thank you, Councilman.

15 Chair recognizes Councilwoman
16 Gilmore Richardson for Round 2.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
18 RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you so
19 much, Council President. And I also
20 want to thank Councilmember Johnson
21 and his team for all the work that
22 they've done in his District around
23 the Eastwick issue. We've had the
24 great fortune, opportunity to work
25 with the partners in EPA around

1 ensuring that there is a really
2 robust community participation, an
3 opportunity for feedback,
4 particularly from the federal
5 government perspective.

6 And so, I'm just appreciative
7 of all the work Councilmember Johnson
8 continues to do on the ground and
9 really incorporating community and
10 happy that we're able to work with
11 our partners at LGAC at the EPA to
12 ensure that's happening in a way that
13 is culturally competent.

14 I wanted to just quickly
15 circle back to the last question I
16 had around sort of strategy and
17 coordination for the IRA funding and
18 how you all are sort of interfacing
19 with other departments?

20 MS. LANKENAU: Sure. One of
21 the great things I learned when I was
22 at OTIS was the RACI model, and RACI
23 is Responsible, Accountable,
24 Consulted and Informed. And I think
25 with a lot of these grand

1 opportunities for our office it's
2 going to be what departments do we
3 support, that we're helping them with
4 language to align the operating
5 departments' goals with these
6 sustainability goals, where is it
7 that we're truly the responsible
8 party to execute.

9 So to me, a lot of the
10 strategy that is coming up is
11 thinking about the different sources
12 of funding that are out there and how
13 do we make more with less. We know
14 government life is full of choices
15 here and we just have to be smart
16 about how we pool them and not being
17 siloed in each of our own departments
18 and bringing the resources, Water,
19 Public Property, Parks & Rec,
20 Streets, the whole group, and then of
21 course the Energy Authority and how
22 they support us and all of our work.

23 So there is going to be some
24 strategy building. I think granted
25 the Administration is -- regardless

1 of the department but certainly ours
2 is going to be a challenge because a
3 lot of these federal programs have a
4 lot of paperwork upfront, they have a
5 lot of paperwork to close out. The
6 interim reporting I feel like is
7 something people doing the work
8 really need to do. Grant work is
9 specialized work, so I think we have
10 to give some thought about the
11 strategy about how we manage.

12 MS. SCHAPIRA: And I think
13 this maybe highlights kind of the
14 exact value of having an authority in
15 addition to having an internal
16 department in this City. With IRA,
17 there are four different kinds of
18 funding. Some is formula funding
19 that'll come straight into the City
20 through most likely the Office of
21 Sustainability, so they'll be able to
22 sort of drive that type of funding.
23 Some of it is competitive grants as
24 Liz mentioned, which is going to
25 require a lot of support to different

1 departments, but also to the School
2 District, which we're working on
3 providing, also to other entities
4 across the City there's opportunities
5 where only a nonprofit can apply.
6 And so, there's a lot of coordination
7 externally that has to happen. Do
8 you have a question --

9 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

10 RICHARDSON: So do you all have a
11 grant administrator?

12 MS. SCHAPIRA: No. We're
13 hoping to get that in this budget.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

15 RICHARDSON: Okay. So you don't have
16 anyone that sort of oversees and just
17 is responsible for that work?

18 MS. SCHAPIRA: No. At PEA
19 we've all become grant writers and
20 grant administrators over the last
21 year and a half. And so, our Senior
22 Operations Manager Maxine Dixon; and
23 our Director of Development, Shonique
24 Banks and myself and Katie and every
25 other staff person at PEA really has

1 contributed to managing that, and we
2 have a number of federal grants now
3 that we've been managing already. So
4 it's a lot of work, and I think we've
5 really operated on a shoestring to
6 really try to make every dollar that
7 the City's given us count and go
8 towards the most impact.

9 And so, now I think we've
10 really reached that inflection point
11 where we need to create the support
12 staff to actually get it done. And I
13 think that's a big thing with IRA,
14 right. I mean as Liz said, it takes
15 a whole lot of work to just apply for
16 the grants, much less to administer
17 them and report in on them.

18 And the grants are only a
19 third of the money that's available,
20 less than a third of the money that's
21 available through the IRA. The other
22 components are rebates and tax
23 credits. And for the very first
24 time, now cities and school districts
25 and nonprofits will be able to get

1 direct pay of tax credits so they can
2 take advantage of these incentives as
3 well as private sector folks. So
4 that creates a whole new set of
5 things that people need to learn
6 about and know how to incorporate
7 into projects. And so, that's
8 something we'll be able to facilitate
9 for the City and the School District.

10 And then with rebates, the
11 states each administer those rebates
12 in different ways. And so, we're
13 working closely with the State
14 Department of Environmental
15 Protection and other folks at the
16 Governor's Office to make sure that
17 Philly is able to get a good share of
18 those rebates and that they're
19 administered in a way that will be
20 accessible for not just higher income
21 folks but also low-income folks who
22 want to be able to put things like
23 heat pumps in their homes.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

25 RICHARDSON: Sure, sure. I heard the

1 bell and I will be respectful of the
2 clock, and I don't want to belabor
3 and come back for a third round. But
4 I just want to put these couple of
5 things on the record, if I may.

6 The first is around, one,
7 thank you for that work and for all
8 of you becoming grant experts, but I
9 do think it's important for someone
10 to be centrally poised to deal with
11 and handle all that we know is coming
12 down the pipeline. So I just wanted
13 to say that.

14 But in addition to that, I
15 have to give you kudos not only for
16 Built to Last, for Solar CTE and
17 really around creating that. And I
18 talked about this at the beginning,
19 the local Clean Energy Workforce
20 that's really reflective of the City
21 of Philadelphia, and I wish we had
22 just a little bit more to sort of
23 parse that out, but you all have just
24 done a stellar job around workforce
25 and making sure it looks like our

1 City.

2 I just wanted to leave this,
3 and if you could just answer this.
4 For Built to Last, I think you talked
5 about restoring 50 homes thus far.
6 What lessons have you all learned
7 during that time and how are you all
8 working to try to get us back to the
9 200 homes by FY24, and if you think
10 there's any other opportunities that
11 may exist for support for that
12 program? And that'll be my last
13 question. I'll submit the rest for
14 the record. Thank you.

15 MS. SCHAPIRA: Thank you so
16 much for that. Yeah, Built to Last
17 has taught us so many things. The
18 model is that we provide almost an
19 administrative backbone to coordinate
20 across now seven different home
21 repair programs. Some are City.
22 Some are nonprofit. Some are
23 utility-based programs. And so,
24 putting all of those together to try
25 to work in the right order and solve

1 each other's problems before they get
2 to the next program so that there are
3 no deferrals or denials, you know,
4 making sure everybody has case
5 management so it's not confusing for
6 the homeowners of who's coming when
7 for what, moving it along quickly.
8 So typically, it takes years, if
9 ever, for folks to get this combo of
10 services.

11 In the first round, we were
12 able to get construction finished in
13 about 20 weeks per home which sounds
14 like a lot, but I think feels fast to
15 most of our homeowners. That's the
16 feedback we've gotten. And I think
17 overall the feedback was
18 overwhelmingly positive from every
19 single homeowner. They were
20 incredibly excited about the work
21 we're able to do, everything from
22 repairing draftiness in homes which
23 really we don't realize how much that
24 impacts people's quality of life, but
25 it was such a big deal for folks --

1 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

2 RICHARDSON: It helps. Right, it
3 helps particularly in these old
4 homes. My house is two years from
5 100 years old. I get it. It
6 certainly does help. And I remember
7 meeting that gentleman in the 7th
8 Council District, just so excited
9 about the work that you all were able
10 to do. So apologies for cutting you
11 off. But you are correct, every
12 little bit helps.

13 MS. SCHAPIRA: Thank you.
14 Yeah. And I'll give one other
15 example. One of our homeowners Nancy
16 Carrasquillo in Kensington said she
17 was having health issues because her
18 chimney had collapsed, she didn't
19 have proper ventilation in the home
20 and there were all sorts of issues
21 from years of roof leaks and all
22 sorts of other things. And she was
23 lucky to get Basic Systems Repair to
24 come in and do her roof which was
25 incredibly helpful, but of course

1 there's still other health problems
2 in the home. And so, Built to Last
3 was able to follow on to that and
4 come in and complete the rest of the
5 work that needed to be done there.

6 And not only is she healthy now and
7 not having those problems anymore,
8 but she has heating and cooling, as
9 she likes to say, and solar to pay
10 for that. So she's really excited.
11 I think that's been the experience.

12 We're on track to get to the
13 400 homes. That is our target for
14 the next couple of years. We have --
15 I think most of the funding that we
16 need we're still waiting on a little
17 bit of foundation support that I
18 think we hope to get. And we'll just
19 keep fundraising. I think that's the
20 only thing that we can do.

21 Any advocacy for the State's
22 Whole Home Repair program is greatly
23 appreciated, you know, any other
24 resources that can be identified.
25 We're meeting with folks from both of

1 our Senators' Offices to talk about a
2 Federal Whole Home Repair program so
3 we can funnel even more money. Any
4 changes to how the weatherization
5 program can be implemented in
6 Pennsylvania to make it more
7 expansive with higher income
8 guidelines with more budget per home,
9 all of that's really helpful. So
10 it's a little bit in the details and
11 in the weeds there, but I think
12 that's how these things go.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

14 RICHARDSON: Sure. Well, thank you.
15 Thank you very much. I will submit
16 the remainder of my questions for the
17 record.

18 And just one last quick --
19 Liz, do you all have a grants
20 administrator? Is it that you all
21 have it and they don't?

22 MS. LANKENAU: We do not,
23 correct.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

25 RICHARDSON: Oh, okay. All right.

1 Thank you.

2 Thank you, Council President.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

4 Thank you, Councilwoman.

5 All right. So any other
6 questions for these witnesses?

7 (No response.)

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

9 There being none, thank you all for
10 your testimony. As always, please be
11 prepared for callbacks. Well, thank
12 you for your work. We look forward
13 to continuing the awesome, awesome
14 opportunities that are presented out
15 there (muted) --

16 THE CLERK: Council
17 President, you're on mute.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

19 You say I'm on mute. Yeah, thank
20 you. That concludes our testimony
21 for PEA and Office of Sustainability.

22 Next up is the Free Library
23 of Philadelphia. Mr. McDermott, our
24 witness to testify is?

25 THE CLERK: Our next witness

1 is Kelly Richards, President and
2 Director of the Free Library.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
4 Good afternoon, sir. How are you
5 doing?

6 MR. RICHARDS: Doing great.
7 Good afternoon, President Clarke and
8 members of City Council.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
10 All right. Please --

11 MR. RICHARDS: I'm Kelly
12 Richards, President and Director of
13 the Free Library. And joining me
14 today is Sade Olanipekun, she's the
15 Chair of the Board of Trustees;
16 Priscilla Suero, our First Deputy;
17 Darren Cottman, our Chief Operating
18 Officer; and Donyale Henderson, our
19 HR Manager 3. Pleased to provide
20 testimony on the Free Library's
21 Fiscal Year 2024 operating budget.
22 I'll be brief.

23 Our department --

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
25 Mr. Kelly?

1 MR. RICHARDS: Yes. Yes,
2 sir.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
4 Hold on one second. Now, I know the
5 screen is small. I'm sorry. I want
6 to divert for a second. It looks
7 like I see a Dallas Cowboy in the
8 background.

9 (Laughter.)

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I
11 mean -- oh, okay.

12 MR. RICHARDS: All right.
13 We've been working on him.

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: That was
15 bold --

16 (Laughter.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

18 RICHARDSON: Wait --

19 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: That was
20 bold, coming and asking for support.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

22 RICHARDSON: And you know, I was
23 looking back there too, CP. I was
24 actually looking at the paddle to the
25 left, and then I saw the --

1 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

2 Give him a pass. For the record,
3 Council Pres, we're all Eagles fans
4 over here, straight Eagles. Look at
5 my board.

6 MR. RICHARDS: Yeah. We've
7 been working on him. We have,
8 President Clarke.

9 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:
10 He made a mistake. It's all right.
11 He's going to be all right.

12 MR. RICHARDS: That's not
13 even his.

14 MR. COTTMAN: We're a
15 welcoming, diverse and including
16 organization.

17 (Laughter.)

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
19 Okay. I just, you know. Sometimes
20 my eyes fail me, but all right. I'm
21 sorry.

22 MR. COTTMAN: I was supposed
23 to put a blur on my screen --

24 MR. RICHARDS: I thought I
25 noticed something.

1 MR. COTTMAN: -- it was a
2 background that was a mishap.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
4 All right. I'm sorry. I'm sorry,
5 Mr. Richards. It just threw me for a
6 little loop there.

7 MR. RICHARDS: No, no. It's
8 okay.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
10 Please proceed, sir.

11 MR. RICHARDS: It's -- you
12 got the wrong background. That's
13 digital.

14 All right. The mission of
15 the Free Library of Philadelphia is
16 advances literacy, guides learning
17 and inspires curiosity. Our plan for
18 the Fiscal Year 2024 is the Free
19 Library, one, we're very thankful for
20 the support that we've received from
21 Council and the Mayor in our '23
22 budget. It has allowed us to begin
23 restoring staffing levels, which has
24 greatly improved our morale.

25 So we are fully equipped to

1 provide resources and programs and
2 services for our communities, the
3 proposed increase of \$9 million for
4 Fiscal Year '24 will allow the Free
5 Library to reach a level of stability
6 not seen in decades. Our Fiscal Year
7 '24 budget includes 2.8 million to
8 provide the remaining 25 percent of
9 Fiscal Year '23 full-time staff
10 salaries for recently hired employees
11 brought in to fulfill the goal of
12 stable five-day service.

13 3.8 million to support
14 staffing needs at neighborhood
15 libraries in Parkway Central to allow
16 us to serve all patrons, including
17 youth and vulnerable populations six
18 days per week. This level of
19 staffing allows the Free Library to
20 expand programming and services to
21 support literacy, learning. We will
22 also meet the social and emotional
23 needs of the communities we serve
24 with the hiring of a small team,
25 full-time permanent social workers.

1 3.8 million to fill the gap
2 in our materials budget to align with
3 the state-required materials funding
4 for a library system our size. With
5 these funds we will expand our print
6 and digital offerings, further
7 connecting Philadelphians to the
8 world through their library card.

9 250,000 for the planning and
10 implementation of a strategic plan.
11 This process, which will include a
12 robust staff and community input,
13 will inform the Free Library's vision
14 with a renewed focus on accommodating
15 the wants and needs of our
16 communities.

17 Diversity, equity,
18 inclusion -- I think we just showed
19 that -- and belonging will continue
20 to be strengthened and integrated
21 into library operations and services
22 by instilling diverse and inclusive
23 practices. Our ability to open
24 consistently is critical to
25 supporting and meeting the needs of

1 our communities as well as
2 participating in citywide initiatives
3 to provide safe spaces for our teens
4 and young people. Our staff are
5 dedicated and committed to ensuring
6 this goal for the Fiscal Year '24.

7 Thank you. Questions?

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

9 Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Richards.
10 I appreciate it.

11 MR. RICHARDS: Sure.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I
13 appreciate your work and your quick
14 response to every call that we make
15 from our offices as it relates to
16 constituent issues. Actually saw
17 some folks over the weekend who asked
18 about -- a lady from the Freedom
19 Riders over on Cecil B. Moore Rec
20 Center, and she wanted to know, one,
21 when we were going to come over and
22 the need to have some additional
23 capital improvements.

24 Unlike a lot of people, they
25 don't quite understand when we put

1 capital dollars in a facility, a lot
2 of that money is utilized on our
3 systems, HVAC, all the other costly
4 opportunities in the facility, but
5 you have to have the heat, you have
6 to have air conditioning wherever
7 possible. You have to have
8 utilities. But obviously, there are
9 additional things that are going to
10 be needed. So we would like to have
11 a conversation about some of those.
12 I'm actually going to be taking a
13 tour over there as I promised the
14 lady I would.

15 But let me ask you this
16 question, something that we've talked
17 about: I know you talked to a number
18 of members about the challenges
19 associated with staffing, something
20 that all of us have a challenge with,
21 myself and all my colleagues trying
22 to find people, particularly people
23 that are going to be reliable, people
24 that are willing to work hard.

25 I know as a result of the

1 specialized type of employee that you
2 sometimes require, you have had some
3 challenges. Can you tell us what
4 progress you've made on that?

5 MR. RICHARDS: Sure, will be
6 happy to provide some information on
7 that. First, I'll say we really
8 appreciate working with the
9 Department of Human Resources and the
10 City in changing the requirements on
11 our entry-level library assistant
12 position. It took three years
13 working part-time in order to get the
14 experience in order to get a full-
15 time job.

16 But working with the City, we
17 were able to remove that requirement
18 because some people want to work
19 part-time and some people want to
20 work full-time. So we were able to
21 remove that requirement. So with the
22 GED, you can get a full-time job or
23 high school degree, get a full-time
24 job with benefits in the City working
25 for the library, which is an awesome

1 start to someone's career to have
2 that entry-level position.

3 And I will say this, because
4 of that we've been able to, you know,
5 we had some initial difficulty
6 because we were so short-staffed
7 initially in starting up that hiring
8 process. But as of January, we've
9 been averaging about 28 hires a
10 month. We started out in January
11 with 44, and I believe in April we're
12 going to be bringing on 28 new
13 employees.

14 But there's some difficulty
15 in getting librarians, but we have
16 been going to different workshops and
17 conferences around the country. We
18 went to a Joint Conference of
19 Librarians of Color that was attended
20 by various demographic groups of
21 library organizations from the Black
22 Caucus to the Asian and Hispanic
23 organizations. And we went there.
24 We had a team from HR go to do some
25 recruiting, and we had several people

1 apply through that process. So we've
2 been working very hard and building
3 up our HR department to meet the
4 needs of hiring those staff that we
5 need in order to open up our branches
6 five-day stable, and then to move
7 into six-day is the reason why we're
8 here today, part of the reason.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

10 All right --

11 MR. RICHARDS: So we've been
12 working hard.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

14 You're six-day initiative will be
15 starting soon?

16 MR. RICHARDS: We've got 10
17 libraries open now on Saturdays.
18 This will give us an opportunity to
19 evaluate and see how this will work.
20 We haven't done this in a while in
21 our communities because of COVID and
22 even prior to that. But we're
23 looking at after this budget process,
24 we believe we will be able to start
25 Saturdays this fall at our

1 neighborhood branches.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: At
3 all of them?

4 MR. RICHARDS: That's our
5 goal at some point this fall. It'll
6 be staggered. I don't think when
7 we've gone to Saturdays I believe
8 we've ever opened them all at once,
9 but we'll be staggering them in as we
10 hire people.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
12 Okay. Let me ask you something a
13 little bit off the grid.

14 MR. RICHARDS: Sure.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So
16 we have a lot of community
17 organizations operating on somewhat
18 of a shoestring budget, but they try
19 to do the best they can with what
20 they have. And I've actually went by
21 a couple of them and they had these
22 little small in-the-corner, these
23 little bookshelves and they've had a
24 little version of a library, the best
25 they can do.

1 Do we actually or have you
2 ever given any thought to assisting
3 some of these, maybe not necessarily
4 recycled books, but to be able if
5 there's any excess books that we can
6 have for organizations? Even as an
7 example, religious facilities --

8 MR. RICHARDS: Right.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: --
10 right, may want to have some sort of
11 educational opportunities, because we
12 got to do -- clearly got to do things
13 a little different, and I know we
14 want to encourage everybody to go to
15 the library.

16 MR. RICHARDS: Right.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
18 But if we can get a child to go to
19 the Colorado Community Center to
20 shoot pool or whatever, but while
21 they're there they go pick up a book,
22 something that's interesting and they
23 read it. Then at the end of the day,
24 that's our objective, to get people
25 to read more and be more

1 knowledgeable about all kinds of
2 different things.

3 Is there any relationship to
4 the non-traditional type of
5 relationship that libraries have?

6 MR. RICHARDS: What you're
7 asking is not something that's
8 unusual that libraries don't do. I
9 have not investigated that here, but
10 let me get back to you because I've
11 got some very creative staff and I'm
12 quite sure some of them are doing
13 something. So I'll get back to you
14 and see if that's not something we're
15 already doing.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
17 Are you familiar with something like
18 that being done somewhere?

19 MR. RICHARDS: Oh,
20 absolutely. Oh, yes, I'm very
21 familiar with that.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
23 Tell us about that. Can you tell
24 us --

25 MR. RICHARDS: We -- well,

1 our Read by 4th program that we are a
2 lead partner to, they have book nooks
3 out in the community like at daycare
4 centers and different places where
5 people go. I believe even in some
6 laundromats, so that is something
7 that we participate in and are a part
8 of. Maybe that answers your
9 question. But what I can do is get
10 back to you and see if we're doing
11 more like that.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

13 Well, I'm saying not necessarily
14 what's going on here. I mean, I know
15 you're in other places. I mean,
16 based on what you said initially, it
17 sounded like you were familiar
18 with other --

19 MR. RICHARDS: Yes, I am very
20 familiar with --

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: --
22 systems doing it.

23 MR. RICHARDS: Yeah.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

25 You can just give us an example of

1 the system. I mean, I understand you
2 don't want to throw your people under
3 the bus if they're not doing it
4 but --

5 MR. RICHARDS: No, no --

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: --
7 we're here to help, right.

8 MR. RICHARDS: Yeah. It does
9 take place. It does happen in other
10 library systems across the country
11 where they partner with barbershops,
12 partner with daycare centers, partner
13 with doctor's offices, places where
14 people congregate and go and have to
15 sit for a while and they're with
16 their kids or either seniors. It
17 does happen frequently.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
19 All right. We're here to help. If
20 we're going to put additional
21 resources in the system, we'd like to
22 see an expansion of the participation
23 rates. And if it calls for us giving
24 you more resources to get people to
25 read somewhere else other than the

1 library, and I don't think that
2 anything's wrong with that, as long
3 as they're working within the format
4 of the general library. We want to
5 have some accountability.

6 Last time I checked people
7 don't steal books or anything because
8 they don't want to read them. They
9 take them because they want to read
10 them, right. So you don't have to
11 worry about the accountability --

12 MR. RICHARDS: Absolutely.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
14 Yeah. So give us some thought please
15 before we conclude our budget. And
16 it's okay if you can give us some
17 examples. We got to do things
18 differently, you know.

19 MR. RICHARDS: Yeah.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
21 The challenge out here is so
22 tremendous. All right. Well, thank
23 you. I'll peel back. And again,
24 I'll be reaching out to you for the
25 follow-up on the Cecil B. Moore

1 branch because I got to do this
2 walkthrough. I know the wish list on
3 the capital side is going to be quite
4 extensive. And if you can do
5 anything with that facade, I know
6 there was a couple of conver -- I'll
7 talk with you offline about them.

8 MR. RICHARDS: We -- yeah.
9 Okay.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I
11 know you had made a commitment to do
12 some things.

13 MR. RICHARDS: Yes, some
14 things are going to happen.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
16 Every time I go out there, people,
17 they do what they're supposed to do.
18 They grab the Councilperson and say,
19 when are you going to get this done.
20 Part of the deal, I love it. All
21 right. Thank you.

22 I believe Councilwoman
23 Gilmore Richardson is first up.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

25 RICHARDSON: Yes. Thank you, Council

1 President.

2 And thank you, President and
3 Director Richards and to your team,
4 including Priscilla and of course
5 Sade, our always Councilmember,
6 family member, we appreciate the work
7 of the library. And you know I don't
8 have to repeat this, that I
9 completely believe in the Free
10 Library of Philadelphia.

11 And we visited a ton of the
12 branches very often, but particularly
13 the Wynnefield branch in the 4th
14 Council District. We love the
15 Wynnefield Library. So I wanted to
16 start where CP left off relative to
17 capital funding.

18 Could you detail how much in
19 capital funding you all are allocated
20 to receive this year? And sort of
21 what will that cover based on what
22 you intend to receive or what you
23 believe you'll receive?

24 And then you also mentioned
25 in your testimony that some of the

1 capital projects, there's a goal of
2 10 to 15 major capital projects for
3 FY24. Could you just provide a list
4 of those projects, like what the
5 major projects will be for the next
6 fiscal year? And then after you talk
7 about that, can you just talk about
8 what the overall capital need is for
9 the library?

10 MR. RICHARDS: Sure, I would
11 be happy to talk about that.

12 I've got with me today Jim
13 Pecora, our Property Management
14 Director. And he is intimately
15 attached to this. I can speak some
16 on it.

17 But to answer your questions
18 fully now, Jim, can you hear me?

19 MR. PECORA: Yes, I can hear
20 you.

21 MR. RICHARDS: Did you hear
22 the Councilmember's question?

23 MR. PECORA: Yes, I did.

24 MR. RICHARDS: Can you answer
25 that for me, please.

1 MR. PECORA: Of course. So I
2 think I will try to answer these in
3 the order you asked. Right now in
4 the Fiscal '24 budget, there's
5 approximately 19.5. And that breaks
6 down into just a few categories.
7 There's 4.6 of that is Rebuild.
8 There's 3.9, it's carryover. And I'm
9 actively doing projects with that.
10 The 10 million that we received is
11 another piece of that.

12 And with that, I'll answer
13 your next question about what we have
14 planned next year, and actually I'm
15 already into it. And then there's
16 the allocation for Fiscal '24 is 1.5.
17 There's also a small PICA amount in
18 there and that makes up what you see
19 in the budget document.

20 As far as the -- I have -- I
21 won't go into all the weeds, but will
22 be very happy to give you my list
23 afterwards. I'm going to answer your
24 question now, but I have complete
25 projects in progress on deck now, on

1 deck in '24. Where I'm going right
2 now is I've got about six roof jobs,
3 seven actually, and just queuing them
4 up right now partially with some of
5 the carryover. But I'm getting into
6 the 10 million. So working with
7 Public Property on getting them
8 started.

9 I already got one going at
10 Walnut, but then there's Rodriguez
11 and Bushrod, they're all over. So we
12 got six roof jobs going. I've got a
13 significant design project going for
14 redesigning our book system at
15 Central. Those things are in
16 progress.

17 As far as what I got queued
18 up for next year, which really is
19 going to start very, very soon. The
20 \$10 million is made up of at least
21 right now about 33 different
22 projects. And --

23 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

24 RICHARDSON: I apologize. Is that 33
25 different projects across 33

1 different locations or multiple
2 projects in certain locations? I
3 guess if we could just get a list.
4 And the reason why I'm asking for
5 this, it's because in our
6 Appropriations Committee hearing we
7 have received information. I have
8 followed up with Finance about this
9 and they have provided a response.

10 But we've received
11 information about capital funding
12 that should have been or will be
13 split between PPR and the Free
14 Library of Philadelphia. So I am
15 trying to understand what the
16 allocation from that \$40 million pot
17 of money is, how much is going to the
18 Library and if it impacts any of this
19 work or is that primarily going to
20 PPR? And I don't know if anybody
21 from Finance is on the call that
22 could really walk me through that or
23 really address that question because
24 I'm seeking clarity to really
25 understand. And I'm trying to pull

1 up the email now, trying to
2 understand how much of that is
3 impacting the work that you're
4 speaking about.

5 MR. PECORA: Okay. I can
6 answer, you know, I can give you the
7 detail on the 10 million. I can't
8 answer the question about the split,
9 so that would have to be -- I'd have
10 to have Finance help with that. But
11 on the split -- I'm sorry, on the 10
12 million, approximately 89 percent of
13 that is going to, as Council
14 President mentioned earlier, a lot of
15 the more expensive elements of
16 construction, HVAC and roof. 89
17 percent of that will go there.

18 And when you start looking at
19 how many neighborhood libraries that
20 would cover, it's approximately 18 of
21 them. So it doesn't, you know, that
22 10 million and all that, that HVAC
23 and roof money is not going to cov --
24 Rebuild will cover, they're doing
25 four major renovations and several

1 smaller ones. I'd say that's about
2 another 8. So with all that money,
3 18 plus 8, 26 libraries. It's about
4 half of the libraries that we're
5 really investing in more heavily. So
6 that's all I could speak to in terms
7 of next year, the 10 million. Sorry,
8 I can't answer that other part.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

10 RICHARDSON: Sure. Is there anyone
11 here from Finance because I really --
12 and I really apologize for doing this
13 on this hearing because I did ask for
14 this information and you all have
15 responded, and Rob has been stellar
16 in following up. But I'm seeking
17 clarity that in the documents that we
18 received, it was 40 million and it
19 was split between PPR and the Free
20 Library. And it says approximately
21 20 million will be used for
22 improvements to the Carousel House.
23 The remaining 20 million is planned
24 to address budget gaps for the
25 projects going to construction in the

1 remainder of this fiscal year. Those
2 include approximately 14 parks,
3 playgrounds or recreation centers and
4 5 libraries. That's the response
5 from the Budget Office.

6 So I'm looking at a document
7 here in response to an inquiry from
8 the Appropriations Committee stating
9 of this \$40 million it will include
10 funding for 5 libraries. So I'm
11 trying to understand the 5 libraries,
12 which locations or which projects for
13 the 5 libraries and then how does
14 that impact the allocation that you
15 all have for the current fiscal year
16 and then what you have planned for
17 FY24?

18 I don't want to get this
19 mixed up. And I'm telling you that
20 as someone who's been around, I'm
21 mixed up on this. Okay. I need to
22 know how much of the 40 million is
23 going to the Free Library for
24 capital. Because initially when we
25 received the responses from Budget,

1 and I get it, folks are rushing, it
2 said Rebuild versus PPR -- it wasn't
3 Rebuild versus PPR. It was Rebuild
4 and PPR and the Free Library. Okay.

5 And so, the question has been
6 answered, but it's no clarity on how
7 much because now I can't adequately
8 ascertain what's coming from the
9 spring appropriations transfer
10 ordinance, what's already been in
11 there for FY23 that's being spent
12 down before the end of the fiscal
13 year, and then if there's anything
14 additional coming in from this
15 Rebuild piece. I need some clarity
16 on this.

17 MS. MAYNARD: Good afternoon,
18 Councilmember. I'm Sabrina Maynard.
19 I am the new Budget Director as of
20 this week. And so, I do not have an
21 answer for --

22 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
23 RICHARDSON: Congratulations.

24 MS. MAYNARD: Thank you.
25 This is my first time doing this. So

1 I want to make sure we get you
2 accurate information, so we'll follow
3 up separately after the hearing. But
4 I want to acknowledge your question
5 and acknowledge that we'll sort it
6 out and we'll get you the information
7 you're requesting.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

9 RICHARDSON: Sure. Well,
10 congratulations and welcome. But
11 this has been ongoing prior to you
12 assuming this position. And it is
13 very important that during this
14 hearing we receive clarity on this
15 because if I don't get clarity on
16 this, I cannot move forward in making
17 an intelligent decision. This all is
18 not making sense to me now.

19 And so, for the record I want
20 to be clear. I need to know how much
21 on capital that was mentioned for the
22 spring FY23 midyear transfer
23 ordinance, how much did the Free
24 Library have to spend on capital
25 already for FY23 and then how much is

1 being proposed for FY24, and which
2 projects for which pot of money?
3 Because it's not fair to the Library
4 folks because they can't answer these
5 questions because this is a Budget
6 Office issue.

7 And I don't want Library
8 Director President Richards or
9 Mr. Pecora to think that this is any
10 slight to you because you have to get
11 your direction from the Budget
12 Office, which is what I'm seeking to
13 do. And so, I need a breakdown of
14 each one of those pots of money, all
15 three, and which projects for which
16 pots. So I can add it all up and say
17 how much it is total. Because even
18 Council President had a question on
19 capital and about a project for Cecil
20 B. And so, we just need to know.
21 Okay.

22 MS. MAYNARD: Understood.
23 Thank you, Councilmember. We will
24 get back to you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

1 RICHARDSON: Thank you, Council
2 President. I'll circle back on the
3 second round.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

5 Thank you, Councilwoman.

6 Chair recognizes Councilman
7 Jones.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES:

9 Mr. President --

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

11 Yes, sir.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: -- the
13 best appointment you made to
14 Appropriations was Katherine Gilmore
15 Richardson. She is forensic with her
16 analysis, I'm telling you. I said
17 this to her last Thursday and I'm
18 saying it on the record now. It's
19 amazing her attention to detail. And
20 you should answer her questions
21 because she will not forget them.

22 President Richards, are you
23 still there?

24 MR. RICHARDS: Yes. Yes, I
25 am. I'm still here.

1 COUNCILMAN JONES: Oh, okay.
2 First of all, let me thank you. The
3 first time we met was that Sgambati's
4 Book Fair and we were signing and
5 giving out books to people, so that
6 was a good indication of the type of
7 leader you would be. So that's
8 number one.

9 Number two, share with us
10 your vision on how we move from
11 hardback books and still maintaining
12 them to an online streaming
13 availability for people, young people
14 in particular, who don't get their
15 information from hardback books?
16 Schools are moving away from hardback
17 books. How are we evolving as a
18 library system both in film and in
19 books online to meet that new
20 frontier?

21 MR. RICHARDS: A very good
22 question, Councilmember. There was a
23 period when digital books and
24 resources came on the market, people
25 got excited, started getting Kindles

1 and everything for Christmas,
2 grandparents, mom and pop. And
3 during that particular time, those
4 resources as far as being sold for
5 the general public were outpacing the
6 selling of books.

7 But over the years, and this
8 is pre-COVID, it sort of balanced
9 out. People who wanted digital books
10 and materials got those, and people
11 who wanted hardcover books and
12 materials got those. Now, that's
13 just from the marketing aspect of it
14 and the selling aspect of it. But
15 what libraries have found out is that
16 people still want to come in and
17 check out books and materials. They
18 still want the physical copy. They
19 still want the hard copy. There's
20 nothing electronic that beats holding
21 a book in your hand and flipping
22 through it. Nothing beats that, and
23 we don't think that's going to ever
24 happen any time soon.

25 But I will tell you that

1 youth and there's certain adults,
2 they love those digital books and
3 digital materials. So libraries have
4 evolved where we collect those or
5 purchase those just like we buy the
6 hardcover copies. We buy them as a
7 shared resource so that people, our
8 community can access those the same
9 way they access the physical copies.
10 So we provide the digital resources
11 and materials, books, recorded books
12 where people, you know, you can drive
13 and connect your phone to your car
14 and listen to a book.

15 You can look at a movie or
16 some National Geographic special, all
17 of those sort of digital resources
18 that people are paying for, the
19 library is the place where everyone
20 can come in and have that shared
21 resource with those same digital
22 materials. So we have evolved just
23 as society has evolved with
24 information.

25 So that's one thing about the

1 library. We make it available to
2 everyone, to the common person out
3 there in the City of Philadelphia.
4 So we evolved. Libraries were one of
5 the first who had VHS, you know, and
6 betas and CDs and DVDs. So we
7 evolved.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: Katherine
9 Gilmore Richardson doesn't know what
10 a VHS machine is. She's Googling it
11 right now.

12 (Laughter.)

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: But what I
14 wanted to get to was I'm hoping there
15 is a plan to modernize the technology
16 and the streaming, but also
17 teleconferencing so that what we
18 experience in the pandemic that
19 libraries continue to be safe places
20 where parents felt comfortable
21 leaving their kids to study. But I
22 think if we add that teleconferencing
23 aspect, that a lecture done in
24 Germantown can be received at the
25 Wynnefield Library, can be received

1 at the Point Breeze area. So to be
2 able to wire and provide hotspots for
3 our young people to access the
4 Internet, for our young people to go
5 on and -- let's say the folk from the
6 Environmental Sustainability Office
7 talked about how you can get involved
8 in learning how to make solar panels
9 so that they can then plug into that
10 lecture and we can work a partnership
11 with a community college or other
12 colleges to be able to allow some of
13 our high schoolers to be able to
14 benefit from that knowledge.

15 YouTube, say what you want
16 about it, if you want to learn how to
17 do something good or bad, you can go
18 on YouTube and learn how to do it.
19 And I would just hope holistically
20 and wholesomely that libraries can
21 fill that void for young people and
22 provide the guardrails and guidelines
23 through technology to get good books
24 online and good access to information
25 online.

1 MR. RICHARDS: Well,
2 Councilmember, what I will tell you
3 is that the Free Library has the big
4 largest footprint for public computer
5 use in the City of Philadelphia. And
6 because of the generosity of the
7 Council and the Mayor to give the
8 Free Library 3.4 million to upgrade
9 all of our computers, all of our
10 software, puts us in a position to
11 next fiscal year when we roll this
12 out, puts us in a position to where
13 we can do just that. Because in
14 order to run what you're saying, you
15 need software, you need backing it in
16 order to be able to handle and
17 control that, so that gives us the
18 ability to have that dream of yours
19 become a reality.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Finally,
21 and I'm going to say this and turn
22 it -- I heard the bell. Your staff,
23 the librarians and other staff, are
24 not your prototypical government
25 employee. They love the library.

1 They love the patrons of the library
2 and are the most zealous defenders of
3 the library system that I've ever had
4 opportunity to work with. So whether
5 you're talking about the 52nd Street
6 Library, the Overbrook Library, the
7 Wynnefield Library throughout my
8 District, East Falls and others, they
9 really -- I remember when former
10 Mayor Nutter wanted to cut libraries.
11 And he ran into a hornet's nest and
12 buzz saw of people who defended your
13 system. So keep on providing the
14 kind of services that people want to
15 fight for.

16 Thank you, Mr. President.

17 MR. RICHARDS: Thank you.
18 It's their life. It's a calling to
19 them. They give their life to it.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Pres?

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
22 Thank you. Thank you, Councilman.

23 Any additional questions?

24 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

25 RICHARDSON: Yes.

1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Council
2 President --

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
4 Chair recognizes -- I'm sorry. Chair
5 recognizes Councilman Johnson.

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes, and
7 I'll be real brief. It's in regards
8 to -- you touched on it briefly
9 earlier, but going to the five days a
10 week, going to scale, I know you said
11 post-pandemic kind of taking our time
12 to get all of our libraries open. I
13 do recognize the ones that are
14 opening six days a week now. None of
15 them are in the 2nd Councilmanic
16 District.

17 I just wanted to get an idea
18 as you move forward what's going to
19 be the process as you identify sites
20 to be open six days a week and then
21 also what is the robust staffing
22 plan? Because I remember in the past
23 it's been conversation regarding the
24 lack of staffing for our library
25 system here in the City of

1 Philadelphia.

2 And so, have we addressed
3 that issue and are we aggressively
4 going about recruiting people to work
5 in our libraries so we can have full
6 staffing? I get calls sometimes that
7 the library at Queen Memorial may not
8 be open full time. It might be open
9 half of the time, which I don't see
10 how that happens with all the
11 resources we have in the City to keep
12 our libraries open, but some person
13 said staffing is an issue. So can
14 you give me an update, Mr. Richards?

15 MR. RICHARDS: Yes,
16 Councilmember. I can tell you that,
17 and I believe it was January 2022, we
18 were open probably about 40 percent
19 of the time on a regular basis which
20 was because of lack of staffing. We
21 just didn't have the staffing that
22 was necessary to provide the services
23 that the community was expecting of
24 us, and that had been taking place
25 from about 2008. It's been going

1 on -- it's almost a generation or
2 two.

3 But with these current
4 resources that Council has given us,
5 we will be able to get our staffing
6 back up, but it's taking some effort.
7 Because not only were we lack of
8 staffing for the branches, but it was
9 also an issue in every one of our
10 departments where we had lack of
11 staffing to really efficiently run
12 the library system.

13 But as a year after that, in
14 January of this year, I think we're
15 somewhere near 70 percent of opening.

16 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.

17 MR. RICHARDS: So as we
18 continue to hire and bring more
19 people on board, that percentage is
20 only going to increase. And I'll
21 tell you, some of the things we've
22 been doing, I'm hearing from branches
23 right now, people saying it's a joy
24 to be in the library on Saturdays.
25 And we've got branches now, you know,

1 the 10 that are open, more coming
2 soon. Students and job seekers are
3 in the library because they couldn't
4 get there through the weekday. And a
5 number of kids and some of our
6 branches, our Kensington branches,
7 we're having pop-up story times
8 because the kids are there unlike
9 before. But Eastwick is in your
10 District, and that is one of the
11 branches that's open on Saturday.

12 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.
13 Good.

14 MR. RICHARDS: Okay. So we
15 made sure we had a branch open in
16 every Councilmanic District.

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: That's
18 good. I'm probably -- Eastwick,
19 yeah. I live in Point Breeze, so I'm
20 probably focusing on Queen Memorial.

21 MR. RICHARDS: I understand.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: But I
23 support Eastwick as well because
24 that's part of the whole District.
25 And so, what is that staffing

1 strategy plan like? What are we
2 doing to aggressively recruit
3 individuals? Are there any barriers
4 or obstacles that have --

5 MR. RICHARDS: Well, the one
6 barrier that you removed, that the
7 City removed, and we got your
8 support, Council support, to get this
9 removed was that barrier of getting
10 our frontline staff, removing that
11 barrier for requirement to have
12 worked three years. Most people
13 don't want to work three years part-
14 time to get a full-time job.

15 Now, that significantly
16 helped us with the staff we need to
17 work in our buildings. Now, we have
18 some challenges, and everybody does,
19 with hiring librarians. But our
20 staff, we're working really hard,
21 going to different librarian
22 conferences around the country and
23 recruiting them to come to work in
24 Philadelphia, and we've had success.
25 So it's coming. It's happening.

1 It's just going to take some time.

2 We just need time to make this thing
3 happen.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I want
5 to leave just one recommendation, and
6 I'm sure probably my colleague
7 Councilman Jones agrees with this as
8 well, as well as Katherine Gilmore
9 Richardson. We do a lot of work
10 around this issue regarding public
11 safety and youth gun violence, right.

12 I view our library system as
13 part of the violence prevention
14 strategy here in the City of
15 Philadelphia. As a kid, I spent
16 plenty of Saturdays in the library.
17 It was a safe haven. It was a way
18 for me to be involved in something
19 positive as opposed to me getting
20 involved with the negative inside the
21 neighborhood, but it also provides a
22 safe haven for our young people to
23 come and just learn, right.

24 And also, I know our day care
25 and Pre-K system, a lot of them

1 utilize our library systems all
2 across the City of Philadelphia. And
3 that's the opportunity to invest in
4 our young people on the front end as
5 opposed to have to address issues
6 when they get older. And so,
7 obviously if we set them on a path
8 early on, it pays off down the line
9 from an educational perspective and
10 all of them being productive members
11 of society.

12 And so, just continue to keep
13 up the good work in that aspect. Any
14 way I could be supportive of you,
15 don't hesitate to let me know.
16 There's obviously a job training
17 career and employment component that
18 our libraries play in terms of
19 helping people look for jobs as well
20 as careers, and I think that's
21 another key component in terms of us
22 stressing the issue of gun violence
23 and also poverty.

24 And so, I look at them being
25 bigger than just, hey, let me just go

1 and read a few books, it's just the
2 library. But libraries are utilized
3 for a variety of different ways in
4 terms of moving our City of
5 Philadelphia forward. So listen, you
6 keep up the good work and we'll be
7 looking forward to continuously
8 working with you. Take care.

9 MR. RICHARDS: Thank you,
10 sir.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
12 Thank you, Councilman.

13 Chair recognizes Councilwoman
14 Katherine Gilmore Richardson.

15 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
16 RICHARDSON: Yes. Thank you so much,
17 Council President. I will end here
18 just on a few questions.

19 One, I just want to circle
20 back to confirm if you could just
21 state what you estimate the overall
22 capital needs are for the library?

23 MR. RICHARDS: On --

24 MR. PECORA: The --

25 MR. RICHARDS: Oh, go ahead,

1 Jim.

2 MR. PECORA: No. I'm sorry,
3 Kelly. Go ahead.

4 MR. RICHARDS: Councilmember,
5 are you stating annually or are you
6 stating just what --

7 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

8 RICHARDSON: I would say overall
9 moving forward if you had a magic
10 wand and were able to deal with every
11 single capital project necessary to
12 ensure that our library
13 infrastructure was up to par, what
14 would that number?

15 MR. RICHARDS: All right.
16 I'm going to pull this magic wand out
17 now. We believe that if we had
18 minimally for stability of 6 million
19 a year, preference would be 12
20 million a year, we'll be able to keep
21 all of our branches open, the roofs
22 fixed because we're constantly going
23 to have to circle around all of our
24 branches to maintain our stability to
25 keep them open, replacing the roofs,

1 carpeting, windows, all of the things
2 that's necessary to continue to have
3 our building safe, ADA capabilities
4 throughout the years. That's what we
5 would need. I think now we get about
6 1.5 million. So --

7 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

8 RICHARDSON: Okay.

9 MR. RICHARDS: Jim, do you
10 want to add anything to that from the
11 expert's point of view?

12 MR. PECORA: Well, we did a
13 lot of homework on comparing, you
14 know, we have 53 libraries. We've
15 got 1 million square feet. 20 of
16 them are Carnegie, so they're aging.
17 There's a lot of extra effort that
18 goes into that. But we compared
19 ourselves to government buildings,
20 school buildings, commercial
21 buildings and that's where we arrived
22 at the -- the optimum would be a
23 minimum of 7 million a year so that
24 you could plan to replace roofs on
25 the proper schedule, HVAC.

1 The problem right now, I'll
2 give you an example, like Haddington
3 and Wyoming, we knew we had a problem
4 last summer. We ordered equipment in
5 the fall. I will not get it until
6 mid-July. I have to put in --
7 everything, the lead times now are
8 really challenging. So if you don't
9 have that kind of funding, what we're
10 doing is just waiting for the next
11 fire and then we'll try to put it
12 out.

13 With that 7 million minimum,
14 we can go into a true capital
15 improvements planning process.
16 That's HVAC, roofs -- I'm about 26
17 roofs into the 52 libraries. In 15
18 years -- things aren't lasting 15 to
19 20 years these days.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
21 RICHARDSON: Right.

22 MR. PECORA: So with the 10
23 million and things that are coming
24 up, I've got a lot of roof jobs
25 coming up. And, you know, you're

1 competing with the School District,
2 very important improvements that need
3 to be done there and there's only so
4 many resources. But that would be
5 the number.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

7 RICHARDSON: Okay. And then finally,
8 I have to mention this because you
9 talked about workforce a bit, but I
10 do need to mention the LEAP program.
11 You all know I started as a teenager
12 in the Free Library of Philadelphia
13 serving as a teen leadership
14 assistant at the Wynnefield branch.

15 And so, I know LEAP continues
16 to sort of move through different
17 iterations and particularly through
18 the pandemic, and I had an
19 opportunity to meet with the young
20 folks via computer during the
21 pandemic. But will the LEAP program
22 be fully operational this year? Are
23 you all hiring TLAs?

24 And I have to say thank you
25 for the TLA hire program and just the

1 overall teen programs we've done with
2 the Library, and particularly in
3 response to Act 158 where we've taken
4 these programs to Wynnefield Library.
5 We did a program at Overbrook High
6 School. And so, I'm really thankful
7 for that in connecting young people
8 to those opportunities to really get
9 them started on a pathway to service
10 in library science.

11 But what will TLA look like
12 this year? And how many young people
13 do you anticipate we'll be hiring for
14 TLA?

15 MR. RICHARDS: I can't give
16 you that number right now, but I will
17 get back to you on that. But I will
18 tell you -- oh, well, two TLAs at
19 each library and one ASL at each
20 library. And it's a great
21 partnership that we have with DHS.
22 We appreciate that, and it goes a
23 long way to show how different
24 departments can work together and
25 build synergy and provide a great

1 service for the City.

2 So we recognize it's an
3 awesome program and that you went
4 through it, and look at where you are
5 today. So it's a great thing. But
6 yeah, two TLAs at each library and
7 one ASL at each library. We just had
8 some difficulty going through COVID
9 and branches closing and the kids,
10 you know, showing up. We're getting
11 better and we're working through
12 that. We're getting people hired and
13 we're getting these branches open so
14 we can have more people coming
15 through that with an experience to be
16 just as successful as you.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

18 RICHARDSON: Oh, well, thank you for
19 that. And I always pay special close
20 attention to the LEAP line item in
21 the budget. So that's why I always
22 ask, to make sure that they are
23 budgeted and that we'll be able to
24 have TLAs at every library because
25 that's an important opportunity for

1 young people. It's not through a
2 WorkReady or through any of the other
3 summer programming that the City
4 offers holistically.

5 And then finally, I'll end on
6 a note of thanks, just to appreciate
7 you and the Library team for the
8 wonderful program we all put together
9 last summer with the Grandmother of
10 Juneteenth, my soror Opal Lee, who
11 was able to read children's books to
12 children at the Free Library of
13 Philadelphia's main branch. That was
14 just a fantastic program and
15 opportunity to highlight a historical
16 figure who has just been honored by
17 the White House who is still living.
18 She's almost 97 years old, and still
19 doing great work. So I just want to
20 appreciate you and the team of the
21 Free Library.

22 And just again before I
23 conclude, Council President, I will
24 put on the record that I will
25 anticipate additional information

1 from the Budget Office regarding my
2 very specific request around the
3 capital funding for the Free Library
4 and the differentiation of the
5 different pots of money.

6 That will be very important
7 to our ability to move forward
8 because I'm now not understanding
9 what was sent back to me. So thank
10 you very, very much. Have a great
11 day.

12 MR. RICHARDS: Thank you.

13 THE CLERK: The Council
14 President had to step away for a
15 minute.

16 Is Councilman Jones present?

17 (No response.)

18 THE CLERK: Well,
19 Councilwoman Gilmore Richardson, we
20 are currently waiting on the Chair if
21 you'd like to ask any additional
22 questions.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

24 RICHARDSON: I'm good. Thank you.

25 THE CLERK: Okay. Just a

1 moment while I wait for the Chair to
2 join. Just a second.

3 (Brief recess.)

4 THE CLERK: Hi, Councilwoman.

5 I do see your request in the chat.

6 And for the record, it states if we
7 need a recess until the next day of
8 hearings. We do need a Councilmember
9 to recess until the next day of
10 hearings, which is Tuesday, April
11 25th at 10:00 a.m. on Teams. If you
12 could recess until then.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

14 RICHARDSON: Sure, it will be my
15 pleasure.

16 For the record, seeing if
17 there are any Councilmembers or any
18 other witnesses with questions for
19 these witnesses from this Committee?

20 (No response.)

21 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

22 RICHARDSON: Okay. There being none,
23 this Committee will stand in recess
24 until Tuesday, April 25th at
25 10:00 a.m., at which time we will

1 reconvene in a remote manner using
2 Microsoft Teams. Thank you very
3 much.

4 DEPUTY MAYOR GARRETT HARLEY:

5 Thank you.

6 (Committee of the Whole
7 concluded at 3:35 p.m.)

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

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

TANEHA CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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