

1

2

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

3

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE - BUDGET

4

- - -

5

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, April 17, 2007
10:15 a.m.

6

7

- - -

8

9

PRESENT:

10

COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNA C. VERNA

11

COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL

12

COUNCILMAN DARRELL L. CLARKE

13

COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.

14

COUNCILMAN WILLIAM GREENLEE

15

COUNCILMAN JACK KELLY

16

COUNCILWOMAN DONNA REED MILLER

17

COUNCILMAN FRANK RIZZO

18

COUNCILMAN DANIEL SAVAGE

19

BILLS 070114, 070115 and 070116

20

RESOLUTION 070128

21

22

23

24

- - -

25

V A R A L L O Incorporated
Litigation Support Services
Eleven Penn Center
1835 Market Street, Suite 600
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19103
215.561.2220 215.567.2670

26

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning. This is the continued public hearing of the Committee of the Whole.

Mr. McPherson, who is our first department?

MR. MCPHERSON: Department of Licenses and Inspections.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good morning, Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Good morning, Council President Verna.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Please identify yourself for the record and proceed with your testimony.

COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: I'm Robert Solvibile, Commissioner of Licensing and Inspections.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And, Commissioner, if you can abbreviate your testimony, we will give a copy to the stenographer and it will be transcribed in full.

COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Thank you. Yes.

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 Good morning, Council President
3 Verna and members of Council. I am
4 Robert D. Solvibile, Sr., Commissioner of
5 the Department of License and
6 Inspections. Accompanying me today are
7 key members of the Department's
8 management team, including Deputy
9 Commissioner Fran Burns to my left,
10 behind me Deputy Commissioner Eileen
11 Evans and Dominic Verdi, and our
12 Administrative Services Director to my
13 right, Bridget Collins-Greenwald. We
14 appreciate the opportunity to present our
15 Fiscal Year 2008 Operating Budget to City
16 Council and to provide you with our plans
17 for the upcoming year, as well as our
18 recent accomplishments.

19 Fiscal Year 2008 budget
20 request: The Department of License and
21 Inspections is requesting a total Fiscal
22 Year '08 budget of \$45,925,020, of which
23 \$29,295,545 is in the City's General Fund
24 and \$15,865,950 is in the Grant Revenue
25 Fund and \$763,525 is in the Community

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 Development Fund.

3 For the General Fund breakout,
4 we are requesting \$17,204,191 in Class
5 100, \$11,506,856 in Class 200 and
6 \$293,450 in Class 300 and \$291,048 in
7 Class 400. The General Fund budget
8 represents a total overall increase of
9 \$690,622 from Fiscal Year '07 estimated
10 obligations. This reflects the four
11 percent contractual wage increase and an
12 increase of two million in Class 200 for
13 demolition funding and an additional
14 \$220,069 in Class 100 to transition the
15 NTI program back to L&I, and an
16 additional \$92,333 in Class 100 for the
17 enforcement of Act 39 and is offset by a
18 2.5 general budget cut.

19 The Fiscal Year '08 request
20 will fund 374 General Fund positions and
21 includes a total of \$10 million in
22 demolition funding. As always, we will
23 continue to prioritize emergency and
24 public safety concerns and will maximize
25 productivity with current resources.

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 After years of talking about
3 automation plans, I can finally come
4 before you and say that L&I has achieved
5 its automation goal. Specific
6 improvements that LICA, License and
7 Inspections' Concerted Approach, include
8 the ability to view full property
9 history, which includes all complaints,
10 licenses, permits and violations;

11 The ability to print violations
12 from any desktop or portable device;

13 A professional quality to all
14 documents;

15 An enhanced integration between
16 units. The Permit Service Division is
17 electronically impeded from issuing
18 permits if contractors are not in the
19 system or not legally licensed. On the
20 same note, the issuance of licenses and
21 permits is withheld if there is existing
22 dangerous building violations;

23 Reinspections are automatically
24 sent to inspectors. Prior to Hansen,
25 reinspections were printed by clerical

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 staff and assigned by managers on paper,
3 making it challenging to manage and track
4 the workload;

5 Violations get to the public
6 faster;

7 Employee work assignments are
8 on the desktop;

9 Fast form building permits are
10 available online for credit card
11 purchase;

12 L&I and the Revenue Department
13 have two electronic interfaces. As the
14 public makes payment through the Revenue
15 Department, the payment automatically
16 updates our Hansen license records. As
17 business privilege tax, BPT, numbers are
18 obtained by the Revenue Department, the
19 numbers are sent to the L&I Hansen
20 database and a business privilege license
21 bill is mailed to the business privilege
22 applicant;

23 Management reports are more
24 accessible and user friendly; and

25 Our data is in an Oracle

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.
2 database, making us better poised to
3 technologically advance.

4 That concludes my shortened
5 version and I welcome your questions.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
7 you, Commissioner.

8 Your Class 100 budget was
9 increased by \$92,333 for Act 39
10 enforcement and \$220,069 for NTI
11 transition. Can you tell us the number
12 of employees associated with each of
13 these increases?

14 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Act 39
15 is one -- it's a service representative
16 who will help process the paperwork of
17 the expected hearings that we'll have and
18 help us manage the workload, the hearings
19 that will happen in front of a Board that
20 we've asked the Mayor to appoint.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Did
22 you say one service representative?

23 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: And
24 also it will help with the court
25 reporter, the payment of the court

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 reporter and also payment to the Board
3 members that will be on this three-panel
4 Board. And you also, Council President,
5 asked about the transition for NTI?

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes.

7 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Four
8 employees, inspectors and a clerical
9 procurement specialist.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm
11 sorry. Do you mind repeating that?

12 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Part
13 of what we've asked is for a procurement
14 specialist to work with the Contractual
15 Services Unit to better prepare their
16 documentation to procurement and to have
17 better tracking of what we bid and how we
18 bid it, the dangerous buildings. And the
19 others will be inspectors to help us
20 support the workload of inspecting
21 dangerous buildings.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Can
23 you tell us what impact, if any, City
24 Council will have on both of these
25 issues?

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: The
3 idea to transition back in the NTI, as
4 I've testified in the past, is to take
5 best practices that L&I always performed
6 and the best practices that we learned
7 from the NTI program. And obviously the
8 Council input is always available to us
9 for direction as to pointing out from
10 your constituents which buildings are
11 falling as we -- as you know, we're
12 complaint driven in most cases.
13 Sometimes we find it ourselves. And
14 also, there will be a planned demolition
15 in the sense that if we're on a block
16 with an imminently dangerous building --
17 and this is still being created, Council
18 President. It's not in stone yet. But
19 if we're on a block with an imminently
20 dangerous building, we would look at the
21 whole block to make sure that we're not
22 leaving something that should be treated
23 by us, and it may even be as simple as a
24 clean and seal or an additional
25 demolition or two on that block.

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
3 you.

4 Can you explain how the Act 39
5 enforcement unit will operate?

6 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE:

7 Basically the Act 39 -- our 990
8 inspectors, the business compliance
9 inspectors, when an appeal takes place,
10 when someone appeals the designation and
11 there's a posting requirement, we'll give
12 out the paperwork to people who come and
13 apply for a hearing and we will spot
14 check about 30 percent, maybe 40 percent
15 to make sure that it's properly posted.
16 In some cases -- then the public has an
17 opportunity to again protest, as you are
18 aware, the application. And we will have
19 hearing dates that will be online, the
20 location that the hearing is for, the
21 time and the place. And we anticipate
22 the need for at least three days a week
23 full time. The Board that will be
24 appointed should be a full-time Board
25 that at least three, maybe four days a

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 week will have hearings from morning to
3 evening, and basically that's the way we
4 anticipate it working.

5 And, again, we're still putting
6 that together. We have the Board part
7 down and a pretty decent plan that was
8 created by a lady who just retired. We
9 asked her before she left if she would
10 put the Act 39 -- she was the
11 Administrator for the Board, Claire
12 Gatzmer. And she did that for us and we
13 have a pretty good plan. Now it's to get
14 the kinks out and get the implementation
15 going. I think that we'll have a good
16 program for it, though.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: What
18 will be the salary of the service rep?

19 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: The
20 service rep, it's about 40 counting
21 benies.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I beg
23 your pardon?

24 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: It's
25 about \$40,000 counting the benefit

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.
2 package, 40,133 counting the benefits
3 package.

4 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Point of
5 information.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: The
7 Chair recognizes Councilman Rizzo for a
8 point of information.

9 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: What's the
10 value of the benefit package?

11 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: I'm
12 sorry, Councilman.

13 Council President, I misspoke.
14 It's not counting packages. It's not
15 counting the benefits package. I'm
16 sorry.

17 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: What is the
18 value of the benefit package, just for
19 knowledge?

20 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: I'm
21 told between 25 and 40 percent is the
22 benefits package, the cost of each
23 employee.

24 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: So the value
25 of that job is 40, plus the benefit

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 package?

3 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: That
4 would be correct.

5 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you.

6 Thank you, Madam Chair.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

8 You're welcome.

9 Do we know who the three-panel
10 Board will be --

11 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: No.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: -- at
13 this point in time?

14 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: We
15 have not been told that. I believe the
16 way it's worded, it will be appointed by
17 the Mayor.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And
19 what will their payment be?

20 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Pardon
21 me, sir -- I'm sorry.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: What
23 will their salary be?

24 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: I
25 believe they get paid a hundred dollars a

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.
2 session.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And
4 you said they would work probably four
5 days a week?

6 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Yes.
7 And a session, I'm not sure what will
8 determine a session. I know what our
9 Zoning Board of Adjustment, a session,
10 there's a morning session and then
11 there's an afternoon and evening session.
12 So each separate session you get an
13 additional hundred dollars for. And I'm
14 not sure the hours we'll have this Board,
15 if evening hours will be needed at this
16 point.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
18 you.

19 You mention on Page 4 of your
20 testimony that L&I will construct planned
21 package demolitions of a smaller scale.
22 Please explain what this means and what
23 impact will City Council have in
24 determining these packages.

25 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: The

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 smaller scale -- with NTI, they did
3 packages of 60 to 100 in some cases. It
4 varied. What we mean by smaller packages
5 is two or three on a block.

6 And basically where the Council
7 involvement would be, that we always
8 notify Council offices when there's a
9 problem building in their area and, as I
10 said, especially in the case of your
11 office, we find out from Maryanne more
12 often than we do from ourselves. And we
13 would then see that there's additional
14 properties and we would find out -- try
15 to make sure there was no additional
16 plans for rehabilitation on that block,
17 and then treat the whole block in total.

18 The lesson of NTI would be to
19 treat it as not a cut and dry, it will be
20 demolished or it won't be demolished, but
21 how best to serve that block to make a
22 better product at the end of the day for
23 everybody.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: So
25 these demolitions in fact are not limited

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 to the imminently dangerous properties?

3 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: There
4 will be cases where we would treat
5 properties that are not imminently
6 dangerous, but obviously with the level
7 of funding, we would have to make sure
8 that we can treat the imminently
9 dangerous structures, as is everybody's
10 priority.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: All
12 right. Your department took a 2.5
13 percent reduction in Class 100 of
14 \$433,123. What is the position
15 equivalent of this reduction and what is
16 the operational impact to your
17 department?

18 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: The
19 impact would be nine positions, and we
20 intend to lose them through attrition,
21 not in any other way. One of the things
22 that started for the last several years
23 in the Department, when we have a
24 vacancy, we bring the manager -- and
25 since I've been Commissioner, myself, the

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.
2 Administrative Services Director and the
3 Deputy, and sometimes the manager will
4 call the person in and see do you really
5 need this position filled, because we
6 have completely revamped our department
7 with the new system, the new LICA system,
8 and can we put it better with an
9 inspector versus, say, a clerical or a
10 manager. And we put ourselves through
11 that on every person, every position we
12 hire.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: So of
14 the nine positions, how many inspectors
15 do you think there are?

16 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: I
17 would anticipate none.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: None?

19 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: No
20 inspectors. Council President, for the
21 last several years -- when I say
22 "several," probably going back to the
23 last eight years to ten years -- we have
24 made it a challenge, a personal
25 challenge, is to make sure that the

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 majority of the new positions that are
3 filled creating additional inspectors
4 that we didn't have before are in fact
5 either building inspectors or housing
6 inspectors.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: With
8 that being said, can you tell us the
9 number of field inspectors that you have
10 presently?

11 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: I'll
12 break it down between building and
13 housing.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: That
15 would be fine.

16 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: And
17 business compliance.

18 In our business compliance,
19 which is the inspectors who do the
20 vending and also some zoning enforcement,
21 there's 21 inspectors. In our commercial
22 and industrial, there's 15 inspectors.
23 Commercial/industrial does obviously fire
24 violations in high-rise buildings,
25 residential and also in commercial

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 buildings.

3 In our Housing Enforcement
4 Unit, we presently have 27, but I believe
5 April 23rd there will be a test that will
6 be announced, and we anticipate as soon
7 as we have a list from Civil Service, to
8 hire five more inspectors in our Housing
9 Division.

10 In our Weights and Measures
11 Unit, there's 11 --

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

13 Excuse me. And those five are in the
14 budget?

15 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Yes.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I'm
17 sorry. I didn't mean to interrupt you.

18 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: In our
19 Weights and Measures Unit, there's 11
20 positions that we have. There's 49 in
21 our Building Division. And as an
22 example, in Fiscal Year '97, there was
23 31. So I'm pretty proud of the fact that
24 we're able to build up our Building
25 Division the way we've been.

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You
3 say today you have?

4 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Pardon
5 me?

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Today
7 you have 40?

8 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: 49.

9 And I believe that takes care
10 of all the inspectional force.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Do
12 you believe that you have a sufficient
13 number of inspectors to meet the
14 Department's demand?

15 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: I
16 believe that if we continue to be
17 aggressive in filling vacancies with
18 inspectors, that, yes, we can meet the
19 Department's demand. We have been, and I
20 see no reason why we can't. With the
21 increase in the building activity in
22 Philadelphia, our inspectors have done a
23 tremendous job in staying on top of that,
24 and I've received compliments on the
25 amount of time, with as busy as our

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 district offices are with the
3 construction industry, it's taking to get
4 our inspectors to make an inspection.

5 And also, the Contractual Services Unit,
6 which is the imminently dangerous
7 building, is separate from the district's
8 where there are construction, and we've
9 kept that fully staffed. So I feel
10 comfortable that we can meet the demands.

11 In our operations in the
12 Housing Division, we're current in school
13 inspections. Every year we, as you're
14 aware, we give you a report. We're 100
15 percent the last few years. We just put
16 additional people in our special cares
17 inspection program to ensure that that's
18 fully 100 percent.

19 So we're pretty well poised to
20 go into the future with our workforce,
21 our trained workforce. And part of -- a
22 little bit of -- I don't want to call it
23 a problem, but a little bit, it's natural
24 when you go to a new system that you need
25 to spend more time on training. And with

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 all of our inspectors, we've had to give
3 them refresher courses on how to use the
4 new system, because we went from a 100
5 percent paper operation to completely
6 electronic. I mean, they get their
7 workload electronically, their building
8 permits, and it's just -- it's a totally
9 different -- I like a pencil and paper,
10 and now we have to pick our work up off a
11 computer.

12 So it's a lot of time we're
13 spending on training this workforce that
14 we have. But I'm comfortable that we can
15 carry out our mission.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: So
17 I'm getting from your testimony that if
18 you have vacancies, you have no problem
19 whatsoever in filling them almost
20 immediately?

21 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: If
22 there's a list. We've been always since
23 I've been Commissioner, we've been very
24 aggressive in making sure that we fill
25 our vacancies. Our problem is that like

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 with housing, there's no list right now
3 and we need to wait for the Civil Service
4 system to give us a list of people.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Well,
6 has the test been given?

7 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: It
8 will be given on the 23rd of April. And
9 I believe it takes about 30 days after
10 that, 30 to 40 days. End of the fiscal
11 year we should have a list that we can
12 hire people off of.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: So
14 how many vacancies do you have presently?

15 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Five.
16 Five in the Housing Division to fill.
17 And then with people retiring, there's
18 probably about three more that we will
19 sit down and decide where we want to put
20 these people.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: All
22 right. I received a letter actually
23 complimenting your department. However,
24 in the letter it says, All too often this
25 department is unable to immediately

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 inspect sites due to a shortage of
3 inspectors. As you know, time is of the
4 essence in catching contractors,
5 individuals or others in the act of
6 performing work without permits or
7 without proper oversight. And they talk
8 about a recent collapse on the 500 block
9 of Washington Avenue.

10 Now, do you have a shortage of
11 inspectors or not?

12 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: That
13 collapse -- a majority of these collapses
14 working without a permit goes on -- that
15 was a Saturday.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: There
17 was a permit?

18 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: There
19 was no permit.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: There
21 was no permit.

22 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: They
23 were working without a permit on a
24 Saturday when people -- people tend to do
25 that, work on days that they know the

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 City inspectors aren't available. But
3 what we do in the spring, in the
4 beginning of the spring and we'll do
5 throughout the summer is, on weekends
6 we'll put inspectors on overtime per
7 district to go out looking for people
8 working without a permit just to stop
9 things like that.

10 But as far as any kind of a
11 work without a permit, when we get that
12 call, we'll be out there right away. We
13 take that very seriously, because most of
14 the building failures that we hear about
15 and read about are because people are
16 working without a permit, which just it's
17 very serious. As a matter of fact, we
18 list the people who can pull permits on
19 our website now, people that have a
20 contractor's license. It's all available
21 on our website for anybody to see that
22 ABC Company is in fact licensed as a
23 contractor.

24 So, I mean, on weekends we're
25 not going to catch people working without

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 a permit normally unless in the
3 springtime and the summer we go out and
4 do the special inspection program.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Well,
6 what does the weather have to do with
7 inspections?

8 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Not
9 that it has anything to do with it, but
10 people tend -- in the springtime there's
11 more people doing it, so it's easier for
12 us to find the people.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Well,
14 apparently at this location in the 500
15 block of Washington Avenue the work was
16 being done without permits and
17 consequently the building collapsed. So
18 I think if we had inspectors -- you don't
19 have to have a full force of inspectors,
20 I'm sure, going around on weekends, but I
21 think that it doesn't matter whether it's
22 spring, summer, winter or fall. People
23 are doing work without permits.

24 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: And we
25 agree, and usually during the week we're

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 very aggressive. On weekends we have an
3 emergency duty inspector who is always on
4 call, and when called, we will go out and
5 stop the work. In this case, we were out
6 there before the building collapsed, but
7 it was too late because the damage was
8 already done by the contractor digging
9 lower than the foundation that was beside
10 him, which made the building fall.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
12 you.

13 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Fail.
14 I'm sorry.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I
16 don't want to dominate the hearing. I
17 see my colleagues have questions.

18 The Chair recognizes Councilman
19 Greenlee.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
21 you, Madam President.

22 Good morning, Commissioner.

23 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Good
24 morning.

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: If I can

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 just start out by thanking you for all
3 these years we've worked together in your
4 various titles and mine. You've always
5 been very helpful, and I appreciate that.

6 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: That's
7 why we're both gray now.

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE:
9 Absolutely.

10 First, you talk about the NTI
11 transition back to L&I and you mention a
12 couple of things, the dangerous
13 buildings, I think, and the clean and
14 seals. Are there other things that L&I
15 will now be doing again that NTI did?

16 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: We
17 always were a part of the NTI program.
18 The management of it and the interfacing
19 with Council was done out of the NTI
20 office, but as far as the inspections, we
21 still had all the powers of our
22 inspections and so forth. What will not
23 be in this will be the lot treatment.

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I was
25 going to ask about the lot.

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: We
3 will not have that money. There's
4 obviously not enough with the money to be
5 able to do the lots. But that's about
6 the only thing I can think of.

7 One of the things in-house what
8 I did was, working with Dominic Verdi,
9 was took five inspectors from the Housing
10 Division and put them in our Contractual
11 Services Unit to take away the complaints
12 of the vacant buildings from the 990
13 force and let them concentrate on the
14 occupied buildings and have this force of
15 people there available to us to do all
16 the inspection programs for vacant
17 buildings. And they'll work right with
18 the Demolition Unit hand in hand, and
19 that should work out rather well.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.
21 Talking about the inspections again and
22 the time frame, and I know it varies
23 according to caseload and all that kind
24 of thing, but often times what I used to
25 hear was that the original inspection

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 might be done reasonably quickly, but
3 sometimes the follow-up inspection would
4 take a while.

5 What kind of time frame do you
6 work on both in the original
7 inspection -- and I'm talking more about,
8 I guess, if there's such a thing as
9 ordinary violations, not the emergencies.

10 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: If
11 it's affecting you, it's never ordinary.

12 Basically, we attempt for --
13 I'll use dangerous buildings as an
14 example.

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: We may
17 receive a complaint on a dangerous
18 building and be out there in hours, if
19 not an hour or as soon as humanly
20 possible to get our inspector there. But
21 we attempt to do it the next working day.
22 If it's -- but on a weekend, we do have
23 an emergency duty inspector, and we have
24 no problem in sending the emergency duty
25 inspector to make sure that the building

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 is safe.

3 As I mentioned in my testimony,
4 we used to have a paper trail to get
5 inspectors out there, which was very
6 cumbersome. Now inspectors get their
7 workload electronically and enter the
8 work themselves electronically. So each
9 violation -- some violations are ten-day
10 notice to comply. There's 30 days and
11 then there's immediate time. So it
12 varies per inspection.

13 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: According
14 to the violation?

15 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE:
16 According to the violation. And the
17 inspectors as a whole always triage, and
18 the more critical inspections get done in
19 a more timely manner.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.
21 And I think you referenced in one of your
22 earlier statements about the inspectors
23 are now learning or the computer system
24 is working better. Because I know we
25 heard from -- I can think of one

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 inspector -- I won't mention his name --
3 who said, Geez, I don't even know how to
4 get the stuff for the reinspection. So
5 I'm waiting for it, but it hasn't come to
6 me on the computer.

7 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: You
8 have to understand that they went from
9 literally -- and I'm not exaggerating --
10 only using pencil, and a computer was
11 unheard of, to having computers they
12 carry with them.

13 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Right.

14 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: And
15 it's a whole -- and there's inspectors
16 that take to it that love it. They just
17 fall in love with it and have adopted it.
18 And there's inspectors, like anything
19 new, are taking longer to adjust.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Sure. I
21 understand.

22 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: And
23 what we've done is, Deputy Commissioner
24 Burns and Bridget Greenwald to my right
25 and left, who head up and were a major

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.
2 part of this to get us to become
3 computerized, we have set up where we
4 bring refresher training to our
5 inspectional force, and if you need it,
6 you want it, you'll get it, and we won't
7 criticize saying you already had it, you
8 don't need it anymore. As an example,
9 it's online. When inspectors go to the
10 first class they've ever been trained at,
11 we give them a booklet on how to use the
12 system. And then it's also online. If
13 they lose it, they can download it, plus
14 it's updated. If we find a better way to
15 do something, we instantly put it out to
16 the managers and bring our inspectors in
17 and train them.

18 So it's a matter, I think,
19 Councilman, of just getting our workforce
20 adjusted to this new modern -- we went
21 literally from the 18th century to the
22 21st century overnight. It's not an easy
23 task.

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: As
25 somebody who is not exactly a computer

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 techie, I can relate. I understand what
3 you're saying.

4 And the last part of that
5 inspection piece is when it gets to
6 enforcement, and a lot of that, I guess,
7 sometimes is court backlog. It's kind of
8 out of your hands, I guess.

9 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Well,
10 Municipal Court takes a good two months,
11 I believe, but that's all electronic now
12 too, whereas before it was paper and then
13 somebody entering it in. Now
14 electronically the inspector advances it
15 to the Municipal Court, and then there's
16 also Equity Court, which is controlled
17 obviously by the courts, and there's like
18 procedure to get notice to the owner.
19 And that takes a good 30 to 40, sometimes
20 50 days to get service.

21 So it really -- obviously L&I
22 gets blamed because we're the beginning
23 point, but when we turn it over to the
24 courts, we're at their mercy.

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: No. That

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 happens. I remember making that argument
3 to constituents many times.

4 Just a last comment. You talk
5 about the Concourse reconfiguration, and
6 I know that's something that we received
7 complaints about in the past a lot, about
8 people didn't quite know what they were
9 doing, where they were going, what line
10 they were standing in, all that kind of
11 thing. And I see in your statement that
12 you found that the customers are much
13 more happy with how it is now?

14 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: We
15 invite you all over. I'll give you a
16 personal tour. We made the front end
17 really nice where -- you're right.
18 People would wait in, let's say, license
19 issuance line for an hour and then find
20 out, no, you need to go to revenue.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Or
22 permits.

23 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: So now
24 you can't even get in. People complained
25 about the line to get in, but they forgot

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 that we saved them an hour in the wrong
3 line. And it's a lot nicer. Now our
4 goal is to get the back end where the
5 workers are in a more -- to make it more
6 professional for the engineers, and we're
7 working on that now. But it's a real
8 improvement in the front end. You can
9 get a number and come back in an hour and
10 hopefully we'll be ready for you then.

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Sounds
12 good. All right. Thank you,
13 Commissioner.

14 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Thank
15 you.

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
17 you, Madam President.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:
19 You're welcome.

20 The Chair recognizes Councilman
21 Rizzo.

22 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thank you,
23 Madam Chair.

24 Commissioner and the entire L&I
25 organization, I think you guys do a great

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 job.

3 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Thank
4 you.

5 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: When I first
6 came to Council, I got numerous
7 complaints, and it's rare today that I
8 even have to contact you to discuss a
9 constituent's concern. So I think you
10 guys do a great job.

11 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Thank
12 you.

13 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: I got a
14 question. Recently we realized that we
15 were supposed to be -- the patrol of the
16 roadways, the State Police now do that.
17 Is there anything that the state does in
18 the County of Philadelphia that you're
19 doing now that a state agency should be
20 doing? I think elevators, aren't
21 elevators inspected by the state?

22 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Yes.

23 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Is there
24 anything else like that that you do that
25 you could point to and say, We shouldn't

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.
2 be doing this, that it's really a state
3 responsibility?

4 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: The
5 state does boilers and we don't. I'd
6 have to give that some thought and get
7 back to Council President. I'm really
8 not sure what else the state would do. I
9 mean, they are responsible for elevators,
10 which sometimes causes us problems in
11 issuing a Certificate of Occupancy,
12 because they're the only ones that can
13 certify the elevators, handicap
14 accessible, and we can't issue a
15 temporary CO even without that being done
16 by the state. But I'd have to give it
17 some thought and get back to you.

18 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: In other
19 words, what we're doing is, we're looking
20 at opportunities with the tight budget,
21 if there are things like whatever we're
22 doing, like we patrolled the Expressway
23 for all these 40 years and now we realize
24 that -- we always realized that we
25 weren't getting our fair share there.

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 So if you could come up with
3 anything else that you believe that the
4 state should be doing that you're doing
5 and spending your money to do it when
6 it's really a state responsibility, I
7 think getting it to the Chair would be
8 appreciated.

9 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: I will
10 do that. I'll go back in my staff
11 meeting to discuss it with my staff and
12 we'll give the Council President a list.

13 COUNCILMAN RIZZ0: The other
14 question, tell me about -- it's
15 interesting. I can always tell when
16 somebody is preparing to do some work at
17 their home. On a Thursday when the
18 dumpster shows up, it's a real signal to
19 me that something is about to happen.

20 Tell me about the proactive
21 work that inspectors do. Do inspectors
22 ride down the street on a Thursday, see a
23 dumpster at the curb and that being a
24 signal to the inspector that obviously
25 they're not cleaning -- they may be

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 cleaning out the attic, but there may be
3 some construction going on. Do they ever
4 check to see if there's a permit?

5 I remember the days -- and I
6 guess it still occurs -- where the
7 inspector on the street was the one that
8 really kind of kept an eye on their area
9 to make sure that things weren't
10 occurring without permits.

11 How proactive are the
12 inspectors to -- and I don't want to use
13 the word "police" their area, but do the
14 inspectors physically look for what I
15 just described, the dumpster out front,
16 meaning that there's something cooking
17 there?

18 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: In two
19 ways, Councilman. The inspector who has
20 the district, it's his or her area -- and
21 note I said "her," because now we have at
22 least, I believe, two or three female
23 building inspectors, which we never had
24 before, which I'm very proud to be able
25 to say. They have it on their computer

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 if there's a permit, so they'll know
3 instantly if there's a permit that
4 they'll be able to do the work there,
5 because their wireless connection.

6 We also have a new class of
7 inspectors called inspector trainee,
8 where under the State Code you need to
9 pass certain modules to become a
10 full-fledged building inspector. So what
11 we do is hire inspector trainees who need
12 to within 18 months need to pass nine
13 certs, plumbing, electrical, plans
14 review, to stay on the job permanently,
15 and while they're in the trainee status,
16 we use them to go out and check sites for
17 just that, working without a permit, are
18 you licensed, things like that. It's
19 very effective, that force. And also the
20 inspector who has the district, as I
21 said, has it electronically if there's a
22 permit or not. So, yes, we do have a
23 program for that.

24 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Good.

25 My last question or

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 observation, as you know, we have a
3 dumpster regulation now in the City of
4 Philadelphia. L&I has a piece of it and
5 I believe the Streets Department has it,
6 but in my travels throughout the City,
7 especially Center City, I've noticed a
8 lot of dumpsters that are parked at
9 meters, that are dumped at meters, that
10 are in no parking zones. One particular
11 recently, I was at an event where the
12 dumpster was obstructing the view of the
13 people that are coming out of the street.

14 And, again, I don't expect you
15 to have all the knowledge of what the law
16 is in reference to placing a dumpster in
17 the City of Philadelphia, but could you
18 just briefly tell us what exactly is
19 required if you bring a dumpster to your
20 location, especially in the inner city,
21 that they need to be licensed, et cetera.

22 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: One of
23 the things to be proactive I recently
24 did, Center City District, I sent them a
25 list of all the dumpsters that are

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 licensed dumpsters in the Center City
3 area, and we'll use them to go out and
4 make sure that the dumpsters that are
5 there are in fact licensed. As for the
6 other part, we'll have to get back to you
7 through the Council President and the
8 members of Council as to what would be
9 legally. But as my memory serves me, you
10 need to have it on your property. You
11 can't have it outside the property. So
12 somehow the dumpster has to be there on
13 your property, a location that needs to
14 be licensed.

15 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Well,
16 Commissioner, I think you will probably
17 agree with me that when you do travel our
18 city, you see, especially in Center
19 City -- and I'm not suggesting --
20 probably it's very difficult to do
21 construction in Center City without
22 having dumpsters, but I've been in
23 situations at night where you're coming
24 in a running lane, an actual operating
25 lane, and there's a dumpster left, no

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.
2 lights on them, no reflective material,
3 no cover on it. The material is,
4 especially with this wind, blowing out of
5 it.

6 I would appreciate it that you
7 could reconvene -- and I think the other
8 partner in this is the Streets
9 Department -- to really if we have a
10 regulation on the way dumpsters are
11 supposed to be placed, that it really be
12 revisited, especially -- most of the
13 material that was in the dumpster at
14 Sydenham and Locust or one of those
15 streets, the material was blowing down
16 Locust Street because it didn't have any
17 cover on it during this wind.

18 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: I will
19 make sure that we do that. I will call
20 Commissioner Tolson and ask her to have
21 Dave Perri, who used to be with L&I as
22 our Chief Code Official, now is the
23 engineer for the Bridge Division and also
24 traffic, work with us on that to make
25 sure that we're doing between both.

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 I know that Streets Department
3 makes it pretty easy on somebody to get
4 their license, because it's free. It's a
5 free permit to have a dumpster on the
6 street. They just want you to apply.
7 But we'll figure out for the enforcement
8 and get back to you on that.

9 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: A free
10 permit in the City of Philadelphia?

11 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Yeah.
12 It's not L&I. We don't do anything for
13 free.

14 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Nothing for
15 free. But that's interesting to know. I
16 guess we'll have to put that on the list
17 of these to look at after the initial
18 go-around. I didn't know there was
19 anything for free.

20 So that would be appreciated,
21 because, again, the dumpsters need some
22 management.

23 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE:
24 Absolutely.

25 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thanks

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 again, and, again, congratulations on the
3 good work that your organization
4 provides. Thanks.

5 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Thank
6 you very much, your kind words.

7 COUNCILMAN RIZZO: Thanks,
8 Madam Chair.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:
10 You're welcome.

11 The Chair recognizes
12 Councilwoman Miller.

13 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank
14 you, Madam President.

15 Good morning, Mr. Solvibile and
16 staff.

17 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Good
18 morning, Councilwoman.

19 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I have
20 just a couple of questions. One of my
21 staff members wants to know can we get
22 read-only access to the new L&I
23 violations database?

24 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: We're
25 working that out, because we just

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 completed the total system, the last
3 phase of it, at the end of January and
4 now we're looking to do read-only access
5 to not just Council but to other City
6 departments. It comes to mind L&I and
7 Fire work hand in hand on enforcement of
8 the Fire Code and we want to be able to
9 get to the point where I would love -- I
10 don't know how soon we could do that, but
11 a fire truck going to a scene, be able to
12 look up on the computer that our
13 inspectors have, the same type of thing,
14 what's there. And it would be, again,
15 read-only access.

16 So we're working on that and
17 should have an answer shortly, and we'll
18 notify -- we'll have the read-only
19 access. When we're capable of getting on
20 everybody's system, we can have it
21 installed.

22 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: How long
23 do you think that will be or how soon?

24 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: A
25 month or two. We're that close. We

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 think we're that close.

3 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

4 That's good.

5 I think L&I does a good job and
6 I also want to thank you, but I just want
7 to discuss a little bit about the fact
8 that L&I is going to take over the NTI
9 activities, correct, according to your
10 testimony?

11 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Yes.
12 We're taking over best practices of the
13 NTI program and the L&I program and
14 combining both best practices, and it
15 will be managed through L&I through our
16 Contractual Services Unit, which has been
17 involved with NTI from day one.

18 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: So does
19 that mean we won't be meeting with the
20 Managing Director's Office and NTI to
21 create the demolition packages? I mean,
22 how will this change?

23 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Well,
24 the packages -- there's \$10 million in
25 our budget, and the packages will be

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 smaller. NTI packages, I remember one in
3 your area, it was like 80, I believe.

4 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Right.

5 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Around
6 Temple Medical School.

7 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Right,
8 Tioga.

9 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: And
10 the days of having an 80 package will not
11 come back as far as this budget is
12 concerned. It will be smaller packages.
13 Like I told Council President Verna,
14 we'll go to a street with an imminently
15 dangerous building and there might be
16 other things that need to be done on that
17 street, maybe a building sealed or
18 another building demolished, and we'll
19 treat the block more in total of a total
20 concept than just dealing with the
21 imminently dangerous building and walking
22 away from it.

23 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: But who
24 will Councilpersons actually deal with on
25 the demolition, whether it's a small

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 package? It's now going to be L&I and
3 not NTI or MDO?

4 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Yes.

5 It will be L&I working with the same
6 people we've always -- with the Managing
7 Director, the community groups,
8 Councilpeople and doing the best job to
9 make it as safe as possible for everybody
10 and to treat the block wholly versus
11 individually.

12 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Well, I
13 think that the approach for doing
14 whatever needs to be done on a block is
15 really good. You just said that if a
16 house needs to be demolished, that will
17 happen, but if one needs to be clean and
18 sealed, that will also happen, and that's
19 really good, because then we don't have
20 to call you back and say, Can you clean
21 and seal this house.

22 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: It
23 makes us look like we -- it makes us all
24 look like we care about that block, which
25 we all do, except we just looked at it

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 with sort of blinders before. Now we'll
3 look at the whole block.

4 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Well,
5 that's really good.

6 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: And
7 one of the things that our Clean and Seal
8 that I'm pretty proud of, since I've been
9 involved with and charged with Clean and
10 Seal, which is for the last ten years, if
11 they go to a block, they'll even sweep
12 the street if they need to. If it looks
13 totally out of place, they'll -- and the
14 workers really feel good about this,
15 because you can leave and it looks better
16 than when they got there. They just
17 won't deal with the one house. They'll
18 deal with -- if there's a house next
19 door, they'll deal with both.

20 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.
21 Well, that's really good.

22 This Decision Maps, can you
23 tell me what that is exactly? I know it
24 has something to do with the database of
25 vacant properties, but what is this

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 Decision Map?

3 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: I'm
4 going to ask Deputy Commissioner Burns to
5 answer that, because she's been in the
6 forefront of that.

7 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER BURNS: Hi.
9 Good morning. My name is Fran Burns.
10 I'm Deputy Commissioner for
11 Administration for the Department of L&I.

12 We actually -- and this is one
13 of the practices we adopted from NTI, is
14 the use of data to identify vacant
15 property, and NTI actually used this
16 practice at the very beginning of the
17 program. And since then, they've worked
18 with the consultant and MOIS, the Mayor's
19 Office of Information Services, to
20 develop a prototype that uses data across
21 departments, and I'll give you an
22 example, to identify vacant properties.
23 So we're using different indicators, like
24 real estate tax liens, water revenue
25 liens, water service termination,

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.
2 electricity termination, building
3 violations, our vacant properties, vacant
4 lots, our permits for rehabilitation and
5 permits for demolitions. And what the
6 mapping does is, it takes each of these
7 indicators, layers them in a GIS model
8 and gives you a map at the end that says,
9 Okay, this is the area of the City that
10 has the highest density of vacant
11 properties. And then what we're going to
12 do through L&I is say, Okay, we're going
13 to send our inspectors to that area, and
14 we'll confirm by an actual foot, an
15 inspector, that those properties are
16 vacant and then make decisions on
17 resources based on that.

18 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: And
19 that's one of the things that the map
20 is -- when the first days of NTI and I
21 saw the first map, they used a brown
22 color, and then it would lighten -- and
23 I'm sure you've all seen them in your
24 decision meetings that they had. It's
25 really an effective way of bringing you

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 right to where you want to be and putting
3 your inspectors in the right place.

4 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I do
5 remember the maps, but I guess I just
6 never realized it was called Decision
7 Maps. If we wanted to use that now to
8 see -- because sometimes I get a feel
9 that we really don't know, at least my
10 office really doesn't know, where the
11 majority of vacant properties are that
12 were not demolished, just for planning
13 purposes.

14 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: That's
15 the reason we -- in a meeting that I had
16 with the Managing Director when we first
17 started talking about the transition of
18 the process to L&I, it's the first thing
19 we wanted to work on, was the Decision
20 Mapping. So just for the reason we'll
21 know what's out there, we'll know our
22 volume of work that we need to go forward
23 to work on.

24 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Is L&I
25 going to have someone go back through the

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 neighborhoods like they did in the very
3 beginning of NTI?

4 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Yeah.

5 I envision to go to the most densely
6 populated area and look at that first and
7 then span out and then, at the same time,
8 I think to go to the areas on the fringes
9 and look at them, because as you and I,
10 we all know, if we can stop one vacant
11 and be pretty forceful, then we won't
12 create another vacant next door to it.

13 It's going to be a challenge,
14 but it's something that we never really
15 had the availability of before. That's
16 why the term "Decision Map" is really
17 better than calling it a list of all the
18 vacants. We'll be able to do just that,
19 to go to areas that are -- if we see a
20 block that's one dot and everything else
21 occupied, we'll want to go there first to
22 make sure that we treat that house
23 properly and make sure that it's Code
24 compliant. Because keep in mind, there's
25 Councilman DiCicco's doors and windows

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 ordinance that Council passed where if
3 the block is more than 80 percent
4 occupied, our inspectors would write
5 "order doors and windows" on the property
6 versus just sealing it up.

7 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: You don't
8 mention curbsides in your testimony, so
9 I'm assuming it's just going to remain
10 the same for emergencies?

11 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Well,
12 the advancement we made, we brought in
13 some additional training for the
14 inspectors, the building inspectors in
15 the Department who would write the
16 violation of imminently dangerous, to
17 have them realize that the word
18 "imminently dangerous" means that a
19 building is in a state of imminent
20 collapse and if anything declared
21 imminently dangerous will be treated, not
22 just written up and then reinspected 30
23 days later. We send out a notice
24 immediately as soon as the return mail
25 comes back. In most cases the return

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 mail, if it's an off address, we'll then
3 curbside the property, whereas before we
4 didn't work that aggressive with them.

5 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: One of
6 the things that drives me a little bit
7 nuts in my district is the fact that
8 speculators are buying properties,
9 whether there's a lot or dwelling, and
10 then they go wherever it is they go and
11 they just leave the property. They don't
12 cut the grass. They won't do anything.
13 And so I thought maybe we needed a bill
14 to do stronger enforcement, but everybody
15 seems to think that we have laws in place
16 that can deal with these abandoned newly
17 purchased properties or lots.

18 What can we do? I mean, what
19 do we need to do to make them stop these
20 Code violations on these properties?

21 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: More
22 intense enforcement. The reason that,
23 talking with staff, that we took five
24 inspectors and put them in contractual
25 services, they will inspect only building

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 or outside violations, nuisance type
3 violations, to allow the rest of the
4 inspectors at 990 to concentrate on the
5 occupied buildings. And we'll even do
6 some occupied buildings, but just the
7 outside, with this group of five, just to
8 really be proactive in letting people
9 know you got to take care of your
10 property, period. We're not going to
11 take your nonsense.

12 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Well,
13 that's --

14 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: But
15 the Property Maintenance Code all covers
16 the type of violations you just
17 mentioned. There wouldn't really be a
18 need for additional.

19 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Well,
20 then maybe we can get some of them in
21 Equity Court, because this is really a
22 problem. It's really a big problem in my
23 district. It seems like people have
24 purchased these properties and lots that
25 don't live in Philadelphia, so they don't

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.
2 really know what they were purchasing and
3 where, and now they're just sitting. No
4 one is buying them. They're just
5 sitting, and no one provides the
6 maintenance to them. And I hate calling
7 the City all the time to ask them to come
8 and clean the lot when, clearly, there is
9 an owner.

10 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: I
11 agree, but keep in mind that every time
12 we clean that lot, we'll put a lien on
13 it, and the lien is like a first
14 mortgage. We get that money. As I sign
15 off on a lot of buildings that we clean
16 and sealed 20 years ago because of the
17 development going on in the City, that
18 people are paying them bills. It's all
19 coming home to roost.

20 So eventually we get ours. It
21 might take a while, but we get it. I
22 mean, it's there. It's the first lien.
23 And our interface with Revenue really
24 works well, and that happens almost
25 automatically.

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

3 All right. Thank you.

4 Thank you, Madam President.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

6 You're welcome.

7 The Chair recognizes

8 Councilwoman Blackwell.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
10 you, Madam President.

11 Like everyone else, I would
12 like to thank L&I for performing all the
13 miracles they do, and we know they
14 really, really try to address all the
15 miracles citywide. And I heard
16 Councilman Rizzo talking about dumpsters,
17 and I think citywide that's just become
18 an issue, and we've been calling, because
19 I think they can get -- I think they get
20 permission for a year by the Streets
21 Department, isn't it?

22 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Well,
23 yes, the Streets Department to be in the
24 highway. And I'm going to go back and do
25 some research and we'll give you -- we'll

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 give Council President and a copy to
3 members of Council a briefing on how that
4 system works.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: What
6 we've been doing is -- because at one
7 time I called in four or five at once a
8 few months ago, and Deputy Commissioner
9 Williams went and told the people
10 straighten up or else, when it comes time
11 for renewal, we won't renew it. So
12 that's how we've been trying to deal with
13 that, because I know it is an issue. And
14 I have an issue with Brad Ingerman. I
15 hope he knows I'm talking about him.
16 Brad Ingerman at 55th and Christian, who
17 has just decided to leave -- he moved the
18 dumpster from behind the property in
19 front of it on the sidewalk across from a
20 rec center, and he keeps trashing garbage
21 all over the place all the time, and
22 every blue moon I'll beg somebody to
23 clean it up for me, who won't do it, not
24 even when I've talked to him.

25 So I know that it can be a

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 problem, but that's what we've been
3 doing, trying to get Deputy Commissioner
4 Carlton Williams to deal with him and
5 threaten him and threaten to -- I guess
6 they can clean it up and lien him in that
7 area, too.

8 Anyhow, they have --

9 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: I'm
10 not sure how they do it, but I'm sure --

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: But
12 anyhow, that's what we've been doing,
13 reporting him, and it seems to be better
14 at least.

15 But I really wanted to take the
16 mike to thank you for all the miracles
17 you perform. We know we call you every
18 day, and we want to do better, but
19 obviously the people who approach us all
20 the time don't make that possible. But
21 thank you very much.

22 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Thank
23 you. It's what helps keeps us young, all
24 the input we get from Council.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 you.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: The
4 Chair recognizes Councilman Kelly.

5 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Thank you,
6 Madam Chair.

7 Good morning, Commissioner.

8 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Good
9 morning, Councilman.

10 COUNCILMAN KELLY: First of
11 all, let me just follow Councilwoman
12 Blackwell in thanking you for all the
13 hard work that you and your staff have
14 done throughout the City. I know working
15 with my office you've done wonders. And
16 I see Commissioner Verdi there, who has
17 also worked on numerous problems that
18 we've had from constituents.

19 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Thank
20 you.

21 COUNCILMAN KELLY: I also want
22 to commend you on the development of the
23 EZ Permits. It seems to me that that's
24 the way to go. It would help in your
25 backlog. That's something -- I don't

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 know how long you have had that. How
3 long have you had that system?

4 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: About
5 two years, Councilman, and we're
6 looking -- we have a little piece of --
7 they call it a portal, a portal into our
8 system, and we'll soon be able to issue
9 plumbing and electrical permits that do
10 not require a plan online, and even if
11 they require a plan, they can drop the
12 plan off and then apply online.

13 Our Permit Manager, Mr. Murray,
14 who is full of Vim and Vinegar and a lot
15 younger than I am, is working on training
16 our frequent users that bring plans to
17 the Department, to have a drop-off for
18 them where you take this training from
19 Mr. Murray and then you can just leave
20 your plans there and then we'll get back
21 to you in the same amount of time than if
22 you had waited in line.

23 Our goal is to put everything
24 online that we possibly can as soon as we
25 can. That ongoing will be the

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 Department's goal with this new system we
3 have.

4 COUNCILMAN KELLY: As you, I'm
5 sure, are aware, we have too many City
6 Halls. We have one in North Philadelphia
7 and one in Northeast Philadelphia. Do
8 you have any plans to reinstate the L&I
9 services at these facilities?

10 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Not at
11 the present time. Everything you can do
12 in a mini City Hall I believe that
13 involves L&I, you can do online. It was
14 a simpler service there. So at the
15 present time, we have no plans to staff
16 the two mini City Halls.

17 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Well, let me
18 just say that there have been numerous
19 people, especially small businesses and
20 whatnot, that really relied on that
21 service in those facilities and I think
22 they're greatly missed, and that would be
23 something that I would like you to really
24 look at in the future.

25 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: We

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 will.

3 COUNCILMAN KELLY: I don't see
4 anything wrong in having a person
5 assigned there possibly two days in North
6 Philadelphia and two days in Northeast
7 and the following day in MSB. I think
8 that would help greatly, and I think that
9 would help you reduce the backlog in MSB.

10 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: We
11 will look into it, Councilman. Thank
12 you.

13 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Okay. Could
14 you tell me about the accelerated
15 processing of permits? What's the
16 difference in the amount of time an
17 applicant receives on that?

18 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: With
19 an accelerated permit, the applicant will
20 have an answer within ten working days.

21 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Within?

22 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Ten
23 working days. The regular process I
24 believe is 30 days, 30 working days,
25 which is obviously more --

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 COUNCILMAN KELLY: What's the
3 cost of an accelerated permit?

4 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: The
5 cost of the overtime for the examiner,
6 it's about -- it's 540 for the first four
7 hours.

8 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Okay. And
9 you're still sticking to that?

10 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: And
11 \$420 for a zoning review in an
12 accelerated --

13 COUNCILMAN KELLY: So the
14 accelerated permit would take you roughly
15 about ten days then, two weeks?

16 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE:
17 Roughly ten. I mean --

18 COUNCILMAN KELLY: I'm not
19 trying to keep it -- I mean, it could go
20 longer.

21 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: I
22 understand. I'm hoping I'm saying the
23 right thing here, but I'm pretty sure I
24 am, because I experience it every day.

25 They do a really great job

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 downstairs in our Concourse. It's sort
3 of like a MASH unit that you see the MASH
4 show on television. They bring a
5 professional atmosphere to a very busy
6 place and they do a really good job.

7 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Madam
8 President, did you address the billboards
9 issue?

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: No.

11 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Was that
12 addressed already?

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: No,
14 it was not.

15 COUNCILMAN KELLY: I just
16 wanted to get back to something in
17 previous hearings that we've had here on
18 the issue of permits for billboards. I
19 know there's quite a lot of them that
20 were put up throughout the City that did
21 not have permits. I was just wondering
22 if you were still involved in trying to
23 find out what billboards have permits and
24 which ones don't, and if they don't, what
25 type of activity are you going to do to

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 remove them.

3 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: The
4 eight sheets, the littler signs on the
5 side of a building, at this point in time
6 are about -- they're all down. They're
7 all down. As to the billboards, this
8 year under an agreement reached with the
9 Law Department, we've received \$770,850
10 in revenue from the licensing of
11 billboards, which -- and basically --

12 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Is that
13 still voluntary?

14 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: No.

15 COUNCILMAN KELLY: In previous
16 hearings we heard that companies were
17 just voluntarily sending money for these
18 permits.

19 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Well,
20 and previously there was a lot of
21 litigation, whereas this agreement, this
22 legal agreement that the Law Department
23 really needs to speak to because it's
24 beyond my capability to explain it
25 properly, basically it enforces the

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 Council's will that they pay their
3 license and get it, whereas before there
4 was court opinions that they may not need
5 a license. And now this is an agreement
6 between all parties that, yes, they will
7 have this license and will pay it to the
8 City.

9 COUNCILMAN KELLY: So, in other
10 words, in your opinion, all of the
11 billboards that exist in Philadelphia
12 will have or should have permits?

13 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Yes.
14 And if they are proven to not be legal,
15 then we can order them down. And there's
16 criteria in the agreement that if it --
17 if they can prove that they had a permit
18 at one point in time for that billboard,
19 then it would remain, under the
20 agreement. If they can't, they would be
21 ordered to remove it.

22 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Okay.

23 Thank you, Madam President.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Is
25 some of the billboard issues still under

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 litigation?

3 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: I'm
4 not sure at all, Council President. I
5 thought that it was resolved with this
6 agreement, but we'll have to get back to
7 you on that. I'm not sure if there's
8 still a litigation involved.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:
10 Councilman Greenlee.

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: The best
12 of my memory, I think most of the
13 companies have agreed, but I think
14 there's like ten percent of the companies
15 that are not in this agreement.

16 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: That's
17 accurate, but who they are, I'm not at
18 all sure who -- the majority of the
19 billboard owners or the sign faces, as we
20 call them, are part of the agreement.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And then
22 there was the counter lawsuit against the
23 agreement. So I don't know where that
24 stands now.

25 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: But to

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.
2 say that I'm aware of any more
3 litigation, I'm really not at all sure.
4 And the whole --

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I
6 think I recall what you said.

7 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Yeah.

8 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: The
9 part that I'm happiest about is we got
10 rid of the eight sheets, because they are
11 eye graffiti all throughout our
12 neighborhoods in Philadelphia and it was
13 horrendous, and that's all gone now.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And
15 what is the cost of the permit? I mean,
16 I think we had set a certain fee. I
17 think it was \$600, but I think when they
18 went to court --

19 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Are
20 you talking about the license for the
21 billboard, the sign face?

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Yes.

23 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: One
24 hundred fifty per sign face. In other
25 words, some poles have three or two or

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 just one. It's 150 per sign face.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: And
4 you said we generated how much as a
5 result of action taken?

6 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Seven
7 hundred and eighty thousand, eight
8 hundred and fifty dollars this fiscal
9 year in licenses for billboards.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
11 you.

12 Are there any other questions
13 from members of the Committee?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:
16 Commissioner, a little bird whispered in
17 my ear a little earlier that this will
18 probably be your last budget hearing. I
19 am told that you're on DROP and you'll be
20 going out in August.

21 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Yes.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: I
23 guess you have mixed emotions about that.

24 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: I do.
25 I really do. I get emotional. Right now

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.
2 when you said that, I got all -- that's
3 why I didn't mention it in my testimony,
4 because I didn't want to like feel stern.
5 But it would have been 36 years this
6 September. I'll leave almost at 36
7 years. And as you know, your father and
8 my father worked together. It's just so
9 many fine memories of this place that is
10 just unbelievable, coming here as a kid
11 and now as an adult. It's a good
12 feeling.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:
14 Great. We certainly want to wish you the
15 best of luck.

16 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Thank
17 you.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Our
19 next department?

20 You might as well stay where
21 you are, Commissioner.

22 MR. McPHERSON: Board of L&I
23 Review.

24 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: This
25 is the first time an L&I Commissioner is

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 reading this testimony. It's usually
3 somebody else.

4 Good morning, Council President
5 Verna and members of Council. I am
6 Robert D. Solvibile, Commissioner of the
7 Department of License and Inspections. I
8 appreciate the opportunity to present the
9 Board of License and Inspection Review's
10 Fiscal Year 2008 Operating Budget
11 request.

12 The Board of License and
13 Inspection Review is requesting a total
14 Fiscal Year '08 budget of \$224,705 in the
15 City's General Fund. For the General
16 Fund breakout, we are requesting \$198,108
17 in Class 100, \$25,969 in Class 200 and
18 \$628 in Class 300.

19 The General Fund budget
20 represents an increase of \$7,620 from
21 Fiscal Year '07 estimated obligations.
22 The Fiscal Year '08 request will fund
23 three full-time General Fund positions,
24 comparable to the Fiscal Year '07
25 authorized General Fund position level.

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 Thank you. I will be happy to
3 answer any questions you may have.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank
5 you very much.

6 Commissioner, was the Board of
7 L&I Review assessed the 2.5 percent
8 general reduction?

9 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: No.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank
11 you. I have no further questions.

12 Any questions from members of
13 the Committee?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna:
16 Seeing none, I thank you.

17 MR. McPHERSON: Board of
18 Building Standards.

19 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Good
20 morning, Council President Verna and
21 members of Council. I am Robert
22 Solvibile, Commissioner of the Department
23 of License and Inspections. I appreciate
24 the opportunity to present the Board of
25 Building Standards' Fiscal Year 2008

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 Operating Budget request.

3 The Board of Building Standards
4 is requesting a total Fiscal Year '08
5 budget of \$112,792 in the City's General
6 Fund. For the General Fund breakout, we
7 are requesting \$112,733 in Class 100 and
8 \$59 in Class 200.

9 The General Fund budget
10 represents an increase of \$4,336 from our
11 '07 estimated obligations. The Fiscal
12 Year '08 request will fund two full-time
13 General Fund positions, comparable to the
14 '07 authorized General Fund position
15 level.

16 Thank you. I will be happy to
17 answer any questions you may have.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
19 you very much.

20 Commissioner, has the Board of
21 Building Standards been assessed the 2.5
22 percent general reduction?

23 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: No,
24 Council President.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 you. I have no further questions.

3 Are there any questions from
4 members of the Committee?

5 (No response.)

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

7 Seeing no one, I thank you very much.

8 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Thank
9 you.

10 MR. MCPHERSON: The Zoning
11 Board of Adjustment.

12 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Good
13 morning, Council President Verna and
14 members of Council. I am Robert
15 Solvibile, Commissioner of the Department
16 of License and Inspections. I appreciate
17 the opportunity to present the Zoning
18 Board of Adjustment's Fiscal Year 2008
19 Operating Budget request.

20 The Zoning Board of Adjustment
21 is requesting a total Fiscal Year '08
22 budget of \$450,313 in the City's General
23 Fund. For the General Fund breakout, we
24 are requesting \$402,272 in Class 100 and
25 \$48,041 in Class 200.

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 The General Fund budget
3 represents an increase of \$5,554 from
4 Fiscal Year '07 estimated obligations.
5 The Fiscal Year '08 will fund five
6 full-time General Fund positions,
7 comparable to the '07 authorized General
8 Fund position level.

9 Thank you. I will be happy to
10 answer any questions you have.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:
12 Commissioner, the Zoning Board of
13 Adjustment was assessed the 2.5 General
14 Fund reduction. What is the value of
15 this reduction and its operational
16 impact? It would appear to me it's
17 something like \$10,000.

18 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: We
19 don't have a -- initially with the
20 computerization, it won't have an impact
21 on any processing that the Zoning Board
22 of Adjustment does. Also, I'm told the
23 reduction is \$10,315, is the reduction
24 you're asking for. We feel that we'll be
25 able to make that up with the

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 productivity gained by the new system.

3 As an example, when I go on my system

4 now, I'll see that there's an appeal to

5 whatever Board it's appealed to, whereas

6 before I had to go over and ask some poor

7 lady to find it. It's right there in

8 front of me now, whereas before it never

9 was. It's shared by anybody in the

10 Department now, which creates a lot less

11 productivity for the unit there.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
13 you.

14 Are there any further questions
15 from members of the Committee?

16 (No response.)

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

18 Seeing none, thank you very much.

19 COMMISSIONER SOLVIBILE: Thank
20 you, and have a great day.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: You
22 do the same.

23 MR. MCPHERSON: The next
24 department is the Water Department.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Good

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 morning, Commissioner. Please identify
3 yourself for the record. And before you
4 start your testimony, I would ask you to
5 be kind enough to abbreviate what you
6 have given us. The written testimony
7 will be given to the stenographer and it
8 will be transcribed in full.

9 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Thank
10 you, Madam President. I will cut it
11 down.

12 Good afternoon, President Verna
13 and members of City Council. I am
14 Bernard Brunwasser, Water Commissioner,
15 appearing before you today to testify on
16 behalf of the Philadelphia Water
17 Department's FY08 Operating Budget
18 request. On my left is Deputy
19 Commissioner for Finance and
20 Administration, Joseph Clare, and on my
21 right is Deputy Commissioner for
22 Operations, Debra McCarty.

23 Our proposal for the Water
24 Department budget of \$403.5 million is
25 augmented by an additional \$300.5 million

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 for other Water Fund activities,
3 including the Water Revenue Bureau, debt
4 service and central agency support, for a
5 total of \$704 million.

6 Although the proposed FY08
7 total Water Fund Operating Budget of 704
8 million is 160.8 million higher than our
9 FY07 appropriation, it is important to
10 note that 131 million of this total is
11 accounted for by a \$125 million transfer
12 of funds from the Water Department's Debt
13 Service Reserve Fund to the Operating
14 Budget and six million to pay for the
15 cost of surety bonds and other costs
16 related to the surety substitution.

17 These bond proceeds will
18 eventually be deposited in the Water
19 Residual Fund's Special Infrastructure
20 Account, as previously approved by City
21 Council under Bill 060005, to acquire or
22 construct water and sewer infrastructure
23 projects that are consistent with the
24 City's New River City economic
25 development initiative. When this

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 one-time transaction is excluded, the
3 increase in the Water Fund's total FY08
4 Operating Budget as compared to the FY07
5 budget is \$29.8 million, or 5.5 percent.

6 As you know, the Philadelphia
7 Water Department is a municipal utility
8 serving the citizens of the Philadelphia
9 region by providing integrated water,
10 wastewater and storm water services. Our
11 primary mission is to operate and
12 maintain the infrastructure necessary to
13 provide high-quality affordable drinking
14 water; to protect the public health; to
15 provide an adequate and reliable water
16 supply for all residential, business and
17 public needs; and to sustain and enhance
18 the region's watersheds and quality of
19 life by managing wastewater and storm
20 water effectively.

21 The Water Department operates
22 three drinking water treatment plants,
23 processing an average of 258 million
24 gallons of treated drinking water each
25 day; three wastewater treatment plants,

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.
2 cleaning an average of 430 million
3 gallons per day of sewage -- that went to
4 over one billion yesterday or the day
5 before, I should say -- a biosolids
6 recycling facility; a sophisticated
7 testing laboratory; and a range of
8 customer service, technical and
9 administrative support services. In
10 addition, the Department maintains more
11 than 3,100 miles of water mains, more
12 than 3,500 miles of sewer, 79,000 storm
13 water inlets, 26,000 fire hydrants and
14 extensive related infrastructure. The
15 Water Revenue Bureau of the Department of
16 Revenue provides support for water and
17 sewer billings and collections for the
18 utility.

19 Philadelphia's drinking water
20 is safer than ever, substantially better
21 than state and local regulations for
22 purity require. Philadelphians have
23 recognized the improvements in service
24 provided by the Water Department, and our
25 most recent citizen survey results show

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 an 81 percent satisfaction with overall
3 PWD services and an 82 percent
4 satisfaction with overall water quality.
5 These are the highest levels of
6 satisfaction ever received by the Water
7 Department in this survey.

8 We are also treating wastewater
9 to award-winning levels, overseeing the
10 cleanest water environment in 150 years
11 and making progress in protecting our
12 watersheds to keep our streams and rivers
13 clean. The three Water Pollution Control
14 Plants have maintained high levels of
15 treatment such that they have been
16 recognized by the National Association of
17 Clean Water Agencies with either Silver,
18 Gold or Platinum awards over the past
19 decade. This year, all three of our
20 plants will receive Gold awards,
21 reflecting perfect compliance with their
22 National Pollution Discharge Elimination
23 System permits in Calendar Year 2006.
24 Last year, all three plants also achieved
25 Gold awards for Calendar Year 2005.

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 The Water Department continues
3 to have some of the lowest rates in the
4 region for water, wastewater and storm
5 water services. We have had great
6 success in containing costs, increasing
7 employee productivity and improving
8 services. In past years, we have shared
9 many of our successes in cost containment
10 and revenue enhancement with you.
11 Savings have resulted from a variety of
12 sources, including maximizing grants,
13 refinancing debt, reduced days lost to
14 injury, energy savings, automatic meter
15 reading and plant operating efficiencies.

16 Just last month the financial
17 community recognized the superior
18 performance of the Water Department when
19 on March 14, 2007 the Water Department
20 successfully refunded \$345 million of
21 water and wastewater revenue bonds for a
22 net present value savings in excess of
23 \$14.5 million in future debt service
24 expense. All three of the major bond
25 rating agencies rated the Department's

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.
2 bonds in the A minus/stable range.
3 Moody's Investors Service assigned an
4 A3/stable outlook rating to the Water
5 Department and attributed this rating to
6 the Department's strong management,
7 improved financial operations,
8 significant cash balances in the Rate
9 Stabilization Fund and ongoing
10 improvements in environmental compliance.
11 I must thank City Council for unanimously
12 approving the bond ordinance that led to
13 this successful refunding.

14 Philadelphia's drinking water
15 meets or surpasses the requirements of
16 state and federal standards 100 percent
17 of the time. Nationally, the PWD is
18 among an elite group of only 56 water
19 utilities that have received a Directors
20 Award from the EPA-sponsored Partnership
21 for Safe Water for meeting the
22 Partnership's goals for five consecutive
23 years.

24 Many Philadelphians are unaware
25 of the connection between the work of the

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 Water Department and the quality of their
3 local watershed - the creeks, streams,
4 rivers and surrounding land that provide
5 fresh water both for recreational
6 enjoyment and for drinking water supply.
7 The City now enjoys watersheds that are
8 cleaner and healthier than they have been
9 in well over a century. Once plagued by
10 federal consent decrees for the failure
11 to operate our wastewater treatment plant
12 facilities in compliance with
13 environmental regulations, these same
14 plants are now winning national industry
15 awards.

16 The Water Department has been
17 awarded the U.S. EPA Region III -- that's
18 the midatlantic states -- Source Water
19 Protection Award, also received the
20 American Water Works Association's
21 Exemplary Source Water Protection Award
22 and the American Council of Engineering
23 Companies Diamond Award for the
24 Schuylkill River Source Water Assessment.
25 These awards recognize the Water

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 Department as the model for the region
3 and country in the area of source water
4 protection.

5 PWD's management of the storm
6 water system is an important service for
7 both flood control and environmental
8 protection. In January 2006, PWD also
9 initiated new storm water regulations.
10 The new regulations are an important tool
11 in the City's efforts to reduce flooding
12 and to protect our rivers and streams.
13 Accordingly, all development projects
14 that disturb more than 15,000 square feet
15 of earth must comply with water quality
16 and non-structural site design
17 requirements that are consistent with
18 state and federal storm water best
19 management practices. In FY08, the PWD
20 has budgeted an additional \$900,000 to
21 expedite the review of storm water plans.
22 Also in Fiscal '08, the PWD has budgeted
23 \$3 million to fund backwater valve
24 installations in flood-prone properties.
25 These backwater valves will help to

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 protect properties that are prone to
3 flooding due to sewer backups.

4 Meanwhile, the Water Department
5 is nearing completion of its two-year
6 comprehensive hydraulic engineering study
7 of those neighborhoods in the City that
8 have experienced basement flooding due to
9 surcharge sewers. We are close to
10 beginning to design significant capital
11 projects to permanently cure this
12 problem. We have greatly increased our
13 capital program in order to fund these
14 infrastructure improvements in the coming
15 years. My hope is that over the next
16 decade the City of Philadelphia will
17 virtually eliminate this type of problem.

18 None of the above financial
19 service improvements would have been
20 possible without the hard work and
21 professional achievements of the people
22 of the Philadelphia Water Department. I
23 want to thank all of the employees.
24 We're members of all the important
25 agencies throughout the nation, and we

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 look forward to our continued partnership
3 with City Council toward further
4 improvement during FY08 and the years
5 ahead.

6 At this time, I'd be happy to
7 answer any questions you may have.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
9 you very much, Commissioner.

10 The Chair recognizes Councilman
11 Greenlee.

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
13 you, Madam President.

14 Commissioner -- and I know part
15 of this is Water Revenue related, but
16 this just came to my attention yesterday
17 and you're here.

18 Shut-offs for non-payment, have
19 you been doing those on Saturday for a
20 while? I didn't realize that. Because
21 the person got shut off on Saturday and
22 obviously she could -- without giving you
23 the full story, she messed up, she was
24 late on her agreement, but she had issues
25 and a death in the family and that kind

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 of thing and obviously couldn't get back
3 on until about 5 o'clock -- she was down
4 there early Monday, but by the time she
5 got back on, it was Monday evening.
6 Sounds a little unfair to me.

7 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: I
8 think the advantage of Saturday shut-offs
9 is the fact that that's when most people
10 are home rather than during the week and
11 they often have an opportunity to
12 forestall the shut-off at that time.

13 Now, she would have been
14 notified. She certainly had gotten
15 notice and due process up till that
16 point. But, yes, we do shut off on
17 Saturdays, and I think it helps us and it
18 helps some of these customers to be there
19 when our folks arrive.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: But if
21 they're not there, you still turn off,
22 right?

23 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Yes,
24 we do.

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Because

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 that's what happened to her. She just
3 didn't happen to be home. And unlike --
4 and I guess we're not going to agree on
5 this, but unlike at least Monday through
6 Thursday and Friday at least to a certain
7 point, the person can go down and get the
8 bill paid. They can't do that on
9 Saturday. So they're off for two days.
10 It just doesn't -- I mean, I understand
11 about being home and trying to collect
12 the money if they're there. That makes
13 sense, because they're more likely to be
14 home, but if you do shut them off and
15 they're not there, they're without water
16 for a couple days with no ability to do
17 anything about it, correct? I mean, they
18 can't do anything on the weekends.

19 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: As I
20 said, they did receive due process.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I
22 understand that.

23 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: And
24 we will accept checks. Some people will
25 not come to the door and they owe us

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 money --

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Well,
4 they might not be home, in all fairness,
5 right?

6 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER:
7 That's also possible, but what I'm saying
8 is, if the word goes out that you have to
9 be home for a shut-off, we're never going
10 to be able to do a shut-off.

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Well, I
12 don't think the word should be that they
13 have to be home. I guess what I'm saying
14 is, there is a difference during the week
15 when you get shut off than on Saturday,
16 correct?

17 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER:
18 Correct.

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And in
20 this case, the woman had kids. I mean,
21 it was -- and I'm not saying she's
22 without fault. She should have paid the
23 bill. I'm not saying that. But it just
24 doesn't seem -- has this been going on
25 for a while, Saturday shut-offs?

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Yes.

3 And we do have an emergency number on the
4 notice and if she comes back, if somebody
5 comes back on a Saturday later in the day
6 and sees that their service has been shut
7 off, they can call us and, if we can, we
8 will restore them that same day, but they
9 have to have 50 percent of their bill
10 ready at the door.

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: You mean
12 you'll send somebody back --

13 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Yes.

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: -- if you
15 have the personnel to do that?

16 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Yes.
17 If we're still out there, yes.

18 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Is that
19 decision to shut off on Saturday, is that
20 Water Commissioner, Water Revenue,
21 combination of both?

22 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Well,
23 we get notices from the Water Revenue
24 Bureau. We are told who is in line for
25 shut-off, and we then take that work and

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 parcel it out as best we can.

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And I
4 don't want to belabor the point, but I
5 know there were some utilities -- I'm not
6 sure if Water was one of them -- that
7 wouldn't even shut off on Friday at one
8 point for the reason I just said, that
9 the customer could not make good on the
10 bill until Monday.

11 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: There
12 are occasions, Councilman, when we
13 have -- we make a conscious decision not
14 to have shut-offs on certain holidays,
15 certain major holidays and things of that
16 nature, but, generally speaking, the
17 folks that we eventually come out to shut
18 off have had many opportunities to come
19 in and sign a payment agreement with the
20 Water Revenue Bureau or pay their bill in
21 full.

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Well, in
23 this case, like I said, the person was
24 late. She had an agreement. She fell
25 behind. So I'm not defending that. It

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 just seems that she had no alternative,
3 and I didn't know about that she could
4 have called and somebody else could come
5 out. I don't even know when she got home
6 on Saturday.

7 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER:

8 Right.

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I don't
10 know. I guess we're going to disagree on
11 that. I don't think there should be
12 Saturday shut-offs, but I'll leave it at
13 that.

14 Thank you, Madam President.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

16 You're welcome.

17 The Chair recognizes Councilman
18 Goode.

19 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,
20 Madam President.

21 Good morning, Commissioner.
22 Commissioner, what is the Water
23 Department's collection rate?

24 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Well,
25 it's actually the Revenue Department's

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 collection rate, but I think I can speak
3 to it. It's best that I describe it, if
4 you don't mind.

5 Our revenues are between \$400,
6 \$500 million annually, but let's use \$100
7 million as an example. If the Water
8 Revenue Bureau bills \$100 million, let's
9 say, within Fiscal '06, because that's
10 the last complete year, if they billed
11 \$100 million throughout the year, at the
12 end of the year they will have collected
13 within that year approximately \$96 to \$97
14 million. Now, that \$96 or \$97 million is
15 made up typically of about 85 to 86
16 million from '06 itself and about \$8
17 million from the immediate prior year,
18 which is '05. They also collect another
19 \$2 or \$3 million from years prior to
20 Fiscal '05. So at the end of the day,
21 they have collected maybe \$96 to \$97
22 million within Fiscal '06, though billed
23 \$100 million.

24 The current collection factor
25 of '06 billings and collections within

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 '06 is approximately 85 to 86 percent.

3 That's called the current collection
4 factor.

5 COUNCILMAN GOODE: How has that
6 changed over the last five years?

7 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Very
8 little.

9 COUNCILMAN GOODE: And how much
10 money is owed to the City in terms of
11 Water Revenue collection?

12 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: I
13 don't have -- I haven't seen any recent
14 figures, but it's probably along the
15 lines of \$200 million.

16 COUNCILMAN GOODE: And how has
17 that changed over the last five years?

18 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Also
19 probably has not changed a great deal.

20 COUNCILMAN GOODE: And what new
21 efforts are underway to go after that
22 \$200 million?

23 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: What
24 have we done? One of the things that
25 we've done is, beginning in 1997, we

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.
2 implemented the largest automatic meter
3 program in the water industry in the U.S.
4 and now virtually every home has an
5 automatic water meter, which eliminates
6 disputes over estimated bills.

7 COUNCILMAN GOODE:
8 Commissioner, you said not much has
9 changed over the last five years. What
10 new have you tried over the last five
11 years to go after that \$200 million?

12 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER:
13 Again, I'm talking about the Water
14 Revenue Bureau, but we're going to a new
15 billing system, which will give the
16 customer service reps more tools to use
17 and a better history of each account.
18 During the moratorium, the shut-off
19 moratorium for residential customers,
20 which lasts from December 1st through
21 April 1st each year, we go after existing
22 vacant properties and do dig-ups and we
23 check all these non-billed status
24 properties.

25 The new AMR -- the AMR that we

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.
2 have, the automatic meter system, spews
3 out records to us where we investigate
4 suspicious accounts. Over the past six
5 or seven years, the Water Department has
6 investigated and collected over \$18
7 million in accounts that would have
8 otherwise gone unknown. And that's 18
9 million in existing money. It doesn't
10 count the money once you put an account
11 on the books again that you collect
12 subsequently.

13 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Let me try
14 the question from one other approach.
15 How much of that \$200 million do you
16 expect to recover over the next five
17 years?

18 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Of
19 that 200 million? Some of that 200
20 million is not yet due. That's kind of
21 an all-inclusive number, but much of --
22 some of that is up to 15 years old.
23 Because we have the ability to lien a
24 property, we have to keep our receivables
25 on the books for up to 15 years.

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 COUNCILMAN GOODE: The question
3 was, over the next five years, how much
4 do you expect to recover?

5 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: I
6 really don't know. A lot depends on some
7 other advancements that we may have with
8 the new billing system.

9 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Okay. Thank
10 you.

11 Thank you, Madam President.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Thank
13 you.

14 The Chair recognizes Councilman
15 Kelly.

16 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Thank you,
17 Madam Chair.

18 Good morning, Commissioner.

19 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Good
20 morning.

21 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Just
22 following up on Councilman Goode's line
23 of questioning, what is the rate of
24 collections right now? Is it any better
25 than PGW, for instance?

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: I'm
3 not sure what PGW's collection factors
4 are at the moment, but I know in past
5 years there was some confusion over the
6 collection rates and factors, and it
7 always comes up. On a cumulative basis,
8 again, the Revenue Department gets about
9 up to 97 percent.

10 COUNCILMAN KELLY:

11 Ninety-seven?

12 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Of
13 what they bill. But on a current
14 collection factor basis -- and this is a
15 number that became controversial a couple
16 years ago -- it's about 85 to 86 percent.
17 But that is a number that would never
18 approach 100 percent for many reasons,
19 mostly because when you're talking about
20 a given fiscal year, many bills go out in
21 June, one-twelfth of the bills go out in
22 June, and some of them don't have due
23 dates until the following fiscal year, so
24 they're not credited to --

25 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Until the

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 following year.

3 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Yeah.

4 So, as I said, about 85 to 86 percent of
5 the revenue comes in from the year, the
6 current year, and about eight to nine
7 percent of the revenue comes in from the
8 immediate prior year, and then another
9 two to three percent comes in from older
10 billings. So for every hundred million
11 dollars that's billed by the Water
12 Revenue Bureau, they will collect in a
13 given year approximately \$97 million.

14 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Do you have
15 any plans to have payments automatically
16 transferred from checking accounts from
17 banks?

18 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: We
19 are looking into much of this, and I
20 think our new billing system should be
21 able to make that a reality for us. I
22 think there's a lot of -- we've actually
23 done some payments by credit card, but
24 there's an additional fee to the
25 customer. So it's kind of a -- we're

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 weighing all of these options.

3 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Well, I
4 think it's something you have to look at.

5 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: You
6 can pay online today.

7 COUNCILMAN KELLY: You can?

8 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Yeah.

9 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Okay. I
10 just want to have an idea that projects
11 for lettings, for instance, it goes from
12 the Water Department to the Capital
13 Program to Procurement. Could you tell
14 me really what you're working at as far
15 as a timeline from when you get a project
16 to when it's going to be awarded to a
17 contractor?

18 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Yeah.
19 I have the experts in the room, I think.

20 About five months, we're
21 hearing. And some things are -- some
22 projects are highly complex and they may
23 take a little bit longer. Sometimes the
24 vendors have to come in, take a look at
25 it and then ask a lot of questions and --

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Well, it
3 seems like to me there seems to be a
4 hitch in one of these departments,
5 whether it be the Capital Program or
6 whether it be the Procurement, but
7 somewhere along the line when you release
8 it, it doesn't get to the contractor
9 until months, if not years, later, and I
10 just want to know if any improvement has
11 been made over the last year or so, if
12 anyone can give me an idea.

13 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: We'll
14 get back to you on that. I'm not
15 positive about what's been done in
16 Procurement over the past couple of years
17 on this topic.

18 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Well, I just
19 want to know where the hold-up is. Is it
20 in the Capital Program or is it in
21 Procurement? It's somewhere in there,
22 and I don't know who -- I know these
23 projects are fully budgeted. It's
24 nothing to do with the lack of funding
25 for it. It's just more or less it's an

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 internal problem that we have, and it
3 seems like it's always delayed. And some
4 of them it's very important, because this
5 is an infrastructure problem, and I think
6 that we should start looking at ways to
7 improve the administration or at least
8 processing projects.

9 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Sure,
10 Councilman Kelly. Actually, I have my
11 Chief Engineer and General Manager for
12 Planning and Engineering, Mr. Steve
13 Furtek, and I think he can help on some
14 of this.

15 MR. FURTEK: How you doing,
16 Councilman?

17 For the most part, we don't see
18 that there's huge delays in projects once
19 they leave the Water Department.
20 Occasionally there's a project that's
21 very difficult and will require a back
22 and forth --

23 COUNCILMAN KELLY: When you say
24 it leaves the Water Department, where
25 does it go?

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 MR. FURTEK: It goes to
3 Procurement for advertising and bidding.
4 Procurement actually accepts the bids,
5 and then the award and notice to proceed
6 occurs after that.

7 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Could you
8 give me --

9 MR. FURTEK: Now, when the
10 project is bid, depending on the
11 complexity of the job, there may be a
12 two-month window where the contractor has
13 an opportunity to look at the plans and
14 specs and propose his bid.

15 The entire time is about five
16 months. It's pretty routine.
17 Occasionally we have a very complex job
18 where there's a lot of questions from the
19 contractor, and those particular jobs
20 take a little bit longer.

21 COUNCILMAN KELLY: And after
22 Procurement receives this information,
23 then they can award the contract to
24 the --

25 MR. FURTEK: Right. Once the

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 bids are tabulated, then there's a review
3 process that occurs to make sure all the
4 paperwork is in by each bidder, and then
5 the award is issued.

6 COUNCILMAN KELLY: Where does
7 the Capital Program come in?

8 MR. FURTEK: My understanding
9 of the Capital Program component is, they
10 provide oversight in general terms and
11 make sure that the financing is in place,
12 that we have the capital money, and it's
13 basically a checks and balances kind of
14 an arrangement.

15 COUNCILMAN KELLY: So when you
16 have a project, it goes to the Capital
17 Program first, then Procurement?

18 MR. FURTEK: Correct.

19 COUNCILMAN KELLY: So there
20 seems to be some play in there.

21 MR. FURTEK: I think --

22 COUNCILMAN KELLY: How long
23 does the Capital Program --

24 MR. FURTEK: If you look at it
25 as a pipeline of projects, there's a

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.
2 constant flow through that pipeline, and
3 every month we're awarding so many jobs.
4 The delays are few and far between. They
5 typically are related to a specific
6 project that has some issue, but,
7 generally speaking, there's a progression
8 of projects every month.

9 COUNCILMAN KELLY: And
10 generally you could say that it takes
11 about five months or so before a project
12 is awarded --

13 MR. FURTEK: That's correct.

14 COUNCILMAN KELLY: -- to a
15 contractor? Okay. That's what I wanted.

16 Thank you, Madam President.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

18 You're welcome.

19 The Chair recognizes Councilman
20 Greenlee.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
22 you, Madam President.

23 Commissioner, just at the risk
24 of belaboring a point, just one more
25 question on the Saturday shut-off issue.

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 You had mentioned earlier about
3 the ability of the customer if they have
4 the money to call and somebody would come
5 out and pay. Do you have any idea, or
6 could you get it, how many people do or
7 can take advantage of that; in other
8 words, how much you collect by that
9 process of somebody calling back on a
10 Saturday? Is there a way to find that
11 out?

12 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: We do
13 have that -- well, I don't know if we've
14 isolated Saturday, but we do know that
15 the folks that go and do the shut-offs do
16 bring in a lot of revenue.

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: But that
18 might be just the first time when they
19 catch the people home, whether it's a
20 Saturday or a Tuesday, right?

21 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER:
22 Right. I think what we've found out is
23 as our culture has changed over the last
24 generation or two, it's much more likely
25 to catch someone home on a Saturday than

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 on a weekday.

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: All
4 right. I hear that, but that person
5 that's not home on a weekday still has
6 the ability to pay right away down here
7 and get on the next day. The Saturday
8 person doesn't have that. I know I'm
9 repeating myself here.

10 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: No.
11 I understand, but I honestly don't have
12 that great of sympathy. If someone has
13 not contacted us, the Revenue Bureau, and
14 has not done what they need to do to
15 protect their water, their water source,
16 then if it happens on a Saturday and
17 they're out of water for a day or two, as
18 bad as that is, I find I'm not that --
19 I'm not that concerned. It's a shame,
20 but they should not have put themselves
21 in that position.

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Well, we
23 agree on that. They should not have put
24 themselves in the position, but I think
25 there is a difference. I don't know how

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 else to say it. The person has the
3 ability to do something more quickly any
4 other day than a Saturday. So we're
5 going to --

6 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: I
7 think one of the things that we might be
8 able to do is to make sure that the
9 notice that we leave on a Saturday once
10 we've shut them off or we leave them a
11 message to call perhaps our emergency
12 desk when they get home and, if they have
13 their 50 percent, to give us a call and
14 we'll make every effort to restore them
15 as soon as possible.

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.
17 How -- never mind. Maybe you don't know.
18 The other utilities, do they have
19 Saturday shut-offs now?

20 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: I
21 believe so.

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: They do?

23 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Yeah.

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I know
25 there was a time they didn't, but I'm not

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 sure. Because, again, this is the first
3 time it got raised. I was surprised when
4 I -- I know you do emergency shut-offs,
5 there's leaks and all like that. That's
6 different.

7 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Now,
8 Councilman, I know you also know that we
9 have a shut-off moratorium for
10 residential customers from December 1st
11 through April 1st.

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I
13 understand.

14 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER:
15 Unfortunately, sometimes that moratorium
16 is more of a disservice to some of the
17 customers, because they ride that too
18 long. They get behind the eight ball,
19 and it's unfortunate.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I
21 understand that, and people take
22 advantage of sometimes the good-meaning
23 programs. I understand that. In this
24 case, it wasn't that much money. I
25 forget the exact -- I mean, it wasn't

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 like she was like months and months
3 behind. She had an agreement. There was
4 a death in the family. She messed up,
5 and she admits that she messed up, but --
6 all right. I'm belaboring the point
7 again. Okay.

8 Thank you, Madam President.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

10 You're welcome.

11 Are there any other questions
12 from members of the Committee of the
13 Water Commissioner?

14 (No response.)

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA:

16 Seeing none, Commissioner, thank you very
17 much.

18 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Thank
19 you. I just wanted to mention that you
20 probably won't be seeing me at the next
21 budget either. I'm also in DROP and --

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT VERNA: Oh,
23 really? This is the first I'm hearing
24 it.

25 COMMISSIONER BRUNWASSER: Well,

1 4/17/07 - WHOLE - BILL 070114, ETC.

2 yeah. December is -- if I last that
3 long, it will be December.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: Thank
5 you very much for all of your service.

6 COMMISSIONER Brunwasser: Thank
7 you.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT Verna: This
9 Committee will stand in recess until
10 tomorrow, Wednesday, April the 18th at
11 10:00 a.m.

12 Thank you very much.

13 (Committee of the Whole
14 adjourned at 12:00 p.m.)

15 - - -

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

1

2

CERTIFICATE

3

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the

4

proceedings, evidence and objections are

5

contained fully and accurately in the

6

stenographic notes taken by me upon the

7

foregoing matter on April 17, 2007, and that

8

this is a true and correct transcript of same.

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

MICHELE L. MURPHY

16

RPR-Notary Public

17

18

19

(The foregoing certification of this

20

transcript does not apply to any reproduction

21

of the same by any means, unless under the

22

direct control and/or supervision of the

23

certifying reporter.)

24

25