

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE ON FISCAL STABILITY AND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL COOPERATION

Via Microsoft Teams
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Monday, March 1, 2021
10:06 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB, CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILMAN DEREK S. GREEN
COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH
COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL
COUNCILWOMAN CHERELLE L. PARKER
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA
COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS

RESOLUTION 200406 - Resolution authorizing the
Committee on Fiscal Stability and
Intergovernmental Cooperation to hold
quarterly hearings that include monthly
reporting requirements, to discuss the fiscal
position and overarching social impact goals
of the City...

- - -

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

3 Good morning, everyone. This hearing is
4 called to order. I recognize the
5 presence of a quorum of Committee
6 members. Members of the Committee in
7 attendance who are present today are
8 Co-Chair/Vice Chair Councilmember Brian
9 O'Neill, Councilmember Cindy Bass,
10 Councilmember Derek Green, Councilmember
11 Jamie...

12 (Connection issues.)

13 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: We lost
14 you a little bit there, Councilmember,
15 after Derek Green.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay.
17 Councilmember Derek Green, Councilmember
18 Jamie Gauthier, Councilmember Mark
19 Squilla, Councilmember Maria
20 Quinones-Sanchez, Councilmember Kathy
21 Gilmore Richardson, and Councilmember
22 Helen Gym.

23 Audio okay?

24 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yeah.

25 That was better. That was good.

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: This is the
3 public hearing of the Committee on Fiscal
4 Responsibility and Intergovernmental
5 Cooperation. The purpose of this public
6 hearing is to hear testimony on
7 Resolution No. 200406. The resolution
8 co-sponsors are Councilmember Parker,
9 Councilmember Green, Councilmember
10 Quinones-Sanchez, Councilmember Squilla,
11 Councilmember Gilmore Richardson,
12 Councilmember Bass, and Councilmember
13 Thomas.

14 I understand that state law
15 currently requires that the following
16 announcement be made at the beginning of
17 every remote public hearing as follows:

18 Due to the current public
19 health emergency, City Council committees
20 are currently meeting remotely. We are
21 using Microsoft Teams to make these
22 remote hearings possible. Instructions
23 for how the public may view and offer
24 public testimony at public hearings of
25 Council committees are included in the

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 public hearing notices that are published
3 in the Daily News, Inquirer, and Legal
4 Intelligencer prior to the hearings, and
5 can also be found on PHLCouncil.com.

6 The Clerk will now please read
7 the title of the resolution before the
8 Committee today.

9 Laurel, I think your mic...

10 THE CLERK: Sorry about that.
11 Good morning.

12 Authorizing the Committee on
13 Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental
14 Cooperation to hold quarterly hearings
15 that include monthly reporting
16 requirements, to discuss the fiscal
17 position and overarching social impact
18 goals of the City, including and as
19 related to the Five-Year Plan and the
20 reporting requirements set forth in the
21 Quarterly City Manager's Report and as
22 submitted to the Pennsylvania
23 Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority.

24 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
25 everyone, for being here today. I also

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 want to recognize our Majority Leader,
3 Councilmember Cherelle Parker, for
4 joining in.

5 Ms. Grbach, please call the
6 first panel of witnesses.

7 THE CLERK: Harvey Rice, Rob
8 Dubow, Marisa Waxman.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. I'm
10 going to ask everyone to hold their
11 questions until everyone has given
12 testimony.

13 And, Mr. Rice, maybe you'd like
14 to start.

15 MR. RICE: Councilmember Domb
16 and the members of the City Council
17 Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental
18 Cooperation Committee, as you know, my
19 name is Harvey Rice. I am the Executive
20 Director of the Pennsylvania
21 Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority,
22 which is a state oversight agency for the
23 City of Philadelphia. Again, thank you
24 for allowing me to testify at this
25 quarterly meeting to speak about PICA's

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 report on the Quarterly City Managers
3 Report for the second quarter of Fiscal
4 Year 2021, which encompassed the months
5 of October, November, and December of
6 2020, and PICA's reports on City
7 revenues, obligations for January, as
8 well as overtime costs through January.

9 I've prepared a short
10 PowerPoint presentation with the
11 highlights of our report on the QCMR as
12 well as a synopsis of our revenue budget
13 obligations and overtime reports.

14 So the first slide shows you,
15 so that everyone -- what the numbers
16 reveal in the QCMR for Quarter 2. The
17 quarter ended with a fund balance of
18 \$29.1 million, which was lower than the
19 projected fund balance in the plan which
20 was submitted back in June of 2020, which
21 was 51.3 million. However, it increased
22 from the first quarter, which was at
23 22.8 million. So the fund balance has
24 increased within one quarter. However,
25 it's below the Five Year Plan projection

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 and still below what we had said in our
3 staff report on the plan back in July
4 where we would have liked to see fund
5 balances at a higher level, and the City
6 was achieving that up until the COVID
7 pandemic.

8 Revenues are 4.6 billion and
9 obligations are at 2.3 billion -- I'm
10 sorry; revenues were at 1.6 billion. The
11 plan projection is 4.6 for the year.

12 The next slide shows in further
13 detail the projected revenues and
14 obligations. As you can see, the plan
15 projection was at 4.5 billion. The
16 2021 Quarter 2 projection is at
17 4.6 billion. That includes approximately
18 76 million of CARES funds. If you take
19 away the CARES funding, we're actually
20 below about 55 million than projected in
21 the plan.

22 Obligations, even though
23 revenues are decreasing over the
24 projections as well as FY20, obligations
25 are increasing, and so as a result, we've

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 been following the budget obligations
3 spending by month for this fiscal year
4 since the pandemic.

5 So this is the summary. As I
6 said, revenues are projected to increase
7 by 20.6 million from the Five Year Plan.
8 Obligations are projected to increase by
9 almost 130 million from the plan. So
10 these -- and part of these obligations
11 are due to the expenses of COVID-19 on
12 the City and its impact.

13 Projected revenues are to
14 decrease by 40.8 million from the Five
15 Year Plan, and locally generated non-tax
16 revenues is projected to decrease by over
17 10 million. But other revenues -- this
18 is the 71.6 million. I said 75 earlier.
19 It's 71.6 from the CARES Act.

20 This slide details our
21 projected obligations by class. The
22 class is wages, employee benefits,
23 purchases of services, going down to debt
24 service, and it goes from the plan to the
25 second quarter and the amount changed

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 from the original plan to the second
3 quarter projections.

4 Staffing has decreased through
5 Quarter 2 in FY21 by 542 full-time
6 employees. This is mainly due to some
7 layoffs, attrition, as well as the hiring
8 freeze. But, however, overall staffing
9 has increased from pre-recession levels
10 of 2009.

11 Overtime, as you know, the PICA
12 and its Board is very concerned about the
13 rising overtime costs that we have seen
14 year after year. Through the first
15 quarter, we were encouraged that overtime
16 was decreasing, I think at that time by
17 like 7 or 8 percentage points, but now
18 it's lower than 2 percent, and these
19 costs are before the January and February
20 storms.

21 Okay. City tax revenues
22 through January, this is more up to date
23 than what was in the QCMR, because we
24 follow the revenues every month as well
25 as we follow the obligations every month.

3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

The City collected approximately 246.45 million in General Fund tax revenue in 2021. If you compare that to last January -- I'm sorry. There was an October there -- of approximately 77.2 million or 23.9 percent, but there was about a \$30-some-million payment that came in in February that should have been attributed or counted for in January. So that percent would be lower.

So our tax collections decrease about 200 million or 11.7 percent. And the only tax category to increase year to date is the BIRT tax, which is, as you well know, is one of the most difficult taxes to predict. So this shows you -- this chart shows the FY2021 revenues, January 2020 and the change, and then the year to date and also the change. So that gives everyone a little snapshot picture of what is occurring with our revenues.

And, again, we also looked at the obligations through January, and the

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 City expended almost 2.3 billion and
3 encumbered an additional 317, almost 318
4 million, amounting to almost 2.6 billion.
5 That's 53.2 percent of the 4.8 billion
6 spending budget, which is lower than
7 the -- the City doesn't budget by month,
8 but if you divide that by 12 months, it
9 would have been 50.8 -- 58.3 percent. So
10 they're about 5 percent lower.

11 Now, this is January, and we
12 follow -- we'll be following February's.
13 We'll be getting them very soon, and the
14 storms and the cleaning up of the storms
15 might impact that number come February.
16 So as always, we're keeping a close eye
17 on that.

18 There's 12 departments who have
19 the highest budget accounts, and they
20 spend almost 2.3 billion so far of the
21 total obligations.

22 And then this is just a slide
23 to show Council that City departments'
24 overtime through January of 2020 and
25 through January of 2021, their overtime

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 cost each year, whether they're over and
3 under.

4 Now, we need to be just
5 cautioned here that you'll see some
6 departments with high numbers. That's
7 because they let the City Commissioners
8 borrow their employees for the
9 presidential election, and those numbers
10 have not been attributed back or
11 transferred back to the Commissioners
12 Office. So you'll see high numbers, but
13 that really doesn't reflect, and until
14 that transfer is made to the City
15 Commissioners Office, then we'll get a
16 better picture of the overtime spending
17 in those departments.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GYM:

19 Mr. Chairman, can I just ask for a point
20 of clarification for Mr. Rice?

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Sure. Go
22 ahead.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So you just
24 mentioned the 12 departments. Were those
25 12 departments the ones -- can you just

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 run through the 12 departments? Are they
3 the ones right here on this page, the
4 previous one?

5 MR. RICE: For overtime or
6 obligations? I'm sorry, Councilwoman.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: The 12
8 departments with the highest budgets, is
9 this the list of the departments with the
10 highest budgets?

11 MR. RICE: Yes. Yes, it is.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you.

13 MR. RICE: You're welcome. I'm
14 sorry.

15 And that ends my presentation.
16 As always, I'm here to answer any
17 questions you may have regarding the
18 presentation or anything else on
19 revenues, obligations, and the quarterly
20 report.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
22 Harvey. I just want to clarify
23 something, if I could. On that overtime
24 report, it looked to me like the biggest
25 issue there was Fire at 7 million.

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 MR. RICE: Yes. Yes, it is,
3 Councilman.

4 COUNCILMAN DOMB: We'll come
5 back to that.

6 Let's go to Rob Dubow, our
7 Finance Director.

8 MR. DUBOW: Good morning, Chair
9 Domb and members of the Committee.
10 Thanks for the opportunity to testify
11 today on Resolution 200406 regarding the
12 current fiscal position of the City and
13 our recovery efforts. I'm joined by
14 Sarah de Wolf, our Recovery Officer and
15 Deputy Finance Director for Policy and
16 Practice, and Marisa Waxman, who is our
17 Budget Director.

18 We'll now share slide decks
19 submitted with this testimony, and Marisa
20 and I will walk you through it.

21 And Marisa has shared it. It's
22 up on the screen.

23 The first couple of slides go
24 through how our \$439 million fund balance
25 morphed into a \$29 million fund balance.

3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

We start looking at our revenues, and Harvey talked a little bit about how those are higher than the adopted budget but less than FY20. The reason that they're higher is that we used some of the CRF money, Coronavirus Relief money, to offset some of our costs, as allowed under the Act.

Our expenses are higher than projected, and that is largely related to the pandemic, and Marisa will go through that in more detail later. That leaves us with a very small fund balance of 29 million, which is less than three days' worth of spending. It's far below our internal goal of between 6 and 8 percent we had gotten before the pandemic hit and much less than the 17 percent recommended by the Government Finance Officers Association, and we have never gotten close to that number.

That takes us to Slide 3, which walks through progression of our fund balance. By the end of FY19, through

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 really years of hard work, we had built
3 up our fund balance to \$439 million. You
4 can see that was even slightly above our
5 goal of being between 6 and 8 percent.
6 The top end of that goal would have had
7 us at about 380 million, but way below
8 where the GFOA recommended we should be,
9 which would have been at about
10 \$811 million in FY19.

11 By the end of FY20, we've
12 already started to see the impact of the
13 pandemic, and you can see that our fund
14 balance, it dropped from 439 to 291, and
15 that was just slightly below the bottom
16 of where we wanted to be, but by the end
17 of this year, we project that we'll be at
18 29 million, way, way below where we
19 should be, below where the GFOA says we
20 should be and, as I said before, equal to
21 only about three days' worth of our
22 obligations.

23 Marisa is going to walk you
24 through the next set of slides to give
25 you some more specifics on our revenues

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 and expenditures. So that takes us to
3 Slide 4.

4 MS. WAXMAN: Thank you, Rob.

5 So here's a bit more detail on
6 our General Fund revenues through the
7 second quarter of the year. Through the
8 second quarter, they're about \$28 million
9 lower than our original projections, but
10 we still are projecting for the end of
11 the year to be about \$20 million higher,
12 and that trade-off is because on the one
13 hand, we've had to reduce some of our tax
14 revenue estimates. Primarily we've taken
15 down since last quarter our wage tax by
16 16 million as well as significant
17 reductions from our parking and amusement
18 taxes. Obviously those are very pandemic
19 related. The parking tax, we get large
20 chunks of that from the stadiums and from
21 the airport, and so while people aren't
22 flocking to those locations, those are
23 going down, as well as our amusement tax.
24 Over 80 percent of that comes from
25 professional sporting event tickets, and

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 so that has not recovered. We had
3 initially thought we would have a rotten
4 first quarter to this fiscal year, then
5 get better. Obviously now that we're
6 into the third quarter, we haven't seen
7 that yet and had to bring those down.

8 That is, our tax collection
9 reductions in our projections are
10 somewhat offset by bringing money in from
11 the Grants Fund from our Coronavirus
12 Relief Act funds, and so we do get a bit
13 of an offset from increasing our revenue
14 from other governments, which allows us
15 to be overall up 20 million despite those
16 reductions in our tax collections. And
17 that is also based on our collections
18 experienced year to date and updated
19 projections from the City's economic
20 consultants at IHS Market and other
21 sources.

22 And here it shows you a little
23 bit more of what's happening year to
24 date. So you can see our tax collections
25 are actually up so far, but that's more

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 of a timing issue on some things. As
3 Harvey mentioned, the BIRT is really
4 unpredictable, but the added bonus this
5 year is that we got a bunch of it in July
6 because of the late due date instead of
7 having it due last April. But you can
8 see that our sort of fee and fine revenue
9 is under our original projections, our
10 revenue from other governments. And then
11 when you look at that revenues from other
12 funds, that 34 million coming in, no
13 change there. That is us pulling
14 100 percent of our Rainy Day Fund money
15 out and back into the General Fund.

16 Our General Fund obligations
17 for the quarter are about 10 million more
18 than the adopted budget, and that's
19 basically due to, as Harvey noted, the
20 2020 presidential election, the continued
21 public health crisis, and we've had costs
22 not just to respond to the pandemic
23 itself, but it is increased costs for
24 just doing the core government services
25 we've always done. We've talked before

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 about the impact on residential trash
3 tonnage and what that means for our waste
4 disposal fees.

5 So our year-end projections are
6 expected to be about \$129 million more
7 than the original budget. Those are --
8 of that 129, 50 million is expected to be
9 from additional COVID relief costs on the
10 second half of the year. That's the
11 report that's currently under
12 consideration, but also as noted, we have
13 additional costs related to personnel,
14 the additional business relief that was
15 allocated when Council passed the last
16 mid-year transfer ordinance, those
17 election costs and, again, those pesky
18 waste disposal fees.

19 So year to date, some of this
20 has been driven -- overtime in general,
21 we are still on track to have less
22 overtime this year than we did last year,
23 but it is a bit of a mixed bag. Some of
24 our front-line agencies, particularly
25 ones that are dealing with the pandemic

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 response, those continue to be up, but
3 some other departments because of
4 activities not happening, particularly
5 driven by special events, it's not. So
6 we are projecting to be a bit lower, and
7 so we're about \$8 million below where we
8 were this time last year in terms of
9 overtime.

10 And so one of the things to
11 think about when you're thinking about
12 overtime is what does leave usage look
13 like, and again here we have a mixed bag,
14 because you have to think about how many
15 folks are available for work. And in
16 some agencies, the work can wait until
17 people return. In other agencies, we're
18 not going to tie ourself into pretzels
19 trying to figure out how we're going to
20 send an ambulance three days from now
21 when folks are back.

22 And so what we have seen is
23 that overall our median leave usage is
24 down this year, but those front-line
25 agencies, it's up, the ones most engaged

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 in the pandemic response, but it's down
3 for some of the more back-office
4 functions. And so we're not really
5 surprised by that given the impact of
6 COVID-19 on employees' health, the need
7 for caring for children or family
8 members, quarantine and isolation
9 requirements where the work still has to
10 be done. Other folks like me, now the
11 boiler repair guy has to come, I'm not
12 taking an afternoon off work. I just let
13 him in the house. Not that I get paid
14 overtime or whatever, but you get the
15 point.

16 Depending upon the nature of
17 work, the impacts of COVID is either
18 increasing our need for overtime as a
19 result of leave usage or decreasing.
20 This is also impacted by the number of
21 folks we have on staff, and as Harvey
22 mentioned, we're in a hiring freeze.
23 We've had attrition. And so our adopted
24 budget had the General Fund at just under
25 24,000 positions, but our actuals right

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 now are just over 22,000 in the General
3 Fund, and that's a decrease of 340 in
4 full-time positions since the first
5 quarter. About 20 percent of that
6 decrease since the first quarter is in
7 the Police Department. The rest of it is
8 pretty spread out. We also see a
9 decrease of about close to 3 percent
10 since this time last year. And so all of
11 the different factors that Harvey
12 mentioned are at play there.

13 So performance measures, you
14 know, when we track the QCMR, we're
15 looking at where is the money, how are we
16 spending, what's coming in, what's coming
17 out, but we also want to know what are we
18 getting for that money. That is another
19 thing that has been really hard to
20 negotiate in the pandemic. So we've got
21 109 performance measures that we report
22 quarterly in the QCMR. There's over 500
23 that appear in the Five Year Plan. But
24 the ones we track quarterly and report
25 that way, about close to two-thirds are

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 still on track. Thirty-four are not on
3 track and six measures are not available
4 at this time, and obviously COVID having
5 quite an impact on these.

6 So looking at some of the ones
7 that are on track, the number of
8 households we're providing homeless
9 prevention assistance to is on track.
10 The timeframe for residential permit
11 assistance in L&I is on track, as well as
12 the number of cleanups from CLIP, those
13 are all doing great.

14 But some of the ones where
15 we've struggled so far this year,
16 Streets. Earlier in the year we had real
17 challenges with on-time recycling
18 collection and on-time trash collection.
19 However, you can see we have made
20 tremendous strides in the second quarter
21 compared to the first quarter,
22 164 percent increase over the first
23 quarter in recycling, 200 percent
24 increase over the first quarter in trash
25 pickup. So still not knocking it out of

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 the park, 100 percent on-time collection,
3 but a tremendous improvement over where
4 we were when we really struggled.

5 Other programs because of
6 closures and changes in operations, there
7 are some challenges. So children and
8 adults attending Free Library programs,
9 obviously that is a whole different look
10 than in years past. So a lot of
11 variation in there in our performance
12 measures. I encourage you to dig in in
13 the QCMR.

14 As Harvey mentioned, we're now
15 really closely tracking our spending
16 month to month, and I will say that
17 because of timing issues, month to month
18 we don't spend one-twelfth of our budget
19 every month. There are things that
20 happen at certain times of year. There's
21 certain seasonality. But this gives us a
22 real opportunity as a sort of early
23 warning system red flag.

24 And so, for example, in here
25 you might go, oh, my goodness, why is all

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 other classes \$35 million over budget for
3 the month of January? Well, it's because
4 we made a \$44 million debt service
5 payment a few days early. It was
6 initially scheduled or planned out in our
7 cash flow for February. We made it in
8 January. So we're not worried about
9 that, but this is a good sort of gut
10 check to see what's going on.

11 Similarly, in the Class 100,
12 you're like, wow, how are we \$83 million
13 under budget for January? Well, that's
14 because actually December had three pay
15 periods, which then -- just once that
16 timing smoothes out, January won't have
17 as many.

18 So we see that variation.
19 We'll follow up on it if it looks funky,
20 but just because it looks funky doesn't
21 necessarily on a month-by-month basis
22 mean there is challenge.

23 So this shows you how a bunch
24 of different departments are doing in
25 terms of their year-to-date obligations,

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 how much they've spent. And so some of
3 these -- and when this is obligations,
4 this is both money actually expended,
5 dollars out the door, as well as dollars
6 encumbered, stuff we know that we're
7 going to spend. So Commerce, which
8 includes a \$15 million subsidy to the
9 Convention Center, they encumbered that
10 \$15 million very early in the year, so it
11 looks like they've spent the majority of
12 their budget July 1.

13 Similarly, with the Department
14 of Behavioral Health and Intellectual
15 disAbility Services, they encumber most
16 of their funds for their providers early
17 in the year, so you can see them edging
18 up to close to 100 percent of their
19 budget spent. Some other ones are
20 Sinking Fund Commission. We do most of
21 our payments at the end of the year. But
22 it's good to see that most of the others
23 that don't have those real seasonality
24 things going on right at that 58 percent
25 level of where you would expect to be

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 seven-twelfths through the year.

3 You'll actually even notice
4 that City Council on this one, which is
5 through the end of January, is actually
6 at 22 percent. That's because of the
7 timing of when that New Normal money is
8 coming out. You'll see that shoot up in
9 the coming months as those dollars go out
10 or transfer to other departments that are
11 going to push them out.

12 And then here's just a snapshot
13 of the Class 100. This is the one where
14 you actually want to pay a little more
15 attention of is it on track to be
16 seven-twelfths of the year. Granted,
17 again, some seasonality with some
18 departments, but we see things a lot
19 closer here to being just on track for
20 seven-twelfths of spending. We ask a few
21 questions if things look out of alignment
22 here.

23 So that was FY21, but now we've
24 started to look ahead to FY22, and we
25 have some concerns. And so I think it

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 was early last week or possibly the week
3 before we started talking about the
4 possibility of a budget gap in FY22.
5 What we did is, we looked at how much
6 money we would go into the year with, the
7 \$29 million fund balance that we planned
8 to end FY21. We looked at our
9 preliminary revenue estimates for FY22.
10 And so all together, that's about
11 \$4.7 billion. So if we wanted to end
12 FY22 with, say, even just a very modest
13 \$50 million fund balance, we'd only be
14 able to spend about 4.67 billion.

15 Unfortunately, when we look at
16 the cost to deliver our current level of
17 services in FY22, that adds up to
18 5.1 billion. So the difference between
19 the current level of services at
20 5.1 billion and the revenues and fund
21 balance we'll have available to us at 4.7
22 indicates a potential budget gap of 450
23 million.

24 Now, what this doesn't include
25 is any potential additional federal

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 relief from new Coronavirus rescue
3 packages, and so we can't build those in
4 until they are passed into federal law.
5 We can't count on those while they're
6 still speculative, but obviously we are
7 really hopeful about those so that we can
8 help partially address this.

9 And so that is just one, that
10 federal stimulus or federal relief
11 package, is just one of our
12 uncertainties, but obviously we're still
13 looking at the path of the virus, vaccine
14 distribution, that impact on economic
15 conditions. We have all four labor
16 contracts expiring at the end of this
17 fiscal year that we'll need to have new
18 collective bargaining agreements. We
19 have tremendous fixed and inflexible
20 costs, and we're concerned about School
21 District finances. They actually have
22 gotten some really great federal relief
23 lately, but they have had longtime
24 structural challenges, and for both what
25 that means right now and the future

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 economic vitality of the City, their
3 challenges are in some ways our
4 challenges.

5 So the origins of how we got
6 into this pickle are probably not a
7 surprise. That low starting fund
8 balance, we're only going in with
9 29 percent, less than three days' worth
10 of spending, when a city with a budget
11 our size should really have 800 million.
12 You know, a \$450 million budget gap when
13 things are bad would be a lot less
14 painful if we'd been able to be at that
15 GFOA recommended level of fund balance.

16 The other origins are that our
17 revenues are just not bouncing back. We
18 are expecting some improvement over FY21
19 but not getting back to FY20 levels, and
20 even FY20 levels weren't as good as we
21 would have hoped because we had that last
22 terrible quarter.

23 And then increased costs, there
24 are some things in our base budget that
25 are just going up. We've got our fixed

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 and inflexible costs. We've made some
3 commitments, and there's just some cost
4 increases.

5 So I mentioned the changes that
6 were -- and these are early preliminary
7 revenue projections we've done with IHS,
8 and I'll direct your attention to the
9 bottom right corner. Basically it's
10 saying, as I mentioned, that we think
11 that our revenues will go up by about
12 \$49 million. So that's better, but
13 unfortunately that's still \$140 million
14 less than FY20. So we're not even back
15 to FY20, which, again, had one really not
16 great quarter.

17 And so as we're figuring out
18 what is in that base budget for next
19 year, that 5.1 billion that our current
20 revenue projections won't quite cover, it
21 mostly assumes same costs for services as
22 FY21, but that's tricky when some of the
23 areas of the FY21 budget isn't quite
24 sufficient. So as Harvey mentioned,
25 we're still going to be looking at what

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 was the impact of those storms in
3 February. We always set aside a snow
4 reserve. It's based on prior year
5 experience, but what happens when you
6 have a year that is much bigger than the
7 average in the past couple of years?

8 We made very few restorations
9 of cuts to FY21. Most of them are not.
10 It does remove some one-time costs, but
11 there's going to be some disagreement and
12 some conversation back and forth about
13 should some of those one-time costs have
14 been recurring.

15 So here's some commitments and
16 some expectations we have as we move into
17 FY22. Even with federal stimulus or
18 federal relief, we do anticipate that
19 cuts will be needed. So there's certain
20 areas where we have additional costs.
21 Insurance, the cost of the City's
22 insurance for cyber terrorism and things
23 like that are going up. Just as the
24 world gets more uncertain, insurers are
25 feeling a little less confident.

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 In our area of homeless
3 services and some other areas in FY21, we
4 were able to reduce spending because we
5 got federal grants that were specific for
6 those particular services, like the
7 Emergency Solutions Grant. So we were
8 able to reduce the General Fund
9 contribution. It was backfilled with
10 federal dollars. If those federal
11 dollars don't recur, we need to figure
12 out what do we want to do there. And
13 we're also going to have a lot of
14 backlogs, work that needs to get done
15 eventually but couldn't be done as we're
16 in this pandemic state, especially
17 impactful within our court system.

18 Since we know that this is
19 going to be a challenging budget but just
20 also it is something we are building into
21 our practice, we are thinking about
22 racial equity as we navigate all of the
23 decisions we want to make. We want to
24 make sure that our process is more
25 inclusive and equitable, and so we've

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 made some changes to who is involved in
3 generating and vetting the ideas. That's
4 included internal and external focus
5 groups. We've got a Budget Equity
6 Committee that looks at the racial
7 disparity impacts of various proposals
8 that we're looking at. We've got a
9 survey that we did in multiple languages
10 that we've gotten more than 13,000
11 responses on at this point.

12 We've also just built into our
13 process more sort of targeted focus on
14 this. So there are questions about
15 racial equity in all of the forms that
16 departments fill out when describing
17 their current operations, requests for
18 new money, and potential reductions.
19 We've integrated the OEO goal-setting
20 process into our budget process so that
21 when we're having those conversations
22 about how we're going to spend money,
23 we're really at the same time having the
24 conversations about how we're going to
25 spend money with minority-owned,

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 women-owned, disabled-owned businesses.

3 And so we've made our process more

4 inclusive, and that's part of it, and we

5 also then want to make sure that the

6 decisions we're making have better

7 results in terms of the outcomes.

8 And so that's for the whole

9 budget, but there are also some areas

10 where we just really want to make sure

11 that we have a more inclusive and

12 engaging approach, and so we've also

13 launched participatory budgeting, which

14 will for a million dollars for capital

15 projects really turn that over to

16 community members. Right now we're in

17 the proces of co-designing a process with

18 a steering committee of community members

19 about how we will sort of throw open the

20 gates for the general public to make

21 recommendations of how to spend that

22 million dollars. Then there will be a

23 process with community members, known as

24 budget delegates, to sort of vet that

25 down when it went down to a dozen, two

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 dozen really good viable options. That
3 will then go out for public vote, and at
4 that point, those are the projects that
5 get funded. We're using mayoral ITEF
6 dollars, so it does not require any
7 additional transfer ordinances or mayoral
8 signoff. So it really puts that in the
9 hands of the public.

10 But looking at this budget gap,
11 we realize that there's a lot we need to
12 do other than just simply hoping for
13 federal relief. So we're looking at the
14 strategies out there, using or reducing
15 reserves. The trouble there is that that
16 well is dry. We've already done that.
17 Rob showed the reduction in our fund
18 balance.

19 Shifting costs to other
20 sources, grants, philanthropy, private
21 sector, relying on other City funds. We
22 can kick the can, hope that there's some
23 things that even though we know we need
24 to do them sometime, that we can put them
25 off for a little bit longer, things like

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 refinancing debt. That's something that
3 we are doing this year. Deferring tech
4 costs, seeing if we can stretch out the
5 useful life of some of our equipment
6 longer.

7 We might get out of the
8 business of providing some services and
9 allow the private sector to meet needs if
10 those needs are there. There's finding
11 efficiencies, consolidating functions,
12 doing our hiring freeze, asking for
13 reduced fees and costs from vendors.
14 We've already had good success there in
15 terms of our rents and some of our IT
16 consulting costs. But if you can't
17 provide the same services for less money,
18 then we need to look at reducing
19 services. That might be quality, that
20 might be quantity. We might be really
21 cannibalizing some of our centralized
22 services, which takes things longer. And
23 then obviously there's the looking at the
24 other side of the balance sheet,
25 enhancing revenues, do we sell or

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 monetize assess, do we change our tax or
3 fees, do we borrow in the short term, in
4 the long term. And obviously, again,
5 we're doing bits of all of this already.

6 But unfortunately there is no
7 silver bullet. There is no one of these
8 that is the perfect solution that is
9 without consequence. So there's
10 challenges. As I already mentioned,
11 reducing reserves, we're basically out of
12 those. What we really need to do is also
13 make sure that as we're planning for our
14 recovery, that we're planning to build
15 those back up again, because we know
16 something else will hit us in the future
17 and we need to be prepared.

18 If we're going to shift to
19 other sources to fund our things, we need
20 willing partners, and it also then will
21 avert funds that would have been used
22 elsewhere. We've seen really great
23 partnership from local philanthropies,
24 the private sector, as we've all tried to
25 pitch in and do what we can right now.

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 We want to see more of that, but
3 obviously there are challenges.

4 Kicking the can, we still have
5 to balance the Five Year Plan, so we have
6 to be mindful of that. It can't add
7 costs. When we do the debt refinancing
8 this year, yes, we'll save money in the
9 short term, but with the interest costs,
10 it costs us more over time. If we're
11 waiting to do technology replacements, we
12 are always at risk at having things break
13 and not being able to deliver services.

14 If we get out of certain
15 businesses, there can be a loss of
16 control over the service quality,
17 quantity or access. Find efficiencies,
18 there's a point where your options are
19 limited to do that without impacting
20 service quality or quantity, and we're
21 also constrained by a number of laws in
22 our contracts, so we can't just do
23 whatever we want there. We have some
24 limits on our flexibility.

25 Reducing services is really

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 challenging, particularly when our
3 vulnerable communities need us most. And
4 back-office cuts can impact staff and
5 service delivery as well. And enhancing
6 the revenues, our state constitution, its
7 uniformity clause basically means that
8 it's really hard to target any revenue
9 enhancements we do to folks with the
10 ability to pay, and so really limits our
11 ability to do progressivity.

12 There's been equity impacts of
13 those increases if we can't do those sort
14 of graduated increases that we want, and
15 we might stifle the economic recovery.
16 What we really want is when public health
17 considerations allow, to come roaring
18 back, but if the way we've gotten
19 ourselves out of this is to increase the
20 burden, that can really hamper that.

21 As I mentioned, we really do --
22 we are limited by our fixed and
23 inflexible costs, so we don't have much
24 room to maneuver. Our fixed costs are
25 things we can't do anything about right

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 now to change the spending level in the
3 short term, things like our debt service
4 and our pension. But we also have a
5 number of inflexible costs where we have
6 limited room for change or would require
7 significant operational spending changes
8 elsewhere in the budget.

9 For example, you can't just
10 magically say let's spend 25 percent less
11 on City benefits. Well, unless we really
12 renegotiated all of our contracts or
13 dramatically reduced the size of our
14 workforce, we don't have much room there.
15 So really the discretionary part of our
16 General Fund is less than half at
17 47 percent.

18 So where do we go from here
19 with all of that great news that I've
20 just shared? First, we're going to
21 continue to update and refine our revenue
22 estimates. We're working with the City's
23 economists and others. We are really
24 thankful to PICA for convening a group of
25 economists at the Federal Reserve next

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 month, so as we get closer to getting the
3 estimates that we'll use for the upcoming
4 budget and Five Year Plan, that creates
5 an opportunity for folks and experts to
6 weigh in and sort of kick the tires on
7 those.

8 We're obviously continuing to
9 lobby for federal relief. We really
10 appreciate sort of the support and
11 collaboration of many Councilmembers to
12 amplify that message. And what we really
13 need is a lot of money, we need it to be
14 flexible, and we need it to come directly
15 to the City.

16 As I mentioned, we are going
17 through a process of getting input, so we
18 are doing those focus groups, a survey,
19 and we're also participating in various
20 technical assistance programs and cohorts
21 with other cities so that we can learn
22 from each other, steal each other's best
23 ideas and not repeat each other's
24 mistakes as we try and navigate this.
25 And we're continuing to update our

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 service costs and our priorities, again,
3 using that racial equity lens.

4 And so as we move forward,
5 we'll be heading toward introducing the
6 FY22 budget on April 15th, and obviously
7 the next fiscal year will start in July.

8 So that is what we wanted to
9 share with you, our performance and where
10 we are through the second quarter, as
11 well as our look ahead to FY22, and we
12 are all here and happy to answer any
13 questions you have.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank
15 you. Thank you, Marisa. Thank you, Rob.

16 I have several questions, but
17 I'm going to ask some of my questions, if
18 you can make the responses as concise and
19 specific as possible so we get to
20 everybody.

21 I also want to recognize
22 Councilmember Curtis Jones for joining
23 us. Good morning, Councilmember Jones.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good
25 morning.

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And a general
3 question maybe for Rob and Marisa. A lot
4 of this is dependent on assumptions,
5 assumptions of when certain parts of the
6 economy come back. Can you give us any
7 idea of the assumptions and what you've
8 utilized in these projections?

9 MS. WAXMAN: Sure. So we work
10 with a global econometrics firm called
11 IHS Market, and what they do is, first
12 they as a company tend to update their
13 national/international models, and then
14 they refine them down to regional, state,
15 and then county level for us.

16 They don't necessarily build in
17 like, hey, the economy is going to return
18 to normal on September 23rd, 2021. And
19 so more what they're looking for is sort
20 of quarter over quarter improvement and
21 expansion.

22 Right now their model does
23 include some level of relief generally
24 being passed in March and that impact on
25 the economy. It doesn't factor in a

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 specific amount for Philadelphia's budget
3 but just generally. So that's some of
4 the assumptions that it currently relies
5 on, that there will be additional relief
6 this spring and that things will improve
7 from there, but it doesn't have a
8 specific date, more incremental
9 improvement.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I say this
11 because I think right now everything we
12 do in the City connects. Number one,
13 this is all because of the pandemic. So
14 the vaccinations and the plan for
15 vaccinations for the City are crucial.

16 I was watching yesterday on the
17 news, an area outside of Boston at
18 Gillette Stadium, they have a plan to do
19 vaccinations of a million a month, and
20 I'm just -- we've been pushing pretty
21 hard on a vaccination plan, because the
22 quicker we get our population vaccinated,
23 the better it is to save lives and bring
24 the economy back. That's the big
25 picture. And so we're going to look for

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 those plans, but that should be part
3 of -- everyone in government should be
4 pushing for getting 100,000 people a week
5 vaccinated with every site we can do,
6 because that's really the key to this.

7 So I'm going to go to a few
8 specific questions and we can come back
9 to this. This question is for Harvey
10 Rice. It sounds like, Harvey, we're
11 heading into a \$450 million budget gap,
12 and I'm curious as to what PICA thinks
13 are the areas of the General Fund budget
14 that you would suggest the City
15 prioritize to improve services and reduce
16 our expenses.

17 MR. RICE: Well, we believe
18 that's up to the City Administration and
19 City Council to develop their priorities
20 for government spending, and what we do
21 is when that plan comes to us and that
22 budget, we review it and analyze it to
23 make sure that it's reasonably
24 appropriate and the budget is balanced.

25 One of the concerns we have,

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 while it won't solve the potential 450
3 million, is this rising cost in overtime.
4 Year after year after year we have seen
5 overtime increase, even during the
6 pandemic when we thought it might drop
7 down, decrease, because more employees
8 were working from home, coupling that
9 with the pandemic and overtime in certain
10 areas to deal with the pandemic.

11 So that has been a concern of
12 PICA, especially the Board, these past
13 few years. So that would be our one
14 recommendation, but then also to go
15 through their budget, make sure that
16 first they do away with unnecessary
17 spending, and then they're going to have
18 to make some choices to prioritize what
19 delivery of City services are the most
20 paramount to the citizens of Philadelphia
21 and then present a budget to City Council
22 or -- then City Council will have their
23 hearings and will then also be able to
24 impact that budget. That budget will be
25 adopted in June and then put into the

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 plan, which will be submitted to PICA
3 sometime after that, and then we will
4 make sure that that budget is reasonable,
5 appropriate, it's balanced for the full
6 five years, and hopefully at that -- we
7 also know at that point what federal aid
8 will be coming under President Biden's
9 stimulus, which will then also impact
10 that potential \$450 million deficit.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Which of the
12 expenses, by the way, do you think are
13 unnecessary?

14 MR. RICE: Well, I hate to beat
15 a dead horse but overtime. We think some
16 overtime has been unnecessary. We see
17 staffing, leave usage, not a significant
18 problem, but overtime is still rising in
19 certain departments, and so that would be
20 one. Then I think the City needs to go
21 through, as they're doing, they're
22 doing -- instead of cutting, say,
23 overtime across the board, they're going
24 through every budget to see where
25 spending on overtime may decrease, and I

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 believe that they're also looking at
3 every department's budget to see what
4 spending may be curtailed for a year or
5 two or curtailed indefinitely, and they
6 will present that to us, and then we'll
7 go through that, we'll review that and
8 monitor it to see whether it's
9 appropriate.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I have
11 another question for you. There's been
12 some rumors -- we don't know if it's true
13 or not -- that the federal government may
14 come through with almost 1.3 billion.
15 We're not sure, but that's the rumor. In
16 PICA's opinion, how do you think that
17 money should be used? What kind of
18 timeframe? Should all of it be used on
19 services? Should we allocate a portion
20 of it for investment in our tax structure
21 to help the existing businesses come back
22 and bring new ones to the City? What's
23 your overview of that?

24 MR. RICE: Well, first of all,
25 Councilman, I agree, it is a rumor. We

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 really don't know and we're not -- here
3 in PICA we have not put a dollar amount
4 of what the City would receive, but
5 whatever they receive, I think that the
6 City should look at it comprehensively, a
7 full approach. One is that to deliver --
8 so they can continue to deliver the
9 services so they don't have to cut
10 services that the citizens of the City
11 need, but also look at how we can get --
12 because we got to look to the future.
13 They should be looking at the future.
14 How we can use that money, whether it's
15 for small businesses or other revenue,
16 that we would have revenue enhancements
17 coming into the City in the subsequent
18 years.

19 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Mr. Chair, I
21 have a point of information.

22 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Sure.

23 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Mr. Chair,
24 I'd just like to correct the record. I
25 believe both you and Mr. Rice said that

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 the \$1.1 billion is a rumor. I would not
3 characterize it as a rumor. I will state
4 that we cannot confirm that based on the
5 Community Development Block Grant formula
6 that we will receive \$1.1 billion, but it
7 has been passed out of the House Budget
8 Committee and out of the House as a whole
9 and before the Senate. So it may change,
10 and I agree with the sentiments of you,
11 Mr. Chair, and Mr. Rice that it may
12 change if it does get passed, but I would
13 just correct the record to say it's not a
14 rumor. It has been passed out of the
15 House.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

17 This question is for the
18 Administration. When discussing the
19 Fiscal '22 budget, you mentioned the
20 increasing insurance costs and continuing
21 funding pandemic-related initiatives.
22 They're going to drive our expenditure
23 up, I think, to 5.1 billion, close to 200
24 million. Can you give us the detail of
25 what that \$200 million increase is?

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 MS. WAXMAN: Sure. We can
3 certainly get back to you, and obviously
4 that will be within our FY22 budget
5 proposal. There will be certain areas
6 where you can see that there's some costs
7 related to pension allocations among the
8 funds, insurance costs unfortunately, and
9 other things as well, but some of them
10 are things where we're going to have to
11 spend more, but nobody is going to be
12 able to see, touch, feel or benefit from
13 sort of enhanced service, and we'll be
14 able to provide more information of that.
15 We'll see what we can do in advance, but
16 obviously in the FY22 budget, we'll be
17 highlighting those.

18 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I know you
19 mentioned insurance costs. I'm just
20 trying to get an idea, what do you think
21 the number is for the insurance cost
22 increase?

23 MR. DUBOW: We can't give you
24 an exact number. We can tell you why
25 it's increasing. So if you look at

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 things like the increase in weather
3 events around the world, that means that
4 insurance companies are more concerned
5 about what their costs are going to be,
6 and they pass on those costs to all of
7 the people who pay insurance. So that's
8 a hit for us. So it's not actually
9 really in that case something specific to
10 us. That's kind of a global phenomenon
11 that we are just suffering from.

12 COUNCILMAN DOMB: What is our
13 annual insurance costs right now?

14 MR. DUBOW: We'll get back to
15 you. I don't have it in my head. I have
16 it on paper, but we'll get back to you on
17 that.

18 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. This
19 is a question for Harvey Rice. What did
20 PICA think about the overtime report and
21 action plan submitted by the City, and
22 did you get action plans from all
23 requested departments?

24 MR. RICE: We did not receive
25 action plans from all requested

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 departments. I think the only one
3 outstanding is Fire.

4 The Board would like -- we're
5 attempting to schedule this meeting.
6 However, we're still minus a Board
7 member, which hasn't been appointed yet.
8 So we're going to have an informational
9 meeting with the City in regards to the
10 action plans that they submitted and to
11 get some better clarification of an
12 explanation for these plans in the next
13 month or so.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Wasn't Fire
15 on your report the highest number in
16 overtime?

17 MR. RICE: Yes. They have the
18 highest number of overtime, and then if
19 you look at for the first two quarters
20 the number of fire structures, it's down
21 20 percent from last year. We don't
22 have -- they don't report the EMS costs,
23 so we don't have those numbers. We're
24 going to follow up on those to see if
25 maybe that overtime has shifted to EMS

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 service costs.

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I'm going to
4 go to my colleagues and I'll come back
5 for some more questions.

6 I'd like to recognize
7 Councilmember Maria Quinones-Sanchez.

8 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank
9 you, Chairman, and thank you to all of
10 the members.

11 I have a couple of tax
12 questions for Harvey and then some
13 operational questions for the
14 Administration.

15 When you looked at our tax
16 revenues, you spoke a little bit around
17 BIRT and the difficulty in projections.
18 Which is more volatile? Is it the gross
19 or the net profit? And is there anything
20 you're seeing in there that we should be
21 aware of?

22 MR. RICE: I would say the
23 gross in the BIRT is more volatile than
24 the net profits. Marisa disagrees with
25 me.

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 MS. WAXMAN: I would say that
3 usually the net, because there's more
4 sort of timing or different tax decisions
5 that folks can take, whether to have
6 higher expenses. I think historically
7 the gross portion, which is only
8 unfortunately 25 percent, has been
9 steadier because it's just based on
10 sales, and clearly similar to our sales
11 tax. But the net income is usually more
12 volatile because profits can fluctuate
13 and additionally tax planning can take
14 place.

15 We saw when the TCJA -- the
16 Trump administration's federal tax
17 changes went in, businesses changed their
18 behavior in anticipation of that, because
19 they were expecting lower tax rates. So
20 federal tax policy changes can really
21 impact our net income numbers, and so
22 that does tend to wiggle a bit more.

23 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: So --

24 MR. RICE: But the reason why,
25 Councilwoman, the reason why I said BIRT

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 was, it's a bigger pool, where the net
3 profits is around 30 million.

4 MR. DUBOW: I think there's a
5 little confusion in terminology. So I
6 think what Marisa is doing is breaking
7 out the BIRT between the net income
8 portion and the gross receipts portion
9 and saying the net income portion is more
10 volatile.

11 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: So have
12 we seen, if at all, any increase in all
13 those essential businesses that stayed
14 open, particularly the multi-nationals
15 and their contributions to it? Because
16 they were allowed to be open during the
17 COVID relief. What of the COVID business
18 closures and then the essential
19 businesses, on the gross receipts side,
20 what did we see?

21 MS. WAXMAN: So we
22 unfortunately haven't been able to see
23 anything yet because the 2020 tax returns
24 aren't due yet. So it is too early. We
25 can sometimes use some of our other taxes

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 as canaries in the coal mine to tell us
3 the ones that we collect on a more
4 frequent basis. And obviously the wage
5 tax is our largest tax revenue stream,
6 and that one we do collect frequently,
7 and so that we're breaking out industry
8 by industry.

9 In terms of the wage tax, our
10 largest sectors are actually government
11 and health and human services, and those
12 have stayed pretty sturdy, which is good
13 for our wage tax collections for the most
14 part. Where we see weakness is in some
15 of the other hospitality, bars,
16 restaurants, entertainment. Those are
17 ones where year over year wage tax
18 collections are still really down. And
19 so that may give us an early indicator
20 about what collections will look like for
21 the BIRT from those industries, but it's
22 not always a perfect lockstep
23 relationship between them.

24 So what we can do is -- it
25 sounds like you're particularly

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 interested in maybe some of the larger
3 retailers. We could take a look -- go
4 back, take a look at their wage tax and
5 see if that is -- how that's looking so
6 far this year and whether or not that may
7 have been somewhat of a precursor of what
8 the BIRT looks like.

9 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I would
10 appreciate that.

11 Harvey, one of the things that
12 I appreciate PICA with all of this focus
13 around some of this overtime, and we're
14 really looking for the structural changes
15 around how we better manage the overtime.
16 I had a question about had PICA looked at
17 the City's overall expenditure,
18 particularly in its contracting in its
19 capital budget in comparison to other
20 markets? Has the Board had any time to
21 say what we're doing, the service
22 delivery models, contracting that we're
23 doing is in line with other jurisdictions
24 that are similar to us or it's not? Have
25 you had an opportunity to look at that?

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 MR. RICE: We have not had an
3 opportunity to look at that, but that's
4 an interesting idea. I think we'll take
5 that on.

6 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Yeah.
7 I'd be happy to follow up, along with the
8 Chair of Fiscal Stability and our Finance
9 Chair, to really drill down on what is
10 the cost of doing business and how are we
11 comparing with other jurisdictions.
12 There's some preliminary numbers that
13 when you look at labor rate numbers in
14 comparison to other markets, we are not
15 in line with the markets like DC and New
16 York, what has happened over the last
17 five years and how that increases our
18 infrastructure investment, because every
19 time we have to make tough decisions, the
20 decisions are always around we have to
21 defer maintenance, defer maintenance.
22 And in addition to it adding long-term
23 costs, one would argue that part of why
24 we're paying premiums is because of that,
25 right? People know. And so when we make

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 a decision to make an infrastructure
3 investment, we're at the dear end, so
4 then the market -- have we overinflated
5 our market because of our practices
6 around deferred maintenance of
7 infrastructure investment?

8 So I'd be interested in us
9 looking at that, drilling down on that as
10 we plan our Five Year Plan and because
11 the federal government is really speaking
12 to infrastructure investments, how we do
13 this long term, roads, we're talking
14 schools. If we're going to do that, we
15 should be looking at our processes around
16 that.

17 And then, lastly, the wage tax
18 I know -- and I know some of my
19 colleagues will have a discussion and
20 we'll have to continue to drill down on
21 that. Harvey, what has the Board
22 considered around what the new normal
23 under COVID government, what are some of
24 the additional one, two, three, outside
25 of overtime, things that the Board has

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 been looking at that we should be aware
3 of that they have some concerns over?

4 MR. RICE: Well, and I think
5 City Council as well as the
6 Administration has this concern, is
7 when -- is non-resident wage tax. What
8 will occur once COVID-19 is behind us and
9 what will the businesses and the
10 employees in Philadelphia look like,
11 because not only does it affect the wage
12 taxes that they submit to the City and
13 their businesses collect, but it also has
14 a domino effect on the life of the City
15 and the supporting businesses that
16 support those workers during the day. So
17 that is a concern of ours.

18 It's very difficult, I think,
19 for all of us to project what that impact
20 will be because this is new territory,
21 but it is one of the top issues that
22 we're really looking at and trying to get
23 an understanding going into the future of
24 what life in the City will be like and
25 how that will impact the wage tax, both

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 resident and non-resident.

3 So that would be a
4 significant -- and I think another area
5 that we would hope when the City presents
6 their budget and Five Year Plan, that
7 because of COVID, what have we learned
8 from it. Are there any efficiencies in
9 government or departments that we've seen
10 over this past year and sometime going
11 forward that we can use as a positive
12 impact in streamlining City government
13 without impacting the delivery of City
14 services.

15 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank
16 you.

17 And, finally, Marisa, to that
18 point, can you speak to, as you're
19 preparing for the presentation of the
20 budget, what are the one, two, three
21 guiding principles using your equity lens
22 that you're asking departments to look
23 at, right? If we want to step away from
24 10 percent cuts across the board, what
25 are the guiding principles in lieu of

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 zero-based budgeting, or whatever, that

3 you're asking departments to look at?

4 Because I do think that the world has

5 changed and this COVID reality is going

6 to be real different. What is your

7 expectation, especially front-facing

8 departments who now have to change their

9 models?

10 MR. DUBOW: You're muted,

11 Marisa.

12 MS. WAXMAN: Sorry. Thank you.

13 So part of the way that we've

14 been doing this is really asking

15 departments when they're proposing new

16 money or they're proposing one of the cut

17 scenarios, we ask a lot of questions.

18 One, we want to get to like the impacts

19 or the outcomes for the service

20 population, and that really impacts the

21 front-line folks. And so we ask

22 questions around what -- is it going to

23 worsen or improve racial disparities, and

24 if so, how do they know. Is this

25 anecdotal or something with no data

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 versus which ones can they show us are
3 data-driven, evidence-based changes or
4 expectations. And so we try and factor
5 that in.

6 We're also asking departments
7 about how they developed these, what was
8 the internal process like and was that
9 diverse. Also, was there outside impact
10 or collaboration. And we do worry about
11 the front-facing, but we also are
12 thinking a lot about what does the impact
13 mean for our workforce.

14 We had gotten some feedback
15 that in the FY21 Version 2 of the budget,
16 that it was sort of clear, you can see
17 some of the decisions we made and sort of
18 thinking about the impacts on
19 communities, but we maybe didn't do as
20 good a job thinking about the impacts on
21 our City workforce who would be impacted
22 by layoffs as much as we could. And
23 obviously we have constraints because of
24 the union contracts and because of civil
25 service regulations, but we do want to

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 consider both the public impacts as well
3 as the impacts on our workforce and who
4 is impacted. And as we go into the FY22
5 budget, I'll tell you now -- I don't even
6 think I told Rob this yet -- there's
7 going to be a new chapter on how we're
8 using racial equity in our
9 decision-making in the Five Year Plan to
10 really flesh that out of it.

11 COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: It will
12 be Council's expectation that you can
13 share that framework on a
14 department-by-department basis. I think
15 it's very important that we have that
16 document in a framework so that as we're
17 measuring the choices that we have to
18 make moving forward, because I do think
19 this is also an opportunity to realign
20 certain things that we were doing that
21 maybe we shouldn't be in the business of
22 doing. And I was very encouraged when
23 you spoke about what does government do
24 well and then where could we be better
25 partners with our community stakeholders

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 because they do it better and having that
3 honest conversation and understanding the
4 tension points.

5 I know that we have some
6 departments that are very program driven,
7 where we have program stakeholders in the
8 community that could do the work probably
9 more efficiently and more effectively.
10 So I'm going to be looking at that space.

11 Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and
12 thank you to the Administration. Thank
13 you.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
15 Councilmember.

16 I also want to make sure I
17 recognize Councilmember Bass and
18 Councilmember Thomas.

19 And now I'd like to go to
20 Councilmember Green.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
22 Mr. Chair. I just have a few quick
23 questions.

24 Looking at some of the options
25 that I believe, Marisa, you provided in

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 your testimony to deal with the upcoming
3 budget, has there been any discussions
4 about early retirements as a way of
5 reducing the workforce as a way of
6 reducing expenditures?

7 MR. DUBOW: Yes. We had some
8 discussions and, as you know, there was
9 legislation introduced last week for the
10 airport facing their own real significant
11 challenges to move forward with an early
12 retirement plan. So we're doing it
13 there.

14 For the departments in the
15 General Fund, we talked to commissioners.
16 They were really concerned about what
17 that would mean operationally, so we
18 wound up not going with it for General
19 Fund departments. We are proposing one
20 for the airport.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And I
22 understand the concern to operations, but
23 still this could be an option to possibly
24 reduce expenditures considering that
25 we're looking at a \$450 million budget

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 deficit.

3 MR. DUBOW: And I'd say it was
4 an option we looked at, and departments
5 studied it really hard and came to the
6 conclusion that looking at the employees
7 they were worried they would lose doing
8 an early retirement plan, that it was a
9 risk they didn't want to take.

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. We'll
11 revisit that at some point later.

12 Some other quick questions.
13 Marisa, in your presentation you talked
14 about performance measures and you talked
15 about homeless prevention and that the
16 City met its measures. I'm curious how
17 the City met its measures considering
18 that throughout most of the pandemic
19 we've had some significant homeless
20 issues, both for the airport and more
21 recently SEPTA. I had a chance to tour
22 the SEPTA stations along with
23 Councilmembers Squilla and Gym and
24 Gilmore Richardson on Friday, and this is
25 going to be a very significant issue and

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 impact not only for the operations of
3 SEPTA, operations of the airport, but
4 also will have an impact in reference to
5 both hospitality and also other measures
6 that will impact possibly our revenue as
7 we move forward as a city.

8 So can you give some
9 perspective on what steps we're taking?
10 How did we meet those performance
11 measures that you said were on target?

12 MS. WAXMAN: Sure, and I
13 apologize. I misspoke, because I was
14 talking about one specific measure that
15 was highlighted there in terms of there's
16 a particular assistance program where
17 they provide dollars to prevent
18 homelessness, folks who need sort of
19 emergency stop-gap filling so that they
20 don't become homeless, and that was the
21 program I was referencing.

22 What I can do is go back and
23 look at the whole suite of Office of
24 Homeless Services' measures and get back
25 to the Chair on which ones are on track,

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 which are off track, and particularly any
3 gaps.

4 One of the things we do with
5 the program-based budgeting and the
6 performance measures is that we are
7 somewhat regularly updating those to make
8 sure that -- we're collecting over 500,
9 but that still just sort of nibbles at
10 the whole breadth of what we do as a
11 city. So we can come back to you and see
12 if there are any gaps to make sure that
13 if we're not measuring where the concerns
14 are, is there anything we need to update
15 there. And obviously there's going to be
16 some new measures this year just across
17 the budget. For example, in the
18 Department of Public Health, they've got
19 a new unit, COVID Containment,
20 affectionately known as COCO, and that's
21 a program that's now going to need its
22 own measure.

23 So it's not unusual. We
24 actually work through that process with
25 PICA when we're looking at do we have the

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 right measures in place. So I'll get
3 back to you with the whole breadth of the
4 Office of Homeless Services ones, and
5 really interested in any feedback, if you
6 think there are gaps in terms of what
7 we're capturing. And obviously I hear
8 the larger issue, how are we going to
9 address the actual problems that are
10 clearly visible and be able to do that,
11 because the one thing I mentioned earlier
12 in this is that in FY21 we had received
13 fairly significant federal grants through
14 the Emergency Solutions Grant for
15 homeless services that had allowed us to
16 reduce our footprint in terms of General
17 Fund dollars, but I think it is a real
18 question that if those grants aren't
19 recurring, how exactly are we going to
20 navigate that.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: The issue is
22 not just those that have unfortunately
23 not a place to stay, but also the
24 substance abuse population as well.
25 That's kind of merged together. That

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 creates some real challenges for our city
3 and I think something that we're going to
4 have to address on an intergovernmental
5 approach and a public-private partnership
6 approach, not only with the City but City
7 Council, the Chamber of Commerce, and
8 other entities to really try and put
9 together some real strategies to address
10 some of these issues going forward.

11 You talked about using a racial
12 equity lens. I heard that phrase used
13 quite a bit throughout the
14 Administration, and you're going to be
15 working with the Office of Economic
16 Opportunity in that regard. So how will
17 that occur in reference to the City's
18 spend of dollars from a procurement
19 perspective?

20 To the extent that I've seen
21 through my experience in City government,
22 we don't always have OEO at the table for
23 various departments when they're making
24 procurement allocations and the spending
25 decisions, and so often it's kind of an

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 afterthought to some degree in reference
3 to really making the hard decisions of
4 how we spend City dollars in a way that's
5 going to really enhance the City of
6 Philadelphia, especially in our
7 local-based businesses.

8 So how will that occur in this
9 upcoming budget?

10 MS. WAXMAN: So I'm really glad
11 you asked that, because that is one of
12 the key changes we made this year to our
13 internal process. So normally in the
14 past, departments when they come in with
15 their proposals for the upcoming fiscal
16 year, they would meet with the Budget
17 Office, and they would have a separate
18 set of meetings with OEO, and you
19 referenced that it maybe could feel like
20 an afterthought. This year we had OEO
21 and Procurement as part of that budget
22 meeting with the Procurement Commissioner
23 as well as Iola Harper from running the
24 OEO Office, who was embedded in that
25 budget meeting. So that those are no

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 longer separate conversations. That is
3 one single conversation. If we're
4 talking about your budget, we're talking
5 about your OEO participation goals in the
6 same meeting.

7 So that's one of the changes
8 we've made this year so that we could
9 really push and ask questions as we're
10 talking about people's 200 or Class 300
11 or 400 budgets, what was there. So
12 that's one of those areas where we are
13 trying to better integrate those budget
14 conversations with the participation
15 goals so that we can push that forward.

16 So that's one example of how
17 we're doing that. Another example is
18 applying a racial equity lens. This is
19 from the capital budget, and I'm not sure
20 exactly how we'll depict this, but we get
21 lots and lots of requests for funding,
22 and so in certain areas what we, say, had
23 the Commerce Department do for economic
24 development projects was we plotted in a
25 matrix, you know, impact on economic

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 development on one axis and impact on
3 racial disparities in the other, and
4 really we were looking for the projects
5 that have the highest impact on economic
6 development simultaneously with the
7 highest impact on reducing racial
8 disparities.

9 Now, there are a lot of
10 limitations in what we're doing. We
11 spend a lot of time trying to learn from
12 other cities and see where they are and
13 what they're doing, but it's still really
14 subjective and there's still -- there's a
15 lot of practices, but we don't yet have
16 evidence-based, data-driven sort of
17 information to tell us how to score this
18 investment in homeless services against
19 this investment in anti-violence, about
20 which is going to do more to reduce
21 disparities.

22 So we acknowledge there are a
23 lot of limitations in how we are doing
24 this work, but we are trying to learn
25 from our peers. We're trying to look

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 internally and serve this as many
3 different ways as possible to make sure
4 that when we're talking about how we're
5 spending money, that that is central to
6 the conversation.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Well, that's
8 definitely a positive step in going
9 forward in that regard. So now OEO will
10 have a better perspective throughout the
11 year what various departments are going
12 to be spending as the budgets are being
13 put together, but it's also important
14 that as those departments are going
15 through those procurement steps, OEO is
16 right there at the table during the whole
17 process, and that has not always been the
18 case. I'm glad they have the information
19 now up front and not at the back end, but
20 now that they have the information
21 regarding the various departments, it's
22 important that OEO is there at the
23 beginning of the procurement process for
24 especially the Class 200 and other type
25 contracts, so that way, we can make sure

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 there's true participation and dollars
3 spent at the local level.

4 I just wanted to close with two
5 other quick questions. Generally, what
6 is the cost on our city resources for an
7 average snowstorm in the City?

8 MR. DUBOW: So that really
9 varies by storm.

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I figured,
11 but generally what's the range? I'm not
12 saying it's X amount of dollars, but
13 what's the general range? What has it
14 historically been?

15 MR. DUBOW: And Marisa can jump
16 in. That first big storm this year by
17 itself, I think, Marisa, that came in
18 around 5 million, but then some of the
19 other storms were much smaller costs,
20 like in the hundreds of thousands, but a
21 really big storm can cost millions of
22 dollars. We were fortunate in that we
23 really went years without seeing that
24 kind of storm, so we in general put in a
25 contingency in the budget for those

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 storms. For years, that was great, and
3 the cost of the storms was coming in
4 much, much lower than our contingency.
5 This year obviously it went the other
6 way.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And then
8 last question, and I know Mr. Chair and
9 Mr. Rice both made reference to President
10 Biden's American Rescue Plan. That has
11 not been passed. We can't guarantee that
12 it will pass, considering we've been in
13 this place in the past in reference to
14 aid to local governments. Last year the
15 CARES plan included aid to local
16 governments and then at the last minute
17 that was replaced with additional direct
18 dollars to individuals around the nation.
19 So that matter has not been settled.

20 However, the Administration did
21 push back the budget address from its
22 historical time to April 15th. One would
23 venture that was done to see what would
24 happen at the federal level.

25 So if there is additional

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 dollars that comes from direct aid to the
3 City of Philadelphia under the American
4 Rescue Plan, what will be the timeline to
5 incorporate those dollars and will that
6 be reflected in the April 15th budget or
7 would there be a revision to the budget
8 in that regard?

9 MR. DUBOW: So we are hoping
10 that it's passed in time for us to
11 include it in the April 15th budget, and
12 you're right, that was the reason that we
13 pushed back the budget, one, to see what
14 happened with that package and then, two,
15 to see what happens with our own
16 revenues. I know that the goal is to get
17 it passed by mid March so that it's timed
18 with when unemployment benefits expire.

19 As you have been doing, we've
20 been looking at the various analyses by
21 groups of what it would mean for us. So
22 we hope that we will be in pretty good
23 shape. If it's passed within the next
24 few weeks and doesn't change radically at
25 the end, that we'll be able to include it

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 in the budget.

3 I do also want to say some of
4 the pushback has been that jurisdictions
5 don't really need this money because
6 their budgets have been coming in better
7 than anticipated. That's not the
8 position we're in. We desperately need
9 every penny we can get to make sure that
10 our budget and our Five Year Plan stays
11 balanced. So we are hoping that the bill
12 passes in the form that it looks like now
13 with discretionary money that will help
14 us keep our budget and plan balanced.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So if it is
16 passed by the timeline that I've heard,
17 and I think you also referenced, there's
18 a good possibility that you will be able
19 to include it in the April 15th budget?

20 MR. DUBOW: That is correct.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Thank
22 you, Mr. Chair.

23 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
24 Councilmember Green.

25 I also just want to recognize

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 that Councilman Oh was present for the
3 hearing.

4 And I'd like to call upon
5 Councilmember Gym for questions.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
7 very much, Mr. Chair.

8 I had a couple of questions.
9 So could you explain what is the actual
10 amount of money we give in grant money to
11 the School District last year?

12 MR. DUBOW: Last year?
13 If you have it.

14 MS. WAXMAN: For FY21, the
15 current year, it's \$252 million.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: 252, okay.
17 And that was in --

18 MS. WAXMAN: Early in the year.

19 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Was that an
20 increase from the previous year?

21 MS. WAXMAN: Yes.

22 MR. DUBOW: It was. Last year
23 was 227.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And has the
25 District -- we did not have our IGA. We

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 were supposed to have it last week, but
3 we did not have our quarterly update with
4 the District yet. But have you gotten
5 indication about the decision not to
6 assess property taxes and whether you
7 anticipate a request to increase the
8 grant amount to the District this year or
9 do you think that will hold flat?

10 MR. DUBOW: In FY22, you mean?

11 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yes.

12 MR. DUBOW: So we had built in
13 escalating contributions through the Five
14 Year Plan, including an increase for next
15 year. We have not had any discussions
16 yet about what will happen with that
17 request, but we assume that the District
18 will give us a request that's consistent
19 with the Five Year Plan.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And the Five
21 Year Plan puts us at FY22 for what
22 amount?

23 MS. WAXMAN: 269 million.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Clearly, if
25 the Governor's budget were to go through

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 and the request in particular from the
3 state around the education spending, have
4 you done any projections around the
5 impact of the Governor's budget on School
6 District finances and whether that would
7 impact anything in terms of the City?

8 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. So I think
9 both the Governor's budget and the
10 federal relief both would have impacts on
11 the District's finances, and I think both
12 would push back the year when the
13 District is projecting that it will have
14 deficits. So they both would have really
15 positive impact on the District's
16 finances.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Right. And
18 it seems that the District feels more
19 positive about the federal relief and
20 that continues -- like the state
21 legislature work is always going to be in
22 play until the end; is that accurate?

23 MR. DUBOW: That's definitely
24 accurate. And as I just talked about
25 with Councilmember Green, our hope is

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 that we'll know what's going to happen
3 with the federal relief by the time we do
4 our budget. I don't think that will
5 be -- as you're saying, I don't think
6 that will be the case with the state
7 budget.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yeah. Okay.

9 So I guess my question on
10 overtime might be for both PICA and the
11 City. Last year the City made a promise
12 about curtailing overtime. Obviously I
13 think for multiple reasons there was
14 indication of what was problematic about
15 all of that, including the fact that many
16 members of our City forces were sick as a
17 result of COVID. Others were, therefore,
18 called upon to do overtime. It was
19 pretty traumatizing and difficult, and
20 I'm sure all of us on City Council want
21 to express our gratitude to our City
22 workers around this.

23 As we head into the next year,
24 however, I think one of the questions I
25 have for both PICA and the City are,

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 doing a blanket statement about overtime,
3 doing blanket statements at this point do
4 not seem particularly helpful nor
5 strategic, in part because it's obvious
6 that in general overtime is problematic,
7 but there's no question that we should
8 have learned a few things, and
9 particularly about certain departments,
10 why overtime was incurred. And as we
11 move into budget projections for next
12 year, is PICA taking a more strategic
13 approach to recommendations on overtime
14 and then also looking at particular
15 departments and areas where, for example,
16 the Fire Department had significant
17 amounts of overtime, but our answer isn't
18 obviously to say, hey, you know, we're
19 not going to fill those positions,
20 because obviously people's lives are in
21 danger.

22 But are you taking a more
23 strategic look at overtime rather than
24 just kind of a blanket look at a set of
25 numbers on a spreadsheet? And I'll go to

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 PICA first and then I'd like to hear from
3 the City and Rob and Marisa how you're
4 thinking about it.

5 MR. RICE: We are in this
6 manner looking at it strategically. When
7 we met with the City regarding the
8 overtime and the action plans, we worked
9 with them on the departments. We really
10 wanted to see, where we thought it was
11 necessary, to do action plans, to put
12 forward them, and I think the City and
13 PICA came to an agreement with all of the
14 departments that submitted the action
15 plan.

16 So while we look at -- while we
17 report sometimes the overall number, we
18 also in our reports look at every
19 department, and we are concerned about
20 those departments, A, that keep on
21 increasing and we're trying to determine
22 why they're increasing, especially
23 when -- when we started looking at this
24 about four or five years ago, the answer
25 was, well, our staffing levels were low,

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 we're not up to full contingent of
3 staffing. Well, now our staffing levels
4 have surpassed -- probably been at their
5 highest until the pandemic, and then
6 overtime was also at their highest. So
7 that argument started to raise questions
8 of -- that argument actually isn't
9 working.

10 So we do look at it
11 strategically. We look at those
12 departments that consistently have an
13 increase in overtime, even though their
14 staffing levels have increased. And so
15 in working with the City, we both came to
16 an agreement on the identification of
17 those departments that we think if they
18 did a thorough review of where their
19 overtime is, where they can cut overtime,
20 then overall overtime could be reduced in
21 the annual budget.

22 MS. WAXMAN: Thank you. Thank
23 you, Harvey.

24 And so thank you,
25 Councilmember, because I really

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 appreciate the way you framed that
3 question. And so, yes, we're not looking
4 at it as one sort of behemoth of a cost
5 center, but looking at it department by
6 department and really understanding the
7 drivers that really vary, because really
8 overtime is a tool to deliver services.
9 Sometimes it is the most effective, most
10 efficient, and in those cases, we've been
11 very clear, we don't want to reduce our
12 reliance because that's the best way to
13 deliver a service. In other areas, we've
14 seen that there are other interventions,
15 and those really -- it may be that maybe
16 we don't need to provide that service or
17 provide it at a lesser quality or
18 quantity. In other cases, we might want
19 to leverage technology to provide that
20 service differently, but sometimes that
21 requires a heavy up-front investment that
22 we might not have.

23 And so we provided department
24 by department, and I think as Harvey
25 mentioned, the one that's outstanding

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 still is Fire, because that is one where
3 their entire operation is built on
4 structural overtime. It's not one event
5 or one thing, but literally doing the job
6 that they do right now is dependent
7 entirely on that. And we have learned --
8 I will say doing this analysis during a
9 pandemic, odd time to do it. Things are
10 not normal. Operations are not normal.
11 Service needs are not normal. Our
12 staff's ability to be present, not
13 normal. But we did still see things.

14 One of the things we looked
15 when we dug deeper is the role that
16 special events play in driving overtime,
17 some of our smaller departments. So not
18 talking big dollars, but special events
19 or unplanned events, both happy and
20 tragic, are not things that individual
21 departments tend to budget in and have as
22 part of their core mission, but are
23 things that have historically been thrust
24 upon them.

25 So PICA asked us to do actually

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 two things. One, just get better in our
3 budgeting so that we are more impactful,
4 because a lot of departments, they may
5 have exceeded their overtime spending but
6 not their overall Class 100. So they're
7 still managing within their budget for
8 personnel costs, but just doing it
9 different ways. So how can we better
10 refine our forecasting so that the
11 budgets put forward in that same number
12 still have the right allocation for
13 straight time versus that. Because we
14 talked to some departments where it just
15 wouldn't make sense, that it would cost
16 more to bring more staff on because maybe
17 there's ten different people, each with
18 specialized expertise that need to do a
19 little bit of overtime, that you couldn't
20 hire one more person to do all that
21 breadth to work, plus there would be
22 extra costs for benefits that it really
23 makes sense.

24 There's other areas, though,
25 that we saw that there were real

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 opportunities to dial back. One of
3 the -- as we dug into this, one of the
4 things we learned was a recent technology
5 investment at L&I in eCLIPSE helped them
6 have their inspectors spend a lot less
7 time doing scheduling, because now folks
8 who want to schedule an appointment can
9 do self-service scheduling that lets them
10 focus their time on actually doing the
11 inspections. And so with the caseloads
12 being what they were, they were able to
13 do less overtime.

14 So we really are trying to
15 think of this, one, that overtime in and
16 of itself isn't good or bad. It's a tool
17 to deliver services. Sometimes it's the
18 right one; sometimes it's not. And we're
19 taking that department-by-department
20 approach.

21 So I think actually growing out
22 of the Appropriations hearing and a
23 question from Councilmember Thomas, we'll
24 send over to Council the individual
25 departmental action plans that address

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 what are the drivers and then what is the
3 response. In some cases, departments
4 said this is the best way we want to do
5 it and we agreed that we still want the
6 service and this is the best way. In
7 other cases, they've identified ways to
8 change it.

9 As I mentioned, though, Fire is
10 still, because that is their entire
11 operation, is continuing to take a lot of
12 internal discussion. We can't -- that
13 one requires that real thoughtful look.
14 We can't just sort of make that on the
15 fly.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And, look, I
17 understand how complicated this area is.
18 I think in the issue of a certain
19 department -- I mean, obviously like Fire
20 is a good example of this -- I think it's
21 one thing when overtime is within the
22 boundaries. It's another thing when the
23 overtime allocations become multiples of
24 a department's budget, which was actually
25 what we were seeing. And so I think it's

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 just a better, thoughtful thing.

3 I'm going to leave this as a
4 comment and not as a question, but one of
5 the things that I do hope that we are
6 getting or that you are getting is clear
7 direction from the City about what
8 departments really do need to be
9 prioritized. Looking at the list of the
10 12 departments and especially looking in
11 retrospect, there should have been or
12 should continue to be ongoing review of
13 departments that really do need to see a
14 dramatic amount of expansion. And this
15 is also for PICA. PICA has to understand
16 that this city was in massive crisis,
17 that there were areas of work that had to
18 expand; for example, like outreach,
19 mental health work, emergency situations
20 that required and demanded services.

21 There's no question to me that
22 seeing DHS significantly increase is not
23 a surprise given the amount of need and
24 the work that went in, from food delivery
25 to supports and outreach and door-to-door

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 management of services under multiple
3 departments, that that should have been
4 one of the departments that would have
5 seen an increase and that we should be
6 fine with that. There are other areas
7 where you might ask questions, like I'm
8 not sure why First District court would
9 have seen -- I mean, I think they
10 actually saw a decline; is that right?
11 So a 42 percent decline. The slides
12 moved pretty quickly and I don't have the
13 slide right in front of me, but, again,
14 it's one of the areas where you would
15 want to see -- like if certain
16 departments were more muted during this
17 time period, it might make more sense.

18 My hope is is that Finance is
19 getting clear direction from the City of
20 Philadelphia. And I know for myself and
21 for Councilmembers on here, we do want to
22 see expansion in some areas, just period,
23 like there just needs to be help. And so
24 I hope that that's something that's taken
25 into play.

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 I think my colleague
3 Councilmember Green spoke very eloquently
4 about the importance of support for
5 SEPTA. We believe that SEPTA is going to
6 be a critical factor in the City's
7 ability to engage our region, to bring
8 commerce back to life, to bring business
9 centers and economic corridors back to
10 life. We are deeply concerned about
11 SEPTA's ability to manage the multiple
12 crises that are being kind of compiled
13 on, especially when you have a decrease
14 in ridership and a more isolated kind of
15 transportation corridor that's going on
16 right now, but we're not going to be able
17 to improve that if the actual experience
18 of riding SEPTA feels unsafe, unclean,
19 and unhealthy for people.

20 So there needs to be ongoing
21 discussion. We know that the SEPTA Board
22 made a conscious decision about using
23 some of its federal CARES Act money, for
24 example, on maintaining its
25 infrastructure pipeline, and maybe as

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 we're dealing with emergencies within the
3 City, we want to continue to have that
4 conversation. Either way, though, it
5 feels very important to us that that is a
6 collective dialogue.

7 You don't control SEPTA's
8 budget. They are quasi-independent, but
9 our city does depend on it as much as it
10 does on the School District. So I'm just
11 going to leave it at that.

12 I guess the last question I
13 just wanted to clarify for Rob, because I
14 didn't quite understand the response to
15 Councilman Green. So I think he was
16 asking about the potential offer for
17 early retirement. This goes back a
18 little bit to my earlier question about
19 taking a look at departments on a
20 strategic level. I don't actually know
21 whether there are union guidelines around
22 early retirement, whether it has to be
23 applied across the board or whether
24 departments can kind of be encouraged to
25 take -- can be offered early retirement

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 as opposed to an across-the-board City
3 worker kind of offer, but I guess I
4 wasn't clear what your answer was. It
5 sounded like it was considered for early
6 retirement on kind of a blanket level.
7 It was declined. But I was wondering if
8 you could just clarify that a little bit
9 more.

10 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. It was
11 actually -- we went out to every cabinet
12 member, and they then went down to all
13 their departments, talked through whether
14 they wanted to participate in the early
15 retirement program, and departments did
16 not want to participate because they were
17 really concerned about the senior-level
18 employees that they would lose and what
19 that would mean for their operations.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yeah. It's
21 understood. I agree with my
22 Councilmember, though, that as we look at
23 a devastating potential impact on our
24 budget, having departments plan out --
25 there's a Five Year Plan in place, right?

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 And I clearly think that COVID upends
3 some of the five-year planning, so that
4 some departments may be needing expansion
5 and a real robust investment right now,
6 especially as we focus in on recovery,
7 focus in on health, and focus in on
8 addressing longstanding racial
9 disparities. Other departments may need
10 to be on a five-year trajectory where
11 maybe the growth is more muted. And I'm
12 wondering if you are having again, and
13 encourage the City to have again, that
14 approach, that it needs to be kind of a
15 purposeful direction about priorities for
16 departments.

17 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. That is
18 definitely a key part of the process this
19 year and really has to be given the
20 challenge that we're facing.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yeah. My
22 last question is on housing with regard
23 to the clear emphasize on priorities for
24 the City. Housing issues were a clear
25 priority for the Council body last spring

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 as we headed into COVID and the past
3 hellish year of 2020. There was no
4 question that we felt like we were not
5 only on the right footing by emphasizing
6 housing, which got slashed in the Mayor's
7 original budget but got restored. It, in
8 fact, turned out to be one of our most
9 successful programs. I mean, we should
10 underscore the fact that while there are
11 precious few areas where we should -- we
12 can say that there were good things, and
13 Ms. Waxman, I really do appreciate your
14 talking about L&I and the IT stuff,
15 because we need to hear a lot more of
16 those examples of those stories. I also
17 want to underscore the importance of
18 housing. We were first out the gate on
19 the eviction moratorium. We had already
20 had in place an investment in
21 PHLRentAssist, which the budget preserved
22 with right to counsel, Landlord-Tenant
23 Court, lawyer for a day programs, and
24 advice for people, especially as they
25 were dealing with unlicensed landlords,

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 potentially illegal evictions that were
3 kind of off the books as we sought to
4 protect people. Those things all came
5 into play.

6 But, more importantly, I think
7 what the investment in housing did was
8 that it drew down additional money.
9 Philadelphia moved over \$60 million in
10 rent vouchers out to communities and
11 families. The City put in ten. Council
12 put in eight because we were so quick,
13 because our folks at the City level were
14 paying attention to the programs. They
15 were nimble, and they already had the
16 vehicle to do something.

17 But our \$18 million investment
18 on our end translated into 60 million,
19 and now there's over 100 million
20 potentially coming to us from the state
21 level. My hope is that as we plan out
22 for the coming year, that we recognize
23 that there were areas of the City where
24 City agencies and incredibly heroic
25 individuals throughout City government

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 did tremendous work in keeping people
3 housed, keeping people stable, and making
4 sure that landlords were paid, and as a
5 result, we became like an enormous
6 vehicle for moving money efficiently,
7 responsively, and quickly throughout our
8 city.

9 My hope is is that as we go
10 into the coming year, that the housing
11 budget will not be a place again where
12 the City chooses to slash, because it
13 will be core to our stability, and I ask
14 this also of PICA to keep this in mind,
15 that there are -- we do need to make sure
16 that we have success stories on the
17 books, priorities that were met. They
18 should match the City's priorities,
19 absolutely, but it's not often that we
20 saw a lot of -- well, let me take that
21 back. We saw a lot of local heroes in
22 2020, and I will underscore the fact that
23 I felt that out of 2020, the housing
24 justice people and City agencies did a
25 yeoman's job.

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 So I will hope that the housing
3 arena and that the City's continued
4 stability around housing will remain a
5 priority and we don't have to go through
6 what we went through in the last budget
7 cycle. So I'll leave it at that.

8 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
10 Councilmember.

11 I'd like to call on
12 Councilmember Kathy Gilmore Richardson.

13 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: Thank
14 you. Thank you so much, Mr. Chair.
15 Thank you for this hearing, and thank you
16 to the PICA Board, Rob and Marisa for all
17 of your work.

18 I wanted to start by echoing
19 the sentiments of my colleagues
20 Councilmembers Green and Gym around our
21 need to ensure that we're supporting
22 SEPTA as a part of our region's overall
23 recovery. We had an opportunity last
24 week to ride the subway on the East
25 Market side with Councilmembers Gym,

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 Squilla, Green, Brooks, and myself, and I
3 will say as a lifelong Philadelphian and
4 someone who rode the bus every day to
5 school from Wynnefield to Center City
6 when I went to Masterman and also on the
7 subway when I went to Girls' High and
8 then again on the bus routes when I went
9 to college at West Chester, I have never
10 seen conditions worse than what we saw
11 last Friday.

12 So I am imploring all of you,
13 the Administration and all of us, to
14 consider intergovernmental briefings with
15 SEPTA on a weekly basis so that we can
16 all work together to ensure that some of
17 the challenges we are seeing around our
18 most vulnerable populations, particularly
19 those who are houseless and also those
20 who are suffering in addiction, can be
21 addressed as we are trying to push
22 individuals to come back to the City as
23 we move forward in the vaccination
24 process. So I definitely wanted to start
25 there.

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 I wanted to go back to earlier
3 in your presentation, Marisa, where you
4 talked about the GFOA recommended level
5 of reserves, particularly for larger
6 municipal cities, and talk about, because
7 we have a Five Year Plan that we have to
8 plan out, how you all are thinking around
9 ensuring that we can increase our
10 reserves moving forward. I know around
11 this time last year we had a hearing in
12 this committee where we talked about our
13 city's readiness for any potential
14 economic recession, and little did we
15 know -- I remember us talking about at
16 the end of that hearing this thing called
17 the Coronavirus that was on the West
18 Coast and about some articles that we had
19 read in the New York Times, and little
20 did we know the overall impact COVID
21 would continue to have on our city
22 budget.

23 So can you talk about how you
24 all, even in the throes, in the midst of
25 this pandemic, are thinking about

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 building up our reserves over time,
3 particularly to get to the GFOA
4 recommended level. Because I think if we
5 were at those levels going into this
6 pandemic and really kind of tightening
7 our budget before the pandemic, that we
8 would have been in a better place and not
9 have just three days of discretionary
10 spending.

11 So can you talk about how you
12 all are thinking about increasing our
13 reserves even while we're in the
14 pandemic?

15 MS. WAXMAN: So certainly
16 that's basically the process we're in now
17 as we're developing the FY22 budget and
18 the Five Year Plan, is that it's very
19 much on the minds, particularly of the
20 finance folks, because -- and
21 particularly that slide we showed and how
22 we had that reserve. Imagine if we had
23 been at 29 million at the start of the
24 Coronavirus, that would have been
25 hundreds more millions in either cuts or

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 revenue enhancements. And so we think
3 within government and externally, that's
4 a message that's getting through, folks
5 recognize. But we also understand there
6 are real trade-offs there. So we'll
7 figure out what we can do to build up
8 over the course of the Five Year Plan,
9 but to get to that 17 percent, the two
10 months in the bank, that's 800 million,
11 and we've got real trade-offs there with
12 service delivery, particularly when
13 53 percent of our budget is fixed or
14 inflexible. We had to carve out 800
15 million out of half of our budget.
16 That's huge. That's a huge percentage.
17 And so that's where a lot of our
18 challenges are, and so we'll be talking
19 about that.

20 We also talked to our peers in
21 a lot of cities, and we know how
22 important this is, so I don't want to --
23 we're not at a point yet where we've got
24 our FY26 fund balance percentage target,
25 but certainly that's something we know

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 that we're going to need to build back as
3 we're trying to triangulate between
4 having a tax structure that helps our
5 economic recovery, providing services
6 that meets the needs of Philadelphians
7 while at the same time building back up a
8 reserve so that for the next thing, we're
9 in a good place. And really that's the
10 challenge we have, and so it is
11 triangulating between those three sort of
12 opposing needs that will be more front in
13 our mind as we go into producing that
14 Five Year Plan.

15 I don't know, Rob, if there's
16 anything else you want to add to that.

17 MR. DUBOW: No. I think it is
18 really important to think about the
19 trade-offs, because there are cities
20 that -- if you look at other cities, a
21 lot of them have gotten to that
22 17 percent or even higher, and some of
23 them even managed to stay there during
24 this process, and part of their
25 decision-making was whether they dip into

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 those fund balances.

3 It's a lot more complicated for
4 us because we are both a city and a
5 county, which means that we're providing
6 a different array of services from some
7 of the other cities and because we have a
8 higher poverty level than many of those
9 cities. We also have a different tax
10 base. So as Marisa is talking about the
11 trade-offs between tax base and services,
12 that really plays into some of our
13 decision-making about thinking whether we
14 really will get up to that 17 percent or
15 whether we want to get more in the range
16 of the 6 to 8 percent, where we were
17 before. And then that's a discussion we
18 always have, but one thing that we all
19 agree on is 29 million is too low. It
20 doesn't give us much of a cushion and we
21 have to build that up over time.

22 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: Sure.
23 And I agree with you, and thank you, Rob,
24 for your response.

25 Marisa, you walked right into

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 some of my next questions around our
3 fixed costs. I know you talked about
4 previously some of our debt and looking
5 to restructure that debt and sort of
6 refinance while rates are historically
7 low. So can you talk about some of the
8 debt restructuring that has happened
9 since the onset of the pandemic and sort
10 of the indicators around the
11 restructuring you were able to accomplish
12 thus far and what your thinking is about
13 that moving forward.

14 And then my second question, so
15 that you're able to frame your response
16 around where I'm trying to go with this,
17 is how are you all thinking about our tax
18 restructuring overall in the future? I
19 mean, particularly because we rely so
20 heavily on the wage tax as the largest
21 portion of our budget. How are you all
22 thinking about restructuring to move
23 towards what our new normal will look
24 like in the future? Because I do think
25 that's important to how we figure out

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 what's next.

3 MR. DUBOW: So let me take the
4 debt portion and then I'll flip it over
5 to Marisa for the tax structure portion.

6 We have, and even before the
7 pandemic hit, one of the constants is
8 that we are looking at all of our
9 outstanding debt and looking at
10 opportunities for refundings. And so, I
11 mean, you'll notice through the Finance
12 Committee there's kind of a constant
13 stream of requests for refundings, not
14 just in our General Fund but in our Water
15 Fund, our Aviation Fund. So that's a
16 constant.

17 What's different this time is
18 that we've added in fairly substantial
19 restructuring of our pension obligation
20 bonds. And so we've done that in a way
21 that would save over \$90 million citywide
22 and about \$75 million in our General
23 Fund.

24 So that is one of the important
25 parts of our overall plan for how we got

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 through '21. I mean, without that, what
3 was already an ugly process would have
4 been much uglier. So that is -- the
5 Treasurer's Office, they're meeting with
6 people every day to figure out the best
7 way to look at our outstanding debt and
8 to see opportunities for refundings.

9 I will say one of the things
10 that happened at the federal level a few
11 years ago was ending the ability to do
12 advanced refundings, which took away one
13 of the ways that we have to reduce our
14 costs. There was bipartisan legislation
15 introduced in the Senate last week that
16 would bring back advanced refundings.
17 That would be a big help for us. That
18 would help us look for other
19 opportunities to save money.

20 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: Thank
21 you. That was very, very helpful, and
22 I'll definitely follow up on the advanced
23 refunding portion specifically.

24 I also wanted to talk about
25 contracts as well. I know some of my

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 colleagues mentioned contracts earlier in
3 this conversation, like Councilmember
4 Green and others, but I wanted to
5 specifically zero in on contracts by each
6 department, and if you could submit this
7 information to the Chair, that would be
8 most helpful. But if you could provide a
9 list of all contracts for each City
10 department that are held by former City
11 employees, and if you could detail their
12 original hire date, meaning when they
13 were hired by the City originally, their
14 separation date, and their contract award
15 date and amount and if the contract is
16 yearly and has approval. Sometimes you
17 have the one-year contract and then you
18 typically would approve it year by year
19 on a year-by-year basis. So if you could
20 just detail that information and provide
21 that to the Chair, that would be most
22 helpful.

23 And, finally, I don't know that
24 we'll be able to get a clear response on
25 this, but I wanted to talk about some

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 services that are provided to some of our
3 City departments that typically City
4 employees can do. So I wanted to know if
5 you have a list or if you could provide a
6 list to the Chair of all contracts in
7 each City department that City employees
8 could typically do and the amount of
9 those contracts. And if we need to talk
10 offline about that, I will be more than
11 happy to do so, but that would be
12 helpful. We can talk more offline about
13 that.

14 MR. DUBOW: Yeah.

15 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: Yeah.

16 MR. DUBOW: Looking at Marisa's
17 face, I think neither she nor I
18 completely understand what you're asking,
19 so we should definitely have a
20 conversation about it.

21 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: Yeah.
22 I'll definitely follow up with that,
23 because I do think it will be an
24 important conversation to have going into
25 some of the upcoming contract

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 negotiations with the City unions.

3 So thank you very, very much.
4 And I wanted to again circle back to the
5 other request around the list of all the
6 contracts by former employees. If you
7 can just provide that to the Chair, that
8 would be helpful.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
10 Councilmember.

11 COUNCILWOMAN RICHARDSON: Thank
12 you, Mr. Chair.

13 Thank you, Rob and Marisa.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I would just
15 have a quick follow-up question to
16 Councilmember Gilmore Richardson's
17 question regarding the advanced
18 refunding. If that legislation does get
19 passed, have we done any kind of a
20 financial analysis as to how much money
21 we could possibly save with that
22 legislation?

23 MR. DUBOW: So I think what
24 happened over time is, we haven't looked
25 as much at those opportunities because we

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 weren't able to capitalize on them, and
3 that's something we can start to look at
4 now.

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: If you could
6 let us know, that would be interesting,
7 because maybe we could help lobby to get
8 that through possibly.

9 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. That would
10 be great. Thank you.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Councilmember
12 Jones, I know you have a question.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
14 Mr. Chairman, and thank you for pulling
15 this Fiscal Stability hearing together.
16 I think it's the most important questions
17 we can be asking for our city over the
18 next year.

19 But Rahm Emanuel and Winston
20 Churchill before him said never let a
21 good crisis be wasted, something to that
22 effect, and I was wondering if in fact we
23 are going to see some relief measures
24 passed through the Senate. It probably
25 will not include the \$15-an-hour wage

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 increase, but it will include a lot of
3 interesting reimbursements and also
4 opportunities for the City of
5 Philadelphia.

6 Who is at the heart of the team
7 evaluating where those opportunities
8 might find buckets within the City of
9 Philadelphia?

10 MR. DUBOW: So we have a
11 Recovery Committee, the Recovery Office,
12 and Sarah is here from that office, but
13 there's also a steering committee with
14 that group that has representation from
15 around the City, the Mayor's Office,
16 Commerce, Finance, to make sure that we
17 are having ongoing discussions about the
18 best way to access money and the best way
19 to use it. I'm going to let Sarah give
20 more details on that response.

21 MS. DE WOLF: Sure. Thank you,
22 Rob.

23 I'm Sarah de Wolf, Recovery
24 Officer for the City. And as Rob
25 mentioned, we have a steering committee.

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 We meet monthly right now. We'll
3 probably meet more frequently if
4 additional legislation gets passed, but
5 that steering committee does include
6 diverse and representative members from
7 across City government as well as City
8 Council, diversity, equity, and
9 inclusion, and we elevate significant
10 spending decisions up to that steering
11 committee for consideration as a way of
12 getting input and buy-in.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Don't get me
14 wrong, I really appreciate the hashtag
15 diversity and inclusion. I mean,
16 everybody is woke, as they say. I get
17 it. But I want some specifics as in
18 where would a bucket for criminal justice
19 reform or anti-violence or, as
20 importantly, big-picture opportunities,
21 such as mass transit enhancements?

22 I believe now is the time to
23 plant a seed for regional light rail,
24 regional light rail going from Bucks
25 County down to the Wissahickon Transfer

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 Station, down to Center City, to Delaware
3 Avenue, down to the airport. And I say
4 that because it's going to take ten years
5 for that seed to be planted into a tree
6 that we can harvest fruit from, but if we
7 don't do it now, it may never happen.
8 And in this Joe Biden administration,
9 there's going to be a large
10 infrastructure repair bill.

11 We have 100-plus bridges in
12 Philadelphia that are over 100 years old
13 and that are imminently dangerous, but I
14 want to know that we're teeing up for
15 those kinds of opportunities coming from
16 Washington and we're coordinating clearly
17 with the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania,
18 our state partners, to be able to
19 fast-track this relief so that it
20 actually helps us this fiscal year.

21 And so please give me some
22 indication of how that coordination is
23 happening.

24 MS. DE WOLF: Sure. I'd be
25 happy to. So you mentioned the next

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 significant piece of legislation that
3 we're expecting to see, which is going to
4 be focused around transportation and
5 infrastructure, and we are beginning to
6 have conversations around that, obviously
7 understanding -- not knowing the details
8 of what that legislation might be, but
9 understanding that that is coming our way
10 and we need to be ready for it.

11 So we've been working closely
12 with the Mayor's Office on that. We've
13 talked with the Chamber of Commerce, and
14 we're also internally looking, kind of
15 dusting off some of our previous plans
16 and lists of significant infrastructure
17 projects and really thinking through what
18 does the criteria look like now, is it
19 the same or is it different, do we have
20 new layers of criteria that we want to
21 put on these projects in order to
22 identify what would really be the most
23 significant or most important project
24 that we would want to fund.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: So, for

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 example, when we had the stimulus program
3 under the Obama administration, I've been
4 around long enough to see us scrambling
5 around for shovel-ready projects to meet
6 the criteria.

7 We have advanced notice that
8 this is coming down the pike. We should
9 take this opportunity to say, you know,
10 we really looked at that light rail, we
11 didn't believe we could get funding for
12 it, just maybe there might be manna from
13 heaven to come down to fix that. Imagine
14 that on top of a Sixers facility on
15 Delaware Avenue. That would change our
16 financial projections for the next ten
17 years.

18 So I'd like us to stop the
19 bleeding, because we're leaking at this
20 moment, but after we finish the triage,
21 we could actually take this crisis to
22 actually start to look to a brighter
23 Philadelphia.

24 And listen, Mr. Chairman, I'm
25 always the glass is half full. I'm that

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 kind of guy. But I don't believe it will
3 be half full if we don't have a vision
4 for how we would take advantage of this
5 crisis right now.

6 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
8 Councilmember. What you're really
9 talking about is, we should probably put
10 together a plan, a bucket list, of things
11 we should be doing over the next five to
12 ten years, and the transit plans you're
13 talking about I think are great ideas,
14 great info. Thank you. Thank you very
15 much.

16 Let's go to Councilmember
17 Isaiah Thomas, please.

18 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank you,
19 Mr. Chair, and actually thank you,
20 Councilmember Jones, too, because that's
21 a perfect segue into my questions. And
22 of course thank you to everybody for
23 being here to testify.

24 We had a hearing recently that
25 spoke to the importance of investment,

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 significant investment, in
3 infrastructure. In the midst of being
4 here today and listening to all the great
5 testimony as well as questions from my
6 colleagues, I did not hear anything about
7 capital investment as it relates to
8 infrastructure of our streets, our roads,
9 and things like that.

10 In our hearing last week, we
11 found out that about 12 percent of the
12 roads in the City of Philadelphia produce
13 80 percent of the car accidents. So I'm
14 wondering what plans are in place to
15 address this issue when we're seeing more
16 people die in 2020 from fatalities
17 dealing with car accidents and
18 hit-and-runs than what we've seen in
19 nearly over a decade, and based on the
20 hearing, we found that the primary
21 sustainable solution is changing the
22 structure of our streets.

23 So I'm wondering what's the
24 plan there and how do we see that fitting
25 into the work that's being done from the

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 fiscal side?

3 MS. WAXMAN: So I will say that
4 paving and those Vision Zero investments
5 and others are part of what will be in
6 the FY22 capital budget. Pre-pandemic
7 that had clearly been one of our highest
8 priorities. However, there's a number
9 of -- there were a number of pressures on
10 obviously our operating and capital
11 budgets, so we obviously couldn't spend
12 as much as we wanted, but those are still
13 clearly in the mix as we develop the
14 FY22. And then there's obviously
15 thinking about the sort of larger federal
16 infrastructure investments that go beyond
17 sort of the meat and potatoes of our
18 standard year in/year out capital budget.

19 I'm not sure, Sarah, if you
20 have any information about that big bill
21 or if that's still in the works about how
22 the City is going to be thinking sort of
23 regionally about those big infrastructure
24 type investments.

25 MS. DE WOLF: Yeah. We don't

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 have a lot of specifics at this point,
3 unfortunately. We have heard indication
4 that a starting point might be a
5 previously introduced infrastructure
6 bill, and apologies. I'm blanking on the
7 name of it right now, but I can provide
8 it as follow-up.

9 The other thing that we're
10 hearing is that just that there may be a
11 return of earmarks, but, again, very
12 little detail around that. So
13 unfortunately not a lot of information to
14 tell us whether that would cover some of
15 our core infrastructure projects.

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: So in the
17 hearing, there wasn't a whole lot of
18 detail specifically targeting areas, and
19 I just want to again reiterate the
20 importance of focusing on not just the
21 12 percent of the roads that produce
22 80 percent of the car accidents, but also
23 looking at areas in the City of
24 Philadelphia where the Administration
25 actually found the relationship between

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 not just gun violence and poverty but
3 hit-and-runs and unreported hit-and-runs
4 and the need to pour resources in those
5 communities to essentially address those
6 issues. So I did want to just put that
7 out there first.

8 Real quick, and I'm sorry,
9 Chairman, I don't want to be too long.
10 Just keeping the same streets hat on, are
11 we considering how a Safer Streets grant
12 could be expanded by the coming
13 infrastructure bill? Is that something
14 that's a part of your conversation?

15 MS. WAXMAN: I think on the
16 operating -- on our side, we'd have to
17 get back.

18 I don't know if, Sarah, you
19 have any information off the top of your
20 head, but we can look into that.

21 MS. DE WOLF: I would have to
22 get back to you too, yeah.

23 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: All right.
24 We're just concerned that we have an
25 opportunity right now to be able to

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 address some of the capital investment
3 that we need in infrastructure, and we
4 feel like a collaboration with the
5 federal government at this time can put
6 us in a position where it might not cost
7 us as much as the actual total amount.
8 So I just wanted to add that to the
9 conversation and hope that that's
10 something that we can look to do and work
11 together on so that we can assure that
12 we're doing something about the safety
13 issues in our city.

14 Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I
15 appreciate it. And thank you again,
16 everybody, for allowing me to be here
17 today.

18 MR. DUBOW: And just to add
19 that the folks from our Transportation
20 and Infrastructure Office are actively
21 involved in our discussions about what we
22 should look for in that infrastructure
23 bill. So things like the safety program
24 will be things that are high on their
25 priority list and that they are a part of

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 our conversations.

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
4 Councilmember Thomas. All great points.
5 Thanks for your input.

6 I don't believe there's any
7 other questions from my colleagues, but I
8 do have a few remaining questions that I
9 held off asking. So I figure I'd bring
10 them up now and either, Marisa or Rob,
11 you're welcome to take a crack at either
12 one of them.

13 MR. DUBOW: Is this like the
14 lightning round at the end?

15 COUNCILMAN DOMB: This is it,
16 yeah. This is it. Thirty seconds to
17 respond.

18 So this is regarding that
19 potential relief funding we may get. So
20 the relief funding we get from the
21 federal government will basically
22 probably be a one-time boost to our
23 budget, and the concern is we want to be
24 very careful about using funding from
25 this one-time boost to add on recurring

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 expenses we might not be able to cover in
3 future years if we don't have this relief
4 funding from the federal government. So
5 as you're preparing for the Fiscal Year
6 '22 budget, I would ask that you provide
7 Council with information regarding all
8 one-time funded programs in personnel so
9 we can clearly distinguish between what's
10 going and what has the potential to be
11 lost if we don't receive funding in
12 future years to offset grant dollars.
13 And the question I guess is, how is the
14 Administration, how are you thinking
15 about balancing the one-time expenditures
16 versus recurrent costs when we apply this
17 relief funding?

18 MR. DUBOW: Thank you for that
19 question, because that's been a topic of
20 conversation for us, because we're
21 obviously very concerned about the same
22 issue, and we think kind of looking at
23 the structural problems we face, that we
24 have to be really purposeful and
25 thoughtful about how we deploy whatever

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 federal funding that we get so that it
3 helps us bring about structural solutions
4 to the structure problems we face, and
5 that's how we intend to use it.

6 Obviously we'll know better how
7 that works when we see what comes out of
8 whatever is finally passed and whatever
9 requirements are around it, but we share
10 your concern, and that's our intention.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. The
12 second question in the lightning round,
13 what are the Administration's priorities
14 for the incoming federal relief dollars?
15 Example, if it's 1.1 or 1.3, or whatever
16 that number is, showed up at City Hall
17 today -- that would be great -- what are
18 the top five things you'd think the
19 Administration would want to put that
20 money and how would you utilize it?

21 MR. DUBOW: So we want to use
22 that money to make sure that we stay in
23 balance, that our Five Year Plan works
24 and -- I mean, for us, that's the number
25 one through five priority, to make sure

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 that the number gets us to a place where
3 we're balanced, while not having to make
4 painful cuts or painful decisions on the
5 tax side.

6 MS. WAXMAN: The only thing I
7 would add is that the Administration has
8 started talking about our priorities for
9 the FY22 budget, and so the ones listed
10 there are health equity for all, a
11 quality education for all, a safer and
12 more just Philadelphia, inclusive economy
13 in thriving neighborhoods, and doing that
14 all with a diverse, efficient, effective,
15 inclusive government. So I think none of
16 those are surprises, but being able to do
17 that is -- those outside dollars is what
18 keeps us in balance to be able to advance
19 those.

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And so in
21 general, though, getting back to the
22 budget issue, we're 450 million potential
23 projection shortfall for Fiscal Year '22.
24 If I'm reading it correctly, is the
25 revenue shortfall about 200 to 250

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 million and the expense overage is 200
3 million? Is that pretty accurate or am I
4 not accurate on that?

5 MS. WAXMAN: We'll have to sort
6 of titrate that out a little, but
7 generally, yes, those are -- that seems
8 like the right ballpark, and so that's
9 what we'll be considering.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So in that
11 light, I'm going to ask Sarah -- thanks
12 for being here, Sarah -- if you can give
13 us kind of a reconciliation on COVID
14 dollars we received from the federal
15 government, COVID dollars we've spent as
16 the City, just to make sure we're like in
17 balance.

18 MS. DE WOLF: I'm sorry. I
19 couldn't quite hear what you said, but if
20 Marisa or Rob --

21 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. I think I
22 got it. You want to know what we got and
23 what we spent.

24 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Yeah;
25 reconciliation of COVID dollars we spent

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 versus what we received.

3 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. And I think
4 what we'll probably show is what we've
5 got and what we've allocated, because
6 spending takes a little longer, but we've
7 fully allocated our funds.

8 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Last, but not
9 least, is it on your radar that whatever
10 the numbers are that we get from the
11 federal government, if we get money,
12 that -- by the way, I think we should do
13 a budget with expecting no money, like
14 calling for the worst, hope for the best.
15 We should do a budget without any money
16 from the feds and just see where we are
17 at that point.

18 But if we do get money, is
19 there some small percentage the
20 Administration would consider investing
21 into our tax structure in order to,
22 again, help the existing businesses in
23 our city recover and, going forward, give
24 us a tool to help expand that economic
25 base?

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406

2 MR. DUBOW: I think discussions
3 about our tax structure have to be part
4 of the FY22 budget process. Hopefully if
5 we get federal money, that is something
6 that will help in that conversation, but
7 I think either way, it's got to be part
8 of the conversation.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Because I
10 think what we're seeing now and what
11 you're seeing is wage tax of the
12 non-residents who don't live here could
13 hurt us dramatically, because, again,
14 that concept of taxing things that can
15 move, that's what we need to look at
16 going forward for a healthier city.

17 MR. DUBOW: Yes.

18 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Are there any
19 other questions or comments from my
20 colleagues for today's hearing?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. I want
23 to thank each of you for being here today
24 and for your ongoing oversight of our
25 city's finances, and hopefully we'll have

1 3/1/21 - FISCAL STABILITY - RES. 200406
2 you back here real soon for another round
3 of questions, but we appreciate your
4 testimony today and look forward to
5 working with you as things progress.

6 I want to thank everybody for
7 being in the hearing today. I don't
8 believe there's any public questions, so
9 I think we can move forward and conclude
10 the hearing.

11 Thank you very much, and have a
12 great day. Thank you.

13 (Committee on Fiscal Stability
14 and Intergovernmental Cooperation
15 concluded at 12:16 p.m.)

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Committee on Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation
March 1, 2021

Page 1

A	actual 73:9 83:9 97:17 128:7 actuals 22:25 add 40:6 109:16 128:8,18 129:25 132:7 added 19:4 112:18 addiction 105:20 adding 61:22 addition 61:22 additional 11:3 20:9 20:13,14 29:25 33:20 37:7 46:5 62:24 80:17 80:25 102:8 119:4 additionally 57:13 address 30:8 73:9 74:4,9 80:21 93:25 124:15 127:5 128:2 addressed 105:21 addressing 100:8 adds 29:17 administra... 47:18 52:18 56:14 63:6 68:12 74:14 80:20 105:13 120:8 122:3 126:24 130:14 131:19 132:7 134:20 administra... 57:16 131:13 adopted 15:4 19:18 22:23 48:25	adults 25:8 advance 53:15 132:18 advanced 113:12,16 113:22 116:17 122:7 advantage 123:4 advice 101:24 affect 63:11 affectionat... 72:20 afternoon 22:12 afterthought 75:2,20 agencies 20:24 21:16 21:17,25 102:24 103:24 agency 5:22 ago 88:24 113:11 agree 50:25 52:10 99:21 110:19,23 agreed 94:5 agreement 88:13 89:16 agreements 30:18 ahead 12:22 28:24 44:11 aid 49:7 80:14,15 81:2 airport 17:21 69:10,20 70:20 71:3 120:3 alignment 28:21 ALLAN 1:11 allocate 50:19 allocated 20:15 134:5 134:7 allocation 92:12	allocations 53:7 74:24 94:23 allow 38:9 41:17 allowed 15:8 58:16 73:15 allowing 5:24 128:16 allows 18:14 ambulance 21:20 American 80:10 81:3 amount 8:25 46:2 51:3 79:12 83:10 84:8,22 95:14,23 114:15 115:8 128:7 amounting 11:4 amounts 87:17 amplify 43:12 amusement 17:17,23 analyses 81:20 analysis 91:8 116:20 analyze 47:22 and/or 137:23 anecdotal 65:25 announcem... 3:16 annual 54:13 89:21 answer 13:16 44:12 87:17 88:24 99:4 anti-violence 77:19 119:19 anticipate 33:18 84:7 anticipated 82:7 anticipation 57:18	apologies 126:6 apologize 71:13 appear 23:23 applied 98:23 apply 130:16 137:21 applying 76:18 appointed 55:7 appointment 93:8 appreciate 43:10 60:10 60:12 90:2 101:13 119:14 128:15 136:3 approach 36:12 51:7 74:5,6 87:13 93:20 100:14 appropriate 47:24 49:5 50:9 Appropriat... 93:22 approval 114:16 approve 114:18 approxima... 7:17 10:3,6 April 19:7 44:6 80:22 81:6,11 82:19 area 34:2 46:17 64:4 94:17 areas 32:23 33:20 34:3 36:9 47:13 48:10 53:5 76:12,22 87:15 90:13 92:24 95:17 96:6,14,22 101:11 102:23	126:18,23 arena 104:3 argue 61:23 argument 89:7,8 array 110:6 articles 106:18 aside 33:3 asked 75:11 91:25 asking 38:12 64:22 65:3 65:14 66:6 98:16 115:18 117:17 129:9 assess 39:2 84:6 assistance 24:9,11 43:20 71:16 Association 15:21 assume 84:17 assumes 32:21 assumptions 45:4,5,7 46:4 assure 128:11 attempting 55:5 attendance 2:7 attending 25:8 attention 28:15 32:8 102:14 attributed 10:10 12:10 attrition 9:7 22:23 Audio 2:23 Authority 4:23 5:21 authorizing 1:19 4:12 available 21:15 24:3 29:21	Avenue 120:3 122:15 average 33:7 79:7 avert 39:21 Aviation 112:15 award 114:14 aware 56:21 63:2 axis 77:2 B back 6:20 7:3 12:10,11 14:5 19:15 21:21 31:17 31:19 32:14 33:12 39:15 41:18 45:6 46:24 47:8 50:21 53:3 54:14,16 56:4 60:4 71:22,24 72:11 73:3 78:19 80:21 81:13 85:12 93:2 97:8,9 98:17 103:21 105:22 106:2 109:2 109:7 113:16 116:4 127:17,22 132:21 136:2 back-office 22:3 41:4 backfilled 34:9 backlogs 34:14 bad 31:13 93:16 bag 20:23 21:13 balance 6:17 6:19,23 14:24,25 15:14,25 16:3,14	29:7,13,21 31:8,15 37:18 38:24 40:5 108:24 131:23 132:18 133:17 balanced 47:24 49:5 82:11,14 132:3 balances 7:5 110:2 balancing 130:15 ballpark 133:8 bank 108:10 bargaining 30:18 bars 59:15 base 31:24 32:18 110:10,11 134:25 based 18:17 33:4 52:4 57:9 124:19 basically 19:19 32:9 39:11 41:7 107:16 129:21 basis 26:21 59:4 67:14 105:15 114:19 Bass 1:11 2:9 3:12 68:17 beat 49:14 beginning 3:16 78:23 121:5 behavior 57:18 Behavioral 27:14 behemoth 90:4 believe 47:17 50:2 51:25 68:25 97:5 119:22 122:11
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Committee on Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation
March 1, 2021

Page 2

123:2 129:6 136:8 benefit 53:12 benefits 8:22 42:11 81:18 92:22 best 43:22 90:12 94:4 94:6 113:6 118:18,18 134:14 better 2:25 12:16 18:5 32:12 36:6 46:23 55:11 60:15 67:24 68:2 76:13 78:10 82:6 92:2,9 95:2 107:8 131:6 beyond 125:16 Biden 120:8 Biden's 49:8 80:10 big 46:24 79:16,21 91:18 113:17 125:20,23 big-picture 119:20 bigger 33:6 58:2 biggest 13:24 bill 82:11 120:10 125:20 126:6 127:13 128:23 billion 7:8,9 7:10,15,17 11:2,4,5,20 29:11,14,18 29:20 32:19 50:14 52:2 52:6,23 bipartisan 113:14 BIRT 10:15 19:3 56:17 56:23 57:25 58:7 59:21	60:8 bit 2:14 15:3 17:5 18:12 18:23 20:23 21:6 37:25 56:16 57:22 74:13 92:19 98:18 99:8 bits 39:5 blanket 87:2 87:3,24 99:6 blanking 126:6 bleeding 122:19 Block 52:5 board 9:12 48:12 49:23 55:4,6 60:20 62:21 62:25 64:24 97:21 98:23 104:16 body 100:25 boiler 22:11 bonds 112:20 bonus 19:4 books 102:3 103:17 boost 129:22 129:25 borrow 12:8 39:3 Boston 46:17 bottom 16:15 32:9 bouncing 31:17 boundaries 94:22 breadth 72:10 73:3 92:21 break 40:12 breaking 58:6 59:7 Brian 1:15 2:8 bridges 120:11 briefings 105:14 brighter	122:22 bring 18:7 46:23 50:22 92:16 97:7 97:8 113:16 129:9 131:3 bringing 18:10 Brooks 105:2 bucket 119:18 123:10 buckets 118:8 Bucks 119:24 budget 6:12 8:2 11:6,7 11:19 14:17 15:4 19:18 20:7 22:24 25:18 26:2 26:13 27:12 27:19 29:4 29:22 31:10 31:12,24 32:18,23 34:19 35:5 35:20 36:9 36:24 37:10 42:8 43:4 44:6 46:2 47:11,13,22 47:24 48:15 48:21,24,24 49:4,24 50:3 52:7 52:19 53:4 53:16 60:19 64:6,20 66:15 67:5 69:3,25 72:17 75:9 75:16,21,25 76:4,13,19 79:25 80:21 81:6,7,11 81:13 82:2 82:10,14,19 84:25 85:5 85:9 86:4,7 87:11 89:21 91:21 92:7 94:24 98:8 99:24 101:7	101:21 103:11 104:6 106:22 107:7,17 108:13,15 111:21 125:6,18 129:23 130:6 132:9 132:22 134:13,15 135:4 budgeting 36:13 65:2 72:5 92:3 budgets 13:8 13:10 76:11 78:12 82:6 92:11 125:11 build 30:3 39:14 45:16 108:7 109:2 110:21 building 34:20 107:2 109:7 built 16:2 35:12 84:12 91:3 bullet 39:7 bunch 19:5 26:23 burden 41:20 bus 105:4,8 business 20:14 38:8 58:17 61:10 67:21 97:8 businesses 36:2 40:15 50:21 51:15 57:17 58:13 58:19 63:9 63:13,15 75:7 134:22 buy-in 119:12 C cabinet 99:11 call 5:5 83:4 104:11	called 2:4 45:10 86:18 106:16 calling 134:14 canaries 59:2 cannibalizing 38:21 capital 36:14 60:19 76:19 124:7 125:6 125:10,18 128:2 capitalize 117:2 capturing 73:7 car 124:13,17 126:22 careful 129:24 CARES 7:18 7:19 8:19 80:15 97:23 caring 22:7 carve 108:14 case 54:9 78:18 86:6 caseloads 93:11 cases 90:10 90:18 94:3 94:7 cash 26:7 category 10:14 cautioned 12:5 center 27:9 90:5 105:5 120:2 centers 97:9 central 78:5 centralized 38:21 certain 25:20 25:21 33:19 40:14 45:5 48:9 49:19 53:5 67:20 76:22 87:9 94:18 96:15 certainly 53:3 107:15	108:25 CERTIFIC... 137:2 certification 137:20 CERTIFY 137:3 certifying 137:24 Chair 1:11 2:8 14:8 51:20,23 52:11 61:8 61:9 68:22 71:25 80:8 82:22 83:7 104:14 114:7,21 115:6 116:7 116:12 123:19 Chairman 12:19 56:9 68:11 104:8 117:14 122:24 123:6 127:9 128:14 challenge 26:22 100:20 109:10 challenges 24:17 25:7 30:24 31:3 31:4 39:10 40:3 69:11 74:2 105:17 108:18 challenging 34:19 41:2 Chamber 74:7 121:13 chance 70:21 change 10:19 10:20 19:13 39:2 42:2,6 52:9,12 65:8 81:24 94:8 122:15 changed 8:25 57:17 65:5 changes 25:6 32:5 35:2	42:7 57:17 57:20 60:14 66:3 75:12 76:7 changing 124:21 chapter 67:7 characterize 52:3 chart 10:18 check 26:10 Cherelle 1:15 5:3 Chester 105:9 children 22:7 25:7 choices 48:18 67:17 chooses 103:12 chunks 17:20 Churchill 117:20 Cindy 1:11 2:9 circle 116:4 cities 43:21 77:12 106:6 108:21 109:19,20 110:7,9 citizens 48:20 51:10 city 1:2,22 3:19 4:18 4:21 5:16 5:23 6:2,6 7:5 8:12 9:21 10:2 11:2,7,23 12:7,14 14:12 28:4 31:2,10 37:21 42:11 43:15 46:12 46:15 47:14 47:18,19 48:19,21,22 49:20 50:22 51:4,6,10 51:17 54:21 55:9 63:5 63:12,14,24	64:5,12,13 66:21 70:16 70:17 71:7 72:11 74:2 74:6,6,21 75:4,5 79:6 79:7 81:3 85:7 86:11 86:11,16,20 86:21,25 88:3,7,12 89:15 95:7 95:16 96:19 98:3,9 99:2 100:13,24 102:11,13 102:23,24 102:25 103:8,12,24 105:5,22 106:21 110:4 114:9 114:10,13 115:3,3,7,7 116:2 117:17 118:4,8,15 118:24 119:7,7 120:2 124:12 125:22 126:23 128:13 131:16 133:16 134:23 135:16 city's 18:19 33:21 42:22 60:17 74:17 97:6 103:18 104:3 106:13 135:25 citywide 112:21 civil 66:24 clarification 12:20 55:11 clarify 13:22 98:13 99:8 class 8:21,22 26:11 28:13
--	--	---	---	---	---	--	--

Committee on Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation
March 1, 2021

Page 3

76:10 78:24 92:6 classes 26:2 clause 41:7 cleaning 11:14 cleanups 24:12 clear 66:16 90:11 95:6 96:19 99:4 100:23,24 114:24 clearly 57:10 73:10 84:24 100:2 120:16 125:7,13 130:9 Clerk 4:6,10 5:7 CLIP 24:12 close 11:16 15:22 23:9 23:25 27:18 52:23 79:4 closely 25:15 121:11 closer 28:19 43:2 closures 25:6 58:18 Co-Chair/... 2:8 co-designing 36:17 co-sponsors 3:8 coal 59:2 Coast 106:18 COCO 72:20 cohorts 43:20 collaboration 43:11 66:10 128:4 colleague 97:2 colleagues 56:4 62:19 104:19 114:2 124:6 129:7 135:20 collect 59:3,6	63:13 collected 10:2 collecting 72:8 collection 18:8 24:18 24:18 25:2 collections 10:12 18:16 18:17,24 59:13,18,20 collective 30:18 98:6 college 105:9 come 11:15 14:4 22:11 41:17 43:14 45:6 47:8 50:14,21 56:4 72:11 75:14 105:22 122:13 comes 17:24 47:21 81:2 131:7 coming 19:12 23:16,16 28:8,9 49:8 51:17 80:3 82:6 102:20 102:22 103:10 120:15 121:9 122:8 127:12 comment 95:4 comments 135:19 commerce 27:7 74:7 76:23 97:8 118:16 121:13 Commission 27:20 Commissio... 75:22 commissio... 12:7,11,15 69:15 commitme... 32:3 33:15	committee 1:3,20 2:5,6 3:3 4:8,12 5:18 14:9 35:6 36:18 52:8 106:12 112:12 118:11,13 118:25 119:5,11 136:13 committees 3:19,25 Commonw... 120:17 communities 41:3 66:19 102:10 127:5 community 36:16,18,23 52:5 67:25 68:8 companies 54:4 company 45:12 compare 10:4 compared 24:21 comparing 61:11 comparison 60:19 61:14 compiled 97:12 completely 115:18 complicated 94:17 110:3 comprehen... 51:6 concept 135:14 concern 48:11 63:6 63:17 69:22 129:23 131:10 concerned 9:12 30:20 54:4 69:16 88:19 97:10 99:17	127:24 130:21 concerns 28:25 47:25 63:3 72:13 concise 44:18 conclude 136:9 concluded 136:15 conclusion 70:6 conditions 30:15 105:10 confident 33:25 confirm 52:4 confusion 58:5 Connection 2:12 connects 46:12 conscious 97:22 consequence 39:9 consider 67:2 105:14 134:20 considerati... 20:12 119:11 considerati... 41:17 considered 62:22 99:5 considering 69:24 70:17 80:12 127:11 133:9 consistent 84:18 consistently 89:12 consolidating 38:11 constant 112:12,16 constants 112:7 constitution	41:6 constrained 40:21 constraints 66:23 consultants 18:20 consulting 38:16 contained 137:5 Containment 72:19 contingency 79:25 80:4 contingent 89:2 continue 21:2 42:21 51:8 62:20 95:12 98:3 106:21 continued 19:20 104:3 continues 85:20 continuing 43:8,25 52:20 94:11 contract 114:14,15 114:17 115:25 contracting 60:18,22 contracts 30:16 40:22 42:12 66:24 78:25 113:25 114:2,5,9 115:6,9 116:6 contribution 34:9 contributions 58:15 84:13 control 40:16 98:7 137:23 convening 42:24 Convention 27:9 conversation 33:12 68:3	76:3 78:6 98:4 114:3 115:20,24 127:14 128:9 130:20 135:6,8 conversatio... 35:21,24 76:2,14 121:6 129:2 Cooperation 1:4,20 3:5 4:14,23 5:18,21 136:14 coordinating 120:16 coordination 120:22 core 19:24 91:22 103:13 126:15 corner 32:9 Coronavirus 15:7 18:11 30:2 106:17 107:24 correct 51:24 52:13 82:20 137:8 correctly 132:24 corridor 97:15 corridors 97:9 cost 12:2 29:16 32:3 33:21 48:3 53:21 61:10 79:6,21 80:3 90:4 92:15 128:6 costs 6:8 9:13 9:19 15:8 19:21,23 20:9,13,17 30:20 31:23 32:2,21 33:10,13,20 37:19 38:4 38:13,16	40:7,9,10 41:23,24 42:5 44:2 52:20 53:6 53:8,19 54:5,6,13 55:22 56:2 61:23 79:19 92:8,22 111:3 113:14 130:16 Council 1:2 3:19,25 5:16 11:23 20:15 28:4 47:19 48:21 48:22 63:5 74:7 86:20 93:24 100:25 102:11 119:8 130:7 Council's 67:12 Councilman 1:11,13,14 1:14,15,16 1:17 2:2,13 2:16,24 3:2 4:24 5:9 12:21 13:21 14:3,4 44:14,24 45:2 46:10 49:11 50:10 50:25 51:19 51:20,22,23 52:16 53:18 54:12,18 55:14 56:3 68:14,21 69:21 70:10 73:21 78:7 79:10 80:7 82:15,21,23 83:2 98:15 104:9 116:9 116:14 117:5,11,13 119:13 121:25 123:7,18 126:16	127:23 129:3,15 131:11 132:20 133:10,24 134:8 135:9 135:18,22 Councilme... 2:8,9,10,10 2:14,17,17 2:18,19,20 2:21 3:8,9,9 3:10,11,12 3:12 5:3,15 44:22,23 56:7 68:15 68:17,18,20 82:24 83:5 85:25 89:25 93:23 97:3 99:22 104:10,12 114:3 116:10,16 117:11 123:8,16,20 129:4 Councilme... 43:11 70:23 96:21 104:20,25 Councilwo... 1:11,12,12 1:13,15,16 12:18,23 13:6,7,12 56:8 57:23 57:25 58:11 60:9 61:6 64:15 67:11 83:6,16,19 83:24 84:11 84:20,24 85:17 86:8 94:16 99:20 100:21 104:13 110:22 113:20 115:15,21 116:11 counsel 101:22 count 30:5
---	---	---	--	---	---	--	---

Committee on Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation
March 1, 2021

Page 4

counted 10:10 county 45:15 110:5 119:25 couple 14:23 33:7 56:11 83:8 coupling 48:8 course 108:8 123:22 court 34:17 96:8 101:23 cover 32:20 126:14 130:2 COVID 7:6 20:9 22:17 24:4 58:17 58:17 62:23 64:7 65:5 72:19 86:17 100:2 101:2 106:20 133:13,15 133:25 COVID-19 8:11 22:6 63:8 crack 129:11 creates 43:4 74:2 CRF 15:7 criminal 119:18 crises 97:12 crisis 19:21 95:16 117:21 122:21 123:5 criteria 121:18,20 122:6 critical 97:6 crucial 46:15 curious 47:12 70:16 current 3:18 14:12 29:16 29:19 32:19 35:17 83:15 currently 3:15,20	20:11 46:4 curtailed 50:4,5 curtailing 86:12 Curtis 1:14 44:22 cushion 110:20 cut 51:9 65:16 89:19 cuts 33:9,19 41:4 64:24 107:25 132:4 cutting 49:22 cyber 33:22 cycle 104:7 D D 1:16 Daily 4:3 danger 87:21 dangerous 120:13 data 65:25 data-driven 66:3 77:16 date 9:22 10:15,20 18:18,24 19:6 20:19 46:8 114:12 114:14,15 DAVID 1:14 day 19:14 63:16 101:23 105:4 113:6 136:12 days 21:20 26:5 107:9 days' 15:15 16:21 31:9 DC 61:15 de 14:14 118:21,23 120:24 125:25 127:21 133:18 dead 49:15 deal 48:10 69:2	dealing 20:25 98:2 101:25 124:17 dear 62:3 debt 8:23 26:4 38:2 40:7 42:3 111:4,5,8 112:4,9 113:7 decade 124:19 December 6:5 26:14 decision 62:2 84:5 97:22 decision-m... 67:9 109:25 110:13 decisions 34:23 36:6 57:4 61:19 61:20 66:17 74:25 75:3 119:10 132:4 decks 14:18 decline 96:10 96:11 declined 99:7 decrease 8:14 8:16 10:12 23:3,6,9 48:7 49:25 97:13 decreased 9:4 decreasing 7:23 9:16 22:19 deeper 91:15 deeply 97:10 defer 61:21 61:21 deferred 62:6 Deferring 38:3 deficit 49:10 70:2 deficits 85:14 definitely 78:8 85:23 100:18 105:24	113:22 115:19,22 degree 75:2 Delaware 120:2 122:15 delegates 36:24 deliver 29:16 40:13 51:7 51:8 90:8 90:13 93:17 delivery 41:5 48:19 60:22 64:13 95:24 108:12 demand 95:20 department 23:7 27:13 72:18 76:23 87:16 88:19 90:5,6,23 90:24 94:19 114:6,10 115:7 department's 50:3 94:24 departmen... 67:14 93:19 departmen... 93:25 departments 11:18 12:6 12:17,24,25 13:2,8,9 21:3 26:24 28:10,18 35:16 49:19 54:23 55:2 64:9,22 65:3,8,15 66:6 68:6 69:14,19 70:4 74:23 75:14 78:11 78:14,21 87:9,15 88:9,14,20 89:12,17 91:17,21 92:4,14 94:3 95:8 95:10,13	96:3,4,16 98:19,24 99:13,15,24 100:4,9,16 115:3 departments' 11:23 depend 98:9 dependent 45:4 91:6 Depending 22:16 depict 76:20 deploy 130:25 Deputy 14:15 Derek 1:13 2:10,15,17 describing 35:16 desperately 82:8 despite 18:15 detail 7:13 15:13 17:5 52:24 114:11,20 126:12,18 details 8:20 118:20 121:7 determine 88:21 devastating 99:23 develop 47:19 125:13 developed 66:7 developing 107:17 development 52:5 76:24 77:2,6 DHS 95:22 dial 93:2 dialogue 98:6 die 124:16 difference 29:18 different 23:11 25:9 26:24 57:4	65:6 78:3 92:9,17 110:6,9 112:17 121:19 differently 90:20 difficult 10:16 63:18 86:19 difficulty 56:17 dig 25:12 dip 109:25 direct 32:8 80:17 81:2 137:23 direction 95:7 96:19 100:15 directly 43:14 Director 5:20 14:7,15,17 disAbility 27:15 disabled-o... 36:2 disagreement 33:11 disagrees 56:24 discretionary 42:15 82:13 107:9 discuss 1:21 4:16 discussing 52:18 discussion 62:19 94:12 97:21 110:17 discussions 69:3,8 84:15 118:17 128:21 135:2 disparities 65:23 77:3 77:8,21 100:9 disparity	35:7 disposal 20:4 20:18 distinguish 130:9 distribution 30:14 District 30:21 83:11,25 84:4,8,17 85:6,13,18 96:8 98:10 District's 85:11,15 diverse 66:9 119:6 132:14 diversity 119:8,15 divide 11:8 document 67:16 doing 19:24 24:13 26:24 38:3,12 39:5 43:18 49:21,22 58:6 60:21 60:23 61:10 65:14 67:20 67:22 69:12 70:7 76:17 77:10,13,23 81:19 87:2 87:3 91:5,8 92:8 93:7 93:10 123:11 128:12 132:13 dollar 51:3 dollars 27:5,5 28:9 34:10 34:11 36:14 36:22 37:6 71:17 73:17 74:18 75:4 79:2,12,22 80:18 81:2 81:5 91:18 130:12 131:14 132:17 133:14,15	133:25 Domb 1:11 2:2,16 3:2 4:24 5:9,15 12:21 13:21 14:4,9 44:14 45:2 46:10 49:11 50:10 51:19 51:22 52:16 53:18 54:12 54:18 55:14 56:3 68:14 82:23 104:9 116:9,14 117:5,11 123:7 129:3 129:15 131:11 132:20 133:10,24 134:8 135:9 135:18,22 domino 63:14 door 27:5 door-to-door 95:25 dozen 36:25 37:2 dramatic 95:14 dramatically 42:13 135:13 drew 102:8 drill 61:9 62:20 drilling 62:9 drive 52:22 driven 20:20 21:5 68:6 drivers 90:7 94:2 driving 91:16 drop 48:6 dropped 16:14 dry 37:16 Dubow 5:8 14:6,8 53:23 54:14 58:4 65:10 69:7 70:3 79:8,15
---	---	---	--	---	--	--	---

Committee on Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation
March 1, 2021

Page 5

81:9 82:20	76:25 77:5	employees	38:5	72:17 76:16	expire 81:18	43:9 49:7	find 40:17
83:12,22	97:9 106:14	9:6 12:8	equitable	76:17 87:15	expiring	50:13 57:16	118:8
84:10,12	109:5	48:7 63:10	34:25	94:20 95:18	30:16	57:20 62:11	finding 38:10
85:8,23	134:24	70:6 99:18	equity 34:22	97:24 122:2	explain 83:9	73:13 80:24	fine 19:8 96:6
99:10	economists	114:11	35:5,15	131:15	explanation	85:10,19	finish 122:20
100:17	42:23,25	115:4,7	41:12 44:3	examples	55:12	86:3 97:23	fire 13:25
109:17	economy	116:6	64:21 67:8	101:16	express 86:21	113:10	55:3,14,20
112:3	45:6,17,25	employees'	74:12 76:18	exceeded	extent 74:20	125:15	87:16 91:2
115:14,16	46:24	22:6	119:8	92:5	external 35:4	128:5	94:9,19
116:23	132:12	EMS 55:22	132:10	Executive	externally	129:21	firm 45:10
117:9	edging 27:17	55:25	escalating	5:19	108:3	130:4 131:2	first 5:6 6:14
118:10	education	encompassed	84:13	existing	extra 92:22	131:14	6:22 9:14
128:18	85:3 132:11	6:4	especially	50:21	eye 11:16	133:14	14:23 18:4
129:13	effect 63:14	encourage	34:16 48:12	134:22		134:11	23:4,6
130:18	117:22	25:12	65:7 75:6	expand 95:18	F	135:5	24:21,22,24
131:21	effective 90:9	100:13	78:24 88:22	134:24	face 115:17	feds 134:16	42:20 45:11
133:21	132:14	encouraged	95:10 97:13	expanded	130:23	fee 19:8	48:16 50:24
134:3 135:2	effectively	9:15 67:22	100:6	127:12	131:4	feedback	55:19 79:16
135:17	68:9	98:24	101:24	expansion	facility	66:14 73:5	88:2 96:8
due 3:18 8:11	efficiencies	encumber	essential	45:21 95:14	122:14	feel 53:12	101:18
9:6 19:6,7	38:11 40:17	27:15	58:13,18	96:22 100:4	facing 69:10	75:19 128:4	127:7
19:19 58:24	64:8	encumbered	essentially	expect 27:25	100:20	feeling 33:25	fiscal 1:3,20
dug 91:15	efficient	11:3 27:6,9	127:5	expectation	fact 86:15	feels 85:18	1:21 2:1
93:3	90:10	ended 6:17	estimates	65:7 67:12	101:8,10	97:18 98:5	3:1,3 4:1,13
dusting	132:14	ends 13:15	17:14 29:9	expectations	103:22	fees 20:4,18	4:16 5:1,17
121:15	efficiently	engage 97:7	42:22 43:3	33:16 66:4	117:22	38:13 39:3	6:1,3 7:1
	68:9 103:6	engaged	evaluating	expected 20:6	factor 45:25	felt 101:4	8:1,3 9:1
E	efforts 14:13	21:25	118:7	20:8	66:4 97:6	103:23	10:1 11:1
earlier 8:18	eight 102:12	engaging	event 17:25	expecting	factors 23:11	figure 21:19	12:1 13:1
24:16 73:11	either 22:17	36:12	91:4	31:18 57:19	fairly 73:13	34:11 108:7	14:1,12
98:18 106:2	98:4 107:25	enhance 75:5	events 21:5	121:3	112:18	111:25	15:1 16:1
114:2	129:10,11	enhanced	54:3 91:16	134:13	families	113:6 129:9	17:1 18:1,4
early 25:22	135:7	53:13	91:18,19	expended	102:11	figured 79:10	19:1 20:1
26:5 27:10	election 12:9	enhanceme...	eventually	11:2 27:4	family 22:7	figuring	21:1 22:1
27:16 29:2	19:20 20:17	41:9 51:16	34:15	expenditure	far 11:20	32:17	23:1 24:1
32:6 58:24	elevate 119:9	108:2	everybody	52:22 60:17	15:16 18:25	fill 35:16	25:1 26:1
59:19 69:4	eloquently	119:21	44:20	expenditures	24:15 60:6	87:19	27:1 28:1
69:11 70:8	97:3	enhancing	119:16	17:2 69:6	111:12	filling 71:19	29:1 30:1
83:18 98:17	Emanuel	38:25 41:5	123:22	69:24	fast-track	finally 64:17	30:17 31:1
98:22,25	117:19	enormous	128:16	130:15	120:19	114:23	32:1 33:1
99:5,14	embedded	103:5	136:6	expense	fatalities	131:8	34:1 35:1
earmarks	75:24	ensure	eviction	133:2	124:16	finance 14:7	36:1 37:1
126:11	emergencies	104:21	101:19	expenses	February	14:15 15:20	38:1 39:1
East 104:24	98:2	105:16	evictions	8:11 15:10	9:19 10:9	61:8 96:18	40:1 41:1
echoing	emergency	ensuring	102:2	47:16 49:12	11:15 26:7	107:20	42:1 43:1
104:18	3:19 34:7	106:9	evidence	57:6 130:2	33:3	112:11	44:1,7 45:1
eCLIPSE	71:19 73:14	entertainm...	137:4	experience	February's	118:16	46:1 47:1
93:5	95:19	59:16	evidence-b...	33:5 74:21	11:12	finances	48:1 49:1
econometrics	emphasize	entire 91:3	66:3 77:16	97:17	federal 29:25	30:21 85:6	50:1 51:1
45:10	100:23	94:10	exact 53:24	experienced	30:4,10,10	85:11,16	52:1,19
economic	emphasizing	entirely 91:7	exactly 73:19	18:18	30:22 33:17	135:25	53:1 54:1
18:19 30:14	101:5	entities 74:8	76:20	expertise	33:18 34:5	financial	55:1 56:1
31:2 41:15	employee	equal 16:20	example	92:18	34:10,10	116:20	57:1 58:1
74:15 76:23	8:22	equipment	25:24 42:9	experts 43:5	37:13 42:25	122:16	59:1 60:1

Committee on Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation
March 1, 2021

Page 6

61:1,8 62:1	108:8	follows 3:17	front-line	111:18,24	generated	111:16	133:11
63:1 64:1	109:14	food 95:24	20:24 21:24	130:3,12	8:15	123:16	134:23
65:1 66:1	123:11	footing 101:5	65:21	FY19 15:25	generating	125:16	135:16
67:1 68:1	131:18,23	footprint	fruit 120:6	16:10	35:3	goal 15:17	good 2:3,25
69:1 70:1	131:25	73:16	full 49:5 51:7	FY20 7:24	getting 11:13	16:5,6	4:11 14:8
71:1 72:1	five-year	forces 86:16	89:2 122:25	15:5 16:11	23:18 31:19	81:16	26:9 27:22
73:1 74:1	4:19 100:3	forecasting	123:3	31:19,20	43:2,17	goal-setting	31:20 37:2
75:1,15	100:10	92:10	full-time 9:5	32:14,15	47:4 95:6,6	35:19	38:14 44:23
76:1 77:1	fix 122:13	foregoing	23:4	FY2021	96:19 108:4	goals 1:22	44:24 59:12
78:1 79:1	fixed 30:19	137:7,20	fully 134:7	10:18	119:12	4:18 76:5	66:20 81:22
80:1 81:1	31:25 41:22	form 82:12	137:5	FY21 9:5	132:21	76:15	82:18 93:16
82:1 83:1	41:24	former	functions	28:23 29:8	GFOA 16:8	goes 8:24	94:20
84:1 85:1	108:13	114:10	22:4 38:11	31:18 32:22	16:19 31:15	98:17	101:12
86:1 87:1	111:3	116:6	fund 6:17,19	32:23 33:9	106:4 107:3	going 5:10	109:9
88:1 89:1	flag 25:23	forms 35:15	6:23 7:4	34:3 66:15	Gillette 46:18	8:23 16:23	117:21
90:1 91:1	flat 84:9	formula 52:5	10:4 14:24	73:12 83:14	Gilmore 1:12	17:23 21:18	goodness
92:1 93:1	flesh 67:10	forth 4:20	14:25 15:14	FY22 28:24	2:21 3:11	21:19 26:10	25:25
94:1 95:1	flexibility	33:12	15:24 16:3	29:4,9,12	70:24	27:7,24	gotten 15:18
96:1 97:1	40:24	fortunate	16:13 17:6	29:17 33:17	104:12	28:11 31:8	15:21 30:22
98:1 99:1	flexible 43:14	79:22	18:11 19:14	44:6,11	116:16	31:25 32:25	35:10 41:18
100:1 101:1	flip 112:4	forward 44:4	19:15,16	53:4,16	Girls' 105:7	33:11,23	66:14 84:4
102:1 103:1	flocking	64:11 67:18	22:24 23:3	67:4 84:10	give 16:24	34:13,19	109:21
104:1 105:1	17:22	69:11 71:7	27:20 29:7	84:21	45:6 52:24	35:22,24	government
106:1 107:1	flow 26:7	74:10 76:15	29:13,20	107:17	53:23 59:19	39:18 42:20	15:20 19:24
108:1 109:1	fluctuate	78:9 88:12	31:7,15	125:6,14	71:8 83:10	43:16 44:17	47:3,20
110:1 111:1	57:12	92:11	34:8 37:17	132:9 135:4	84:18	45:17 46:25	50:13 59:10
112:1 113:1	fly 94:15	105:23	39:19 42:16	FY26 108:24	110:20	47:7 48:17	62:11,23
114:1 115:1	focus 35:4,13	106:10	47:13 69:15		118:19	49:23 52:22	64:9,12
116:1 117:1	43:18 60:12	111:13	69:19 73:17	G	120:21	53:10,11	67:23 74:21
117:15	93:10 100:6	134:23	108:24	gap 29:4,22	133:12	54:5 55:8	102:25
118:1 119:1	100:7,7	135:16	110:2	31:12 37:10	134:23	55:24 56:3	108:3 119:7
120:1,20	focused 121:4	136:4,9	112:14,15	47:11	given 5:11	62:14 63:23	128:5
121:1 122:1	focusing	found 4:5	112:15,23	gaps 72:3,12	22:5 95:23	64:10 65:5	129:21
123:1 124:1	126:20	124:11,20	121:24	73:6	100:19	65:22 67:7	130:4
125:1,2	folks 21:15	126:25	funded 37:5	gate 101:18	gives 10:21	68:10 69:18	132:15
126:1 127:1	21:21 22:10	four 30:15	130:8	gates 36:20	25:21	70:25 72:15	133:15
128:1 129:1	22:21 41:9	88:24	funding 7:19	Gauthier	glad 75:10	72:21 73:8	134:11
130:1,5	43:5 57:5	frame 111:15	52:21 76:21	1:12 2:18	78:18	73:19 74:3	governments
131:1 132:1	65:21 71:18	framed 90:2	122:11	general 10:3	glass 122:25	74:10,14	18:14 19:10
132:23	93:7 102:13	framework	129:19,20	17:6 19:15	global 45:10	75:5 77:20	80:14,16
133:1 134:1	107:20	67:13,16	129:24	19:16 20:20	54:10	78:8,11,14	Governor's
135:1 136:1	108:4	Free 25:8	130:4,11,17	22:24 23:2	go 12:21 14:6	85:21 86:2	84:25 85:5
136:13	128:19	freeze 9:8	131:2	34:8 36:20	14:23 15:12	87:19 95:3	85:9
fitting 124:24	follow 9:24	22:22 38:12	funds 7:18	42:16 45:2	25:25 28:9	97:5,15,16	graduated
five 6:25 8:7	9:25 11:12	frequent 59:4	18:12 19:12	47:13 69:15	29:6 32:11	98:11 107:5	41:14
8:14 23:23	26:19 55:24	frequently	27:16 37:21	69:18 73:16	37:3 42:18	109:2	grant 34:7
40:5 43:4	61:7 113:22	59:6 119:3	39:21 53:8	79:13,24	47:7 48:14	115:24	52:5 73:14
49:6 61:17	115:22	Friday 70:24	134:7	87:6 112:14	49:20 50:7	117:23	83:10 84:8
62:10 64:6	follow-up	105:11	funky 26:19	112:22	56:4 60:3	118:19	127:11
67:9 82:10	116:15	front 78:19	26:20	132:21	67:4 68:19	119:24	130:12
84:13,19,20	126:8	96:13	further 7:12	generally	71:22 84:25	120:4,9	Granted
88:24 99:25	following	109:12	future 30:25	45:23 46:3	87:25 103:9	121:3	28:16
106:7	3:15 8:2	front-facing	39:16 51:12	79:5,11	104:5 106:2	125:22	grants 18:11
107:18	11:12	65:7 66:11	51:13 63:23	133:7	109:13	130:10	34:5 37:20

Committee on Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation
March 1, 2021

Page 7

73:13,18 gratitude 86:21 Grbach 5:5 great 24:13 30:22 32:16 39:22 42:19 80:2 117:10 123:13,14 124:4 129:4 131:17 136:12 Green 1:13 2:10,15,17 3:9 51:20 51:23 68:20 68:21 69:21 70:10 73:21 78:7 79:10 80:7 82:15 82:21,24 85:25 97:3 98:15 104:20 105:2 114:4 gross 56:18 56:23 57:7 58:8,19 group 42:24 118:14 groups 35:5 43:18 81:21 growing 93:21 growth 100:11 guarantee 80:11 guess 86:9 98:12 99:3 130:13 guidelines 98:21 guiding 64:21 64:25 gun 127:2 gut 26:9 guy 22:11 123:2 Gym 1:13 2:22 12:18 12:23 13:7 13:12 70:23 83:5,6,16	83:19,24 84:11,20,24 85:17 86:8 94:16 99:20 100:21 104:20,25 H half 20:10 42:16 108:15 122:25 123:3 Hall 131:16 hamper 41:20 hand 17:13 hands 37:9 happen 25:20 80:24 84:16 86:2 120:7 happened 61:16 81:14 111:8 113:10 116:24 happening 18:23 21:4 120:23 happens 33:5 81:15 happy 44:12 61:7 91:19 115:11 120:25 hard 16:2 23:19 41:8 46:21 70:5 75:3 Harper 75:23 harvest 120:6 Harvey 5:7 5:19 13:22 15:3 19:3 19:19 22:21 23:11 25:14 32:24 47:9 47:10 54:19 56:12 60:11 62:21 89:23 90:24 hashtag 119:14 hat 127:10	hate 49:14 head 54:15 86:23 127:20 headed 101:2 heading 44:5 47:11 health 3:19 19:21 22:6 27:14 41:16 59:11 72:18 95:19 100:7 132:10 healthier 135:16 hear 3:6 73:7 88:2 101:15 124:6 133:19 heard 74:12 82:16 126:3 hearing 2:3 3:3,6,17 4:2 83:3 93:22 104:15 106:11,16 117:15 123:24 124:10,20 126:10,17 135:20 136:7,10 hearings 1:21 3:22,24 4:4 4:14 48:23 heart 118:6 heaven 122:13 heavily 111:20 heavy 90:21 held 114:10 129:9 Helen 1:13 2:22 hellish 101:3 help 30:8 50:21 82:13 96:23 113:17,18 117:7 134:22,24 135:6 helped 93:5	helpful 87:4 113:21 114:8,22 115:12 116:8 helps 109:4 120:20 131:3 heroes 103:21 heroic 102:24 hey 45:17 87:18 high 12:6,12 105:7 128:24 higher 7:5 15:4,6,10 17:11 57:6 109:22 110:8 highest 11:19 13:8,10 55:15,18 77:5,7 89:5 89:6 125:7 highlighted 71:15 highlighting 53:17 highlights 6:11 hire 92:20 114:12 hired 114:13 hiring 9:7 22:22 38:12 historical 80:22 historically 57:6 79:14 91:23 111:6 hit 15:18 39:16 54:8 112:7 hit-and-runs 124:18 127:3,3 hold 1:20 4:14 5:10 84:9 home 48:8 homeless 24:8 34:2	70:15,19 71:20,24 73:4,15 77:18 homelessness 71:18 honest 68:3 hope 37:22 64:5 81:22 85:25 95:5 96:18,24 102:21 103:9 104:2 128:9 134:14 hoped 31:21 hopeful 30:7 hopefully 49:6 135:4 135:25 hoping 37:12 81:9 82:11 horse 49:15 hospitality 59:15 71:5 house 22:13 52:7,8,15 housed 103:3 households 24:8 houseless 105:19 housing 100:22,24 101:6,18 102:7 103:10,23 104:2,4 huge 108:16 108:16 human 59:11 hundreds 79:20 107:25 hurt 135:13 I idea 45:7 53:20 61:4 ideas 35:3 43:23 123:13 identification 89:16	identified 94:7 identify 121:22 IGA 83:25 IHS 18:20 32:7 45:11 illegal 102:2 Imagine 107:22 122:13 imminently 120:13 impact 1:22 4:17 8:12 11:15 16:12 20:2 22:5 24:5 30:14 33:2 41:4 45:24 48:24 49:9 57:21 63:19,25 64:12 66:9 66:12 71:2 71:4,6 76:25 77:2 77:5,7 85:5 85:7,15 99:23 106:20 impacted 22:20 66:21 67:4 impactful 34:17 92:3 impacting 40:19 64:13 impacts 22:17 35:7 41:12 65:18 65:20 66:18 66:20 67:2 67:3 85:10 imploring 105:12 importance 97:4 101:17 123:25 126:20 important 67:15 78:13 78:22 98:5 108:22 109:18	111:25 112:24 115:24 117:16 121:23 importantly 102:6 119:20 improve 46:6 47:15 65:23 97:17 improvement 25:3 31:18 45:20 46:9 in/year 125:18 include 1:21 4:15 29:24 45:23 81:11 81:25 82:19 117:25 118:2 119:5 included 3:25 35:4 80:15 includes 7:17 27:8 including 4:18 84:14 86:15 inclusion 119:9,15 inclusive 34:25 36:4 36:11 132:12,15 income 57:11 57:21 58:7 58:9 incoming 131:14 incorporate 81:5 increase 8:6 8:8 10:14 24:22,24 41:19 48:5 52:25 53:22 54:2 58:12 83:20 84:7 84:14 89:13 95:22 96:5 106:9 118:2 increased 6:21,24 9:9	19:23 31:23 89:14 increases 32:4 41:13 41:14 61:17 increasing 7:25 18:13 22:18 52:20 53:25 88:21 88:22 107:12 incredibly 102:24 incremental 46:8 incurred 87:10 indefinitely 50:5 indicates 29:22 indication 84:5 86:14 120:22 126:3 indicator 59:19 indicators 111:10 individual 91:20 93:24 individuals 80:18 102:25 105:22 industries 59:21 industry 59:7 59:8 inflexible 30:19 32:2 41:23 42:5 108:14 info 123:14 information 51:21 53:14 77:17 78:18 78:20 114:7 114:20 125:20 126:13 127:19 130:7 informatio...
--	---	---	--	--	---	---	--

Committee on Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation
March 1, 2021

Page 8

55:8	5:17,21	J	Kicking 40:4	L&I 24:11	lens 44:3	124:4	87:24 88:16
infrastruct...	74:4 105:14	J 1:15	kind 50:17	93:5 101:14	64:21 74:12	lists 121:16	88:18 89:10
61:18 62:2	136:14	Jamie 1:12	54:10 73:25	labor 30:15	76:18	literally 91:5	89:11 94:13
62:7,12	internal	2:11,18	74:25 79:24	61:13	lesser 90:17	little 2:14	94:16 98:19
97:25	15:17 35:4	January 6:7	87:24 97:12	Landlord-...	let's 14:6	10:21 15:3	99:22
120:10	66:8 75:13	6:8 9:19,22	97:14 98:24	101:22	42:10	18:22 28:14	109:20
121:5,16	94:12	10:5,10,19	99:3,6	landlords	123:16	33:25 37:25	111:23
124:3,8	internally	10:25 11:11	100:14	101:25	level 7:5	56:16 58:5	113:7,18
125:16,23	78:2 121:14	11:24,25	102:3 107:6	103:4	27:25 29:16	92:19 98:18	117:3
126:5,15	interventions	26:3,8,13	112:12	languages	29:19 31:15	99:8 106:14	121:18
127:13	90:14	26:16 28:5	116:19	35:9	42:2 45:15	106:19	122:22
128:3,20,22	introduced	job 66:20	121:14	large 17:19	45:23 79:3	126:12	127:20
initially 18:3	69:9 113:15	91:5 103:25	123:2	120:9	80:24 98:20	133:6 134:6	128:10,22
26:6	126:5	Joe 120:8	130:22	largely 15:11	99:6 102:13	live 135:12	135:15
initiatives	introducing	joined 14:13	133:13	larger 60:2	102:21	lives 46:23	136:4
52:21	44:5	joining 5:4	kinds 120:15	73:8 106:5	106:4 107:4	87:20	looked 10:24
input 43:17	investing	44:22	knocking	125:15	110:8	lobby 43:9	13:24 29:5
119:12	134:20	Jones 1:14	24:25	largest 59:5	113:10	117:7	29:8 56:15
129:5	investment	44:22,23,24	know 5:18	59:10	levels 9:9	local 39:23	60:16 70:4
Inquirer 4:3	50:20 61:18	117:12,13	9:11 10:16	111:20	31:19,20	79:3 80:14	91:14
inspections	62:3,7	119:13	23:14,17	lastly 62:17	88:25 89:3	80:15	116:24
93:11	77:18,19	121:25	27:6 31:12	late 19:6	89:14 107:5	103:21	122:10
inspectors	90:21 93:5	123:20	34:18 37:23	lately 30:23	leverage	local-based	looking 15:2
93:6	100:5	JR 1:14	39:15 49:7	launched	90:19	75:7	23:15 24:6
Instructions	101:20	July 7:3 19:5	50:12 51:2	36:13	Library 25:8	locally 8:15	30:13 32:25
3:22	102:7,17	27:12 44:7	53:18 61:25	Laurel 4:9	lieu 64:25	locations	35:8 37:10
insurance	123:25	jump 79:15	62:18,18	law 3:14 30:4	life 38:5	17:22	37:13 38:23
33:21,22	124:2,7	June 6:20	65:24 68:5	laws 40:21	63:14,24	lockstep	45:19 50:2
52:20 53:8	128:2	48:25	69:8 76:25	lawyer	97:8,10	59:22	51:13 60:5
53:19,21	investments	jurisdictions	80:8 81:16	101:23	lifelong 105:3	long 39:4	60:14 62:9
54:4,7,13	62:12 125:4	60:23 61:11	86:2 87:18	layers 121:20	light 119:23	62:13 122:4	62:15 63:2
insurers	125:16,24	82:4	96:20 97:21	layoffs 9:7	119:24	127:9	63:22 68:10
33:24	involved 35:2	justice	98:20	66:22	122:10	long-term	68:24 69:25
integrate	128:21	103:24	106:10,15	Leader 5:2	133:11	61:22	70:6 72:25
76:13	Iola 75:23	119:18	106:20	leaking	lightning	longer 37:25	77:4 81:20
integrated	Isaiah 1:17		108:21,25	122:19	129:14	38:6,22	87:14 88:6
35:19	123:17	K	109:15	learn 43:21	131:12	76:2 134:6	88:23 90:3
Intellectual	isolated	KATHERL...	111:3	77:11,24	liked 7:4	longstanding	90:5 95:9
27:14	97:14	1:12	113:25	learned 64:7	limitations	100:8	95:10 111:4
Intelligencer	isolation 22:8	Kathy 2:20	114:23	87:8 91:7	77:10,23	longtime	112:8,9
4:4	issue 13:25	104:12	115:4 117:6	93:4	limited 40:19	30:23	115:16
intend 131:5	19:2 70:25	keep 82:14	117:12	leave 21:12	41:22 42:6	look 19:11	121:14
intention	73:8,21	88:20	120:14	21:23 22:19	limits 40:24	21:12 25:9	126:23
131:10	94:18	103:14	122:9	49:17 95:3	41:10	28:21,24	130:22
interest 40:9	124:15	keeping	127:18	98:11 104:7	line 60:23	29:15 38:18	looks 26:19
interested	130:22	11:16 103:2	131:6	leaves 15:13	61:15	44:11 46:25	26:20 27:11
60:2 62:8	132:22	103:3	133:22	Legal 4:3	list 13:9 95:9	51:6,11,12	35:6 60:8
73:5	issues 2:12	127:10	knowing	legislation	114:9 115:5	53:25 55:19	82:12
interesting	25:17 63:21	keeps 132:18	121:7	69:9 113:14	115:6 116:5	59:20 60:3	lose 70:7
61:4 117:6	70:20 74:10	key 47:6	known 36:23	116:18,22	123:10	60:4,25	99:18
118:3	100:24	75:12	72:20	119:4 121:2	128:25	61:3,13	loss 40:15
intergover...	127:6	100:18	L	121:8	listed 132:9	63:10 64:22	lost 2:13
1:4,20 3:4	128:13	kick 37:22	L 1:15 137:14	legislature	listen 122:24	65:3 71:23	130:11
4:13,23	ITEF 37:5	43:6		85:21	listening	77:25 87:23	lot 25:10

Committee on Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation
March 1, 2021

Page 9

28:18 31:13 34:13 37:11 43:13 45:3 65:17 66:12 77:9,11,15 77:23 92:4 93:6 94:11 101:15 103:20,21 108:17,21 109:21 110:3 118:2 126:2,13,17 lots 76:21,21 low 31:7 88:25 110:19 111:7 lower 6:18 9:18 10:11 11:6,10 17:9 21:6 57:19 80:4	March 1:8 45:24 81:17 Maria 1:16 2:19 56:7 Marisa 5:8 14:16,19,21 15:12 16:23 44:15 45:3 56:24 58:6 64:17 65:11 68:25 70:13 79:15,17 88:3 104:16 106:3 110:10,25 112:5 116:13 129:10 133:20 Marisa's 115:16 Mark 1:16 2:18 market 18:20 45:11 62:4 62:5 104:25 markets 60:20 61:14 61:15 mass 119:21 massive 95:16 Masterman 105:6 match 103:18 matrix 76:25 matter 80:19 137:7 Mayor's 101:6 118:15 121:12 mayoral 37:5 37:7 mean 26:22 66:13 69:17 81:21 84:10 94:19 96:9 99:19 101:9 111:19 112:11 113:2 119:15 131:24	meaning 114:12 means 20:3 30:25 41:7 54:3 110:5 137:22 measure 71:14 72:22 measures 23:13,21 24:3 25:12 70:14,16,17 71:5,11,24 72:6,16 73:2 117:23 measuring 67:17 72:13 meat 125:17 median 21:23 meet 38:9 71:10 75:16 119:2,3 122:5 meeting 3:20 5:25 55:5,9 75:22,25 76:6 113:5 meetings 75:18 meets 109:6 member 55:7 99:12 members 2:6 2:6 5:16 14:9 22:8 36:16,18,23 56:10 86:16 119:6 mental 95:19 mentioned 12:24 19:3 22:22 23:12 25:14 32:5 32:10,24 39:10 41:21 43:16 52:19 53:19 73:11 90:25 94:9 114:2 118:25 120:25 merged 73:25 message 43:12 108:4	met 70:16,17 88:7 103:17 mic 4:9 MICHELE 137:14 Microsoft 1:7 3:21 mid 81:17 mid-year 20:16 midst 106:24 124:3 million 6:18 6:21,23 7:18,20 8:7 8:9,14,17 8:18 10:3,7 10:13 11:4 13:25 14:24 14:25 15:15 16:3,7,10 16:18 17:8 17:11,16 18:15 19:12 19:17 20:6 20:8 21:7 26:2,4,12 27:8,10 29:7,13,23 31:11,12 32:12,13 36:14,22 46:19 47:11 48:3 49:10 52:24,25 58:3 69:25 79:18 83:15 84:23 102:9 102:17,18 102:19 107:23 108:10,15 110:19 112:21,22 132:22 133:2,3 millions 79:21 107:25 mind 103:14 109:13 mindful 40:6 minds 107:19 mine 59:2	minority-o... 35:25 minus 55:6 minute 80:16 mission 91:22 misspoke 71:13 mistakes 43:24 mix 125:13 mixed 20:23 21:13 model 45:22 models 45:13 60:22 65:9 modest 29:12 moment 122:20 Monday 1:8 monetize 39:2 money 15:7,7 18:10 19:14 23:15,18 27:4 28:7 29:6 35:18 35:22,25 38:17 40:8 43:13 50:17 51:14 65:16 78:5 82:5 82:13 83:10 83:10 97:23 102:8 103:6 113:19 116:20 118:18 131:20,22 134:11,13 134:15,18 135:5 monitor 50:8 month 8:3 9:24,25 11:7 25:16 25:16,17,17 25:19 26:3 43:2 46:19 55:13 month-by-... 26:21 monthly 1:21 4:15 119:2 months 6:4	11:8 28:9 108:10 moratorium 101:19 morning 2:3 4:11 14:8 44:23,25 morphed 14:25 move 33:16 44:4 69:11 71:7 87:11 105:23 111:22 135:15 136:9 moved 96:12 102:9 moving 67:18 103:6 106:10 111:13 multi-natio... 58:14 multiple 35:9 86:13 96:2 97:11 multiples 94:23 municipal 106:6 MURPHY 137:14 muted 65:10 96:16 100:11	30:17 34:11 37:11,23 38:18 39:12 39:17,19 41:3 43:13 43:13,14 51:11 71:18 72:14,21 82:5,8 90:16 92:18 95:8,13,23 100:9 101:15 103:15 104:21 109:2 115:9 121:10 127:4 128:3 135:15 needed 33:19 needing 100:4 needs 34:14 38:9,10 49:20 91:11 96:23 97:20 100:14 109:6,12 negotiate 23:20 negotiations 116:2 neighborho... 132:13 neither 115:17 net 56:19,24 57:3,11,21 58:2,7,9 never 15:21 105:9 117:20 120:7 new 28:7 30:2,17 35:18 50:22 61:15 62:22 63:20 65:15 67:7 72:16 72:19 106:19 111:23 121:20 news 4:3	42:19 46:17 nibbles 72:9 nimble 102:15 non-resident 63:7 64:2 non-reside... 135:12 non-tax 8:15 normal 28:7 45:18 62:22 91:10,10,11 91:13 111:23 normally 75:13 noted 19:19 20:12 notes 137:6 notice 28:3 112:11 122:7 notices 4:2 November 6:5 number 11:15 15:22 22:20 24:7 24:12 40:21 42:5 46:12 53:21,24 55:15,18,20 88:17 92:11 125:8,9 131:16,24 132:2 numbers 6:15 12:6,9 12:12 55:23 57:21 61:12 61:13 87:25 134:10
M magically 42:10 maintaining 97:24 maintenance 61:21,21 62:6 majority 5:2 27:11 making 36:6 74:23 75:3 103:3 manage 60:15 97:11 managed 109:23 management 96:2 Manager's 4:21 Managers 6:2 managing 92:7 maneuver 41:24 manna 122:12 manner 88:6					N name 5:19 126:7 nation 80:18 national/int... 45:13 nature 22:16 navigate 34:22 43:24 73:20 nearly 124:19 necessarily 26:21 45:16 necessary 88:11 need 12:4 22:6,18		O O'Neill 1:15 2:9 Obama 122:3 objections 137:4 obligation 112:19 obligations 6:7,13 7:9 7:14,22,24

Committee on Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation
March 1, 2021

Page 10

8:2,8,10,21	offset 15:8	99:19	overall 9:8	pandemic 7:7	105:18	percent 9:18	132:12
9:25 10:25	18:10,13	opinion 50:16	18:15 21:23	8:4 15:12	106:5 107:3	10:7,11,13	Philadelphi...
11:21 13:6	130:12	opportunities	60:17 88:17	15:18 16:13	107:19,21	11:5,9,10	46:2
13:19 16:22	oh 1:14 25:25	93:2 112:10	89:20 92:6	17:18 19:22	108:12	15:17,19	Philadelphi...
19:16 26:25	83:2	113:8,19	104:22	20:25 22:2	111:19	16:5 17:24	105:3
27:3	okay 2:16,23	116:25	106:20	23:20 34:16	partners	19:14 23:5	Philadelphi...
obvious 87:5	5:9 9:21	118:4,7	111:18	46:13 48:6	39:20 67:25	23:9 24:22	109:6
obviously	44:14 54:18	119:20	112:25	48:9,10	120:18	24:23 25:2	philanthro...
17:18 18:5	70:10 82:21	120:15	overarching	70:18 89:5	partnership	27:18,24	39:23
24:4 25:9	83:16 86:8	opportunity	1:22 4:17	91:9 106:25	39:23 74:5	28:6 31:9	philanthropy
30:6,12	131:11	14:10 25:22	overinflated	107:6,7,14	parts 45:5	42:10,17	37:20
38:23 39:4	135:22	43:5 60:25	62:4	111:9 112:7	112:25	55:21 57:8	PHLCounc...
40:3 43:8	old 120:12	61:3 67:19	oversight	pandemic-r...	pass 54:6	64:24 96:11	4:5
44:6 53:3	on-time	74:16	5:22 135:24	52:21	80:12	108:9,13	PHLRentA...
53:16 59:4	24:17,18	104:23	overtime 6:8	panel 5:6	passed 20:15	109:22	101:21
66:23 72:15	25:2	122:9	6:13 9:11	paper 54:16	30:4 45:24	110:14,16	phrase 74:12
73:7 80:5	once 26:15	127:25	9:13,15	paramount	52:7,12,14	124:11,13	PICA 9:11
86:12 87:18	63:8	opposed 99:2	11:24,25	48:20	80:11 81:10	126:21,22	42:24 47:12
87:20 94:19	one-time	opposing	12:16 13:5	park 25:2	81:17,23	percentage	48:12 49:2
121:6	33:10,13	109:12	13:23 20:20	Parker 1:15	82:16	9:17 108:16	51:3 54:20
125:10,11	129:22,25	option 69:23	20:22 21:9	3:8 5:3	116:19	108:24	60:12,16
125:14	130:8,15	70:4	21:12 22:14	parking	117:24	134:19	72:25 86:10
130:21	one-twelfth	options 37:2	22:18 48:3	17:17,19	119:4 131:8	perfect 39:8	86:25 87:12
131:6	25:18	40:18 68:24	48:5,9	part 8:10	passes 82:12	59:22	88:2,13
occur 63:8	one-year	order 2:4	49:15,16,18	36:4 42:15	path 30:13	123:21	91:25 95:15
74:17 75:8	114:17	121:21	49:23,25	47:2 59:14	paving 125:4	performance	95:15
occurring	ones 12:25	134:21	54:20 55:16	61:23 65:13	pay 26:14	23:13,21	103:14
10:22	13:3 20:25	ordinance	55:18,25	75:21 87:5	28:14 41:10	25:11 44:9	104:16
October 6:5	21:25 23:24	20:16	60:13,15	91:22	54:7	70:14 71:10	PICA's 5:25
10:6	24:6,14	ordinances	62:25 86:10	100:18	paying 61:24	72:6	6:6 50:16
odd 91:9	27:19 50:22	37:7	86:12,18	104:22	102:14	period 96:17	pickle 31:6
OEO 35:19	59:3,17	original 9:2	87:2,6,10	109:24	payment 10:8	96:22	pickup 24:25
74:22 75:18	66:2 71:25	17:9 19:9	87:13,17,23	125:5	26:5	periods 26:15	picture 10:22
75:20,24	73:4 132:9	20:7 101:7	88:8 89:6	127:14	payments	permit 24:10	12:16 46:25
76:5 78:9	ongoing	114:12	89:13,19,19	128:25	27:21	person 92:20	piece 121:2
78:15,22	95:12 97:20	originally	89:20 90:8	135:3,7	peers 77:25	personnel	pike 122:8
offer 3:23	118:17	114:13	91:4,16	partially 30:8	108:20	20:13 92:8	pipeline
98:16 99:3	135:24	origins 31:5	92:5,19	participate	Pennsylvania	130:8	97:25
offered 98:25	onset 111:9	31:16	93:13,15	99:14,16	1:7 4:22	perspective	pitch 39:25
office 12:12	open 36:19	other's 43:22	94:21,23	participating	5:20 120:17	71:9 74:19	place 57:14
12:15 71:23	58:14,16	43:23	overview	43:19	penny 82:9	78:10	73:2,23
73:4 74:15	operating	ourself 21:18	50:23	participation	pension 42:4	pesky 20:17	80:13 99:25
75:17,24	125:10	outcomes		76:5,14	53:7 112:19	phenomenon	101:20
113:5	127:16	36:7 65:19	P	79:2	people 17:21	54:10	103:11
118:11,12	operation	outreach	p.m 136:15	participatory	21:17 47:4	Philadelphia	107:8 109:9
118:15	91:3 94:11	95:18,25	package	36:13	54:7 61:25	1:2,7 5:23	124:14
121:12	operational	outside 46:17	30:11 81:14	particular	92:17 97:19	48:20 63:10	132:2
128:20	42:7 56:13	62:24 66:9	packages	34:6 71:16	101:24	75:6 81:3	plan 4:19
Officer 14:14	operationally	132:17	30:3	85:2 87:14	102:4 103:2	96:20 102:9	6:19,25 7:3
118:24	69:17	outstanding	page 13:3	particularly	103:3,24	118:5,9	7:11,14,21
Officers	operations	55:3 90:25	paid 22:13	20:24 21:4	113:6	120:12	8:7,9,15,24
15:20	25:6 35:17	112:9 113:7	103:4	41:2 58:14	124:16	122:23	9:2 23:23
offline 115:10	69:22 71:2	overage	painful 31:14	59:25 60:18	people's	124:12	40:5 43:4
115:12	71:3 91:10	133:2	132:4,4	72:2 87:4,9	76:10 87:20	126:24	46:14,18,21

Committee on Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation
March 1, 2021

Page 11

47:21 49:2	policy 14:15	pre-recession	64:21,25	produce	projects	105:21	98:8
54:21 62:10	57:20	9:9	prior 4:4	124:12	36:15 37:4	pushback	question 45:3
62:10 64:6	pool 58:2	precious	33:4	126:21	76:24 77:4	82:4	47:9 50:11
67:9 69:12	population	101:11	priorities	producing	121:17,21	pushed 81:13	52:17 54:19
70:8 80:10	46:22 65:20	precursor	44:2 47:19	109:13	122:5	pushing	60:16 73:18
80:15 81:4	73:24	60:7	100:15,23	professional	126:15	46:20 47:4	80:8 86:9
82:10,14	populations	predict 10:17	103:17,18	17:25	promise	put 37:24	87:7 90:3
84:14,19,21	105:18	preliminary	125:8	profit 56:19	86:11	48:25 51:3	93:23 95:4
88:15 99:24	portion 50:19	29:9 32:6	131:13	profits 56:24	property	74:8 78:13	95:21 98:12
99:25	57:7 58:8,8	61:12	132:8	57:12 58:3	84:6	79:24 88:11	98:18
102:21	58:9 111:21	premiums	prioritize	program	proposal 53:5	92:11	100:22
106:7,8	112:4,5	61:24	47:15 48:18	68:6,7	proposals	102:11,12	101:4
107:18	113:23	prepared 6:9	prioritized	71:16,21	35:7 75:15	121:21	111:14
108:8	position 1:22	39:17	95:9	72:21 99:15	proposing	123:9 127:6	116:15,17
109:14	4:17 14:12	preparing	priority	122:2	65:15,16	128:5	117:12
112:25	82:8 128:6	64:19 130:5	100:25	128:23	69:19	131:19	130:13,19
123:10	positions	presence 2:5	104:5	program-b...	protect 102:4	puts 37:8	131:12
124:24	22:25 23:4	present 1:10	128:25	72:5	provide	84:21	questions
131:23	87:19	2:7 48:21	131:25	programs	38:17 53:14		5:11 13:17
planned 26:6	positive	50:6 83:2	private 37:20	25:5,8	71:17 90:16	Q	28:21 35:14
29:7	64:11 78:8	91:12	38:9 39:24	43:20 101:9	90:17,19	QCMR 6:11	44:13,16,17
planning	85:15,19	presentation	probably	101:23	114:8,20	6:16 9:23	47:8 56:5
39:13,14	possibility	6:10 13:15	31:6 68:8	102:14	115:5 116:7	23:14,22	56:12,13
57:13 100:3	29:4 82:18	13:18 64:19	89:4 117:24	130:8	126:7 130:6	25:13	65:17,22
plans 47:2	possible 3:22	70:13 106:3	119:3 123:9	progress	provided	quality 38:19	68:23 70:12
54:22,25	44:19 78:3	presents 64:5	129:22	136:5	68:25 90:23	40:16,20	76:9 79:5
55:10,12	possibly 29:2	preserved	134:4	progression	115:2	90:17	83:5,8
88:8,11	69:23 71:6	101:21	problem	15:24	providers	132:11	86:24 89:7
93:25	116:21	President	49:18	progressivity	27:16	quantity	96:7 111:2
121:15	117:8	49:8 80:9	problematic	41:11	providing	38:20 40:17	117:16
123:12	potatoes	presidential	86:14 87:6	project 16:17	24:8 38:8	40:20 90:18	123:21
124:14	125:17	12:9 19:20	problems	63:19	109:5 110:5	quarantine	124:5 129:7
plant 119:23	potential	pressures	73:9 130:23	121:23	public 3:3,5	22:8	129:8
planted 120:5	29:22,25	125:9	131:4	projected	3:17,18,23	quarter 6:3	135:19
play 23:12	35:18 48:2	pretty 23:8	proceedings	6:19 7:13	3:24,24 4:2	6:16,17,22	136:3,8
85:22 91:16	49:10 98:16	46:20 59:12	137:4	7:20 8:6,8	19:21 36:20	6:24 7:16	quick 68:22
96:25 102:5	99:23	81:22 86:19	proces 36:17	8:13,16,21	37:3,9	8:25 9:3,5	70:12 79:5
plays 110:12	106:13	96:12 133:3	process 34:24	15:11	41:16 67:2	9:15 17:7,8	102:12
please 4:6 5:5	129:19	pretzels	35:13,20,20	projecting	72:18 136:8	17:15 18:4	116:15
120:21	130:10	21:18	36:3,17,23	17:10 21:6	137:15	18:6 19:17	127:8
123:17	132:22	prevent	43:17 66:8	85:13	public-priv...	23:5,6	quicker
plotted 76:24	potentially	71:17	72:24 75:13	projection	74:5	24:20,21,23	46:22
plus 92:21	102:2,20	prevention	78:17,23	6:25 7:11	published 4:2	24:24 31:22	quickly 96:12
point 12:19	pour 127:4	24:9 70:15	100:18	7:15,16	pulling 19:13	32:16 44:10	103:7
22:15 35:11	poverty	previous 13:4	105:24	132:23	117:14	45:20,20	Quinones-S...
37:4 40:18	110:8 127:2	83:20	107:16	projections	purchases	quarterly	1:16 2:20
49:7 51:21	PowerPoint	121:15	109:24	7:24 9:3	8:23	1:21 4:14	3:10 56:7
64:18 70:11	6:10	previously	113:3 135:4	17:9 18:9	purpose 3:5	4:21 5:25	quite 24:5
87:3 108:23	practice	111:4 126:5	processes	18:19 19:9	purposeful	6:2 13:19	32:20,23
126:2,4	14:16 34:21	Primarily	62:15	20:5 32:7	100:15	23:22,24	74:13 98:14
134:17	practices	17:14	procurement	32:20 45:8	130:24	84:3	133:19
points 9:17	62:5 77:15	primary	74:18,24	56:17 85:4	push 28:11	quarters	quorum 2:5
68:4 129:4	Pre-pande...	124:20	75:21,22	87:11	76:9,15	55:19	
Police 23:7	125:6	principles	78:15,23	122:16	80:21 85:12	quasi-inde...	R

Committee on Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation
March 1, 2021

Page 12

racial 34:22 35:6,15 44:3 65:23 67:8 74:11 76:18 77:3 77:7 100:8 radar 134:9 radically 81:24 Rahm 117:19 rail 119:23 119:24 122:10 Rainy 19:14 raise 89:7 range 79:11 79:13 110:15 rate 61:13 rates 57:19 111:6 read 4:6 106:19 readiness 106:13 reading 132:24 ready 121:10 real 24:16 25:22 27:23 65:6 69:10 73:17 74:2 74:9 92:25 94:13 100:5 108:6,11 127:8 136:2 realign 67:19 reality 65:5 realize 37:11 really 12:13 16:2 19:3 22:4 23:19 25:4,15 30:7,22 31:11 32:15 35:23 36:10 36:15 37:2 37:8 38:20 39:12,22 40:25 41:8 41:10,16,20 41:21 42:11 42:15,23 43:9,12	47:6 51:2 54:9 57:20 59:18 60:14 61:9 62:11 63:22 65:14 65:20 67:10 69:16 70:5 73:5 74:8 75:3,5,10 76:9 77:4 77:13 79:8 79:21,23 82:5 85:14 88:9 89:25 90:6,7,7,15 92:22 93:14 95:8,13 99:17 100:19 101:13 107:6 109:9 109:18 110:12,14 119:14 121:17,22 122:10 123:8 130:24 reason 15:5 57:24,25 81:12 reasonable 49:4 reasonably 47:23 reasons 86:13 receipts 58:8 58:19 receive 51:4 51:5 52:6 54:24 130:11 received 73:12 133:14 134:2 recession 106:14 recognize 2:4 5:2 44:21 56:6 68:17 82:25 102:22	108:5 recommen... 48:14 recommen... 36:21 87:13 recommen... 15:19 16:8 31:15 106:4 107:4 reconciliati... 133:13,25 record 51:24 52:13 recover 134:23 recovered 18:2 recovery 14:13,14 39:14 41:15 100:6 104:23 109:5 118:11,11 118:23 recur 34:11 recurrent 130:16 recurring 33:14 73:19 129:25 recycling 24:17,23 red 25:23 reduce 17:13 34:4,8 47:15 69:24 73:16 77:20 90:11 113:13 reduced 38:13 42:13 89:20 reducing 37:14 38:18 39:11 40:25 69:5,6 77:7 reduction 37:17 reductions 17:17 18:9 18:16 35:18 reference 71:4 74:17	75:2 80:9 80:13 referenced 75:19 82:17 referencing 71:21 refinance 111:6 refinancing 38:2 40:7 refine 42:21 45:14 92:10 reflect 12:13 reflected 81:6 reform 119:19 refunding 113:23 116:18 refundings 112:10,13 113:8,12,16 regard 74:16 78:9 81:8 100:22 regarding 13:17 14:11 78:21 88:7 116:17 129:18 130:7 regards 55:9 region 97:7 region's 104:22 regional 45:14 119:23,24 regionally 125:23 regularly 72:7 regulations 66:25 reimburse... 118:3 reiterate 126:19 related 4:19 15:11 17:19 20:13 53:7 relates 124:7 relationship 59:23	126:25 reliance 90:12 relief 15:7 18:12 20:9 20:14 30:2 30:10,22 33:18 37:13 43:9 45:23 46:5 58:17 85:10,19 86:3 117:23 120:19 129:19,20 130:3,17 131:14 relies 46:4 rely 111:19 relying 37:21 remain 104:4 remaining 129:8 remember 106:15 remote 3:17 3:22 remotely 3:20 remove 33:10 renegotiated 42:12 rent 102:10 rents 38:15 repair 22:11 120:10 repeat 43:23 replaced 80:17 replacements 40:11 report 4:21 6:2,3,11 7:3 13:20,24 20:11 23:21 23:24 54:20 55:15,22 88:17 reporter 137:24 reporting 1:21 4:15 4:20 reports 6:6 6:13 88:18	representat... 118:14 representat... 119:6 reproduction 137:21 request 84:7 84:17,18 85:2 116:5 requested 54:23,25 requests 35:17 76:21 112:13 require 37:6 42:6 required 95:20 requirements 1:21 4:16 4:20 22:9 131:9 requires 3:15 90:21 94:13 RES 2:1 3:1 4:1 5:1 6:1 7:1 8:1 9:1 10:1 11:1 12:1 13:1 14:1 15:1 16:1 17:1 18:1 19:1 20:1 21:1 22:1 23:1 24:1 25:1 26:1 27:1 28:1 29:1 30:1 31:1 32:1 33:1 34:1 35:1 36:1 37:1 38:1 39:1 40:1 41:1 42:1 43:1 44:1 45:1 46:1 47:1 48:1 49:1 50:1 51:1 52:1 53:1 54:1 55:1 56:1 57:1 58:1 59:1 60:1 61:1 62:1 63:1	64:1 65:1 66:1 67:1 68:1 69:1 70:1 71:1 72:1 73:1 74:1 75:1 76:1 77:1 78:1 79:1 80:1 81:1 82:1 83:1 84:1 85:1 86:1 87:1 88:1 89:1 90:1 91:1 92:1 93:1 94:1 95:1 96:1 97:1 98:1 99:1 100:1 101:1 102:1 103:1 104:1 105:1 106:1 107:1 108:1 109:1 110:1 111:1 112:1 113:1 114:1 115:1 116:1 117:1 118:1 119:1 120:1 121:1 122:1 123:1 124:1 125:1 126:1 127:1 128:1 129:1 130:1 131:1 132:1 133:1 134:1 135:1 136:1 rescue 30:2 80:10 81:4 reserve 33:4 42:25 107:22 109:8 reserves 37:15 39:11 106:5,10 107:2,13 resident 64:2 residential 20:2 24:10 resolution 1:19,19 3:7 3:7 4:7 14:11	resources 79:6 127:4 respond 19:22 129:17 response 21:2 22:2 94:3 98:14 110:24 111:15 114:24 118:20 135:21 responses 35:11 44:18 Responsibil... 3:4 responsively 103:7 rest 23:7 restaurants 59:16 restorations 33:8 restored 101:7 restructure 111:5 restructuring 111:8,11,18 111:22 112:19 result 7:25 22:19 86:17 103:5 results 36:7 retailers 60:3 retirement 69:12 70:8 98:17,22,25 99:6,15 retirements 69:4 retrospect 95:11 return 21:17 45:17 126:11 returns 58:23 reveal 6:16 revenue 6:12 10:4 17:14 18:13 19:8 19:10 29:9
---	---	---	---	---	--	--	--

Committee on Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation
March 1, 2021

Page 13

32:7,20	46:11 54:13	S	20:10 24:20	sell 38:25	115:2	signoff 37:8	soon 11:13
41:8 42:21	61:25 64:23	S 1:13	44:10	Senate 52:9	Services'	silver 39:7	136:2
51:15,16	73:2 78:16	safer 127:11	111:14	113:15	71:24	similar 57:10	sorry 4:10
59:5 71:6	81:12 85:17	132:11	131:12	117:24	set 4:20 16:24	60:24	7:10 10:5
108:2	91:6 92:12	safety 128:12	seconds	send 21:20	33:3 75:18	Similarly	13:6,14
132:25	93:18 96:10	128:23	129:16	93:24	87:24	26:11 27:13	65:12 127:8
revenues 6:7	96:13 97:16	sales 57:10	sector 37:21	senior-level	settled 80:19	simply 37:12	133:18
7:8,10,13	99:25 100:5	57:10	38:9 39:24	99:17	seven-twelf...	simultaneo...	sort 19:8
7:23 8:6,13	101:5,22	SANCHEZ	sectors 59:10	sense 92:15	28:2,16,20	77:6	25:22 26:9
8:16,17	110:25	56:8 57:23	see 7:4,14	92:23 96:17	shape 81:23	single 76:3	35:13 36:19
9:21,24	119:2 123:5	58:11 60:9	12:5,12	sentiments	share 14:18	Sinking	36:24 41:13
10:18,23	126:7	61:6 64:15	16:4,12,13	52:10	44:9 67:13	27:20	43:6,10
13:19 15:2	127:23,25	67:11	18:24 19:8	104:19	131:9	site 47:5	45:19 53:13
16:25 17:6	133:8	Sarah 14:14	23:8 24:19	separate	shared 14:21	situations	57:4 66:16
19:11 29:20	rising 9:13	118:12,19	26:10,18	75:17 76:2	42:20	95:19	66:17 71:18
31:17 32:11	48:3 49:18	118:23	27:17,22	separation	sheet 38:24	six 24:3	72:9 77:16
38:25 41:6	risk 40:12	125:19	28:8,18	114:14	shift 39:18	Sixers 122:14	90:4 94:14
56:16 81:16	70:9	127:18	40:2 49:16	SEPTA 70:21	shifted 55:25	size 31:11	109:11
review 47:22	roads 62:13	133:11,12	49:24 50:3	70:22 71:3	Shifting	42:13	111:5,9
50:7 89:18	124:8,12	save 40:8	50:8 53:6	97:5,5,18	37:19	slash 103:12	125:15,17
95:12	126:21	46:23	53:12,15	97:21	shoot 28:8	slashed 101:6	125:22
revision 81:7	roaring 41:17	112:21	55:24 58:20	104:22	short 6:9	slide 6:14	133:5
revisit 70:11	Rob 5:7 14:6	113:19	58:22 59:14	105:15	39:3 40:9	7:12 8:20	sought 102:3
Rice 5:7,13	17:4 37:17	116:21	60:5 66:16	SEPTA's	42:3	11:22 14:18	sounded 99:5
5:15,19	44:15 45:3	saw 57:15	72:11 77:12	97:11 98:7	shortfall	15:23 17:3	sounds 47:10
12:20 13:5	67:6 88:3	92:25 96:10	80:23 81:13	September	132:23,25	96:13	59:25
13:11,13	98:13	103:20,21	81:15 88:10	45:18	shovel-ready	107:21	sources 18:21
14:2 47:10	104:16	105:10	91:13 95:13	serve 78:2	122:5	slides 14:23	37:20 39:19
47:17 49:14	109:15	saying 32:10	96:15,22	service 8:24	show 11:23	16:24 96:11	space 68:10
50:24 51:25	110:23	58:9 79:12	113:8	26:4 40:16	66:2 134:4	slightly 16:4	speak 5:25
52:11 54:19	116:13	86:5	117:23	40:20 41:5	showed 37:17	16:15	64:18
54:24 55:17	118:22,24	says 16:19	121:3 122:4	42:3 44:2	107:21	small 15:14	speaking
56:22 57:24	129:10	scenarios	124:24	53:13 56:2	131:16	51:15	62:11
61:2 63:4	133:20	65:17	131:7	60:21 65:19	shows 6:14	134:19	special 21:5
80:9 88:5	robust 100:5	schedule 55:5	134:16	66:25 90:13	7:12 10:17	smaller 79:19	91:16,18
Richardson	rode 105:4	93:8	seed 119:23	90:16,20	10:18 18:22	91:17	specialized
1:12 2:21	role 91:15	scheduled	120:5	91:11 94:6	26:23	smoothes	92:18
3:11 70:24	room 41:24	26:6	seeing 38:4	108:12	sick 86:16	26:16	specific 34:5
104:12,13	42:6,14	scheduling	56:20 79:23	services 8:23	side 38:24	snapshot	44:19 46:2
110:22	rotten 18:3	93:7,9	94:25 95:22	19:24 27:15	58:19	10:21 28:12	46:8 47:8
113:20	round 129:14	school 30:20	105:17	29:17,19	104:25	snow 33:3	54:9 71:14
115:15,21	131:12	83:11 85:5	124:15	32:21 34:3	125:2	snowstorm	specifically
116:11	136:2	98:10 105:5	135:10,11	34:6 38:8	127:16	79:7	113:23
Richardson's	routes 105:8	schools 62:14	seen 9:13	38:17,19,22	132:5	social 1:22	114:5
116:16	RPR-Notary	score 77:17	18:6 21:22	40:13,25	significant	4:17	126:18
ride 104:24	137:15	scrambling	39:22 48:4	47:15 48:19	17:16 42:7	solution 39:8	specifics
ridership	rumor 50:15	122:4	58:12 64:9	50:19 51:9	49:17 64:4	124:21	16:25
97:14	50:25 52:2	screen 14:22	74:20 90:14	51:10 59:11	69:10 70:19	solutions	119:17
riding 97:18	52:3,14	seasonality	96:5,9	64:14 73:4	70:25 73:13	34:7 73:14	126:2
right 13:3	rumors 50:12	25:21 27:23	105:10	73:15 77:18	87:16 119:9	131:3	speculative
22:25 27:24	run 13:2	28:17	124:18	90:8 93:17	121:2,16,23	solve 48:2	30:6
30:25 32:9	running	second 6:3	segue 123:21	95:20 96:2	124:2	somewhat	spend 11:20
36:16 39:25	75:23	8:25 9:2	self-service	109:5 110:6	significantly	18:10 60:7	25:18 27:7
41:25 45:22		17:7,8	93:9	110:11	95:22	72:7	29:14 35:22

Committee on Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation
March 1, 2021

Page 14

35:25 36:21	36:1 37:1	Stadium	stenographic	24:15 25:4	53:2 68:16	19:25 69:15	43:20
42:10 53:11	38:1 39:1	46:18	137:6	studied 70:5	71:12 72:8	70:13,14	technology
74:18 75:4	40:1 41:1	stadiums	step 64:23	stuff 27:6	72:12 76:19	74:11 85:24	40:11 90:19
77:11 93:6	42:1 43:1	17:20	78:8	101:14	78:3,25	92:14 99:13	93:4
125:11	44:1 45:1	staff 7:3	steps 71:9	sturdy 59:12	82:9 86:20	106:4,12	teeing 120:14
spending 8:3	46:1 47:1	22:21 41:4	78:15	subjective	96:8 103:4	108:20	tell 53:24
11:6 12:16	48:1 49:1	92:16	stifle 41:15	77:14	103:15	111:3	59:2 67:5
15:16 23:16	50:1 51:1	staff's 91:12	stimulus	submit 63:12	110:22	121:13	77:17
25:15 28:20	52:1 53:1	staffing 9:4,8	30:10 33:17	114:6	118:16,21	talking 29:3	126:14
31:10 34:4	54:1 55:1	49:17 88:25	49:9 122:2	submitted	120:24	62:13 71:14	ten 92:17
42:2,7	56:1 57:1	89:3,3,14	stop 122:18	4:22 6:20	125:19	76:4,4,10	102:11
47:20 48:17	58:1 59:1	stakeholders	stop-gap	14:19 49:2	131:22,25	78:4 91:18	120:4
49:25 50:4	60:1 61:1,8	67:25 68:7	71:19	54:21 55:10	133:16	101:14	122:16
74:24 78:5	62:1 63:1	standard	stories	88:14	surpassed	106:15	123:12
78:12 85:3	64:1 65:1	125:18	101:16	subsequent	89:4	108:18	tend 45:12
92:5 107:10	66:1 67:1	start 5:14	103:16	51:17	surprise 31:7	110:10	57:22 91:21
119:10	68:1 69:1	15:2 44:7	storm 79:9	subsidy 27:8	95:23	123:9,13	tension 68:4
134:6	70:1 71:1	104:18	79:16,21,24	substance	surprised	132:8	term 39:3,4
spent 27:2,11	72:1 73:1	105:24	storms 9:20	73:24	22:5	target 41:8	40:9 42:3
27:19 79:3	74:1 75:1	107:23	11:14,14	substantial	surprises	71:11	62:13
133:15,23	76:1 77:1	117:3	33:2 79:19	112:18	132:16	108:24	terminology
133:25	78:1 79:1	122:22	80:2,3	subway	survey 35:9	targeted	58:5
spoke 56:16	80:1 81:1	started 16:12	straight	104:24	43:18	35:13	terms 21:8
67:23 97:3	82:1 83:1	28:24 29:3	92:13	105:7	sustainable	targeting	26:25 36:7
123:25	84:1 85:1	88:23 89:7	strategic 87:5	success 38:14	124:21	126:18	38:15 59:9
sporting	86:1 87:1	132:8	87:12,23	103:16	synopsis 6:12	tax 9:21 10:4	71:15 73:6
17:25	88:1 89:1	starting 31:7	98:20	successful	system 25:23	10:12,14,15	73:16 85:7
spread 23:8	90:1 91:1	126:4	strategically	101:9	34:17	17:13,15,19	terrific 31:22
spreadsheet	92:1 93:1	state 3:14	88:6 89:11	suffering		17:23 18:8	territory
87:25	94:1 95:1	5:22 34:16	strategies	54:11	T	18:16,24	63:20
spring 46:6	96:1 97:1	41:6 45:14	37:14 74:9	105:20	table 74:22	39:2 50:20	terrorism
100:25	98:1 99:1	52:3 85:3	stream 59:5	sufficient	78:16	56:11,15	33:22
Squilla 1:16	100:1 101:1	85:20 86:6	112:13	32:24	take 7:18	57:4,11,13	testify 5:24
2:13,19,24	102:1 103:1	102:20	streamlining	suggest 47:14	57:5,13	57:16,19,20	14:10
3:10 70:23	103:13	120:18	64:12	suite 71:23	60:3,4 61:4	58:23 59:5	123:23
105:2	104:1,4	statement	streets 24:16	summary 8:5	70:9 94:11	59:5,9,13	testimony 3:6
stability 1:3	105:1 106:1	87:2	124:8,22	supervision	98:25	59:17 60:4	3:24 5:12
1:20 2:1	107:1 108:1	statements	127:10,11	137:23	103:20	62:17 63:7	14:19 69:2
3:1 4:1,13	109:1 110:1	87:3	stretch 38:4	support	112:3 120:4	63:25 109:4	124:5 136:4
5:1,17 6:1	111:1 112:1	Station 120:2	strides 24:20	43:10 63:16	122:9,21	110:9,11	thank 2:2
7:1 8:1 9:1	113:1 114:1	stations	structural	97:4	123:4	111:17,20	4:24 5:23
10:1 11:1	115:1 116:1	70:22	30:24 60:14	supporting	129:11	112:5 132:5	13:12,21
12:1 13:1	117:1,15	stay 73:23	91:4 130:23	63:15	taken 17:14	134:21	17:4 44:14
14:1 15:1	118:1 119:1	109:23	131:3	104:21	96:24 137:6	135:3,11	44:15,15
16:1 17:1	120:1 121:1	131:22	structure	supports	takes 15:23	taxes 10:17	51:19 52:16
18:1 19:1	122:1 123:1	stayed 58:13	50:20 109:4	95:25	17:2 38:22	17:18 58:25	56:8,9
20:1 21:1	124:1 125:1	59:12	112:5	supposed	134:6	63:12 84:6	64:15 65:12
22:1 23:1	126:1 127:1	stays 82:10	124:22	84:2	talk 106:6,23	taxing 135:14	68:11,12,12
24:1 25:1	128:1 129:1	steadier 57:9	131:4	sure 12:21	107:11	TCJA 57:15	68:14,21
26:1 27:1	130:1 131:1	steal 43:22	134:21	34:24 36:5	111:7	team 118:6	82:21,23
28:1 29:1	132:1 133:1	steering	135:3	36:10 39:13	113:24	Teams 1:7	83:6 89:22
30:1 31:1	134:1 135:1	36:18	structures	45:9 47:23	114:25	3:21	89:22,24
32:1 33:1	136:1,13	118:13,25	55:20	48:15 49:4	115:9,12	tech 38:3	104:8,9,13
34:1 35:1	stable 103:3	119:5,10	struggled	50:15 51:22	talked 15:3	technical	104:14,15

Committee on Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation
March 1, 2021

Page 15

104:15	21:14 28:25	Thirty-four	times 25:20	28:10 37:7	typically	unsafe 97:18	80:23
110:23	32:10 46:11	24:2	106:19	119:25	114:18	unusual	Version
113:20	49:12,15,20	Thomas 1:17	timing 19:2	transferred	115:3,8	72:23	66:15
116:3,9,11	50:16 51:5	3:13 68:18	25:17 26:16	12:11		up-front	versus 66:2
116:13	52:23 53:20	93:23	28:7 57:4	transit	U	90:21	92:13
117:10,13	54:20 55:2	123:17,18	tires 43:6	119:21	uglier 113:4	upcoming	130:16
117:14	57:6 58:4,6	126:16	title 4:7	123:12	ugly 113:3	43:3 69:2	134:2
118:21	61:4 63:4	127:23	titrate 133:6	translated	uncertain	75:9,15	vet 36:24
123:6,7,14	63:18 64:4	129:4	today 2:7 4:8	102:18	33:24	115:25	vetting 35:3
123:14,18	65:4 67:6	thorough	4:25 14:11	transportat...	uncertainties	update 42:21	viable 37:2
123:19,22	67:14,18	89:18	124:4	97:15 121:4	30:12	43:25 45:12	view 3:23
128:14,15	73:6,17	thought 18:3	128:17	128:19	unclean	72:14 84:3	violence
129:3	74:3 79:17	48:6 88:10	131:17	trash 20:2	97:18	updated	127:2
130:18	82:17 84:9	thoughtful	135:23	24:18,24	underscore	18:18	virus 30:13
135:23	85:8,11	94:13 95:2	136:4,7	traumatizing	101:10,17	updating	visible 73:10
136:6,11,12	86:4,5,13	130:25	today's	86:19	103:22	72:7	vision 123:3
thankful	86:24 88:12	thousands	135:20	Treasurer's	understand	upends 100:2	125:4
42:24	89:17 90:24	79:20	told 67:6	113:5	3:14 69:22	usage 21:12	vitality 31:2
thanks 14:10	93:15,21	three 15:15	tonnage 20:3	tree 120:5	94:17 95:15	21:23 22:19	volatile 56:18
129:5	94:18,20,25	16:21 21:20	tool 90:8	tremendous	98:14 108:5	49:17	56:23 57:12
133:11	96:9 97:2	26:14 31:9	93:16	24:20 25:3	115:18	use 43:3	58:10
thing 23:19	98:15 100:2	62:24 64:20	134:24	30:19 103:2	understand...	51:14 58:25	vote 37:3
73:11 91:5	102:6 107:4	107:9	top 16:6	triage 122:20	63:23 68:3	64:11	vouchers
94:21,22	108:2	109:11	63:21	triangulate	90:6 121:7	118:19	102:10
95:2 106:16	109:17,18	thriving	122:14	109:3	121:9	131:5,21	vulnerable
109:8	111:24	132:13	127:19	triangulating	understood	useful 38:5	41:3 105:18
110:18	115:17,23	throes 106:24	131:18	109:11	99:21	usually 57:3	
126:9 132:6	116:23	throw 36:19	topic 130:19	tricky 32:22	unemploy...	57:11	W
things 19:2	117:16	thrust 91:23	total 11:21	tried 39:24	81:18	utilize 131:20	wage 17:15
21:10 25:19	123:13	tickets 17:25	128:7	trouble 37:15	unfortunat...	utilized 45:8	59:4,9,13
27:24 28:18	127:15	tie 21:18	touch 53:12	true 50:12	29:15 32:13		59:17 60:4
28:21 31:13	130:22	tightening	tough 61:19	79:2 137:7	39:6 53:8	V	62:17 63:7
31:24 33:22	131:18	107:6	tour 70:21	Trump 57:16	57:8 58:22	vaccinated	63:11,25
37:23,25	132:15	time 9:16	track 20:21	try 43:24	73:22 126:3	46:22 47:5	111:20
38:22 39:19	133:21	21:8 23:10	23:14,24	66:4 74:8	126:13	vaccination	117:25
40:12 41:25	134:3,12	24:4 35:23	24:2,3,7,9	trying 21:19	unhealthy	46:21	135:11
42:3 46:6	135:2,7,10	40:10 60:20	24:11 28:15	53:20 63:22	97:19	105:23	wages 8:22
53:9,10	136:9	61:19 77:11	28:19 71:25	76:13 77:11	uniformity	vaccinations	wait 21:16
54:2 60:11	thinking	80:22 81:10	72:2	77:24,25	41:7	46:14,15,19	waiting 40:11
62:25 67:20	21:11 34:21	86:3 91:9	tracking	88:21 93:14	union 66:24	vaccine 30:13	walk 14:20
72:4 87:8	66:12,18,20	92:13 93:7	25:15	105:21	98:21	variation	16:23
91:9,13,14	88:4 106:8	93:10 96:17	trade-off	109:3	unions 116:2	25:11 26:18	walked
91:20,23	106:25	106:11	17:12	111:16	unit 72:19	varies 79:9	110:25
92:2 93:4	107:12	107:2 109:7	trade-offs	turn 36:15	unlicensed	various 35:7	walks 15:24
95:5 101:12	110:13	110:21	108:6,11	turned 101:8	101:25	43:19 74:23	want 5:2
102:4 113:9	111:12,17	112:17	109:19	two 36:25	unnecessary	78:11,21	13:22 23:17
123:10	111:22	116:24	110:11	50:5 55:19	48:16 49:13	81:20	28:14 34:12
124:9	121:17	119:22	tragic 91:20	62:24 64:20	49:16	vary 90:7	34:23,23
128:23,24	125:15,22	128:5	trajectory	79:4 81:14	unplanned	vehicle	36:5,10
131:18	130:14	timed 81:17	100:10	92:2 108:9	91:19	102:16	40:2,23
135:14	thinks 47:12	timeframe	transcript	two-thirds	unpredicta...	103:6	41:14,16
136:5	third 18:6	24:10 50:18	137:8,21	23:25	19:4	vendors	44:21 64:23
think 4:9	Thirty	timeline 81:4	transfer	type 78:24	unreported	38:13	65:18 66:25
9:16 21:11	129:16	82:16	12:14 20:16	125:24	127:3	venture	68:16 70:9

Committee on Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation
March 1, 2021

Page 16

82:3,25	125:3	39:5,11,13	37:16 38:14	wondering	<u>Y</u>	102:22	64:24
86:20 90:11	127:15	39:14,18	39:22,24	99:7 100:12	yeah 2:24	103:10	10:06 1:8
90:18 93:8	132:6 133:5	40:10,20	41:18 46:20	117:22	61:6 85:8	106:7,11	100 19:14
94:4,5	way 16:7,18	42:20,22	64:9 65:13	124:14,23	86:8 99:10	107:18	25:2 26:11
96:15,21	16:18 23:25	43:8,19,25	70:19 76:8	work 16:2	99:20	108:8	27:18 28:13
98:3 99:16	41:18 49:12	46:25 47:10	80:12 81:19	21:15,16	100:17,21	109:14	92:6 102:19
101:17	65:13 69:4	50:15 51:2	90:10,13	22:9,12,17	115:14,15	114:18,18	120:12
108:22	69:5 75:4	53:10 55:4	108:11,23	34:14 45:9	115:21	117:18	100-plus
109:16	78:25 80:6	55:6,8,23	112:18,20	68:8 72:24	117:9	120:20	120:11
110:15	90:2,12	59:7 60:13	121:11,12	77:24 85:21	125:25	125:18	100,000 47:4
119:17	94:4,6 98:4	60:21,22	124:18	92:21 95:17	127:22	130:5	109 23:21
120:14	112:20	61:24 62:3	133:15	95:19,24	129:16	131:23	11.7 10:13
121:20,24	113:7	62:13,14	134:4,5,6	103:2	133:21,24	132:23	12 11:8,18
126:19	118:18,18	63:22 66:6	weakness	104:17	134:3	year-by-year	12:24,25
127:6,9	119:11	67:7,16	59:14	105:16	year 6:4,25	114:19	13:2,7
129:23	121:9	69:12,25	weather 54:2	124:25	7:11 8:3,7	year-end	95:10
131:19,21	134:12	71:9 72:8	week 29:2,2	128:10	8:15 9:14	20:5	124:11
133:22	135:7	72:13,25	47:4 69:9	worked 88:8	9:14 10:14	year-to-date	126:21
135:22	ways 31:3	73:7 74:3	84:2 104:24	worker 99:3	10:20 12:2	26:25	12:16 136:15
136:6	78:3 92:9	76:3,4,9,17	113:15	workers	16:17 17:7	yearly 114:16	129 20:6,8
wanted 16:16	94:7 113:13	77:10,25	124:10	63:16 86:22	17:11 18:4	years 16:2	13,000 35:10
29:11 44:8	we'll 11:12	78:4,4 82:8	weekly	workforce	18:18,23	25:10 33:7	130 8:9
79:4 88:10	11:13 12:15	87:18 88:21	105:15	42:14 66:13	19:5 20:10	48:13 49:6	140 32:13
98:13 99:14	14:4,18	89:2 90:3	weeks 81:24	66:21 67:3	20:19,22,22	51:18 61:17	15 27:8,10
104:18	16:17 26:19	93:18 97:16	weigh 43:6	69:5	21:8,24	79:23 80:2	15-an-hour
105:24	29:21 30:17	98:2 100:20	welcome	working	23:10,23	88:24	117:25
106:2	40:8 43:3	104:21	13:13	42:22 48:8	24:15,16	113:11	15th 44:6
113:24	44:5 50:6,7	107:13,16	129:11	74:15 89:9	25:20 27:10	120:4,12	80:22 81:6
114:4,25	53:13,15,16	107:17	went 36:25	89:15	27:17,21	122:17	81:11 82:19
115:4 116:4	54:14,16	108:23	57:17 79:23	121:11	28:2,16	123:12	16 17:16
125:12	61:4 62:20	109:2,3,8	80:5 95:24	136:5	29:6 30:17	130:3,12	164 24:22
128:8	70:10 76:20	110:5	99:11,12	works 125:21	32:19 33:4	yeoman's	17 15:19
warning	81:25 86:2	120:14,16	104:6 105:6	131:7,23	33:6 38:3	103:25	108:9
25:23	93:23 108:6	121:3,14	105:7,8	world 33:24	40:5,8 43:4	yesterday	109:22
Washington	108:18	122:19	weren't 31:20	54:3 65:4	44:7 48:4,4	46:16	110:14
120:16	114:24	124:15	117:2	worried 26:8	48:4 50:4	York 61:16	18 102:17
wasn't 55:14	119:2 131:6	126:9	West 105:9	70:7	55:21 59:17	106:19	<u>2</u>
99:4 126:17	133:5,9	127:24	106:17	worry 66:10	59:17 60:6		2 6:16 7:16
waste 20:3,18	134:4	128:12	wiggle 57:22	worse 105:10	62:10 64:6	<u>Z</u>	9:5,18
wasted	135:25	130:20	willing 39:20	worsen 65:23	64:10 67:9	zero 114:5	66:15
117:21	we're 7:19	132:3,22	Winston	worst 134:14	72:16 75:12	125:4	2.3 7:9 11:2
watching	11:16 18:5	133:16	117:19	worth 15:16	75:16,20	zero-based	11:20
46:16	21:7,17,19	135:10	Wissahickon	16:21 31:9	76:8 78:11	65:2	2.6 11:4
Water 112:14	22:4,22	we've 7:25	119:25	wouldn't	79:16 80:5		20 17:11
Waxman 5:8	23:14 24:8	16:11 17:13	witnesses 5:6	92:15	80:14 82:10	<u>0</u>	18:15 23:5
14:16 17:4	25:14 26:8	17:14 19:21	woke 119:16	wound 69:18	83:11,12,15	<u>1</u>	55:21
45:9 53:2	27:6 30:12	19:25,25	Wolf 14:14	wow 26:12	83:18,20,22	1 1:8 27:12	20.6 8:7
57:2 58:21	30:20 31:8	22:23 23:20	118:21,23	wrong 119:14	84:8,14,15	1.1 52:2,6	200 10:13
65:12 71:12	32:14,17,25	24:15 28:23	120:24	Wynnefield	84:19,21	131:15	24:23 52:23
75:10 83:14	34:13,15	31:25 32:2	125:25	105:5	85:12 86:11	1.3 50:14	52:25 76:10
83:18,21	35:8,21,22	32:7 34:25	127:21		86:23 87:12	131:15	78:24
84:23 89:22	35:23,24	35:5,8,10	133:18	<u>X</u>	99:25	1.6 7:10	132:25
101:13	36:6,16	35:12,19	women-ow...	X 79:12	100:19	10 8:17 19:17	133:2
107:15	37:5,13	36:3,12	36:2		101:3		

Committee on Fiscal Stability and Intergovernmental Cooperation
March 1, 2021

Page 17

200406 1:19	109:1 110:1	12:1 13:1	120:1 121:1	58 27:24			
2:1 3:1,7	111:1 112:1	14:1 15:1	122:1 123:1	58.3 11:9			
4:1 5:1 6:1	113:1 114:1	16:1 17:1	124:1 125:1				
7:1 8:1 9:1	115:1 116:1	18:1 19:1	126:1 127:1	6			
10:1 11:1	117:1 118:1	20:1 21:1	128:1 129:1	6 15:17 16:5			
12:1 13:1	119:1 120:1	22:1 23:1	130:1 131:1	110:16			
14:1,11	121:1 122:1	24:1 25:1	132:1 133:1	60 102:9,18			
15:1 16:1	123:1 124:1	26:1 27:1	134:1 135:1				
17:1 18:1	125:1 126:1	28:1 29:1	136:1	7			
19:1 20:1	127:1 128:1	30:1 31:1	30 58:3	7 9:17 13:25			
21:1 22:1	129:1 130:1	32:1 33:1	30-some-mi...	71.6 8:18,19			
23:1 24:1	131:1 132:1	34:1 35:1	10:8	75 8:18			
25:1 26:1	133:1 134:1	36:1 37:1	300 76:10	112:22			
27:1 28:1	135:1 136:1	38:1 39:1	317 11:3	76 7:18			
29:1 30:1	2009 9:10	40:1 41:1	318 11:3	77.2 10:7			
31:1 32:1	2020 6:6,20	42:1 43:1	34 19:12				
33:1 34:1	10:19 11:24	44:1 45:1	340 23:3	8			
35:1 36:1	19:20 58:23	46:1 47:1	35 26:2	8 9:17 15:17			
37:1 38:1	101:3	48:1 49:1	380 16:7	16:5 21:7			
39:1 40:1	103:22,23	50:1 51:1		110:16			
41:1 42:1	124:16	52:1 53:1	4	80 17:24			
43:1 44:1	2021 1:8 6:4	54:1 55:1	4 17:3	124:13			
45:1 46:1	7:16 10:4	56:1 57:1	4.5 7:15	126:22			
47:1 48:1	11:25 45:18	58:1 59:1	4.6 7:8,11,17	800 31:11			
49:1 50:1	21 113:2	60:1 61:1	4.67 29:14	108:10,14			
51:1 52:1	22 28:6 52:19	62:1 63:1	4.7 29:11,21	811 16:10			
53:1 54:1	130:6	64:1 65:1	4.8 11:5	83 26:12			
55:1 56:1	132:23	66:1 67:1	40.8 8:14				
57:1 58:1	22,000 23:2	68:1 69:1	400 76:11	9			
59:1 60:1	22.8 6:23	70:1 71:1	42 96:11	90 112:21			
61:1 62:1	227 83:23	72:1 73:1	439 14:24				
63:1 64:1	23.9 10:7	74:1 75:1	16:3,14				
65:1 66:1	23rd 45:18	76:1 77:1	44 26:4				
67:1 68:1	24,000 22:25	78:1 79:1	450 29:22				
69:1 70:1	246.45 10:3	80:1 81:1	31:12 47:11				
71:1 72:1	25 42:10 57:8	82:1 83:1	48:2 49:10				
73:1 74:1	250 132:25	84:1 85:1	69:25				
75:1 76:1	252 83:15,16	86:1 87:1	132:22				
77:1 78:1	269 84:23	88:1 89:1	47 42:17				
79:1 80:1	28 17:8	90:1 91:1	49 32:12				
81:1 82:1	29 14:25	92:1 93:1					
83:1 84:1	15:14 16:18	94:1 95:1	5				
85:1 86:1	29:7 31:9	96:1 97:1	5 11:10 79:18				
87:1 88:1	107:23	98:1 99:1	5.1 29:18,20				
89:1 90:1	110:19	100:1 101:1	32:19 52:23				
91:1 92:1	29.1 6:18	102:1 103:1	50 20:8 29:13				
93:1 94:1	291 16:14	104:1 105:1	50.8 11:9				
95:1 96:1		106:1 107:1	500 23:22				
97:1 98:1	3	108:1 109:1	72:8				
99:1 100:1	3 15:23 23:9	110:1 111:1	51.3 6:21				
101:1 102:1	3/1/21 2:1 3:1	112:1 113:1	53 108:13				
103:1 104:1	4:1 5:1 6:1	114:1 115:1	53.2 11:5				
105:1 106:1	7:1 8:1 9:1	116:1 117:1	542 9:5				
107:1 108:1	10:1 11:1	118:1 119:1	55 7:20				