COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

PUBLIC HEARING

COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND CIVIL SERVICE

- - - -

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, October 20, 2004
11:27 a.m.

- - - -

Resolution 040880 - Resolution authorizing the Committee on Labor and Civil Service to hold hearing on the City's decision to charge an application processing fee of thirty-five ($35) dollars for Civil Service positions within the City of Philadelphia.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN JUAN RAMOS, Chair
COUNCIL PRESIDENT ANNA C. VERNA
COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN DAVID COHEN
COUNCILMAN JAMES F. KENNEY
COUNCILMAN JACK KELLY
COUNCILMAN MICHAEL A. NUTTER

- - - -

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

I N D E X

RESOLUTION 040880 PAGE
LYNDA ORFANELLI, Personnel Director
City of Philadelphia..... 3
FRANK FERRIS, District Council 33.... 46
BOBBY DAVIS, Local 696..... 51
MARIETTA GREEN-RUSSELL..... 63

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: We will now go back to our public hearing.

The Clerk will read the title of Resolution No. 040880.

THE CLERK: Resolution 040880, a resolution authorizing the Committee on Labor and Civil Service to hold hearings on the City's decision to charge an application processing fee of $35 for civil service positions within the City of Philadelphia.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: The Clerk will please call our first witness.

THE CLERK: Lynda Orfanelli, personnel director, City of Philadelphia.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Please state your name and your occupation for the record, please.

MS. ORFANELLI: My name is Lynda Orfanelli. I'm the Personnel Director for the City of Philadelphia.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Ms. Orfanelli, do you have a prepared text?

MS. ORFANELLI: Yes, I do, Councilman.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: You can proceed with your testimony.

MS. ORFANELLI: I'm pleased to be here to provide my testimony this morning to the Committee on Labor and Civil Service. Thank you for inviting me, Chairman Ramos.

On September 27th, the City of Philadelphia began charging a $35 application processing fee for citizens seeking civil service employment. This new fee is waived for citizens receiving public assistance, unemployment compensation or supplemental security income.

There are several reasons why we decided to charge the fee. There are internal processing reasons and there are also financial reasons. We wanted to attract more serious job seekers. Over the past four fiscal years, only 45 percent of the people who applied for a city job subsequently reported to the test site to take the examination. City resources spent entering data, analyzing credentials, generating letters, printing test booklets and staffing

the test site were, therefore, wasted. On average, there are almost 20,000 people every year who apply for a city job but choose not to follow through and take the test.

We also wanted to shift the cost of the service to those who are using it. Only 3 percent of the citizens of Philadelphia apply for a job with the City. At present, the services are paid for by the General Fund, thereby using the taxes of all citizens to provide a service used by only by a few.

We also wanted to help promote and improve our own service. The Personnel Department staff resources are shrinking in compliance with the City's plan for workforce reduction. Just for your own information, in the early '90s, we had 135 employees. Today, we have 79. So that's a huge drop in employees to do the work for the civil service. By, hopefully, increasing the number of motivated applicants and eliminating resources wasted on applicants who do not complete the examination process, the Department can focus resources on test

development, better communication with the applicants and more convenient testing times.

For example, the Department will provide the date of the test and the job announcement, something we've never done before, allowing job seekers to arrange their schedules in advance. We will also provide evening testing to better accommodate those who may already be employed. That's something we haven't done either.

We want to align the City with practices in other jurisdictions. User fees for processing applications are widely used by state, county and municipal governments, especially in the northeast part of the United States. We're not the first ones implementing this fee. We're actually coming late to this.

The amount of the fee varies from $10 in Cleveland to $95 in Massachusetts. Most fees are in the range of $20 to $60. The State of New Jersey charges $35 for all jobs. In Pennsylvania, fees are most commonly charged for police and fire jobs, frequently because these jobs are the only jobs

classified as civil service in the smaller jurisdictions. Fees are typically $25 to $30.

Please note that the goal of the application processing fee is not to generate significant revenue for the City, but it is to shift some of the cost of the City's recruitment program from all taxpayers to those who seek the service and to reduce the waste of resources currently consumed by applicants who are not serious about joining the civil service. If that is accomplished, the efforts currently spent in vain can be redirected to providing superior service to a smaller group of job seekers.

We do have a waiver process. It is not onerous. It is a very short form that people fill out. We have been doing this now for a few weeks. It's working very smoothly. People have proper identification to show that they're either on TANF, general assistance, Pennsylvania State Blind Pensions, Pennsylvania Unemployment Compensation and federal SSI. They show us their I.D. We mark their application appropriately and they do

not give us the fee.

This is only a short period of time, but to date, approximately 18 percent of the application fees have been waived on 18 percent of the applications we've received. This is, like, since the 27th. It's not even a month yet. The experience in New York State has been that the number of applicants who have had their fee waived ranged in the low 20 percent. So we're probably going to attract something similar to that.

Our reaction has been very positive in the application center. People have said that they've applied before. They've taken tests. They feel that they'll have a better chance to succeed now because there will be less people taking the test who aren't serious about getting a job with the City. The people that have come to our application center have been very positive. We expected that we would have more negativity than we've received.

We'll be tracking the results. We'll slice and dice it to get a better idea the types of tests that have the most waivers

and other things like that.

I also mentioned that we'll have waivers for positions that are hard to fill. I don't know whether you know, but we have 1,200 titles in the civil service that we test for. Many of them are promotional. Many of them are open competitive. At this point, we've only identified about eight positions that we would be waiving the fee for. They range from automotive maintenance technician to airport administrative trainee, the whole gamut. Some are college degreed; Some are technical positions.

I also attached to my testimony the fees and the jurisdictions that charge fees and how much they charge. It's approximately two pages long.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: The Chair recognizes Councilman Goode.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Orfanelli, refresh my memory, what is the estimated administrative cost of processing applicants?

MS. ORFANELLI: What would be our cost?

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Yes, the cost you're trying to recoup.

MS. ORFANELLI: We are charging $35 based on a time in motion study that indicated on an optimum instance it costs us at least $39 to process an application.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: On an annual basis, what is that?

MS. ORFANELLI: I would have to take the number of applications and multiply it by 39, about 35,000 applications.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: How much revenue are you expecting to generate from this on an annual basis?

MS. ORFANELLI: We estimated about $600,000. We also expect the number of applications to drop from what they were last year because, as I said, we have all these applications from people who don't even appear, 20,000.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: So does the anticipated revenue exceed the costs?

MS. ORFANELLI: To implement this program?

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Yes.

MS. ORFANELLI: Absolutely.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: So the anticipated revenue does exceed the cost of administering?

MS. ORFANELLI: I'm not sure I'm clear on your question.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Are you going to take in more money --

MS. ORFANELLI: Than it's going to cost us to do this?

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Yes.

MS. ORFANELLI: Yes, we are. The only additional cost that we're incurring is an account clerk and a copy machine.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: So you are taking in more money than the actual administrative cost?

MS. ORFANELLI: Yes.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: I'm somewhat familiar with how New York City does it. They actually charge a fee based upon the salary of

the job. Why did you not pursue that type of fee? They charge roughly 0.1 percent. So on a $30,000 job, they charge $30; On a $35,000 job, they charge $35; and up to for a $50,000 or over job, they charge $60. Why did you choose New Jersey's model as opposed to New York's model?

MS. ORFANELLI: We analyzed what was being done elsewhere, and we felt that this model was the one that would work the best for us. Actually, my understanding is in New York City -- they charge the most for the laborer job. That's what I had been told.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: I have a copy of it right in front of me. It's a step. A $30,000 job is $30; for $35,000 it's $35; up to $50,000 and over it's a $60 fee. My question really is why is it a flat fee and why did you choose that model?

MS. ORFANELLI: We really based it on what it costs us to process an application, as opposed to how much a person is going to get for that particular job. So we did it based on our cost.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: You could still have a sliding scale and recoup your cost.

MS. ORFANELLI: We could. That's something that we can consider. It's something that we really didn't think about in great detail, but something that would be worth looking at in the future.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Councilman Cohen.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: How did the idea originate for charging?

MS. ORFANELLI: We were aware that other jurisdictions --

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Who is the we?

MS. ORFANELLI: We, the Personnel Department.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: The idea was born in the Personnel Department?

MS. ORFANELLI: No, it was not. The Personnel Department was aware through our contacts with other jurisdictions that fees are being elsewhere in the country. We attend conferences, IPMA conferences, and these fees have been discussed at other personnel

conferences. So we knew this was being done elsewhere.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: And nobody else outside of the Personnel Department had anything to do with this?

MS. ORFANELLI: In terms of how we came to process it, yes, absolutely. We were at the budget process period when we were called in to talk about what was going on with the City's finances and where we were going with the budget. The Managing Director and the Mayor asked all departments to look at possible revenue-generating options, and every department submitted their ideas. We submitted this as our idea, and this idea was accepted.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: By the Mayor and/or the Managing Director?

MS. ORFANELLI: Well, they were both at the meeting.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: So your idea was presented and accepted at one meeting?

MS. ORFANELLI: Well, I don't know. They discussed it. I don't know how long it

took them to decide to do it. Every department presented it as part of their budget initiatives.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Excuse me for one second, Councilman Cohen.

I just want to acknowledge that Councilwoman Blackwell has rejoined us.

I'm sorry about that, Councilman Cohen. You can proceed.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Thank you. I happen to think it's a very bad idea. It seems to me the City of Philadelphia seems to be cutting what few rights it gives to its citizens. There may be many citizens who apply for jobs that are in good financial positions. But one thing that's always given people hope, even if they have no funds, is maybe some day they can get a City job. It seems to me there ought to be ways other than making it financially impossible for people to apply.

Why does it cost that much money? Why can't you take the application, and if you charge a fee, say, the fees that you have, why

can't you just attach it to the application and to the person who doesn't come to the test? Maybe you use up that application, but you return it to people who do take the test. Why are you punishing people who have taken the test before and not wasted the City's time or effort and charging them as well as people who are the bad actors in the play that you set forth?

It seems to me that there's been very little thinking about this, except as a way to discourage people from applying, and I think that's a bad policy. I think we ought to be indicating to people that government employment is an opportunity, but that it carries a responsibility. If you apply, you pay a fee if it's felt necessary to get them to view it seriously. But if you don't come to a test, you either do one of two things; either you postpone the costs associated with examinations until after the test to see who you ought to spend time on or provide a return of the fee to those people who do take the test, rather than just boldly have the pricing

charged.

MS. ORFANELLI: I just want to make sure I understand what you're saying, Councilman. So you're suggesting that another way of handling this would be for us to collect the fee and hold the fee for the people who don't show, but return the fee to people who do? Am I understanding that correctly?

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Yes. That's one alternative. A second method could be postponing the work. I don't know what there is to examine in advance of taking the test.

MS. ORFANELLI: Unfortunately that can't be. The civil service system is a merit system, and every job has a class spec which describes what the job entails and what qualifications you have to have to take the test. So when you apply for a job, you have to meet the qualifications.

Unfortunately, many people in the past would come into our center. We would have 20 jobs announced. They would apply for five, and maybe they met the application for

one. How do we know that? Because when you fill out your application, it is reviewed to make sure you meet the criteria. You are sent a letter if you don't, explaining that you don't and why, and you still have the appeal process. That means there is someone reviewing it.

The information has to be put into our database because we track all applications. We have to do that for federal reasons and other reasons, good management reasons. So we mail you a letter. You appeal to us. We mail you back another letter. Sometimes your appeal provides additional information that allows you to take the test, so now we let you take the test. Based on the number of applicants we have, we have to schedule a room and time. There's a lot of prep work done before the test. That costs money.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, you've convinced me on that score.

MS. ORFANELLI: That's something I wouldn't expect you to know, obviously.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Yes. But how about the other test? I think what you do in preparation is a good thing. But secondly, how about just supplying the fee, since you're aiming at making people who apply come in seriously? Why don't you just attach whatever payment they've made to the application and hold it or use whatever method you want for return of the fee to those who took the test and only charge those who are causing you to spend time without any reason?

MS. ORFANELLI: That's an interesting idea, and I'm curious if that's been done by any other jurisdiction. It's something we should look into.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: I certainly feel it ought to be looked into.

I don't like the idea of always checking with other jurisdictions, because it seems to me you're always checking with those that are carrying onerous duties as a citizenry, instead of providing the benefits Why don't you look and see how many jurisdictions give people greater benefits

than Philadelphia? Nobody does that. They only do it the other way. So I don't think that looking at other jurisdictions is any reason as to why we should do it. If it's a good policy and good for the citizens, we ought to do it whether anybody else does it or not. We shouldn't just be copycats.

MS. ORFANELLI: Okay. Thank you for your comments.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Now, the second point I want to make. Why was this not discussed with City Council before you adopted it?

MS. ORFANELLI: Actually, it was in my budget testimony.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Why wasn't it given this kind of attention?

MS. ORFANELLI: There were questions that were asked during budget testimony.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: On this issue?

MS. ORFANELLI: Yes, there were.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Well, I think it deserves the highlighting that it's got now, because I can tell you out in the public

there's a terrible reaction against it. Poor people who always hoped that somehow or other they're going to get helped by government again find the door slammed in their face. I just think that's bad psychology. The City ought to appear anxious to help its most impoverished citizens. Instead, we seem to be closing doors on them. I deplore that very much. Government's role is to help people, not take hope away from them. For that reason, I urge serious reconsideration of the policy and I would suggest that it ought to be abandoned until City Council has a chance to consider this matter.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Wisdom has spoken.

I recognize my colleague Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much.

I'd certainly like to thank the Committee for hearing this very, very important issue that affects so many of the

citizens of our City.

I agree with what has been said, that it definitely sends a wrong message and that people who pay the freight, people who pay our salary, and people who certainly pay taxes here have a right not to expect that government doesn't welcome them when it comes to applying for jobs. Every good thing that we have to offer the citizens of the City should have a right that they can take part in.

Ms. Orfanelli, with regard to your first point in your testimony, you said that in the past four fiscal years only 45 percent of the people who applied take the exam and that the City wasted information and job advertisements, et cetera, et cetera. Well, if we know that after all these years that we don't need that many applications and data, why do we print it?

MS. ORFANELLI: I'm sorry. I don't understand your question.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay. You said only 45 percent of the people who apply

for jobs reported to the test site to take the exam. And you said that the City wastes time printing test booklets and blah, blah, blah. But if we know, why don't we work on the City's end, organizationally speaking, after people apply to figure out what we need, instead of punishing the victim or trying to raise money that the City may need on the backs on those in need? Why can't we organize better so that we don't waste time printing documents and doing test stuff? Why can't we organize things better so that the problem becomes ours where it belongs, not the applicants', where it doesn't belong?

MS. ORFANELLI: Well, an example would be, if we announce an exam and we get 1,000 people who apply and are eligible and only 300 show up, we don't know that only 300 are going to show up. That same test could be announced and we could have 950 show up. So we still have to have the number of test booklets for the number of applicants.

It varies from year to year. We can have a large population show up in one year

and a smaller the next year. We don't know that in advance.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: For example, let's take laborer. For laborer, you may have 10,000 people apply for five jobs. Why can't the City do it better? It seems to me that it is wrong to have 8,000, 10,000 people, however many -- it's wrong to have people apply and apply for jobs that past experience shows us are nonexistent. That's not fair either. Why do we advertise for all these jobs if we know that we don't have them? Or why don't we say, we expect to hire in a year's time 10 jobs, albeit 10,000 apply? Why can't we be fair and honest with John and Jane Q. Public so that we have a better sense of all this and put the onus on we who are able to control the situation, and not the public?

MS. ORFANELLI: Our announcements usually include the number of positions that will be open during the life of the list. The list usually lasts for two years. Are you then suggesting, Councilwoman, that instead of us accepting 10,000 applications per laborer,

we close the application process when we received 500 if we know that we're going to have about 400 positions open and don't take the applications from the other 9,500?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I'm suggesting that we need to talk about it, and any system is apparently fairer than the one you name.

I'm also concerned about testimony that says you want to attract serious applicants. Well, who has the right to make that judgment?

I always like to use the example of a mother who says, "You're 18. You're home every day. You need to go out and get a job." So maybe a kid is not serious. He hasn't found out who he is or who she is or what he or she wants to do. Who's to make that decision? Who is the City to decide who's serious and who isn't, who should apply and who doesn't?

There is something wrong with this whole premise of us charging people to determine who's serious and who isn't.

There's something wrong with that whole scenario, as far as I'm concerned.

Your testimony is, we want to attract more serious job seekers. What does serious mean? Who are you, me, or anybody else here to determine who's serious and what serious means for people who apply for jobs?

MS. ORFANELLI: Well, in this instance, we mean serious by someone who is going to show up to take the test.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Well, I totally disagree. I deal with a lot of people, for example, who are in shelters. I deal with a lot of people who are sleeping on the street. So maybe they're told that they have to go someplace and apply for a job. What do they do? Are they serious? Are they not serious because they don't have $35? Does $35 make you serious and not having $35 not make you serious? It's really just a specious argument about who should apply for City jobs and who shouldn't.

It embarrasses me that the City is in the business of deciding among its

citizenry, people who elect us, people who expect us to work in their best interests -- it embarrasses me that we would decide that we're going to charge some $35 that we're told pays for the freight in this regard.

Let me ask you, too, if would you provide to the Chair of this Committee a breakdown of what it costs so that we understand where this $35 comes from, what it's used for.

Rumor has it that it could be $2 million that the City generates out of this. I don't know. We only have the rumor mill to consider because we have no significant data with regard to why we're charging $35, why that's a magic number and what happens.

MS. ORFANELLI: I'll be glad to provide that Time and Motion study to show you how we came up with the $35.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: My other question is, why couldn't the City, for example, have a system whereby a person pays the City some kind of something -- I don't know if it's $35. We haven't had any data

regarding that number. But why can't a person pay after they're hired? Or why can't we do some level of payroll deduction? They do it in private industry. They don't charge people up front. These private job agencies charge people, but they don't charge them until they're hired. Why are we doing it differently?

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Would you yield a moment, Councilwoman Blackwell?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Yes.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: I just want to say in support of what I think are excellent points raised by Councilwoman Blackwell, that's why it's so important to involve Council in the decision-making process, because we're the ones more closely in touch with citizens throughout the City at any given time than any other group, and the City could be avoided the embarrassment. I think this is a terrible thing, and I add my voice again to the voice of Councilwoman Blackwell and others who believe the City ought to be an open institution.

People ought to regard the City as a friend, not as somebody saying, "You're too poor. You're going to have to put up money to take a test or we're not even going to consider you." I think that policy ought to be eliminated at once and then submitted, if the Administration thinks it's a worthwhile one, for consideration by Council before it's put into effect. Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We agree. And again, we ask if the Personnel Director would not come up with a system where maybe something is paid post hiring and not prior to hiring before in short order before this practice is continued. We find it unconscionable that there was talk during budget process also to do this and then it just happened. It started. I've been asking about it since the spring. All of a sudden we get a notice that it just started, that people just have to pay it.

Would you provide to the Chair, Ms. Orfanelli, a system by which people can be

charged something post getting hired, post some kind of commitment as opposed to just an application fee for each and every City job one applies for?

MS. ORFANELLI: So you would like us to propose another policy that could be looked at?

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Absolutely.

MS. ORFANELLI: We can look at that, certainly.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you. We're concerned.

I had a meeting over at the library, for example, with the head of the library and former Mayor Wilson Goode. And I asked them about employment opportunities. The library has 10 part-time people. What about part-time workers? They're concerned that people who get part-time jobs for the City, part-time workers that have limited hours of work, they won't want to pay $35. We lose the quality workforce we want to work in the library because it's not worth their while. Did we consider part-time employees and part-time

hours when this was considered?

MS. ORFANELLI: Councilman Goode asked a question, and that is something we are looking at. Part-time in particular strikes a chord with me, and I understand what you're saying.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We're also asking you and we're asking the Administration to consider waiving this whole process until we receive more answers and more data and more information about what works and what's fair to the citizens of Philadelphia.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We're asking you to consider that and to report that back to the Chair as well. We know that you have to go to the Administration. It's one step above you, but we're requesting that you do that.

MS. ORFANELLI: That's a discussion with the Budget Bureau because revenue estimates are based on projections from this initiative.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Well, we're

asking you to bring that to them and report specifically with regard to that question back to the Chair.

MS. ORFANELLI: We will.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: We're also looking at this whole waiver process, as well as which jobs, in your opinion, should be waived and what income level should be waived. We also would like more specific detail submitted it to the Chair with regard to those specific positions, as well as the part-time hours and part-time days and for which people are exempted.

If the City's issue is -- which apparently it is. If one of the issues is processing these applications, why then would we come up with another system to weed certain people out if the issue is processing applications in the first place? It seems to me we've exacerbated the situation by coming up with another level that people have to consider. Is that not true?

MS. ORFANELLI: If I understand you correctly, the adding of this initiative

doesn't really create another processing level for us. It's a very minimal addition.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I don't understand. There's a whole other form. It's not one line that says, "Do you receive TANF or are you on general assistance or unemployment or SSI?" There's a whole other form that's involved for people who are supposed to be low or no income. How can that be less trouble if the issue is processing in the first place?

MS. ORFANELLI: The form is really a very simple form. It just asks for your name, your address, and what type of assistance you're on, your social security number. Once you show us that, we note it on the application and it takes no time at all. It's very simple. Everybody who came had their identification. We've had no problems with it at all.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I don't understand. There's a whole separate form for people who are low or no income or receiving some kind of subsidy. How do they know if

they apply? Maybe I make $40,000, but I may have six children. Do I apply? How does a person know when they can apply and when they can't? It's a whole other form. It's not on the same application. It's not on the same form, income and source of income. It's a whole other form for people who want the waiver. How do they know they can use it?

MS. ORFANELLI: This form is on our Web site. It's also in our application center. When people come in to apply at the center, they pick up the form. It's a one-pager. We literally have had no problems with them at all.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: That does not answer my question. I believe you do have problems because these people are coming to my office asking me to help them with the $35 application fee, so there are problems. They just feel there's no way to address them at your level, so they come to me and come to our offices as the people they elect and the people who they feel care about them.

Again, I ask, how do I know -- if I

make $20,000 a year and have one child, how do I know I can apply for a waiver? Who makes that decision?

MS. ORFANELLI: Customer service will inform the people who have questions. So if you want to send them over to our customer service office, we'll be glad to work with them.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: It doesn't sound like you have a good system. That means customer service will have a whole other long line which singles people out who may be low income. They're being in a whole other line, like being in a, quote/unquote, welfare line if they're low income.

I have not heard you respond that there's a specific process whereby people are not singled out who are low income in a negative way.

MS. ORFANELLI: If you send them over to the customer service office, we'll take care of them.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: But how do they know they're low income? If they get in

a line and they want to apply for a job, how do they know?

MS. ORFANELLI: The information is posted in the customer service office.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: You're not answering my question.

MS. ORFANELLI: If they have a specific question, someone will answer it for them.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: You're not answering the question. Most people don't have $35 who are applying for civil service jobs. But let's say they do. How do they know whether they can apply for a waiver of the fee? You haven't answered that.

MS. ORFANELLI: It's posted. It's on our Web site. It tells you exactly which categories are eligible for a waiver.

I may be misunderstanding the question.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Excuse me, Councilwoman.

I believe the Councilwoman is addressing low income people who are not on

public assistance or unemployment compensation, and there are no guidelines for those low income people.

MS. ORFANELLI: That's correct.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

How do people know? How do people know if they can have a fee waived or not?

COUNCILMAN GOODE: They can't have a fee waived unless they're on public assistance or unemployment compensation. There should be provisions for low income guidelines if you want to establish them, but none exist right now; is that correct?

MS. ORFANELLI: That's correct.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Councilman.

So our response is, again, we feel it should be waived until some criteria is developed that would address that issue. So we're asking you to report back to the Chair criteria on other low income people.

MS. ORFANELLI: We will do that.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Any other questions from the Committee?

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Does that mean the fee will be waived until such time we get a chance to let the criterion determine what's satisfactory?

MS. ORFANELLI: That's a decision of the Administration.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Councilman Goode.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Ms. Orfanelli, would you concede for the record that the $35 flat fee is fairly arbitrary? It's simply based on the fact that there's a $35 fee in a neighboring state?

MS. ORFANELLI: No.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: So what was the $35 fee based upon?

MS. ORFANELLI: It's based on our cost.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Yet you can't tell me what your annual costs are?

MS. ORFANELLI: I said I would provide that.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: But you can't tell me right now?

MS. ORFANELLI: It's a whole chart that shows you what each step costs.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Okay. Walk me through it then in terms if why it costs $35 as a flat fee, as opposed to a sliding scale and what thought process you went through in terms of determining it would be a flat fee rather than sliding scale.

MS. ORFANELLI: We used our cost, which was $39, to determine that we would charge $35. We didn't consider a sliding scale because that would have meant that we would have charged more than -- to make the $39 really, we would have charged more for a higher pay job and less for a lower pay job. That would have been a whole analysis that we did not do, but are going to do now.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: And that $39 cost is set in stone based upon what analysis? Is it an analysis of last year, the last several years?

MS. ORFANELLI: No. It's a recent

analysis of the process.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: And that analysis covers what period of time and how many applicants?

MS. ORFANELLI: It covers a typical application.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: In other words, how do you we know it's $39? Can you provide us with the raw data that shows us? Was it $39 last year? Was it $39 over the last three years? Has it been $39 for the last 10 years? How do we know $39 is the actual cost set in stone?

MS. ORFANELLI: This analysis was done in January. It's a recent analysis.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: The question I asked you is, the analysis covers what period of time?

MS. ORFANELLI: Maybe I'm not understanding the question.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: You analyzed what period of time which gave you the $39 amount?

MS. ORFANELLI: It's the cost to handle an application. One application cost

us $39 to handle, each application.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Explain to me how you know that.

MS. ORFANELLI: I'm going to send you the whole chart that shows how we break it down.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: You can't explain that to me right now?

MS. ORFANELLI: I don't have the chart in front of me.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Okay. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Ms. Orfanelli, does that mean you hire new staff every time there's an examination?

MS. ORFANELLI: No. That's the cost of our existing staff to do the work.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Would that existing staff be lowered in number if there were no examination?

MS. ORFANELLI: The existing staff has already been lowered in number.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: I'm not asking that question. I'm asking if there is no announcement, does that mean some people are

going to be bounced off their job now?

MS. ORFANELLI: No.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: So why do you say it costs something if the people are there already? You decide on a number of employees. You don't increase them when you announce an examination. The existing staff does the work.

MS. ORFANELLI: Actually, we've been shrinking and we'll probably shrink some more through attrition. However, this gives us the opportunity to do things we've never done before.

For example, the announcement now tells you when our job is going to be because we have more time for planning. We have more time for approving services. Our people can be redeployed to do other things that are necessary and important.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: So you're going to go make the poor people in the City who are struggling and hungry for a job put together $35 from maybe all members of their family in order to enable the Personnel Department to

operate more efficiently? Is that what you're telling us? It wasn't really a revenue basis?

MS. ORFANELLI: The money that we're collecting is not coming back to the Personnel Department, per se. It's going into the General Fund.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: But you're saying it's to pay the expenses that are involved in the examination process.

MS. ORFANELLI: It covers the expense, yes.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: So therefore, if you don't have this fee, you're going to have to fire these people; is that right? You say no.

MS. ORFANELLI: We don't fire people without cause.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Is there cause?

MS. ORFANELLI: When I say cause, cause means that you are not doing your job appropriately or you're not showing up for your job. Those kinds of causes.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: That's what we thought.

Ms. Orfanelli, it just seems to us that for some reason you're resisting the notion that it's wrong to charge low income people and poor people and the people of Philadelphia fees to apply for jobs. You're helping create barriers between the City of Philadelphia and its people. Instead of breaking down those barriers, you're building new ones. And we don't think it's a good idea.

MS. ORFANELLI: I understand.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Councilman Goode.

COUNCILMAN GOODE: Following up with Councilman Cohen's question, he asked you whether you had to terminate those people. You said, no, you only fire people for cause. But I think the question he was actually asking is, do you have to lay anyone off as a result of not bringing in this revenue?

MS. ORFANELLI: Not that I'm aware of.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Any other questions for Madam Personnel Director Lynda

Orfanelli?

(No response.)

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Not hearing any, thank you so much for your testimony.

This morning it is quite obvious that there is a lot of concern on this Committee, and I share the concerns of my colleagues. Before you leave, you used the word "smooth," that things have gone smooth.

I have people that come to my office looking for work every day. I've had at last count over 1500 people coming into my office looking for work, and I've only been in office since January 5th. People don't walk away smooth when we tell them that there's not a job for them.

If you waived 18 percent, and yet there's a category that you don't have a clause for waiving, such as people that are not on public assistance, have run out of their unemployment benefits, I'll just be curious to find out how smooth this is really going to work if the economy doesn't get any better. But thank you, nevertheless, for your

testimony and your time.

MS. ORFANELLI: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Will the Clerk call the next witness, please?

I'm sorry, Madam Orfanelli. Will you please stick around in the event we need to go back to you, please? Thank you.

Clerk, please call our next witness.

THE CLERK: Frank Ferris (ph), District Council 33.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Good morning. Mr. Ferris, please state your name and your occupation for the record, please.

MR. FERRIS: Good morning. My name is Frank Ferris. I'm employed by District Council 33. I work with them in the capacity of helping them to do civil service work which involves classifications and exam announcements, et cetera.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Proceed with your testimony.

MR. FERRIS: First of all, I'm here today to represent District Council. There's a few of the executive board and a few of the

local members that are here. We probably would have had more today, but, unfortunately, it was a short period of time. Otherwise, I guess you're happy; we would have crowded Council.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: This Council Chamber belongs to the people of Philadelphia. They're welcome any time. It doesn't matter if one comes or 10,000.

MR. FERRIS: I want you to know that District Council 33 is certainly in support of this resolution that Council has adopted. We have been opposed to this regulation from the start. We appeared at the Civil Service Council meeting and we had it pulled from the agenda, and we are now in the process of debating the issue.

It was one of the few items that went toward approval in such a fast period of time. I've been with the City and with Council now for about 30 years, and in my 30-year period of time, I don't think I've seen anything pushed through the Civil Service Commission, the Administrative Board, faster

than this issue was. I don't know what the hurry was to get this $35 fee through.

We feel it's an exorbitant fee. It affects too many people in the City of Philadelphia. It affects those who don't get a waiver. There are a number of people who don't get any kind of assistance who are left out of this. They're not included in the waiver, from the way I've read it. Therefore, that's another area to look at.

What happens to the person who is unemployed, who doesn't have a job, has no means of income? He's going to come to you for $35 to apply for a job with no guarantee that he or she is going to get a job. There's no guarantee. Once you apply, that $35 is gone. It's a non-refundable fee. That's the way it reads. They don't want to refund the fee. They arbitrarily set a $35 figure.

This is the first time today that I've heard how they came about arriving at that $35 fee. We were not informed of that at the Civil Service Commission hearing when we originally opposed it. We feel that it's a

very important public relations issue. It's going to enrage a large number of your constituents, as you well may know.

We just feel that it's entirely too high. The fee was set. There is no fee listed in the civil service regulation, which means that the Personnel Director may change that fee at any given time. It just says the Personnel Director will set a fee. And we feel that fee is certainly, certainly much too high. It affects a lot of people, even employees of District Council 33 who apply for jobs.

One of our concerns is why should somebody who lives in the City of Philadelphia, may work in the City of Philadelphia, pays taxes here, somebody in their family is paying taxes, when they want to apply for a job, $35, or you can't fill out an application. We're totally opposed to that and we just want to go on record as being opposed to it and in support of Council's position.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you, Mr.

Ferris.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you.

We totally agree with you. We are still questioning and have asked for details about what $35 pays for. We agree that we have no assurances. We don't know whether it will be $50 or $60 or $100 next week.

We also think it is absolutely unfair. When the rumor mill had it out last spring during the budget process, we complained. And we realized we're the legislative branch, but we totally agree it's unfair when people who pay the freight, pay our salaries, have to be told that all of a sudden, with no explanation, they have to pay a $35 fee just to apply for a job. Forget about getting it. No assurances. There's a whole other process just to apply for a civil services job.

We certainly want to thank you and thank the Chair for inviting you and to let

you know that we are in total agreement with you. We find it unconscionable. We think it's immoral. We think it's wrong that the taxpayers are set upon and are punished for being residents of our City who want to apply for jobs.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you.

Councilman Cohen.

COUNCILMAN COHEN: I want to make clear my opposition to any fee. I don't trust the people who set the $35 fee. They may lower it to $25 and that would be objectionable. If a fee should be paid, it should be paid by the City to the applicant.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN COHEN: Not the reverse.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Well said, Councilman Cohen.

MR. DAVIS: I'm here as a dual role. I'm a taxpayer in the City of Philadelphia. I'm also an officer and I'm also one of the witnesses scheduled for today, but in unity of being here, Frank and I have been working here, so --

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Please state your name.

MR. DAVIS: Bobby Davis, President of Local 696.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Proceed, Mr. Davis.

MR. DAVIS: Thank you.

The first thing I would like to do is just commend Councilwoman Blackwell, Councilman Cohen, Councilman Ramos and Councilman Mariano for initiating this resolution. I hope this resolution will find a way to overturn a wrong in the policy of City government that violates the structure of the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter.

The preamble of the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter, which serves to explain the purpose, states, "Grateful in God for the freedom we enjoy, and in the desire of establishing a form of improving municipal self-government in which all qualifying citizens may participate equally."

This is certainly a violation of that clause of the Home Rule Charter.

Let me just break it down a little bit for you. When we talk about grateful in God for the freedom, the freedom from who? The freedom of people to be employed by the City of Philadelphia. The freedom to better the lifestyle of people that live here in the City of Philadelphia. The freedom to move up in economic ranks. The freedom to do better for their family. When you start creating a system like this, you take away that freedom from certain individuals.

It goes on to say, in the desirous -- I just want to change that word and add a synonym to it. When people get involved -- in this case we're talking about jobs. We're talking about people that are longing for a job. We are talking about people who are wishing for a job. We are talking about people who are hoping for a job. We are talking about people who are eager to have a job. We're talking about people who want a job. All of that falls into that category that starts out with the Charter.

The people that put that Charter

together put it there for a reason, to protect the citizens of Philadelphia from things like this occurring to them.

It goes on. If you go into Section 3-804 in the Philadelphia Home Rule Charter, and I quote, "Civil Service Commissioners shall be in sympathy, Philadelphia commissioners should be in sympathy with the application of married principles to public employment."

If you look at the annotation of it, it further adds, "and that in the exercise of their power and fulfillment of their duties, they be independent of partisan politics." Partisan politics. And that's what we're hearing here.

If we are at civil service and we're not being allowed to speak on behalf of our members, the taxpayers of the City of Philadelphia, we were told this was something that was going to go through despite what we thought. Now, as a taxpayer, we should have been allowed just to speak. It doesn't matter whether we're union officers or anything like

that. We should have been allowed to speak as taxpayers, because our jobs are going to be affected. A lot of us are going to be taking some of these open competitive positions and we're going to be taxed on it.

The people that put this in place, I asked them did they pay $35 for the jobs that they have to work for this City. No. So why should anybody who comes after them have to pay $35? That's what the Charter is all about, to protect those people.

On May 14th, at the City Council budget hearing, City personnel spoke of these changes. At that time, Councilman Rizzo said that this was ridiculous. It still is. It still is. We talk about the waivers. There are so many holes in that waiver, that people that have been unemployed for a long period of time and exhausted all of their unemployment compensation, what do they do? There's no provision for that. People who have extended the allotted time to be on DPA, what do they do? There's no provision for that. We have people in the City of Philadelphia that have

never been unemployed because they're coming right out of high school. They may not have been working, so they have nothing to show. So when they come and they look at this form, this form turns them away right away. So there's no way that the personnel can identify with those people that call it smooth. There's a problem with that waiver system. I agree with Councilman Cohen. I think there should be no $35 charge to anyone.

And then they also talk about the fact that nothing has changed. Well, the reason why a lot of people haven't filed any application is because there's been a job freeze on the City for I-don't-know-how-many years. So, therefore, no one is coming to file an application because everybody understands that there's been a job freeze. So you're not getting the same amount of people coming through in order for you to be able to make some barometer as to whether this thing is successful or not.

The other thing is -- and this might be the most important part for me -- if you're

telling me as a taxpayer of the City of Philadelphia that all of the income that we provide as taxpayers goes towards the applicant to fill out and to process, then certainly I should not be in a category where some of us are paying $35 and some of us aren't paying $35.

Just like the Councilman said, that puts all of us in a situation where we're looking at different people, as to this person didn't pay $35 and got a job. I paid $35 and I didn't get the job. That's a problem. Someone's working that didn't pay the fee. I put the fee in and I can't get the employment. I've been working for the City for X amount of years. I'm a Clerk 1 or I may be someone that's making less money. How do I identify? According to the list that they have out now, I may be qualified for all five of those positions. I may be on minimum wage. How do I get the $175 to pay for all five of those jobs? So you're actually asking me to play some sort of roulette game and identify which one of those positions that I may be able to

pay my $35 for.

The way it used to be is I can apply for all five of those positions with no fee. Now you're making me choose because I don't have $175 to pay for all of the jobs that's on that list.

In closing, I just want to thank the panel, the Committee, for the opportunity to express my concerns about the change of the Philadelphia Charter rule, because I believe that's exactly what's occurring here. This is a back-door attempt for them to change the rules of the Charter, and I think it's unfair and I hope we do the right thing here.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you, Mr. Davis. By the way, thank you for your support last year. I appreciate it and won't forget it.

You are very articulate, as well as Mr. Ferris, on where you stand on this issue. I'm glad that you're well versed in our City Charter. It's not an easy document to read or interpret. You gave me a nice little lesson

in that part of the Charter that I go to a lot. And I have to go look for someone to go and interpret some of that stuff for me. Thank you for being so due diligent in taking a look at our Charter.

I think that you will find that this Committee is very much sympathetic to your points. I understand that the City is trying to find ways to make revenues. I think this is just one of the many ways that the Administration has found to make a little bit of additional monies for this City. I think most of my colleagues, if not all my colleagues, on this Council during budget hearings were opposed to these fees on people that are soliciting or looking for work in this City.

At this time, I want to recognize my colleague, Councilwoman Blackwell.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you very much. We agree, too, it is obviously discriminatory to permit a person to apply for one job and not others. There's so many ways this is unfair.

It seems to me, since it's been around since last spring, one would have thought it would have been better thought out and organized and presented, so that if there could be any support -- not that I see any among my colleagues. I agree with the Chair that I don't believe there's any support from our ranks for this legislation. But perhaps there could be something around which we could have a legitimate discussion and conversation. But we don't see that at all.

Again, we thank you for your commitment to the citizens of our City and to us.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Any other questions from the Committee?

Mr. Ferris, do you have something else to add?

MR. FERRIS: Could I make another comment, please?

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Please.

MR. FERRIS: I just want to reiterate one thing that may have been left out, that stressed on briefly the laborers. I

think Councilwoman Blackwell mentioned the laborers.

When the laborers are going to be hired by the City, it's labor lottery. A labor lottery initiates maybe 5,000, 10,000 different applications. How do you distinguish from a labor lottery, which is one piece of paper people fill out? They line up. They go to all these recreation centers, libraries, to pick up applications. That's a big process. Thirty-five dollars for all of those is quite a lot of money if that is going to come to fruition. What do you do with those people? How do you identify who is qualified and who is not qualified when they're talking about cutting down on workload, cutting down so they can do this more efficiently and run more smoothly? I just wanted to make that point, that laborer is a big problem when it comes to that. They do have to hire laborers. That's what I wanted to add. That's all.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Mr. Ferris, Madam Orfanelli is still here, the Personnel

Director.

Madam Orfanelli, do you have an answer to his question about the situation with the laborer's application?

MS. ORFANELLI: The laborer exam is not going to be held until next year. We have such a large list that we don't exhaust it. It's two years, every other year. It's something that we actually starting talking about, whether we should reduce the actual fee for the laborer because more low income people apply for it. We also expect that there will be a lot more people who will get waivers for that particular test.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I don't understand the difference. You said there are waivers for some positions. Are there waivers because of the lottery situation?

MS. ORFANELLI: I'm talking about waivers because of income, income waivers, because laborer doesn't require a lot of skills or education, and we have huge numbers of people who apply for it. Many of the people are low income people, very many, so

there will probably be a lot of low income waivers for that exam. But we're considering reducing the actual fee for that particular exam.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Again, Mr. Chairman, it all seems so arbitrary. It's so unfair. Perhaps if we could get a list of every job available and mention specific instances, we can get waivers for everything.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you, Mr. Ferris and Mr. Bobby Davis.

Thank you, Lynda Orfanelli, Director of Personnel for the City of Philadelphia.

Can you please call the next witness?

THE CLERK: Marietta Green-Russell (ph)

MS. RUSSELL: Good afternoon.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Can you please state your full name and your occupation for the record?

MS. RUSSELL: Marietta Green-Russell. I'm a clerk.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Proceed with your testimony, please.

MS. RUSSELL: I'm here basically to speak for the unemployed, the low income and the mother that Councilwoman Blackwell spoke about who told her child to get out there and get a job.

It upsets me tremendously that a $35 fee is applied to anyone in the City of Philadelphia. We must live here to even work for them, and on top of that, pay them to get a job. To be tied down in this City because of that -- just to have a job, be tied down, pay you to make you stay here, and then if I don't have any income at all, I'm not even considered. I have to borrow the money from a parent, a friend or someone just to put in an application. Not even to get a job, just to put in the application.

Now, I just heard Ms. Orfanelli state about the laborer position, and maybe those who have lower education or less income would apply for the job. I looked on the Web site and the Clerk 1 is open right now. As a

matter of fact, there's more jobs opened on that Web site now than there has been in quite a very long time. And there are now open competitive positions. I do believe it's about the money.

To be a Clerk 1, all you need is a high school education. That's no skill. That's all you need. But yet we're going to have to pay $35 just to put in the application. I'm not sure what the reason is. I'm not even understanding, which is why I don't agree, because it hasn't been brought out probably why $35 is required. But it seems to me that if you need more personnel to process those applications, then you should get more personnel. You should not charge the person who doesn't have the job or may not even get the job the money to process an application. If it costs $39, it's not $39 per person. It's broken up through civil service employees who are already getting paid. If you need more employees to process them, then do that. Don't charge the City of Philadelphia residents.

I find it to be completely unfair and totally unnecessary. Thirty-five dollars?

So for some reason in the last three weeks, three positions have opened up for my son who has nothing but a high school education. Semi-skilled worker, I always thought that was if you came in as laborer it was promotional only. Now it's on the open competitive. It has to be about the money.

I don't live in Philadelphia because of the money; I live in Philadelphia because I love Philadelphia. But I cannot afford to stay here or even have my children, who I raised here, to stay here and get a job for the City, be proud of what you do, if you're going to charge any fee just to put an application.

I have not seen yet where the job specs says, we have three positions open. It just says, open competitive. It doesn't say how many positions are open. So you're going to get 1,000 people who have a high school education to put in for that application. It makes sense. It's the only thing you may get

living here. And competition comes through the knowledge of which circle you fill out, whether or not you get it correctly. That's fair. But to exclude me because I'm not on welfare, because I'm not on unemployment, social security, and because I don't have any money at all I can't even get in?

What is low income? Low income is not having enough to meet your bills. The gas company does that for us right now. I don't need the City of Philadelphia to say my income is not low enough that I have to give you $35. It's totally unfair. It is not about the people. It's about possibly politics, which I don't understand completely. It may be about the system, but it's not about the residents of Philadelphia.

This is the first time I've actually been here for a good cause, I must say. Since I've been here listening to this conversation, it seems to me that somebody sat at a party, possibly drinking some wine, that said all of a sudden, "New York is doing it, New Jersey is doing it; how about we take this to

Philadelphia and not consider not one person who lives here?" What kind of decision-making is that?

It seems so confusing even on the part of personnel, as if it has not been even thought about. Then you should not be charging right now.

There's an exam that's closing on Friday. We're having this today. That money must be in in order for some people to be considered. And again, I'll say my son included. He's a bum. He's a bum. This is one way for me to get him to recognize that he can be gainfully employed. But that means I have to pay his way. I don't want to pay his way. That's the point of me telling him to go get a job. Why do you have to pay to put in an application? He is not the smartest nail in the box. He does not interview well, but he can take a test. But what about those who cannot?

I am so angry.

I do not remember all that I wanted to say, but I want to get this point across

here. Ya'll wrong. You are so wrong.

(Applause.)

MS. RUSSELL: Whatever works in another city or state is fine. Find out what works in Philadelphia, for Philadelphia, for Philadelphia's residents, for people who want to come live in Philadelphia.

You always see that, "Come to Philly." Philly is not great anymore. Why should the City of Philadelphia make it worse for us? We've got enough problems. We've got enough. If you want more people to take $39 worth of processing fees, then ask whoever, City Council, whoever, to get you more employees to do that. Don't take my money out of my pocket and act like the person that's actually doing the processing is getting a raise because of what they're doing now. That's not true. It's not like they're going to get more money because we're giving them $35. It doesn't make sense. Don't pay, then you don't get a job with the City of Philadelphia.

At this point, that sounds like a

really good idea because you're hurting us. If you're going to hurt us, why would we want to work for you in the first place? Truly, it's supposed to be about uplifting your City and the City residents. That's not happening with this fee. I don't care if it's $3.00 or a dollar. It's wrong, and I don't want to pay it. My family doesn't want to pay it. People in my neighborhood don't want to pay it. Even City workers who have money don't want to pay it.

(Applause.)

MS. RUSSELL: If you want to weed out those who are serious about taking a City exam, then I must say one of the major reasons that I found with people I've spoken with who did not show up for the City exam is because you take so long telling us when the test is that we have sat out there and made plans for our lives. And the day that we're going to Wildwood or Atlantic City or wherever is the day of the test. And you have to be there. You can't always show up. But for those who don't show up, if you want to reprimand them

in some way, if you want it to come out of their pockets, fine. Let it come out of their pocket. Let there be a fee for not showing up, although I think that's kind of stupid too, but it's better than charging everyone. Reprimand those who are not showing up, not those that do.

And me paying you $35 doesn't mean I'm going to show up if I have something more important to do, and no one can determine that. So it's not a guarantee at all. I think it's ridiculous. I think it should be looked at. I hope to all heavens that it is really looked at, that all the questions that were put here are answered properly, that the public has the opportunity to hear those answers before a decision is made. And for whatever reason that you started, it would be so nice if you stopped taking our money right now until you get your affairs in order.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you, Miss, for your testimony. For being here for the first time, you did very, very well. You

expressed yourself very well, and we got your message. We sure hope that the Administration -- and they're listening because they're here -- that they also heard you loud and clear.

Any questions for the witness?

(No response.)

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Not hearing any.

COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank you for coming down to speak out and speak up for others.

MS. RUSSELL: Thank you.

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you so much.

(Applause.)

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: We have no other scheduled witnesses.

Is there anyone here that wants to testify on this resolution?

(No response.)

COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Not hearing any, I thank you, all those that testified.

There has been some requests made to the Personnel Director. Please, as expeditiously as possible, get that

information to me so I can share it with my colleagues on this Committee.

This hearing is recessed to the call of the Chair. Thank you all for being here, and also my Committee Members.

(Council adjourned at 12:42 p.m.)

- - - -

C E R T I F I C A T I O N

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing proceedings of the Council of the City of Philadelphia of Wednesday, October 20, 2004, were reported fully and accurately by me, and that this is a correct transcript of the same.

RE: COMMITTEE ON LABOR AND CIVIL SERVICE

_____

Lisa C. Bradley, RPR