

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, April 21, 2015
10:25 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILMAN DENNIS O'BRIEN
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH
COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA
COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN B. TASCO

BILLS 150162, 150163, and 150164
RESOLUTION 150179

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1
2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
3 morning. This is the public hearing of
4 the Committee of the Whole regarding
5 Bills No. 150162, 150163, 150164, and
6 Resolution No. 150179.

7 Ms. Lewis, please read the
8 titles of the bills and resolution.

9 MS. LEWIS: Bill No. 150162, an
10 ordinance to adopt a Capital Program for
11 the six Fiscal Years 2016 through 2021
12 inclusive.

13 Bill No. 150163, an ordinance
14 to adopt a Fiscal 2016 Capital Budget.

15 Bill No. 150164, an ordinance
16 adopting the Operating Budget for Fiscal
17 Year 2016.

18 Resolution No. 150179,
19 providing for the approval by the Council
20 of the City of Philadelphia of a Revised
21 Five Year Financial Plan for the City of
22 Philadelphia covering Fiscal Years 2016
23 through 2020, and incorporating proposed
24 changes with respect to Fiscal Year 2015,
25 which is to be submitted by the Mayor to

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental
3 Cooperation Authority (the "Authority")
4 pursuant to the Intergovernmental
5 Cooperation Agreement authorized by an
6 ordinance of this Council approved by the
7 Mayor on January 3rd, 1992 (Bill No.
8 1563-A), by and between the City and the
9 Authority.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

11 Thank you, Ms. Lewis.

12 Today we continue the public
13 hearing of the Committee of the Whole to
14 consider various bills read by the Clerk
15 that constitute proposed operating and
16 capital spending measures for Fiscal
17 2016, a Capital Program and a
18 forward-looking Capital Plan for Fiscal
19 2016 through Fiscal 2021.

20 Today we will hear testimony
21 from the City Controller's Office and the
22 Streets Department, and later in the day
23 we will have public testimony.

24 Good morning, sir.

25 MR. BUTKOVITZ: Good morning,

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 President Clarke, members of Council.
3 I'm Controller Alan Butkovitz. I'm here
4 to testify on the 2016 Operating Budget.
5 I'm joined here today by First Deputy
6 City Controller Bill Rubin, our
7 Post-Audit Deputy Gerry Micciulla, and
8 Pre-Audit Deputy John Thomas, as well as
9 our Administrative Services Director,
10 Andrea Rose.

11 The Mayor's proposed Fiscal
12 Year 2016 Operating Budget for the
13 Controller's Office includes a General
14 Fund appropriation of \$8,295,335. I
15 would like again to thank all of our
16 employees who continue to provide quality
17 service to the citizens of the City.
18 They are to be commended and
19 congratulated.

20 This year our Post-Audit Unit
21 audited all 42 City departments included
22 in our Annual Auditor's Report and did so
23 for both Fiscal Years 2013 and 2014. In
24 addition, they completed seven
25 performance or special audits, including

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 Licenses and Inspections Performance
3 Audit of Demolition Practices, a review
4 of the City's overtime costs, and the
5 review of Recreation Advisory Councils'
6 bank accounts. All of these audits have
7 been sent to you and can also be found on
8 our website.

9 With our mission to provide a
10 more efficient and effective government,
11 it is with great pleasure to announce
12 that we will begin training this week on
13 the new electronic work paper system that
14 will reduce paper consumption and
15 printing resources and accelerate the
16 process used to conduct our audits by
17 eliminating the need to manually enter
18 many of the required fields.

19 Our ongoing development of
20 quality professional auditors within the
21 Post-Audit Unit has been extremely
22 valuable, and I would like to thank Gerry
23 Micciulla for his outstanding work in
24 encouraging and inspiring our Post-Audit
25 staff. We now have 42 percent of our

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2 audit staff with CPA certification, which
3 I think is a record to the office. We
4 have partnered with the Becker Group to
5 help those who have not received their
6 CPA and we will defray the cost in return
7 for retention of the employees upon
8 completion.

9 I'd like to acknowledge the
10 Post-Audit staff for recently being
11 honored with a 2014 Knighton Award for
12 their work in the performance audit of
13 the City's demolition practices. This is
14 the second consecutive year that our
15 office has been recognized by the
16 Association of Local Government Auditors
17 as producing one of the best performance
18 audits in North America.

19 Our Pre-Audit Division provides
20 oversight of the City's payment and
21 purchasing processes. Pre-Audit
22 monitors, reviews, and approves or
23 disapproves all requisitions for payment
24 of City funds and responds to daily
25 requests for information regarding vendor

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2 payments. This division just last week
3 was able to reach an agreement after
4 extensive wrangling -- and, again, John
5 Thomas who has made it a personal mission
6 of his to really seek justice for the
7 taxpayer. We were able to get \$95,000
8 returned to the City by a vendor who
9 submitted invoices with incorrect charges
10 and has also agreed to discontinue
11 bidding on certain work.

12 Our Fraud Unit has worked on
13 many cases involving City departments.
14 One of particular note is the recreation
15 center case that has been given to the
16 District Attorney's Office for further
17 review.

18 Our Policy Department headed by
19 Dr. Jeffery Hornstein has developed
20 several reports, most notably our review
21 of the Convention and Visitors Bureau
22 where we analyzed the workings of the two
23 tourism agencies responsible for driving
24 traffic to the City.

25 We have partnered with many

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 departmental commissioners in an effort
3 to collectively resolve the tremendous
4 obstacles they faced, and I look forward
5 to continued cooperation in an effort to
6 streamline City services and reduce their
7 overall cost to the Philadelphia
8 taxpayer.

9 Finally, I'd like to mention
10 the youth mentor program which our office
11 implemented this year. Our staff
12 partnered with Operation Hope, a
13 non-profit that focuses on financial
14 empowerment, to provide financial
15 education to elementary and middle school
16 students. We also established a course
17 for high school students to provide
18 real-life experience by offering a unique
19 exposure to a professional office
20 environment.

21 I appreciate this opportunity
22 to come here and present our testimony,
23 and I look forward to working with you in
24 the coming year. I'd be happy to answer
25 any questions.

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Thank you very much, Mr. Butkovitz. I
4 have a couple of questions, not
5 necessarily in your testimony. Your role
6 as City Controller, can you tell me the
7 limitations that you have with respect to
8 the Charter as it relates to the School
9 District of the City of Philadelphia.

10 MR. BUTKOVITZ: Well, the
11 Charter only authorizes us to be the
12 auditor of the financial statements for
13 the School District, and that problem is
14 compounded by the School Takeover Act,
15 which doesn't even mention us. So, first
16 of all, we have -- there's always several
17 sources of authority for the Controller.
18 There's state law and then there's the
19 question to what extent it's been
20 superseded by the City Charter, and
21 generally the Charter governs. With
22 respect to the City government, we
23 specifically have the power to audit
24 whatever, in our judgment, we think will
25 be productive. We can do performance

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2 audits of Licenses and Inspections. We
3 can determine if the department says this
4 is what their mission is, are the tactics
5 that they're using actually going to
6 implement that mission. We're able to
7 find substantial savings. We're able to
8 look for potential corruption. We are
9 able to be a strong voice, and I think we
10 have a substantial record over nine years
11 in improving operations in the City.

12 On the School District, it's a
13 totally different situation. We can
14 sample whether certain items have been
15 placed in the appropriate column, and we
16 have at times had to use ingenuity to
17 look at things such as the condition of
18 buildings in the School District. There
19 was one year -- two years, in fact, where
20 we did snap inspections of school
21 buildings and were told by the
22 Superintendent at the time, I think it
23 was Tom Brady -- I think it was Paul
24 Vallas and then Tom Brady, and they both
25 said we had no right to be in the school

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2 buildings, and we had to make recourse at
3 that time saying that we simply would not
4 certify the list of assets certifying
5 that they in fact had boilers and heating
6 systems and cooling systems and whatever
7 else they said unless we could eyeball it
8 and, therefore, reluctantly they let us
9 in buildings and we found many more
10 extensive code violations.

11 So it has always been a
12 question of trying to stretch your
13 ingenuity with the School District, but
14 the fact that we do not have the same
15 kind of language that we have in the
16 Charter with respect to City departments
17 is a major handicap.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So
19 in the SRC legislation; i.e., State
20 Takeover, did they spell out in very
21 specific terms prohibition as it relates
22 to your ability to do audits or request
23 information?

24 MR. BUTKOVITZ: I don't have it
25 memorized, but I don't think we're even

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2 mentioned in the School Takeover
3 legislation. So I think that the intent
4 is that it's within the Auditor General's
5 scope. And I do remember when Senator
6 Fumo was still the Appropriations
7 Chairman, he very specifically told me
8 that he knew I didn't have the power to
9 check into School District contracts or
10 other School District operations, because
11 he wrote the law so that we wouldn't.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: You
13 know, I don't necessarily -- I mean,
14 Senator Fumo was quite a crafty person,
15 but I don't know if he necessarily should
16 be viewed as the origin of the Bible as
17 it relates to preemption and School
18 District matters. That whole SRC was
19 done relatively quickly.

20 MR. BUTKOVITZ: Well, we
21 studied the law after that conversation
22 and I couldn't -- believe me, we tried to
23 find something in there to fight him with
24 it, and I think the position that we
25 took -- I think it was Gerry Micciulla

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2 who gave us our position at that time,
3 which was that we had the power to follow
4 City money wherever it went and since --

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: That
6 was going to be my follow-up question.

7 MR. BUTKOVITZ: So since there
8 were some City appropriations to the
9 School District, we argued that we had
10 the authority to continue to follow that
11 money to the School District. But we
12 didn't find any language in the School
13 Takeover legislation that authorized us
14 to do that.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All
16 right. So understanding -- I'd better
17 not telegraph a particular strategy that
18 we may be embarking on.

19 So getting back to following
20 the money, so is it your belief that if
21 there is revenue targeted to schools
22 other than the traditional taxes that
23 were designated solely for schools, such
24 as the cigarette tax or the sales tax,
25 but other types of revenue that went to

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2 schools, would we have the ability to
3 follow that money?

4 MR. BUTKOVITZ: I'm trying to
5 think operationally how that would work.
6 We're constantly in an arm-wrestling
7 contest with the Nutter Administration
8 over many of the reviews we do with
9 departments. So, for example, in L&I
10 we've put out an extensive list for
11 subpoena requests for documentation. We
12 can't do that with the School District.
13 If we issued a subpoena to the School
14 District asking them for details of their
15 spending on the lunch program or how they
16 spend money on special education or all
17 of that, we would get a letter back
18 saying that we don't have the power to
19 request that information. Then we would
20 end up in a courtroom, and I think a
21 judge would say that we can't show them
22 the authority for this information
23 request.

24 So although we are able to
25 engage in the normal annual audit of the

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2 School District and to ask questions over
3 test categories, if it gets into a
4 position where it's going to be
5 litigation or a court fight, which we're
6 always thinking about that when we get
7 into these fights, I don't really have a
8 leg to stand on when I try to collect the
9 detailed information that would go into
10 that.

11 Gerry, do you have anything
12 that you would help us on this?

13 MR. MICCIULLA: No. I think --

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

15 State your name for the record.

16 MR. MICCIULLA: Gerry
17 Micciulla, Deputy City Controller.

18 I think the Controller has
19 pretty much hit it accurately. To the
20 extent -- our audit work primarily covers
21 the audit of the School District's
22 financial statements. If there are any
23 operational issues and -- for example,
24 when you're doing a financial audit, you
25 may very well see something that for

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2 purposes of the financial statements it's
3 presented correctly, but you may question
4 it as to did they use this money
5 efficiently, effectively, and as soon as
6 we start to cross that line, we question
7 how effective or how efficiently they
8 used the money, they start to give us a
9 hard time.

10 MR. BUTKOVITZ: If I may, I
11 mean, certainly it would be a help if the
12 state were to specifically amend the
13 Takeover law to give us audit authority.
14 We have consistently shown a very strong
15 interest in the operation of the School
16 District and, for example, we have done
17 several series of reviews of charter
18 school operations, charter school
19 financing. And, in fact, I think we were
20 at one time -- we had a draft of
21 legislation in Harrisburg that would have
22 authorized the Philadelphia Controller to
23 do the monitoring of charter schools,
24 which the School District office has only
25 had six employees dedicated to. We've

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2 had more resources dedicated to it.

3 So we have a strong commitment
4 and interest and we have -- for many
5 years we were critics of inefficiency and
6 poor financial management in the School
7 District. That would be a very welcomed
8 tool in enabling us to be -- I mean, the
9 School District has basically become a
10 full partner with the City government in
11 terms of budgeting now.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

13 Okay. Yeah. I would hope that with the
14 change in Administration, that we'd
15 have -- and maybe we will -- a much more
16 cooperative relationship with the SRC
17 change in leadership, not necessarily
18 referencing the individual but the fact
19 that the leadership was appointed by the
20 democratic Governor, a person that has
21 shown a willingness to be very
22 cooperative with the City of
23 Philadelphia. So I would hope that we
24 can be in a position, and I know we
25 probably should have some level of an

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2 ability to follow the money, so to speak,
3 since we on an annual basis are given the
4 opportunity to authorize a significantly
5 increasing amount of taxes without any
6 wherewithal to, quote/unquote, follow the
7 money.

8 So I hope that not only on your
9 side you have a much more cooperative
10 relationship, but on our side that we can
11 have a little more input in terms of how
12 that money is actually spent.

13 All right. Thank you.

14 MR. BUTKOVITZ: Thank you.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I'm
16 going to come back on a camera question,
17 but I'm going to recognize Councilman
18 Jones right now.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
20 Mr. Controller. How are you this fine
21 year?

22 MR. BUTKOVITZ: So far as of
23 April 22nd -- 21st, pretty well. First
24 third of the year is okay.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. I

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2 always mention that I enjoy reading your
3 synopses of audits and how you go through
4 them. It helps us in our budget
5 preparation. And I was wondering if
6 indeed -- we recently moved DHS to a CUA
7 system, and have you had an opportunity
8 to go through DHS and its system? Not in
9 a negative way, but just to assess if we
10 are moving in the right direction, if we
11 are meeting our financial objectives, if
12 we are meeting our obligations to the
13 young people. Have we done one for that
14 department in particular?

15 MR. RUBIN: Good morning,
16 Councilman. Bill Rubin, First Deputy
17 Controller.

18 I did speak with Stacey last
19 night. She did give me an idea of some
20 of the issues that you're looking at. We
21 prepared some things. We're going to
22 meet with her as soon as we're done and
23 go through that. Gerry does do a lot of
24 audits that are considered performance
25 audits. We can certainly put that in as

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2 something that we would look at in the
3 future, but it is part of our annual
4 audit that he put through.

5 They send over their own audits
6 that they have done. They have to prove
7 to our department that they've had those
8 audits done, and then it's part of a
9 checklist that Gerry goes through when he
10 does that departmental audit. So we are
11 looking at it, but we can look further
12 into it.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: We wanted to
14 make sure that that was on the record,
15 but we are not going into this in a sense
16 of to try to find a "gotcha" moment. The
17 question becomes this is such a sizable
18 investment, such a new direction for our
19 City, impacting such a vulnerable
20 community, that we want to make sure that
21 we're moving in the right pace. And
22 finally we have a year under this new
23 system, so that we have something to
24 measure both in the performance end but
25 also in the financial end and are the

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2 taxpayers saving money going into a
3 direction like this.

4 We've had an opportunity to go
5 out and personally visit some of the
6 CUAs, and they seem to be good people,
7 but I don't know what that means by way
8 of your analysis, what that means by way
9 of program delivery, and I would be, as
10 one Councilperson, interested in seeing
11 if the experiment, the great experiment
12 is moving in the right direction.

13 Thank you, Mr. President.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

15 Thank you.

16 Mr. Butkovitz, what's your
17 latest analysis on the City's video
18 surveillance systems and the condition?

19 MR. BUTKOVITZ: I think it's
20 several years old, but our conclusion at
21 the time was that I think we found that
22 about a third of the cameras were not
23 functional. And, in fact, as I recall,
24 that controversy occurred the weekend
25 before the collapse at 22nd and Market

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2 Street. So there was -- I mean, the
3 Mayor called us liars, said that we
4 hadn't actually evaluated it, and took
5 the media on a tour of the operation
6 center in which a lot of great video from
7 SEPTA's cameras were interspersed with
8 City cameras and really did not
9 address -- then they started arguing how
10 many cameras did we actually look at, and
11 then all of that was just swept away by
12 the huge disaster at 22nd and Market.

13 But we have not -- I think we
14 looked at it twice. We looked at the
15 video cameras twice. The findings the
16 second time validated the findings the
17 first time.

18 I think there have been news
19 reports about shootings and things
20 happening right under the location where
21 some of these cameras are supposedly
22 located. We were told that if there's a
23 blue light flashing, that the camera is
24 working. We found that that was not
25 true, as you recall. We found that there

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2 were holes in the cameras, that they
3 would get filled up with rainwater, that
4 they were blurry. In fact, in that same
5 week that I just referenced, the
6 Administration tried to show a video to
7 rebut our findings, and all you could see
8 was a police officer in a white shirt
9 with his hand out shooting at someone.
10 It was almost impossible at least on TV
11 to distinguish faces or anything else
12 that would have been really useful in an
13 operational sense. So I think that case
14 has been made.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

16 Okay. I asked that question -- a number
17 of members visited Camden yesterday to
18 look at the new ShotSpotter program, and
19 the reason that it's successful is
20 because the availability of cameras in
21 proximity to the microphone, which is
22 essentially the device that records
23 gunshots. And if in fact we move
24 aggressively towards implementing that
25 program, which I think the members that

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 were there yesterday would probably agree
3 that it's something that we need to look
4 at very seriously, it only works if you
5 have a significant number of cameras in
6 proximity to that location, because
7 there's actually realtime responses,
8 where the gunshot goes off, cameras
9 immediately pan towards that location,
10 and you have people watching the videos
11 so you can see the direction of the
12 potential perpetrator.

13 So if in fact you have an
14 opportunity to look at some possible
15 locations or get a sense of where we are
16 with our camera system, that would be
17 helpful currently, more up-to-date
18 information.

19 MR. BUTKOVITZ: And I think as
20 you've pointed out, Mr. President, one of
21 the problems was nobody is watching the
22 video in Philadelphia as it happens
23 anyway.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
25 Right.

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2 MR. BUTKOVITZ: I mean,
3 citizens were assured that we could
4 afford to have a lower level of police
5 manpower because you'd have the greater
6 efficiency of the technology, and really
7 the practice is to just look at the video
8 after an incident happens to see if you
9 could identify perpetrators rather than
10 to see whether there's a realtime
11 situation where you can deploy added
12 force and maybe save somebody's life.

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Point of
14 information, Mr. President, please.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
16 Okay, sir. You were actually next. I
17 was getting ready to --

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I defer to
19 you, Mr. President. I'll wait.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
21 Because you're next.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I'll wait,
23 sir.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: You
25 took my train of thought.

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2 Okay. If you can find that out
3 for us, because we want to look at that
4 in a very aggressive way, but it only
5 works if the cameras in fact work.

6 Thank you.

7 The Chair recognizes Councilman
8 Johnson.

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
10 Mr. President.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
12 You're welcome, sir.

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I wanted
14 to offer additional information regarding
15 your question regarding the cameras. In
16 the 2nd District, we do have a real
17 live -- we have the Police Realtime Crime
18 Center where -- I don't know how many
19 cameras are plugged into that system, but
20 it's 24/7, and we possibly could take a
21 tour. They're talking about expanding
22 its operation right now, because right
23 now we can look at Broad and Allegheny
24 and see what's going on prior to an
25 incident taking place from the Realtime

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2 Call Center. And so in some capacity as
3 we look at expanding it, I would think
4 that the camera technology would be used
5 to be proactive as well, because from
6 that particular Realtime Call Center, you
7 have a representative from Delaware
8 County Police, New Jersey State Police,
9 ATF, Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, DEA
10 all housed in one -- FBI -- one crime
11 center. And so I'm quite sure if they
12 are monitoring the various locations and
13 you would see something about to happen,
14 they can immediately call the 22nd Police
15 District or the 17th and say, Hey,
16 listen, someone is lurking around
17 somebody's car or we see somebody like
18 doing something suspicious in their
19 pocket, get the cops out there
20 immediately.

21 So I would like to take you on
22 a tour, or anyone else who would like to
23 see it, to see how the cameras can also
24 work in conjunction with the initiative
25 that you went to take a look at yesterday

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2 regarding spot shooting.

3 MR. BUTKOVITZ: I'll be happy
4 to take you up on that. That's really
5 encouraging.

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: When you
7 see this facility, though, it's like
8 awesome. Like if a bomb dropped, this is
9 probably where you want to be at, because
10 it's like got everything going on in
11 one -- and the Chairman of Public Safety,
12 he went down there with me as well with a
13 couple other Councilmembers. And it's
14 probably a jewel that we have. It's
15 probably a quiet secret here in the City
16 of Philadelphia, but it's definitely
17 state of the art.

18 MR. BUTKOVITZ: Well, it's not
19 a secret anymore.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: No.

21 MR. BUTKOVITZ: But I commend
22 you. That's really encouraging to hear
23 something that positive going on.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I had a
25 question, and I always nod to the Mayor

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2 for like -- because that's primarily one
3 of his pet projects that he kind of
4 focused on from a public safety crime
5 aspect, but I'm glad it's in the 2nd
6 District.

7 My question, you came up with a
8 very interesting report and study on the
9 Department of Recreation Advisory
10 Councils and how they operate, finances,
11 and how they go about doing their
12 day-to-day business overseeing our
13 various recreation centers and parks
14 throughout the City. So can you just
15 elaborate on what actually your findings
16 of that report, your recommendations in
17 terms of how you think we need to move
18 forward on the City side to kind of rein
19 in the Advisory Councils that operate
20 throughout the City.

21 MR. BUTKOVITZ: Well, we really
22 focused on two recreation centers. At
23 Fox Chase there were major problems in
24 that the treasurer had carte blanche over
25 the checkbook. She was the only signer

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2 on checks. She signed checks payable to
3 herself, and she had the bank statements
4 and cancelled checks mailed directly to
5 her home. And she also refused to grant
6 access to data on her computer. I think
7 she had the computer at home as well.

8 In addition, the Fox Chase
9 Advisory Council paid about \$31,000 to
10 four Advisory Council officers and to
11 four recreation center employees, a
12 practice which the recreation manual
13 expressly prohibits. Now, there was some
14 debate about that because the Advisory
15 Council said that they got recreation
16 employees to work on weekends and
17 overtime, but the policy of the Charter
18 and City law has been pretty consistent.
19 You work for the City, you work for the
20 City. You have one master, you get one
21 paycheck, and these kinds of side deals
22 are prohibited.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: You say
24 one master?

25 MR. BUTKOVITZ: It sure sounded

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2 like that, but that had to have been an
3 error.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I thought
5 you said one boss or one employer.

6 MR. BUTKOVITZ: That's probably
7 better.

8 At Vogt, there were blank
9 checks that were being pre-signed by
10 Advisory Council officers. In that case,
11 they would only get one signature instead
12 of two, and there was no supporting
13 documentation, no invoices, contracts,
14 vouchers, et cetera.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: What's
16 your recommendations in terms of how we
17 clean up, how we can actually address
18 these issues? Because I think the
19 Advisory Councils are in some aspects
20 totally separate from the Department of
21 Recreation. So I can't just immediately
22 introduce a bill and say, here's how all
23 of the Advisory Councils shall operate
24 here in the City of Philadelphia, because
25 somehow there's a separation between the

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2 two. So how would we --

3 MR. BUTKOVITZ: Yeah. There
4 was a debate about whether we could even
5 audit it for those purposes, and the
6 answer is that the manual has, in effect,
7 served as the Bible for the Advisory
8 Councils. So the Advisory Councils are
9 able to function because they hold
10 themselves out to the world as having a
11 relationship with the Recreation
12 Department. So the Recreation Department
13 has a rule that says in order to
14 function -- in order to have this
15 relationship with us, you must comply
16 with the following requirements such as
17 having double signatures, such as making
18 your books open for audit, such as how
19 they're going to conduct an election for
20 members of the Advisory Council in the
21 neighborhood, who gets to participate,
22 how that all gets scheduled. I think
23 that that would be addressed -- I'm not
24 sure that you can do it by ordinance, but
25 I think that you could do it by

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2 regulation in the Recreation Department.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay. All
4 right. Thank you, Mr. Butkovitz.

5 MR. BUTKOVITZ: Thank you,
6 Councilman Johnson.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
8 Councilman?

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
10 sir.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: The
12 Chair recognizes Councilman Jones.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
14 Mr. President.

15 Just a quick couple of
16 questions. Last year you talked about
17 the 1,200 vacant properties that you took
18 a look at with L&I and the boarding up
19 and things like that. Has there been --
20 Clean and Seal. Thank you. Has there
21 been an update to that information? Have
22 we made progress? City Council and the
23 City has made a substantial investment
24 with new technology, new workforce, and
25 wanted to find out if we've made any

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2 headway with that.

3 MR. BUTKOVITZ: Well, as you
4 probably know, we're in a very extensive
5 review of Licenses and Inspections
6 practices that covers a number of
7 subjects, including delays and failures
8 to comply with time requirements on the
9 taking down of imminently dangerous
10 structures. So part of that is a review
11 of Clean and Seal buildings.

12 We have, as I indicated before,
13 served about three or four extensive
14 subpoenas. There's an awful lot of data
15 being reviewed and culled through. The
16 Law Department right now is going through
17 some of it to determine after -- I guess
18 it's been more than 30 days -- after 30
19 days what they can and can't give us. So
20 it's going to be a series of months
21 before we are able to issue a report on
22 that.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: We put \$3
24 million in a prior year and then I don't
25 know how much last year to try to shore

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 those inspections up. So it would be
3 interesting for us to evaluate a return
4 on investment. There was an article
5 today in the paper talking about those
6 changes being underway, and I just wanted
7 to know if your office had a chance to
8 quantify some of those gains. So I'll
9 wait on that.

10 The other question, following
11 up back with Councilman Johnson and then
12 Councilman Clarke, is, I would be
13 interested in looking at the cameras in a
14 different way, because in Baltimore I
15 think it was 25 percent reduction in
16 crime in the areas that the cameras were
17 in. I don't know if anyone has
18 quantified what they've actually meant to
19 crime prevention, crime reduction,
20 apprehension of criminals. There were a
21 couple of cases last year. One was the
22 abduction, the heinous abduction, of a
23 young lady in Germantown, and the only
24 way they found out was through a camera.
25 It wasn't a camera for the City, but it

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 was a camera technology. So obviously it
3 has a role to play in crime prevention
4 and apprehension. And then the other
5 thing is to look at other cities where
6 they do have live monitors, which is, I
7 think, if I may be so bold as to say, the
8 President's pet peeve, that they actually
9 have eyes on. Even though I would say
10 our apparatus down South Philly is every
11 bit as good or maybe better, the key
12 component is someone actually observing a
13 particular terrain. They call it virtual
14 patrolling, and then having particularly
15 a retired officer or someone who has desk
16 duty to be able to actually know that
17 terrain, know the perpetrators, know some
18 of the methods of operation to be able to
19 add to the boots on the ground and be
20 able with a handheld, be able to give
21 them realtime information. They could be
22 a block or two away and say that Suspect
23 A has just entered the area. Suspect B
24 has just approached him for a transaction
25 and we've seen the transaction. We've

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 memorialized it on tape, go in, and I'm
3 going to tell you what pocket he got it
4 in.

5 So, I mean, Baltimore and other
6 cities that use that particular eyes in
7 the sky and boots on the ground
8 partnership, I would be interested in us
9 measuring what that could mean as a force
10 multiplier, a reduction in actual crime
11 and, more importantly, preventing crimes.
12 I mean, I think that's where you get your
13 bonus points from, actually getting to a
14 situation before it actually occurs as
15 opposed to memorializing it after it
16 happens.

17 MR. BUTKOVITZ: Well, this
18 Council really has taken a heroic role in
19 both focusing on the technology issues
20 that you're referencing on crime
21 prevention and in finally putting in
22 substantial resources in L&I to do what
23 they were making pretend they were doing
24 before.

25 I would take this moment to

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 point out that one of the issues that we
3 had with the cameras was that the City
4 had absolutely no maintenance or response
5 plan. It takes up to five days for the
6 City to fix a camera. In Baltimore, they
7 have a strict 24 hour. If you're going
8 to put confidence, people are going to be
9 walking on the streets figuring that that
10 camera is providing security, the
11 criminals in the area have to not think
12 it's a joke. And very similar to the
13 requirement that L&I be serious about
14 tearing down a building that's going to
15 fall down in 24 hours within the stated
16 time, same thing should be done on
17 maintenance and repair of our video
18 cameras.

19 But you have staked out a
20 visionary path and you've found
21 real-world examples that are very nearby.
22 I mean, any time that Camden is able to
23 lead the way for Philadelphia, it's
24 somewhat embarrassing.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: It was

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 humbling. It wasn't embarrassing, but it
3 was humbling. So I applaud our President
4 for being visionary, not just now but you
5 and former Mayor Street embarked upon
6 this with an RFP to community-oriented
7 policing way back before it was popular.
8 So I want to put that on the record, that
9 it was your vision. I remember some of
10 the first beta testing cameras. And so
11 we've come a long way and I think we have
12 a bit further to go, but the upside
13 potential of this thing is extraordinary.
14 So stay on it.

15 MR. BUTKOVITZ: Thank you.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
17 Mr. President.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
19 Thank you, Councilman.

20 And just for the record, I
21 don't want, speaking from a personal
22 perspective, people to construe this
23 issue with respect to ShotSpotter or any
24 other new technology to be morphed into a
25 Council versus Administration or versus

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 Police. We are just simply, again,
3 prepared to have a true partnership,
4 because we are the appropriating entity
5 within the government to provide the
6 support for any new technology that
7 enhances our ability to deter crime.
8 There are parts in my district, and I'm
9 sure the members' here districts, where
10 there are literally a minimal of a
11 gunshot a night. Nobody gets hit, and
12 people unfortunately because of the
13 frequency of the gunshots, people just
14 kind of shrug it off, oh, well. And it
15 never gets reported. But we're talking
16 about a technology that can actually
17 report a gunshot, so we have a real sense
18 of how many people are actually shooting
19 and actually be in a position to let
20 people know that we have this detection
21 system, that if you shoot, I don't care
22 if you hit them or not, we're going to
23 find you and we're going to track you
24 down. So that's all we're trying to do.
25 And I just want to say that we are a true

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 partner with the Philadelphia Police,
3 because we love our Police and we want to
4 make sure that they have all the tools
5 necessary to be able to deter crime in
6 whatever capacity.

7 There are no other questions at
8 this time. Thank you very much,
9 Mr. Butkovitz.

10 MR. BUTKOVITZ: Thank you.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
12 Thank you.

13 Next up we will have the
14 Department of Streets.

15 (Witnesses approached witness
16 table.)

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
18 morning.

19 COMMISSIONER PERRI: Good
20 morning.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
22 Please proceed.

23 COMMISSIONER PERRI: Good
24 morning, Council President Clarke and
25 members of City Council. I am David

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 Perri, Commissioner of the Streets
3 Department. I am joined today by Deputy
4 Commissioners Donald Carlton, Michael
5 Carroll and Christopher Newman. We are
6 here to present testimony on behalf of
7 the Department's proposed Fiscal Year
8 2016 Operating Budget. We request a
9 General Fund appropriation of
10 \$125,406,720 and an all funds
11 appropriation of \$195,086,720. This
12 budget request allows the Department to
13 accomplish our mission of providing
14 clean, green, and safe streets.

15 Streets Department employees
16 have done a remarkable job accomplishing
17 the Department's mission this current
18 fiscal year despite the challenges posed
19 by a second consecutive severe winter and
20 a shortage of operable trash compactors.
21 Our Sanitation Division has collected
22 250,000 tons of curbside trash through
23 the first two quarters of this fiscal
24 year and has maintained the City's
25 curbside recycling rate and recycling

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 tonnage at historically high levels
3 despite significant changes in the
4 composition of the recycling stream.

5 In early April, the Sanitation
6 Division successfully completed the
7 Eighth Annual Philly Spring Cleanup,
8 which featured a record number of
9 participants and a record number of
10 projects. Sanitation Division Citywide
11 Cleaning Unit continues to provide
12 exceptional cleaning services for the
13 City's world-class outdoor public events
14 while also supporting local neighborhood
15 cleaning projects throughout the City.

16 Sanitation Division's unique
17 Philadelphia More Beautiful Committee
18 effectively supports a growing network of
19 impassioned block captains who have
20 increased in number to over 9,000
21 community leaders citywide.

22 In an effort to provide
23 neighborhoods with safe and convenient
24 access to legally dispose of excess
25 trash, yard waste, tires, furniture,

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 appliances, electronics, and recycling,
3 the Sanitation Division has opened two
4 new convenience centers this fiscal year
5 where residents can easily dispose of
6 these materials and products.

7 Our Transportation Division
8 continues along multiple paths to improve
9 the City's complex transportation
10 network, with a primary goal of improving
11 safety and access for all users of the
12 public right-of-way. The Transportation
13 Division has implemented a Complete
14 Streets approach to projects with an
15 emphasis on upgrading transit corridors,
16 expanding the bicycle network, improving
17 pedestrian facilities, and effectively
18 managing the traffic flow.

19 With these objectives in mind,
20 we are on schedule to open the City's
21 first Traffic Operations Center this
22 September, which will provide the City
23 with a state-of-the-art traffic control
24 and management system. We also continue
25 to modernize City-owned street and alley

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 lighting systems with cleaner, brighter,
3 more energy-efficient LED technology.

4 In terms of maintaining the
5 City's roads, the Department has reached
6 an agreement this year with advocacy
7 groups to focus the reconstruction of
8 curb ramps, the street crossings that
9 have the highest need and highest
10 pedestrian counts. The resulting pilot
11 program will enable the Streets
12 Department to more effectively build out
13 the City's curb ramp network while
14 simultaneously more than doubling the
15 number of miles of local City streets
16 that will be conventionally repaved.

17 The Streets Department as a
18 whole and in partnership with other City
19 departments and agencies, including Parks
20 and Recreation, Water, CLIP, Fleet
21 Management, and the Philadelphia Parking
22 Authority, successfully provided snow and
23 ice removal services during a second
24 consecutive harsh and disruptive winter
25 season that featured 18 snow and ice

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 events. Over an extremely challenging
3 16-month period, Streets Department
4 employees responded to a record 37 winter
5 weather events and their aftermath while
6 continuing to deliver critical public
7 services to the citizens of Philadelphia.

8 We thank you for the
9 opportunity to testify before you today.
10 The deputies, staff, and I are happy to
11 answer any questions that you may have.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

13 Thank you, Commissioner. I just have a
14 couple of quick questions. And just real
15 quickly, Broad Street, North Broad
16 lights, Avenue of the Art, North Broad,
17 the lights along the median, where are we
18 at in terms of scheduling?

19 COMMISSIONER PERRI: We'll get
20 you the schedule for the completion of
21 that project. It is in construction and
22 has been in construction for a period of
23 time. Our staff will probably be able to
24 pass up to me the current completion
25 schedule.

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2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:

3 The main issue I think is that we're
4 working on figuring out the liability
5 issues associated with the lights. So
6 the contractor is currently on hold as
7 per the work progressing until we've
8 worked these issues out.

9 COURT STENOGRAPHER: I'm sorry.

10 Can you state your name.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:

12 I'm sorry. My name is Mike Carroll. I'm
13 the Deputy Commissioner for
14 Transportation in the Streets Department.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: You
16 say it's on hold. There's a logjam every
17 morning on Broad Street. On my way to
18 work I run into a logjam where they're
19 actually working. It looks like some
20 sort of trenching on the street on the
21 lights. So there's something going on.
22 You said it's on hold?

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:

24 The progress in getting the work done for
25 the lights put up and finishing their

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 job. There may be some work that we need
3 to do in order to fix the maintenance of
4 protection of traffic, and we can look
5 into that.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

7 Okay. So when you say "liability,"
8 bottom line is, we're concerned about
9 people running into the standards; is
10 that it?

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:

12 Yeah, and the configuration of the lights
13 is somewhat unusual. It's a project that
14 was developed and adopted by the Streets
15 Department. We're trying to figure out a
16 way that we can get those taken in by the
17 City and maintained by the City in a
18 manner that's consistent with our
19 standards.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

21 Okay. Mattresses, have we gotten a
22 handle on that? Mattresses. I know
23 there was a change to the collection
24 process because of the bedbug phenomenon,
25 and people were just dropping mattresses

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 everywhere because they didn't want to
3 get the bags or the coverage. My
4 understanding is that the Streets
5 Department adopted a policy that they
6 would not collect a mattress unless they
7 were encased in some sort of a plastic or
8 whatever that was. Can you tell me where
9 we are with that? Because I still see
10 them -- it doesn't seem like as many, but
11 I still see a lot of mattresses discarded
12 across the City.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARLTON:

14 Good morning. I'm Deputy Streets
15 Commissioner Donald Carlton in charge of
16 Sanitation.

17 Council President, yes.

18 Initially in 2013 when we introduced this
19 regulation, we did a two-month period
20 where we did warnings for residents who
21 did not comply, and in February we began
22 citing residents who didn't comply. But
23 from a division standpoint, we tried to
24 address it from numerous ways, because as
25 you said, initially it was an issue. We

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2 had people dumping them on lots. We had
3 individuals just dumping them anywhere
4 because there was no compliance, and to
5 avoid the citation, you just didn't want
6 it in front of your property. But what
7 we've done as a division, we've taken a
8 three-step approach where we are
9 identifying it, we have our managers then
10 inspecting it, and if it is infested, we
11 will have crews with -- they will don a
12 uniform, protective uniform, to collect
13 it, but if it's not infested, then we'll
14 have the normal crews collect it.

15 So we've definitely seen a
16 decrease in the amount of illegally
17 dumped mattress over the past year from
18 when we first started this regulation.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
20 What's causing the decrease?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARLTON:
22 Well, we're actually servicing them and
23 we're ensuring that --

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
25 People are still dumping. It's just that

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 you now have the ability to remove them.

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARLTON:

4 I'll be honest, Council President,
5 there's not even as many being dumped. I
6 believe initially individuals kind of
7 resisted as whenever there's a change,
8 but we're seeing a lot more individuals
9 have them in the bags and also they're
10 actually just wrapping them in plastic.
11 So we encourage our crews even if it's
12 not a bag that was bought from Walmart or
13 one of the other chain stores, if it's
14 wrapped, take it.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

16 Okay. More compliance.

17 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARLTON:

18 Yes.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Kind
20 of like the recycling. There was a lot
21 of resistance early on, and I must say I
22 was a little late in getting on board,
23 but I got a couple of warnings and I
24 said, you know what, I'd better comply.
25 My non-compliance will probably be in the

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 newspaper.

3 Real quick. I see that
4 fortunately we're getting a significant
5 amount of revenue as a result of the
6 state authorized gas tax for street
7 paving. Are we using any more creative
8 measures or are we just going to use the
9 continued method of street repaving in
10 terms of materials? And I ask that
11 because I know at one point in time there
12 was this discussion about tires,
13 recycling tires for street paving. And
14 so I guess it's a two-part question.
15 One, are we looking at more creative ways
16 of repaving since we have additional
17 dollars and, two, did that technology
18 actually pan out with respect to
19 recycling of tires? Because we're
20 actually now starting to see an onset of
21 tire dumping again, and I found out we
22 were trying to do something with that,
23 but we found out that that's state
24 regulated in terms of disposition of used
25 tires.

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2 COMMISSIONER PERRI: There's an
3 answer to a couple of your questions in
4 there. The new state gas tax money, we
5 are projecting that out several years to
6 be able to be used for conventional
7 repaving in Philadelphia. That's the
8 most effective way of providing the City
9 with a safe and durable roadway network.
10 We are considering and have met with a
11 supplier to pilot a program using
12 recycled rubber for asphalt, but the use
13 of that product is still in its infancy
14 in northern states in the United States.
15 It is in use in some warmer climates, but
16 it is not in widespread use as of yet in
17 colder weather areas such as
18 Philadelphia.

19 So as the gas tax money that we
20 are projecting increases over the next
21 several years, we would like that
22 exclusively to increase the number of
23 miles of street repaving that we can do.

24 We have tried various alternate
25 repaving methods, including thin overlays

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 and other methods, and we found that they
3 really do not hold up as well as expected
4 and that there's really no good
5 substitute at this point for using
6 conventional paving as the proper way to
7 restore and maintain City streets.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

9 Okay. Thank you.

10 And, lastly, I'd just like to
11 thank you. I don't know if this happened
12 as a result of the conversation we had a
13 couple of budget cycles ago about the
14 placement of the ramps, handicap ramps.
15 I was talking about in other states they
16 were actually targeting locations that
17 had healthcare facilities. That was the
18 primary focus of the installation of
19 those ramps because of the need, and you
20 talked about using pedestrian counts as
21 it relates to accessible ramps. Thank
22 you for adopting that program.
23 Personally, I have a couple of people in
24 my family that have challenges with
25 respect to dealing with those ramps, and

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 a couple years ago trying to navigate the
3 streets in the City of Philadelphia was
4 somewhat challenging. So thank you for
5 moving towards that process.

6 COMMISSIONER PERRI: You're
7 welcome. It's a far more effective and
8 efficient way to build out the curb
9 network, is to identify locations with
10 high pedestrian counts and locations
11 where there is a definitive need. We'd
12 rather do it that way than just hook up
13 doing ramp installation just because we
14 happen to be paving a random street.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
16 Yeah. Actually, I saw that. There was
17 paving of the street that had two houses
18 on it and they actually put ramps on it
19 as a result of that old program. It
20 didn't make a lot of sense, but thank
21 you.

22 The Chair recognizes Councilman
23 Johnson.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
25 Council President.

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2 First and foremost, I just want
3 to publicly acknowledge the work of the
4 Streets Department, starting off with the
5 leadership at the top, which is the
6 Commissioner, and his surrounding
7 supporting cast and team, and special
8 mention to Donald Carlton, only for the
9 simple fact that every time my office
10 calls the Streets Department regarding
11 issues and concerns in the 2nd
12 Councilmanic District, you're always
13 responsive. You're always professional.
14 We have a very huge city and there's a
15 lot of issues that need to be addressed
16 under the Streets Department, but I do
17 thank you for your response and working
18 with us and addressing those day-to-day
19 issues. And the reason why I left the
20 State House to come to City Council to
21 serve as a Councilman in the City of
22 Philadelphia, the City in which I love,
23 is because City Hall is where, and City
24 Council, where the rubber meets the road.
25 So rather it's dealing with potholes,

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 rather it's helping Packer Park get snow
3 removal or sending the cleaning truck
4 down Point Breeze Avenue or working on
5 the alleyways, you have always been
6 supportive of our efforts. I mean, I
7 text Donald like 11:30 at night, saying a
8 lot of issues constituents calling me
9 for.

10 So for the whole team, first
11 and foremost, I just want to say thank
12 you for your service to the City. That's
13 first. And the taxpayers should be
14 proud, because at least in the 2nd
15 District y'all are working.

16 I just want an update on a
17 couple things. One, Philadelphia Futures
18 program, I just love this program. Could
19 you all give us an update, an idea of the
20 status of the program, how many young men
21 are participating, what are we going to
22 do to keep this program moving forward
23 regardless of whoever is in the next
24 Administration. It's an outstanding
25 program that takes young men off the

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 corner, gets them involved in something
3 that's positive, and I think it's one of
4 those little quiet programs that's often
5 talked about that the Mayor implements
6 specifically as a way to address the
7 issue of youth violence by putting young
8 men to work.

9 COMMISSIONER PERRI: Yeah. We
10 love the Future Track program. As you
11 know, it speaks to the thematic goal of
12 closing the income gap. It provides 18-
13 to 24-year-olds with life skills and job
14 training opportunities and real-life job
15 skills, and it also provides the
16 community with much-needed services.

17 One hundred and ninety-eight
18 individuals have completed the program
19 since 2013. Eighty are currently working
20 in the program. This year we provided an
21 enhancement to that program in which we
22 allocated five of the spots for
23 individuals that had learning -- that
24 were in the autistic community so that we
25 can give those folks an opportunity to

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 get real-life job skills and experience.
3 We followed that Future Track
4 program last year with a program we
5 called Survey to Future, and it didn't
6 get too much publicity, but I'm very
7 proud of that program. Our Survey Bureau
8 Manager, Frank Morelli, put the program
9 together, and what he was able to do, we
10 tested five of the Future Track employees
11 and found those that had the highest math
12 skill levels. We then made arrangements
13 with HR to provide those five individuals
14 with temporary jobs with the City of
15 Philadelphia. So they were hired on as
16 trainees for a limited period of time,
17 and what Frank Morelli from our Survey
18 Bureau was able to do, he provided them
19 with intense training on higher level
20 math skills such as trigonometry and in
21 the skills you need to become a surveyor.
22 So after about six months, the
23 engineering aide examination came out,
24 and I'm very proud to say that the five
25 individuals that we trained came out 1,

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 2, 3, 5, and 6 on the engineering aide
3 examination, and they are now all
4 permanent City employees. So they went
5 from a temporary job program into a
6 temporary position with the City of
7 Philadelphia and now they have permanent
8 positions, civil service positions, with
9 an uphill potential that is unlimited.

10 So we're very proud of that
11 program. We think it's something that's
12 scalable and reproducible in other areas
13 of the City government. So Future Track
14 program has been nothing but a success
15 for us. We will be -- we are in the
16 middle of the current program and we'll
17 have another round of trainees coming up
18 afterwards.

19 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay. All
20 right. Just keep me abreast. Chairman
21 of Public Safety, Councilman Jones,
22 obviously you're aware of the program?

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: We over the
24 last couple of years have challenged each
25 department to do that kind of school to

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 work, school to a career as opposed to
3 school to prison. But I must say they
4 have stepped up in such a way that it is
5 a blueprint for other departments,
6 whether it's the Water Department to be
7 able to do that.

8 I mean, from time to time,
9 Councilpeople kind of pile on when you
10 don't do something right, but I'm very
11 glad that Councilman Johnson is
12 recognizing and highlighting something
13 that you're doing extraordinarily well.

14 COMMISSIONER PERRI: Thank you.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes. And
16 just wrapping up, what's special about
17 the program is that every night -- and
18 Councilman Jones, we call each other
19 because both of our districts probably
20 every other evening, we either get a
21 shooting or homicide.

22 So he's kind of hoping it's not
23 his district when we turn on the news and
24 I'm hoping it's not my district when we
25 turn on the news. But it's always

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 inspiring. And I can't speak for anybody
3 else. I can speak for Curt and myself.
4 Like I grew up in Point Breeze. I grew
5 up like in the neighborhood around like
6 regular guys, where half of my friends
7 are dead, the other half are in jail and
8 maybe the rest are still hanging on the
9 corner. And when you see 10, 20 young
10 men come down the street with their blue
11 uniforms on, they are professional,
12 they're not acting out in the
13 neighborhood, and they're working -- see,
14 when we talk about a real serious
15 conversation about crime and violence, if
16 a young man is working during the day,
17 he's too tired to come out and hang on
18 the corner. If he has a job, he's not
19 trying to sell drugs, because he's
20 working already.

21 And so hopefully we'll step up
22 as a city, and I'm going to refocus my
23 priority to specifically begin looking at
24 how do we put more of our money in the
25 budget to make these programs go to

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 scale.

3 The Councilman challenged the
4 Water Department to do the same type of
5 program that I met with them about
6 yesterday where you have young people
7 working, building a career from school,
8 from going from school and focusing on a
9 career. And so I just think at some
10 point in time as a city, we got to sit
11 back and say, Hold up, what are we
12 seriously going to do to help these young
13 men focus on getting a job and not
14 picking up a gun, and it's programs like
15 that that's an example that we're going
16 to begin to start taking a real hard look
17 at. Let's put our money where our mouth
18 is if we really say we're about
19 addressing the issue of crime and
20 violence besides just locking everyone
21 up.

22 So thank you for your
23 leadership. I just want to thank you and
24 your team publicly, because when things
25 go wrong, we give you a call, but we need

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 to acknowledge when you're doing good
3 work, and I just wanted to stop my
4 schedule today and give you all kudos
5 publicly. So thank you.

6 COMMISSIONER PERRI: Thank you.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
8 Councilman.

9 I was going to give you some
10 accolades because I'm next, but I'm going
11 to yield to Councilmembers that have not
12 had an opportunity. I'll save it for a
13 little later.

14 The Chair recognizes
15 Councilwoman Blackwell.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
17 you very much. I'll only be a moment. I
18 wanted to thank this department as well.
19 We have myriad things on the fire, but
20 we're working them through, and we want
21 to say thank you all for your assistance
22 and cooperation.

23 COMMISSIONER PERRI: You're
24 welcome, Councilwoman.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 you.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: When there's
4 a snow event, it's like who do you call,
5 and it isn't Ghostbusters, so we call
6 you.

7 The Chair now recognizes
8 Councilman Oh.

9 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very
10 much, Chairman, and thank you for
11 yielding your time.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: No problem.

13 COUNCILMAN OH: Leadership.

14 All right. Good morning.

15 COMMISSIONER PERRI: Good
16 morning.

17 COUNCILMAN OH: I really just
18 have one question, and it's really just
19 kind of exploring. So the pothole
20 situation and there are a significant
21 number of potholes, I understand that,
22 and I was meeting with a group of
23 motorcycle riders and they kind of
24 alerted me to the fact that even more
25 than cars, they face a lot of safety

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 issues because of the potholes. And so
3 it was explained to them that there has
4 to be five consistent days of a certain
5 temperature before the state at least can
6 get out to do the potholes. And the
7 riders or drivers, they don't really
8 distinguish city, state, federal roads.
9 It's just roads. So I understand that
10 there is kind of a coordination between
11 the City, state, and federal departments
12 that deal with repairing potholes; is
13 that correct?

14 COMMISSIONER PERRI: Yes.
15 There's three main entities that repair
16 potholes in the City of Philadelphia -
17 Streets Department, PennDOT, and SEPTA.

18 COUNCILMAN OH: Okay. And so
19 I've asked this before, but I'm very
20 curious as I continue to read about
21 improvements in infrared technology for
22 pothole repair. Is the Streets
23 Department investigating or planning to
24 at any time do infrared pothole repair?

25 COMMISSIONER PERRI: Yes. As a

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 matter of fact, we do have that equipment
3 and we do use it. We find, however, that
4 using equipment known as Pothole Killer
5 gets the job done in a much quicker
6 manner than using the infrared
7 technology. But we do have that and we
8 do use it.

9 COUNCILMAN OH: Okay. So what
10 is the difference between infrared
11 technology and Pothole Killer?

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:
13 Just on the basic level, the infrared
14 technology requires more of a startup to
15 it. So if we have a street, a block
16 length, where we know that there's a lot
17 of potholes on it, we can start it up, go
18 through that time and process and it's
19 more efficient to use that along the
20 whole length getting all those potholes
21 along the block. But if you have
22 potholes that are spread out a large
23 distance away from each other, it's just
24 more efficient to use the Pothole Killer.

25 COUNCILMAN OH: So let me tell

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 you what I've read, and I'm not saying
3 it's true, but I want to check with you,
4 because you're actually on the ground.

5 So what I understand is that
6 the infrared repair is in high demand in
7 Europe and Asia. It saves money, uses
8 less labor and equipment, and is more
9 green, one-seventh the carbon footprint
10 of a traditional repair, and permanently
11 repairs the pothole. Technology is U.S.
12 technology from Manchester, New
13 Hampshire. It requires two men, one
14 truck, and takes 15 minutes to repair a
15 pothole, and it costs about \$250 per
16 pothole. So to outfit a new truck,
17 significant investment of \$160,000, but
18 the traditional pothole repair is a
19 six-man crew, heavy equipment, and work
20 can slow down for a significant period of
21 time as lanes are closed.

22 And the reason I bring it up is
23 because the key difference appears to me
24 to be that they don't need to wait for
25 warmer weather, that when a pothole

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 appears in cold weather, they can
3 actually repair the pothole then and
4 there, and so the crews would be working
5 in longer periods of time in the
6 different seasons so that the potholes
7 don't sit there and cause damage to cars
8 and vehicles and other things, that when
9 the pothole appears, you could fill it in
10 cold weather and keep moving around so
11 that your crew is going around repairing
12 potholes as they appear.

13 Is that your experience or what
14 has your experience been with this
15 technology?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:
17 Well, it sounds to me like you've got
18 information about newer technology as far
19 as --

20 COUNCILMAN OH: It's new
21 technology. It's 2014.

22 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:
23 So we'll be happy to receive that
24 information from you and evaluate it.
25 There are a few other new techniques that

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 we're looking at as well. We're always
3 looking for ways to do our business a
4 little bit better.

5 It is important to realize,
6 though, that there is a capital
7 investment involved, and so that's the
8 real hurdle for us in terms of taking on
9 new ways of doing things.

10 COUNCILMAN OH: Okay. Thank
11 you very much. Thank you.

12 Thank you.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Perfect
14 timing, Councilman. Impeccable.

15 The Chair recognizes Councilman
16 Squilla.

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
18 Mr. Chair.

19 Good morning, or whatever time
20 it is. Thank you guys for coming in.
21 And, again, I want to reiterate what
22 Councilman Johnson and Councilman Jones
23 have said about how cooperative the
24 Streets Department has been in working
25 with our office. Again, we inundate them

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 with calls and e-mails and just constant
3 concerns, and it's always a response that
4 we get. If the response is not within
5 ten minutes, it's within that day, and
6 there's also somebody that goes out and
7 checks it. So I really want to commend
8 the Streets Department, all the staff for
9 everything, from potholes to trash and
10 whatnot.

11 My question is on the -- we
12 seem to get a lot of concerns with
13 residents who have gullies in their
14 streets where water doesn't seem to get
15 to the sewer line, and sometimes it's
16 maybe a little bit after a street has
17 been repaved, sometimes it's longer.

18 What is the process to fix
19 those gullies? And sometimes it's a
20 little more work than just a patch. If
21 somebody has those type of concerns, what
22 is the process to try to get that fixed
23 where water would then flow eventually
24 down to the sewers?

25 COMMISSIONER PERRI: Generally

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 when we repave a street, we'll do it in
3 such a manner that we can redirect the
4 stormwater flow so that there's no low
5 spots in the street. On occasion if
6 there was an issue with how the street
7 was repaved, we simply have to go back
8 and redo it. There's also some cases in
9 the City in which there may not be enough
10 stormwater drains on a particular street,
11 and the Water Department has a program
12 called Fix the Flood in which the Water
13 Department works with the Streets
14 Department and we look for solutions to
15 areas that have chronic flooding
16 problems.

17 It sounds like in the for
18 instance that you gave us that it
19 probably was maybe not the best paving
20 operation and probably needs to be redone
21 as opposed to a chronic flooding problem
22 in the particular neighborhood.

23 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: What would
24 be then the, I guess, priority on that?
25 I mean, obviously we're redoing streets.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 If we get those concerns or complaints in
3 and we get them over to you, would that
4 then go back on the street list to get
5 repaved or how would that work? Would
6 that just be a repair?

7 COMMISSIONER PERRI: If we did
8 a recent repaving operation and it was
9 not acceptable, we would put that back to
10 the top of the list to go back out again
11 and have it done correctly.

12 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: But
13 otherwise then we would wait until the
14 street gets redone to try to fix the
15 gullies or those puddles that form when
16 we have storms? Some of them are worse
17 than others, but if it isn't something
18 that needs a drain, they would just wait
19 for the next go-around to get that street
20 in able for the water to go down to the
21 storm drains?

22 COMMISSIONER PERRI: That's
23 correct. I mean, we do have an issue in
24 Philadelphia, especially towards the
25 river, with a lot of low-lying flat

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 areas, and no matter how well you do the
3 paving, some streets are just difficult
4 to drain because they do not have enough
5 of a pitch for water to drain off in a
6 quick manner.

7 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All right.
8 Thank you very much. And, again, thank
9 you all for streets and transportation of
10 your, I guess, your efforts and your
11 really response to our office and getting
12 things done. We really appreciate it.
13 Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER PERRI: We thank
15 you.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
17 Councilman.

18 And it is so true. I mean, you
19 guys have been responsive, and half of
20 the time -- we don't even count the times
21 I drag your staff out to community
22 meetings and they stand shoulder to
23 shoulder with us and get beat up a little
24 bit, but we appreciate it and we view you
25 as partners because of it. So thank you.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 COMMISSIONER PERRI: Thank you,
3 Councilman.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: A couple of
5 things, and I'm going to go back to Oh,
6 after I ask a few questions, and my
7 questions relate to B, B, and B, the
8 three B's - bike lanes, bridges, and
9 busted equipment. So we're going to
10 start with my three B's, and let's go
11 with busted equipment.

12 According to your testimony,
13 some of your aging equipment is between
14 10 and 18 years old. The fleet is
15 impacted by that. Refuse collection is
16 impacted by that. How are we addressing
17 your aging fleet and rotating some of
18 them out and then bringing some of them
19 in? And in light of Councilman Oh's
20 question about using new technology, if
21 we have to invest anyway, is this an
22 appropriate time for such an investment
23 in new types of technology?

24 COMMISSIONER PERRI: The main
25 impact of our vehicle problem has been

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 with our trash compactors, and I'm very
3 happy to report that in the City's
4 Capital Program starting with next year,
5 there is a line item in the City's
6 Capital Program specifically earmarked
7 for Streets Department vehicles. There's
8 \$7 million a year that's projected out
9 for the out years in the Capital Program,
10 and that will ensure that we can replace
11 one-eighth of our trash compactor fleet
12 each year.

13 Now, that's the recommended
14 replacement schedule, is that a trash
15 compactor should last about eight years.
16 So, in other words, each year we should
17 replace one-eighth of our fleet.

18 Currently, approximately
19 one-third of our fleet is between 10 and
20 18 years old, which is causing our
21 immediate problems with getting reliable
22 equipment out on the street. Come this
23 July 1st, we have 30 compactors that we
24 will be receiving delivery on. So the
25 problem that we've had over the last year

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 and a half with trash compactors should
3 be gone by this summer.

4 On the highway side, we also
5 need to upgrade our equipment, and one of
6 the innovations that we are going to do
7 is that all our highway dump trucks will
8 be equipped when we purchase them with
9 tanks for brining operations for winter
10 storm response. We need to be able to
11 brine more streets in Philadelphia. We
12 feel that's the most effective way of
13 providing a snow and ice response. It
14 will allow us to use less salt to
15 accomplish the same amount of ice melting
16 on the street, and that's one of the
17 techniques and new technology that we're
18 going to have our trucks equipped with
19 right from the start when we purchase
20 them.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: So on the
22 new equipment you're adding brine versus
23 salting. What do you do with the old
24 equipment?

25 COMMISSIONER PERRI: The old

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 equipment is managed by Fleet Management,
3 and at some point when it becomes beyond
4 the point of being repairable, they
5 relinquish it. Now, I'm not -- I don't
6 know whether they put it out to auction
7 at that point. Some of the equipment
8 they use for spare parts, but the
9 exact -- how that equipment is actually
10 taken off the City's inventory, Fleet
11 Management would be in the best position
12 to answer that question.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: We'll duly
14 note that.

15 So the other B -- I'm going to
16 add another B and make it four, bad
17 weather. What was your estimate for snow
18 removal last year and what did we
19 actually wind up spending?

20 COMMISSIONER PERRI: For snow
21 removal operations, our operation is
22 supplemented with contractor equipment,
23 and we had \$4 million was budgeted for
24 contractor equipment last year, and I
25 know we exceeded that amount. We

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 exceeded that amount by \$1.2 million.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: That's less
4 than I thought, but okay. Can you do me
5 a favor and provide to the Chair the last
6 four years' estimates that you put in the
7 budget and then the last four year
8 reality of expenditures, actual expense.
9 And the reason I say that -- and maybe it
10 is in here, but the reason I say that is,
11 one of two things are true. Either we
12 need to kind of estimate better in the
13 front end and start to look at weather
14 trends, and if we're pleasantly
15 surprised, that's one thing, but we need
16 to be prepared. And not to say that we
17 weren't, but a realistic estimate in the
18 front end so we know what we need to do
19 by way of taxes, by way of
20 appropriations. Okay?

21 COMMISSIONER PERRI: And you
22 want that for our snow removal operation?

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes.

24 COMMISSIONER PERRI: Okay.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: That will

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 help.

3 By way of bridges, there are
4 343 City-owned bridges in Philadelphia;
5 150 of them fall under PennDOT
6 jurisdiction. Last year the Controller's
7 report talked about bridges in a database
8 prioritizing and tracking and maintaining
9 work orders for those bridges. How are
10 we doing by way of City-owned bridges?

11 COMMISSIONER PERRI: The major
12 City-owned bridges, we now have them
13 mapped on the City's website. So any
14 member of the public or anyone that's
15 interested can go to our website, click
16 on a map, and identify any bridge that is
17 City-owned, major bridge that is
18 City-owned within the City limits. If
19 you click on the actual bridge, it will
20 give you the technical information about
21 that bridge. It will give you the bridge
22 number and also a link to filing a
23 complaint should there be an issue with
24 an unsafe condition with that particular
25 bridge.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 So we are putting that bridge
3 information out to the public so that we
4 can effectively collect any kind of
5 complaints or observations of any
6 dangerous conditions that we might have
7 with our City bridge inventory.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: So on that
9 website, you'll tell me if a particular
10 bridge at 52nd and Jefferson has been
11 inspected, how many times it's been
12 inspected that year, and how much
13 maintenance has gone into that bridge?

14 COMMISSIONER PERRI: No. It
15 will simply identify who owns the bridge,
16 what its span length is, what the
17 clearances under the bridge. It does not
18 include the inspection records. All our
19 major bridges are inspected every two
20 years, and we turn those inspection
21 reports in to PennDOT as required by the
22 federal government.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Is there any
24 way to include that in or is that beyond
25 your technical capabilities to talk

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 about, for example, how much maintenance
3 was put into a bridge? Is that doable?

4 COMMISSIONER PERRI: Yeah, I
5 think that would be beyond the ability of
6 us to collect that and present it in a
7 clear fashion on a publicly accessible
8 website.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.
10 So what I'd like to be provided to the
11 Chair and to members of Council by
12 district is the number of City-owned
13 bridges and their maintenance schedule.
14 Not so much when they were inspected, but
15 when are you going to do something, paint
16 it, repair it, replace it. And it's my
17 understanding that the state and federal
18 government does provide 90 percent of the
19 expense of a replacement of a bridge, but
20 provide us very little for the
21 maintenance of a bridge. Is that true?

22 COMMISSIONER PERRI: That's
23 correct. We can apply for when there is
24 federal money available, and that money
25 has been scarce over the past few years,

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 but if we need to do a major bridge
3 rehabilitation or replacement project, we
4 can apply for funding that would cover 95
5 percent of the cost of the bridge. The
6 problem is that the federal government
7 needs to open up and accept applications
8 for that type of project. And that
9 funding has been scarce because of the
10 inability to raise the federal gas tax
11 since 1993. So nationwide there's just
12 not enough money out there to replace and
13 to assist cities with maintenance or
14 actually replacement of needed
15 infrastructure.

16 The federal government does not
17 pay for what they would consider to be
18 routine maintenance. So if there's a
19 pothole, if there was some other minor
20 issue with a bridge, that all gets paid
21 for with local funding.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: So on the
23 mission of maintenance of bridges,
24 Councilman Johnson and I did hearings at
25 his request on CSX, and he's been a

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 champion of that cause dealing with
3 safety issues. When CSX came in here,
4 they talked about going forward meeting
5 with you guys to talk about bridge
6 maintenance and safety transportation,
7 but particularly the bridge safety. Has
8 there been that meeting and what was the
9 result of that meeting?

10 COMMISSIONER PERRI: We have
11 met with CSX on several occasions. We
12 have inspected -- we have put together an
13 internal program in which we do what
14 we're calling underpass inspections. So
15 we know of locations throughout the City
16 in which another owner's bridge is
17 passing over a City street. So we will
18 do an inspection from down below. It's
19 not considered to be an official
20 inspection or a legal inspection in terms
21 of meeting their federal mandate, but
22 it's an inspection that we do on our own
23 to protect the public that may be passing
24 under the bridge. And we put together
25 significant findings that we found on the

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 25th Street Viaduct and presented them in
3 a certified letter to CSX last fall.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Was there a
5 response?

6 COMMISSIONER PERRI: Yes, they
7 did. We had recommended that they
8 provide netting under 25th Street
9 Viaduct. They came back about two months
10 later, met with us, showed us a plan
11 to -- that was a twofold plan. First to
12 provide netting under the bridge to
13 capture any loose materials and,
14 secondly, a rehabilitation plan to take
15 care of the various issues that are
16 happening with that 25th Street Viaduct.

17 Now, a lot of that was at the
18 encouragement of Councilman Johnson, who
19 tirelessly has been working with CSX to
20 get them to up their game. But we're
21 there. We're right there as a partner
22 documenting where there's problems,
23 putting pen to paper, and sending it to
24 them for their response.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: So did I

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 understand you to say that not just the
3 viaduct, but other bridges around the
4 City you have a matrix that you are
5 prepared to inspect and work with them
6 on?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:
8 We're working on a program of inspection.
9 We haven't developed anything specific
10 like a matrix, but we provide letters and
11 reports to them when we get the
12 information. We were able to look at six
13 bridges in the fall. We took a break for
14 the winter and we're getting ready to
15 start that program up again for the
16 spring now.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.
18 So between myself and Councilman Johnson,
19 who those are our white whales, these
20 bridges. I actually have a paper weight
21 that has the railroad spikes that I keep,
22 because one fell down on 52nd and
23 Jefferson.

24 So if you could -- and I know
25 it's a human capital investment -- to

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 look at a particular time schedule,
3 quarterly, yearly, annually, that says
4 we're going to hit six bridges in the
5 first quarter and then we're going to
6 report back and then we're going to do
7 another six bridges in this area and
8 prioritize not just in my district or
9 Councilman Johnson's district, but the
10 worst of the worst and getting to them
11 first and provide that to the Chair, I
12 think that will be worthwhile. You know,
13 we record all these, and the reason I
14 have such a good memory is because we
15 write it down. So thank you.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:
17 Understood.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: I'm going to
19 yield to Councilman Oh.

20 COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you,
21 Mr. Chairman.

22 I'm going to be brief, because
23 I neglected to also say what a great job
24 the Streets Department is doing and to
25 thank particularly Commissioner Perri,

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 who saw an issue, stopped by my office to
3 educate me about the issue, and actually
4 give me some information and
5 recommendations on how to better handle
6 the issue that I had raised. So thank
7 you very much, and keep up the good work.

8 COMMISSIONER PERRI: You're
9 welcome, Councilman.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
11 Councilman.

12 Commissioner, I've never heard
13 in the last eight years this kind of
14 lovefest for your department. I just --
15 I'm taken aback by it.

16 COMMISSIONER PERRI: Well, we
17 greatly appreciate it. As I tell
18 everyone, the Streets Department has the
19 hardest working employees in all of City
20 government, and the deputies, they bring
21 it 24/7. They really do.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: And thank
23 you for that.

24 Having him yield, I would then
25 like to go into bike lanes. How have we

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 over the last couple of years progressed?
3 Are we moving more towards bike lanes?
4 Where are we in that progression?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:

6 We've had a lot of success. We have over
7 200 miles, as you know, in the City.
8 We're working on expanding that network
9 in what we call the priority areas, the
10 areas where we feel like there's a lot of
11 demand for bike use and areas where there
12 are activities that can easily be
13 supported with bike use.

14 One of the things we've focused
15 on is trying to finding creative sources
16 of funding. So we've been very involved
17 with our partners in the Commerce
18 Department, the Water Department, also
19 with the Mayor's Office of Transportation
20 in pursuing funding from both the state
21 and the federal government to expand our
22 bike network. We recently received a
23 grant for about \$300,000 in order to do
24 expansion, which will support the Bike
25 Share program, which is now kicking off

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 this month.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Was there a
4 backlog at one point for bike lanes?

5 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:
6 There are a number of areas where we have
7 had a plan in place to put in bike lanes,
8 and one of the things that we try to do
9 to do it most efficiently is to put the
10 bike lanes in along with paving projects.
11 So as the paving proceeds, so does the
12 bike lane expansion proceed.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: So how many
14 new miles of bike lanes do we expect this
15 year?

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL: I
17 have to get back to you on that. It does
18 depend a little bit on how much paving we
19 get done, and we do have a paving plan
20 that we put together. I think we've, in
21 the last week, prepared that to deliver
22 to Council. So I'll have to review that
23 and give you a precise number at that
24 time.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: How many

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 miles of street do we have, 2,500 miles
3 of street?

4 COMMISSIONER PERRI: It's
5 2,525.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Say that
7 again.

8 COMMISSIONER PERRI: Two
9 thousand five hundred and twenty-five
10 miles.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. And
12 how much actually -- I know there are
13 several types of paving, and could you
14 explain the different types of paving,
15 surfacing versus paving.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:
17 In terms of the work of putting --

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes. One is
19 a deep grade, as I understand.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:
21 I'm sorry?

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: One is a
23 grading and then paving.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:
25 Well, there's a process of paving which

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 involves milling before we do the paving,
3 if that's what you mean. So typically
4 what we do is, we contract out the
5 milling work based on the equipment
6 that's needed. That's not stuff that the
7 City keeps with the Streets Department.
8 And then after that takes place, we'll
9 do, a paving job, we'll put down overlay
10 of paving on top of that.

11 In addition to that, we have
12 experimented with some other techniques
13 which are more temporary which do not
14 include the milling, and the Streets
15 Department is moving away from this
16 because we're finding that we weren't
17 getting the performance that we thought
18 we would.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Was the
20 estimate on that was like five years?

21 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:
22 We looked at some that were about five
23 years, and I think the biggest problem is
24 we're around the range of seven years.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: So you

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 thought it was seven; we wind up with
3 five?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:
5 Less than five in a lot of cases.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: So how many
7 miles of paving will we do next year?
8 What's your estimate?

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:
10 We're looking at 58 miles, I believe, in
11 that order.

12 COMMISSIONER PERRI: I think
13 we're at 66 for this year and 85 for the
14 2016 budget.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: How many of
16 your streets of that 25 miles and
17 2,500 -- what is it, 25 miles?

18 COMMISSIONER PERRI:
19 Twenty-five twenty-five.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Give me
21 the --

22 COMMISSIONER PERRI: Two
23 thousand five hundred and twenty-five.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.
25 Are considered good roads. And I leave

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 that to you to determine what a good road
3 is.

4 COMMISSIONER PERRI: I do have
5 an analysis of that, which I don't have
6 in front of me. In order to give you a
7 full answer, we have to break down that
8 total into different categories. There's
9 different road types and each one has its
10 own particular rating in terms of the
11 percentage that are considered to be in a
12 state of good repair. I'd be happy to
13 send that information over to you after
14 this hearing.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: Do you keep
16 track of biking and motorcycle
17 fatalities?

18 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:
19 We don't keep track of it year to year.
20 We have been working on doing a biannual
21 report which calculates fatalities
22 overall. We break out bike fatalities,
23 pedestrian fatalities, but we don't have
24 a specific category for motorcycle
25 fatalities.

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2 COUNCILMAN JONES: We'd like
3 you to do that. And I don't want to try
4 to put the liability on your department,
5 but if there's a correlation between a
6 bike fatality and where a bike lane is
7 not or where a pothole is, we need to --

8 (Bell rung.)

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: So I'm going
10 to stop and I'm going to recognize
11 Councilman Squilla. She don't play.

12 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you.
13 I thought it was your show here.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: I thought
15 that's the advantage of being up here,
16 but I see it's not.

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you.
18 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

19 During the process, I guess, of
20 the street repairs, and it seems like
21 hopefully we'll get to more of them,
22 during the pothole repairs, are they
23 repaired on a call-in basis or do you
24 have crews out there that are just
25 looking for potholes along the way and

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 fixing them at that point?

3 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:
4 We typically are looking to address
5 complaints that we get in. We track 311.
6 We also take complaints sometimes
7 directly as the Streets Department.

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All right.
9 So if you don't have a complaint of a
10 pothole, it will not necessarily get
11 fixed.

12 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:
13 Well, we do get out there and we do see
14 things on our own, our own staff. So
15 we'll address those things that our staff
16 sees as well.

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All right.
18 Because one of the things our office
19 always has, Well, that pothole has been
20 there a month.

21 I say, Well, did you tell
22 anybody?

23 And they said, Oh, no.

24 Well, it's just not going to
25 get fixed. So, I mean, it does help if

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 they do report them and also on the
3 website, the Streets Department website,
4 where they do the pothole repairs, and
5 that had seemed to work very well for the
6 regular people who are calling in. Maybe
7 if they call our office, we can put them
8 in through there, and it really seems to
9 get attention rather quickly, and your
10 turnaround time has been great. It's
11 just a matter of knowing where they are.

12 I know we just recently got a
13 list, I guess, of street repavings that
14 will be happening. Is there any way if
15 there's a concern on a certain street or
16 we see a street that is in more disrepair
17 to reach out to you and swap a street in
18 those type of situations?

19 COMMISSIONER PERRI: We have
20 published the paving list for this year.
21 If you have -- if you were counting on a
22 street that you thought was in dire
23 straits and needed to be repaired and saw
24 a street on the list that is in not as
25 bad a shape, let us know. We'll take it

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2 into consideration. But within the
3 district, we need to keep a balance on
4 how many streets that we're doing. So
5 you would have to basically give up a
6 street to get a street added.

7 The other thing that we need to
8 do is that when we put those lists
9 together, we go through a process called
10 utility clearance to make sure that the
11 streets that we are doing aren't going to
12 get torn up by the Water Department or
13 the Gas Works the next year. So if
14 they're on a utility list, they may be in
15 a state of disrepair, but we don't want
16 to get in and repave them now just to
17 have them torn up next year. So we do
18 have to check the utility schedules
19 before we would make a swap on a
20 particular street.

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: That's
22 good to know.

23 Also, when we, I guess, go in
24 and there's street markings that are
25 faded or whatnot for whatever reason, is

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 there a timeline that we redo the
3 crosswalks and things like that or is
4 that done periodically, or should we
5 report the crosswalks being faded and so
6 forth?

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL: I
8 think you should report if you see the
9 markings are faded. We'll try and get
10 out in the course of the work that we're
11 doing to maintain those and bring up the
12 brightness and contrast that they should
13 be. As far as the timeline, that will
14 vary street by street, because it's
15 really the traffic that wears out the
16 markings, and so it depends on what kind
17 of traffic the street is getting to know
18 when to go back and look at that kind of
19 thing. But they should be refreshed
20 after the paving takes place.

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: How about
22 inlet cleaning? I mean, that's usually
23 done. Was that done in conjunction with
24 the Water Department?

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:

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2 That's right, and we will, as we're doing
3 other things, inform the Water
4 Department. But when constituents
5 contact us, we usually have them contact
6 the Water emergency desk or the Water
7 Department to let them know.

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: When
9 you're doing the street repairs, not so
10 much as a clogged sewer, but do you work
11 in conjunction with the Water Department
12 at any point there or not really?

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:
14 Not typically, no.

15 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All right.
16 Thank you very much.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
18 Councilman.

19 Just a couple of quick
20 questions. Retaining walls and alleys
21 and driveways. You are very helpful.
22 Give me your perspective on them. I want
23 you to know that we're looking to the
24 state to try to create a fund. And could
25 you elaborate on what the possibilities

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2 were if we can get state cooperation.

3 COMMISSIONER PERRI: We haven't
4 directly talked to the state about
5 obtaining funding at that level, but we
6 are aware of your concerns. Retaining
7 walls and driveways are a critical issue
8 in Philadelphia. They are private
9 infrastructure that is in many cases in a
10 state of disrepair with no discernible
11 program to help those folks bring those
12 assets back into good condition. In a
13 lot of cases, a worn-out driveway, a
14 broken driveway or a dangerous retaining
15 wall will depress real estate values in a
16 neighborhood and make a block unlivable.

17 So we recognize the fact that
18 there needs to be a program for
19 addressing retaining walls, addressing
20 driveways, and perhaps even addressing
21 sidewalks at private residence. But it's
22 a huge issue. It's an issue that's been
23 out there for decades that for one reason
24 or another just hasn't gotten to the
25 point where there's a program in place to

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 address those needs appropriately.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: So whether
4 it's retaining walls in Overbrook or
5 Manayunk, we're faced with high expense
6 per foot of replacing these walls that
7 some residents find it onerous to be able
8 to do.

9 In the case of driveways, I
10 almost view that -- well, no, not
11 driveways. Alleys. In alleys I almost
12 view that as a public safety issue. Our
13 first responders, whether it's Fire
14 coming in from a rear entrance as opposed
15 to where a fire might be in the front,
16 them having good lighting like you are
17 working on, but access and egress through
18 that is a life-saving measure not only to
19 the inhabitants of the residence, but to
20 the firefighters and police officers that
21 find themselves running back there. We
22 have to figure that out by way of keeping
23 them clean and being well lit and also in
24 a state of repair where somebody running
25 down a driveway chasing a perpetrator of

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 a crime doesn't injure himself or herself
3 in the process. We have to -- it's
4 almost a public safety issue to me to be
5 able to respond to a fire, to be able to
6 apprehend a criminal or prevent loss of
7 life.

8 COMMISSIONER PERRI: You're
9 absolutely correct. Through the Future
10 Track program, we have been cleaning
11 those alleyways. The Department is over
12 90 percent complete re-lamping those
13 alleyways, and in almost all cases we're
14 upgrading the lighting to LED to provide
15 a cleaner, brighter lighting through
16 those alleyways, but we do not have a
17 mechanism at this point to repair an
18 alleyway that may have broken concrete or
19 any irregular path.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. We
21 need to work on that, and hopefully our
22 friends at the state may offer us some
23 type of assistance, create some type of
24 revolving loan fund, low interest, no
25 interest loan fund, a recoupable grant of

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 some sort to try to address these
3 critical issues.

4 A couple of years ago a good
5 friend of mine lost their son because of
6 an accidental ingestion of outdated
7 medications. His name was Timmy, and it
8 was a good friend of mine, Bernie
9 Strand's son.

10 What are we doing as a City to
11 create a safer prescription disposal
12 mechanism by way of trash and other
13 places where we can keep it from going
14 into our streets and into our waterways?

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARLTON:
16 Councilman, we don't have a program at
17 all that would address the medical issue.
18 I'm not sure if this is something we may
19 have to talk to Health about, but as far
20 as disposal of medicine and things of
21 that nature, that would more so be the
22 Health Department. There's no mechanism
23 in place for us to deal with medical
24 waste or any type of medicine disposal.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. It's

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 a challenge.

3 And, finally, streetscape in
4 Manayunk. How are we doing on
5 progressing on that? We have some
6 proposed prep work, lighting, and street
7 trees and other stripping. Is that on
8 its way? Do we have a timeframe for
9 that? And if you don't have it now --

10 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CARROLL:
11 We'll check with Commerce. We typically
12 coordinate with them on the streetscape
13 projects. So we can get some information
14 on that and get back to you.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.
16 All politics is local. All right.

17 Are there any other questions
18 for this department?

19 (No response.)

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Seeing none,
21 thank you for your testimony.

22 COMMISSIONER PERRI: Thank you,
23 Councilman.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: This
25 Committee will stand at recess until 5:00

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 p.m., at which time we will have public
3 testimony here in Room 400, City Hall.

4 Thank you all very much.

5 (Recess.)

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good

7 afternoon, everyone. This is a
8 continuation of the public hearing on the
9 Committee of the Whole. We are going to
10 allow for public comment at this part of
11 the budget hearing.

12 We will have folk come up. We
13 will not limit them to three minutes,
14 because there doesn't seem to be that
15 many people, but we'll max out at about
16 five minutes. I think you can get most
17 things done in a five-minute fashion, and
18 if everybody is ready, we'll begin now.

19 I see Commissioner Singer here.

20 COMMISSIONER SINGER: Yes, but
21 I don't want to get --

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: You don't
23 want to get in front of anybody? Okay.

24 Will the Clerk please read the
25 first person signed up to testify.

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2 THE CLERK: I do not have you
3 on the list. Do you want to be added?

4 COMMISSIONER SINGER: Please.

5 THE CLERK: Adrienne Jacoby,
6 Tara McCoy, Elizabeth Uhlhorn.

7 (No response.)

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
9 all for being on time. So is anyone
10 here?

11 THE CLERK: No, not from
12 Philadelphia Reads.

13 Jeri Johnson.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: So I think
15 people didn't believe we were going to
16 start at 5 o'clock, and that's okay.
17 That's a cautionary tale.

18 THE CLERK: Is Jeri Johnson
19 here?

20 MS. JOHNSON: Yes, I'm here.

21 THE CLERK: Okay. Bob Previdi,
22 Deborah Schaaf. All right. We'll go in
23 that order.

24 (Witnesses approached witness
25 table.)

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2 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
3 all for coming.

4 THE CLERK: Jeri Johnson is
5 first.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: The three of
7 you can come up to the table. We'll take
8 you one at a time. It will save us a
9 couple of steps.

10 The rules are, please state
11 your name clearly for the record. The
12 stenographer needs to know who to
13 attribute testimony to.

14 Thank you, and good afternoon.
15 Welcome.

16 MS. JOHNSON: Good evening.
17 Thank you so much for the time to address
18 Council. Just tell you a little bit
19 about myself. In 2008, I founded the
20 Black Pearl Chamber Orchestra as a model
21 for the 21st century orchestra with a
22 mission to engage audiences and impact
23 Philadelphia's diverse community in the
24 arts. Our goals at Black Pearl are
25 similar to many organizations with which

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 you are probably already familiar like
3 Amala (sic) in the 7th District, the
4 Johnson House, and International Ballet
5 Exchange, Art Reach in the 5th District,
6 and of course the City's own Dell Music
7 Center in the 4th District, just to name
8 a few.

9 Like other small organizations
10 in the arts, most of our concerts and
11 educational outreach programs are offered
12 every year free to the public. Last
13 summer, many City Councilmembers joined
14 us at a concert when we were invited by
15 Philadelphia Parks and Recreation to
16 perform the first orchestra concert at
17 the Dell in 36 years as part of an
18 exciting vision that connected the Dell's
19 past with the Park's future. Imagine if
20 the spark that we could ignite through
21 economic revitalization and renewed
22 vitality for the area around the Dell
23 were ignited by combining the impact of
24 Parks and Recreation with arts and
25 culture.

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2 At its height in the 1930s
3 through '50s, concerts at the Dell
4 brought an audience of up to 20,000
5 people to the neighborhoods around East
6 Fairmount Park. What would it take for
7 that happen again in East Fairmount Park
8 and other places around the City?

9 Two resources for arts and
10 culture in the City are already in
11 place - the Office of Arts, Culture and
12 the Creative Economy and the Philadelphia
13 Cultural Fund.

14 In 1986, Mayor Wilson Goode,
15 Sr. established the Mayor's Office for
16 Arts and Culture to support the sector
17 and integrate its contributions into the
18 larger strategy for the City. Later,
19 Mayor Nutter expanded the role at the
20 office to include the growing creative
21 economy. Then in 1992, Council took the
22 bold step of chartering the creation of
23 the Philadelphia Cultural Fund, offering
24 critical general operating support for
25 all arts and culture organizations and

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 underlying the City's commitment to the
3 growth of the sector. Since that time,
4 the cultural sector in Philadelphia has
5 grown to a \$3.3 billion industry,
6 offering 33,000 events that attract 17
7 million visitors to the region annually
8 and create 44,000 full-time equivalent
9 jobs. A large part of that growth has
10 been the reliable support from Council
11 and the Mayor's Office.

12 However, while the Cultural
13 Fund has been a steadfast resource for
14 the arts, at every mayoral election arts
15 and culture organizations hold their
16 breaths, not knowing if the next Mayor
17 will once again choose to support the
18 sector by keeping that office open.
19 Uncertainty is not conducive to growth,
20 and history shows that the arts and
21 culture sector has reason to be concerned
22 since in 2004 Mayor John Street closed
23 the office for four years. The tenuous
24 position of the Mayor's Office of Arts
25 and Culture places the stability of the

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 entire creative economy at risk, and at a
3 time when Philadelphia is becoming known
4 as a cultural destination for visitors
5 and a resource for millennials looking
6 for opportunities and resources to bring
7 their innovative ideas to fruition, this
8 is a risk that Philadelphia cannot afford
9 to take.

10 Imagine if the City endowed a
11 permanent Department of Arts and Culture
12 and integrated that creative power with
13 the work of other City agencies like
14 Commerce, social services, and the School
15 District even to attract new corporate
16 investments, create jobs, and the quality
17 of life in Philadelphia that the City
18 deserves.

19 Black Pearl's concert at the
20 Dell in conjunction with Philadelphia
21 Parks and Recreation was just one example
22 of that potential impact for such a
23 department. For example, the City is
24 planning to or has already made
25 improvements in park infrastructure -

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 lighting, landscaping, and
3 transportation - to the Dell and itself
4 has been renovated as part of larger
5 initiatives like the 2004 Strawberry
6 Mansion Community Plan and 2014 New
7 Fairmount Park Plan, and now the fun part
8 should begin. Providing appropriate
9 municipal resources for arts programming
10 at the Dell will ensure that those
11 investments of the infrastructure pay off
12 by creating a hub of creativity and a
13 place and a reason for people to gather
14 and connect, so that the spark we lit
15 last June at that concert will grow into
16 a blaze of activity in the area and start
17 the process of economic revitalization,
18 not only for East Fairmount Park but for
19 the entire City.

20 Are there any questions from
21 Councilmembers?

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
23 much. We're going to let each of the
24 panelists --

25 MS. JOHNSON: So sorry.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN JONES: No. That's
3 okay. It's a different protocol. We'll
4 let each of the three of you speak and
5 then open it up for questions.

6 For the record, we've been
7 joined by Councilwoman Tasco, Councilman
8 Goode, and Councilman O'Neill.

9 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: You want
10 to have everybody testify?

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes.

12 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: That's
13 fine. That's fine.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.
15 So don't go anywhere.

16 MS. SCHAAF: Good afternoon.
17 My name is Deborah Schaaf and I'm here
18 today on behalf of Feet First Philly.
19 Feet First Philly is a pedestrian
20 advocacy group sponsored by the Clean Air
21 Council. Our goals are to encourage
22 walking and to increase walkability by
23 working for improvements to pedestrian
24 safety, comfort, and the attractiveness
25 of the streetscape.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 Pedestrians are second only to
3 automobile users when total trips are
4 counted in Philadelphia. Although
5 walking has many health benefits, it can
6 be dangerous. More than one-third of the
7 City's traffic deaths are pedestrians.

8 Funding for the Streets

9 Department benefits pedestrians in many
10 ways; for example, by replacing worn-out
11 crosswalks, by reconfiguring dangerous
12 intersections, and by updating traffic
13 signals for safer operations. More
14 funding is needed for the Streets
15 Department to expand the capacity for all
16 of these kinds of improvements.

17 In particular, I would like to
18 urge increased funding for a specific
19 area of the Streets Department budget
20 that is important for people who walk in
21 the City. The Streets Department's
22 Right-of-Way Unit is responsible for
23 sidewalk issues, including construction
24 disruption, sidewalk cafes, newsstands,
25 A-frame signs, and anything else that may

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 obstruct pedestrian movement on the
3 sidewalk. Disruption of the pedestrian
4 path by construction projects is among
5 the top concerns identified by
6 pedestrians in our surveys.

7 Feet First Philly has recently
8 been documenting problems near
9 construction sites. Sidewalks adjacent
10 to work sites are often closed to
11 pedestrians for long periods of time, and
12 signs that inform the public whether
13 these closures were approved by the
14 Streets Department or not can rarely be
15 found. We believe that having more
16 inspectors in the Right-of-Way Unit will
17 not only help improve pedestrian safety,
18 but will also encourage more people to
19 walk in Philadelphia.

20 Thank you for the opportunity
21 to speak today.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
23 for your testimony.

24 We've also been joined by
25 Council President Clarke and Councilwoman

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 Maria Sanchez.

3 MR. PREVIDI: Hello. My name
4 is Bob Previdi. I'm here as a Policy
5 Coordinator for the Bicycle Coalition of
6 Greater Philadelphia.

7 There's a tremendous demand for
8 safety and better streets all over
9 Philadelphia. Twenty-six percent of
10 Philadelphia workers today take public
11 transit to work, 8.5 percent walk, and 2
12 percent bike. Together, over a third of
13 Philadelphia workers get to and from work
14 using streets, sidewalks, and they do not
15 use a car. And these commuters need
16 safer streets even more than motorists,
17 because they are so vulnerable.

18 As part of my testimony, I am
19 submitting the comments of over 200
20 persons who have signed a petition on our
21 website telling their reasons for why
22 they want safer streets. Here's one of
23 those stories from Lindsey, who lives in
24 the 2nd District:

25 I am a Philadelphia resident

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 and I work in Center City. I'm a
3 bicyclist, pedestrian, and a transit
4 user. The streets are arguably one of
5 the most important assets to our city,
6 and their safety, usability, and
7 maintenance need to be made a much higher
8 priority for the Streets Department, the
9 Planning Commission, and ultimately our
10 City Council. We say we want to increase
11 job opportunities, improve our school
12 systems, and attract new businesses and
13 residents, but how will we accomplish
14 these things if the potential users are
15 unable to access them in a safe and
16 affordable manner? The status quo; that
17 is to say, the current policies
18 protecting and promoting motor vehicle
19 ownership, like minimum parking
20 requirements and the absence of protected
21 bike lanes, is clearly not working.
22 Pedestrians and children are being struck
23 and killed in Philadelphia by speeding
24 and distracted drivers, yet we still
25 design our roadway network to get cars

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 through as fast as possible.

3 Our neighborhoods are clogged
4 with cars that block sidewalks, ADA
5 ramps, and hydrants, yet we make it as
6 easy as possible to own a vehicle in the
7 City. Isn't it time to change the way we
8 plan our streets so we can protect our
9 citizens from careless, distractive,
10 aggressive drivers?

11 The Streets Department needs to
12 be funded so that the lifeline of our
13 City - its streets, sidewalks, and bike
14 lanes - can provide its citizens the
15 safest, most affordable and most
16 effective way to move about. And, most
17 importantly, City Council needs to listen
18 and support the experts who have done the
19 studies and spent the time actually
20 learning how Philadelphia can function to
21 its fullest capacity with safe and
22 complete street designs for all users.

23 I'm also submitting these
24 comments here, as I said earlier, and the
25 Bicycle Coalition of Philadelphia has

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 created the Better Mobility 2015 Forum
3 Policy Agenda, which all the mayoral
4 candidates pretty much adopted and we had
5 a very successful mayoral forum. We've
6 also been passing it along to individual
7 Councilmembers, and I invite any
8 Councilmember if you'd like us to come in
9 and chat with you -- Councilperson Jones,
10 we've invited you to come on over to our
11 office, Darrell -- we're over at 1500
12 Walnut. We're also working with the Bike
13 Share people.

14 We think that making the
15 streets safe for all users is critical.
16 If we were in this just for bikes, it
17 wouldn't seem like we would be -- we're
18 not selfishly looking at this just for
19 bikes. We are about more than just
20 bikes. We're about helping all users of
21 the street, because we feel if you calm
22 the street down, it's going to help
23 business in the neighborhoods, kids
24 getting to school, people getting to
25 work. A third of, as I said earlier, a

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 third of our people get to work without a
3 car. So if we look -- if we change that
4 dynamic about how we look at our streets
5 and also when you look at our grid here
6 in Center City, it cannot accommodate
7 much more traffic, to take advantage of
8 the other public transit and bike lanes
9 will help make the City a more greener
10 and enjoyable place to be.

11 So I thank you for this time.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
13 much for your testimony.

14 The Chair recognizes
15 Councilwoman Tasco.

16 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Yes.
17 Thank you all for coming out this
18 evening, and I'm sorry I --

19 COURT STENOGRAPHER: I'm sorry,
20 Councilwoman. I can't hear you.

21 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: I'm sorry.
22 I heard part of it, Jeri, your
23 testimony, on the TV up there. So I just
24 want to ask you a question. Are there
25 models for what you're suggesting?

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 MS. JOHNSON: Models? Of

3 course, there are some models. What I

4 was suggesting and what is just one idea

5 of what could happen at the Dell in

6 particular -- and I'm choosing that

7 because it is a City-owned venue and

8 there are some existing civic plans that

9 are already in motion in terms of Parks

10 and Recreation doing some lighting

11 improvements, sidewalk, landscaping

12 improvement. There's already Keystone

13 tax incentives available for businesses

14 moving into the area. So the last layer

15 to really give people a reason to come to

16 that area and spark that economic

17 revitalization is appropriate funding for

18 the arts and having a department that

19 supports arts and culture in relationship

20 to other branches of City government.

21 So the best model I can think

22 of is actually SummerStage in New York

23 City, if any of you have ever had an

24 opportunity to go there. It is an

25 incredibly large, totally free music,

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 art, dance, puppetry, they have all kinds
3 of activities at a variety of public park
4 spaces throughout the City of New York
5 that incorporates the arts. And so these
6 events really bring a lot of neighborhood
7 cohesion, not just to the main venue
8 there in Central Park but a lot of places
9 and open spaces throughout New York City.
10 And so it isn't just a place-specific
11 kind of thing.

12 What we consider SummerStage
13 model to be is an example of what the
14 industry calls creative place-making, and
15 it is kind of the latest thing in terms
16 of resilient cities using arts to kind of
17 be incorporated into civic planning in a
18 way that isn't just, oh, we're going to a
19 restaurant or, oh, there's a music kind
20 of venue here and we're doing that, but
21 really how does arts and culture create
22 the quality of life, like I said, that's
23 going to bring new investments, that's
24 going to keep our millennials who have
25 all these great ideas, and new businesses

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 here in Philadelphia.

3 And so speaking on behalf not
4 only of myself, Black Pearl, who would
5 have a great time doing concerts at the
6 Dell, but really the entire arts and
7 culture sector is looking for a hero to
8 come to the rescue of the Office of Arts
9 and Culture in some way. Like I said,
10 every mayoral election we sweat. We just
11 sweat. And so Council has taken that
12 step, like I said, of establishing the
13 Cultural Fund. You guys have the power
14 and the inspiration. You know your
15 constituents better than we do. We serve
16 them, but you know all of the needs that
17 they have. Arts and culture is one that
18 can be incorporated into that, and we are
19 happy to serve your constituents in that
20 way.

21 COUNCILWOMAN TASC0: Well,
22 thank you very much. I appreciate your
23 compassion and passion, but more so
24 passion for the Office of Arts and
25 Culture as well as for the Cultural Fund.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 As you know and for the record, the
3 Cultural Fund is a program started by the
4 City Council.

5 Yes. I have to remind you that
6 it's a City Council program to provide
7 funding for the arts and cultural
8 programs throughout the City. And we
9 used to have Class 500 when I came here
10 in the olden days, and certainly there
11 were some people in the press who didn't
12 like it, because they called it our slush
13 fund. So Joan Specter was a leader in
14 establishing by legislation the Cultural
15 Fund, and we need to continue to support
16 and fund that organization so that they
17 can adequately fund the cultural programs
18 in the entire City. So there are some
19 areas that have more programs than I do,
20 but that's okay. That's okay. What I do
21 in my district comes out of the
22 Activities Fund. So there's no
23 either/or. It's both. And it's very
24 important that we understand that and
25 that we support the Cultural Fund and

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 that we see the Office of Arts and
3 Culture grow into the model as suggested
4 by Jeri and all of us who support that
5 part of the City government.

6 So I came down here to just put
7 my two cents in and let her know --

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: It was more
9 than two cents.

10 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: -- there
11 will be a lot of people on Council, I
12 hope, who will be supporting her call.

13 MS. JOHNSON: Just one final
14 point. There are many other cities,
15 major cities, throughout the country that
16 have this office, and it really levels
17 the playing field for all arts and
18 culture so that it's not just one
19 organization's agenda. It is the City's
20 agenda that is met, so that all cultural
21 institutions, and especially the creative
22 economy, which is creating jobs, are
23 really supported. So I think with LA,
24 Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, we need
25 to be right up there, because we're

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 becoming a real powerhouse and it's
3 because of arts and culture and the
4 creative economy.

5 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you
6 so much for coming.

7 Could I ask this gentleman
8 about the bike while I'm here?

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: Sure.

10 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: How are
11 you doing?

12 MR. PREVIDI: Good. How are
13 you?

14 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Nice to
15 see you. I just have one question about
16 how do you protect pedestrians when they
17 may run into a bicycle or a bicycle runs
18 into them? Because some years back a
19 friend of mine was walking down Walnut
20 Street and she was hit by a bicycle, a
21 guy on a bicycle, and the police were
22 sitting there and they did absolutely
23 nothing, and it's against the law. It's
24 like a hit and run.

25 So how do we monitor that and

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 enforce the compliance to be safe and if
3 they should happen to hit someone, it may
4 be an accident -- most of the time it
5 probably is -- what do we do about that?

6 MR. PREVIDI: The Bicycle
7 Coalition advocates for safe streets for
8 all users. We absolutely do not like it
9 when bicyclists are misbehaving, but I
10 don't have to remind you, automobile
11 drivers don't necessarily behave all the
12 time either and pedestrians don't either.

13 What we have found is that when
14 you allocate the appropriate amount of
15 street space to all users and you think
16 about it -- and it's, of course, a
17 changing thing as you go through time.
18 If you allocate it fairly and you look at
19 it, like Spruce and Pine have turned out
20 to be hugely successful. The data shows
21 that the number of cars using Spruce and
22 Pine is the same as prior to. And we've
23 taken a lane of service traffic away, and
24 traffic crashes are down 25 percent over
25 three years. And when you give the

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 bicyclists a legal place to go, they use
3 it, and so you can avoid those potential
4 areas of conflict.

5 Are we perfect? No, but we've
6 kind of forgotten about other users since
7 the end of World War II, so we're playing
8 catch-up.

9 So my advice would be, the
10 better mobility plan that we've put out
11 in 2015 kind of looks at the -- we're
12 calling for a task force. We're looking
13 for Council and the Mayor to come
14 together with all stakeholders, take a
15 real look at crash data, and you're going
16 to find that it's around public transit
17 stops, a lot of public transit stops,
18 Roosevelt Boulevard, and we want to look
19 at those areas and we want to bring
20 everybody into the room. We're in
21 discussions with Jefferson University.
22 They want to work with us because they've
23 got too many head traumas from pedestrian
24 crashes, and they want to work with us
25 and look at the data. I've called

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 Captain Fran Healy at the Police
3 Department and we want to compare police
4 data.

5 We need a task force citywide
6 to look at where the problems are, and
7 the Bicycle Coalition is simply
8 advocating, look, let's all come together
9 in the room and work together.

10 Engineers throw out this
11 phrase -- I'm sure you heard it from
12 Charlie Denny and others -- the three
13 E's - engineering, education, and
14 enforcement. And I think what they're
15 struggling to communicate to people, if
16 you look at it from a City Administration
17 point of view, it's -- you can't just
18 have the Police go out and do
19 enforcement. You just can't have Streets
20 go out and paint something. We need to
21 educate people, the kids. We have a Safe
22 Routes Philly program that we're trying
23 to save right now. It's getting cut from
24 the Health Department. It's a small
25 program. We'd like to see it expanded,

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 where we educate kids about how to be
3 safe on the streets, how to walk safe,
4 bike safe. Maybe some places we need to
5 do some serious engineering changes.

6 Again, we've given over most of
7 the streets to cars over the years, but
8 every place -- if you talk to people who
9 live on Pine and Spruce, even if they
10 were against this, now they're saying,
11 Oh, no, you've calmed the street down
12 tremendously. And it makes for better
13 street life. I think that this can go
14 throughout the City. Broad and Olney in
15 your area we're studying very closely
16 now. You got Central. You got a major
17 bus depot there, a major transit stop, a
18 lot of businesses.

19 We need to calm our
20 neighborhoods down so that they could
21 become the economic engines that we want
22 them to be, and, by all means, we need
23 to -- when people are misbehaving, we
24 need to keep that education up and we
25 have to tell the Police, No, we want the

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 rules enforced.

3 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.

4 Thank you.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,

6 Councilwoman.

7 Also Councilwoman Blackwell was

8 here. Councilman Squilla and

9 Councilwoman Bass have joined us.

10 The Chair recognizes Councilman

11 O'Neill.

12 COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Thank you,

13 Mr. Chair. I will be brief, but I wanted

14 to address all three issues quickly.

15 One, the Cultural Fund, I

16 believe it's been Council's position, not

17 in writing but in practice, to make the

18 current year appropriation for the

19 Cultural Fund, the Arts and Cultural

20 Fund, the floor for the future year, and

21 I expect we'll do that again. And that

22 doesn't mean we like that as a floor, but

23 it won't be any -- I'd be shocked beyond

24 belief if that money isn't restored and

25 we don't try to put more in. That's how

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 important all of us collectively have
3 felt about the need for it, and that even
4 if people say there's never enough, there
5 really isn't ever enough for all the good
6 that comes out of it. I won't go through
7 all the reasons. They've been
8 documented.

9 The two other points, one
10 pedestrians, one bicyclists, I think it
11 would be important if working with the
12 Streets Department, the Mayor's Office,
13 the Transportation Committee to try to
14 get a couple things at least that we know
15 work and make safer for people to cross
16 the street, particularly kids and people
17 that are a little slower walking, older
18 adults, and also bicyclists who are, as
19 you said, pretty unprotected for the most
20 part, and, that is, to at least do some
21 trials with bump-outs at the corner,
22 which compresses the cross -- not only
23 compresses the amount of street you have
24 to cross, it's actually pretty attractive
25 when you bump out the sidewalk at the

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 corner, but it's much safer for people
3 crossing, because instead of a car
4 blocking you, they can -- as you're
5 waiting on the curb for a light to change
6 or usually it's a traffic light that this
7 comes into play with, you can see the car
8 coming. You're not blocked by anything,
9 and a car can see you. And it just makes
10 it eminently safer to cross the street
11 and for even drivers to pick up something
12 they may, not paying too much attention,
13 miss, which is a person.

14 On the bicycle side, I've been
15 in a couple cities where they've started
16 to do the protected lanes, and it's an
17 eye-opener when you think about it, like
18 why didn't we think of this when we were
19 doing stripes, at least in certain
20 critical areas or certain easy areas,
21 because you're next to a park or you're
22 next to an institution or somewhere
23 there's no parking anyway. So when you
24 have to park, you just move out a lane.
25 It all seems to work.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 But a couple examples like
3 that. They're in questionnaires we're
4 hearing, but it wouldn't take too much to
5 kind of get them out there, particularly
6 closer to Center City where more people
7 would see it. And it could be in a
8 neighborhood, but probably more in a more
9 proximate neighborhood to start with.
10 But I just think they're kind of
11 commonsense things. It doesn't have to
12 be every mile or every foot of street.
13 It doesn't have to be every corner, but
14 there's certain corners that we know are
15 more dangerous than others habitually,
16 often at pretty busy intersections, and
17 there's some pretty vulnerable people
18 crossing. It's just one piece. There's
19 a whole lot of things, but it sort of
20 calms traffic as well when they know
21 they're approaching an intersection like
22 that.

23 But I'll leave it at that. But
24 I do think that there's a future with
25 both improvement with pedestrians,

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 bicyclists, and hopefully we'll continue
3 what we're doing and even get more
4 aggressive on the arts and culture side.

5 Thank you.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
7 Councilman.

8 Next we'll have Councilman
9 Squilla.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you,
11 Mr. Chair.

12 I would reiterate too what my
13 colleagues have said about the Cultural
14 Fund and how important it is. As
15 Councilwoman Tasco has mentioned, my
16 district does receive a pretty good fair
17 amount of Cultural Fund dollars, and it
18 is very much appreciated, and it's really
19 the avenue that has grown the district in
20 a way where people feel that they could
21 have a performing arts venue, an art show
22 or whatever it is necessary, and it
23 attracts more people to that area and
24 actually grows the area.

25 So I believe it's a very small

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 investment in arts and culture,
3 considering what it means to the City and
4 the growth of the City of Philadelphia.
5 So I really believe in it. I believe we
6 should increase the budget of that, and
7 hopefully we could have the
8 Administration agree with us to do that
9 also.

10 As far as the issues for bike
11 lanes and scooter parking and other
12 issues that we had across the City of
13 Philadelphia, I think it's a major
14 concern of the City to look at different
15 avenues in different ways to see how we
16 could grow transportation in and around
17 the City of Philadelphia with making
18 accessible parking for scooters and
19 motorcycles, which is another usage that
20 we don't often talk about, but also to
21 have the equality and understanding of
22 people to share the road, how important
23 it is to understand there that you have
24 to be aware of your surroundings and the
25 people near you.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 The protected bike lanes are a
3 great way to go in the future.
4 Unfortunately some of our narrower
5 streets, it's almost impossible to get
6 them on there, so we have to work with
7 what we have. And you know especially in
8 certain parts of the City if you try to
9 remove parking, it becomes a nightmare.
10 So, I mean, but we have so many creative
11 and smart people in the City of
12 Philadelphia to go in there and look at
13 ways, and I think if we do it right and
14 we include all the people in the process,
15 again, are we going to get 100 percent of
16 the people happy? Absolutely not. We're
17 not. But I see us as a city that's
18 growing and is really being progressive.
19 We need to find ways to add different
20 transportation models, even public
21 transportation models, whether it's
22 bringing the trolley back or adding new
23 routes and also making those
24 transportation models be able to use and
25 access bicycles onto them. I know SEPTA

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 has done that now and looking to grow
3 that also. And we as Council have the
4 ability to work with the Streets
5 Department and Transportation and
6 Planning to do that. Do we always agree?
7 Absolutely not also, because we have a
8 constituency base that we have to listen
9 to, but we know that we need to do it.
10 We know that it's something necessary,
11 and we look at best practices in other
12 cities. Other cities have different
13 street grades than we have.

14 But I really appreciate the
15 effort that's been put into this, and we
16 as a city need to -- I think we don't
17 have to copy other cities, but maybe
18 invent new ways to get these bike lanes,
19 whether it's a buffer lane or even just a
20 bike lane itself, even more trails as we
21 built along the rivers that we're doing
22 now and looking at those things. And I
23 got to give credit to all the
24 organizations involved, because any time
25 we change something in the City, it's not

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 always a positive thought by everyone.
3 So I want to give credit.

4 Do you have ideas -- and I'll
5 just ask a real quick question -- ideas
6 on as Philadelphia is compared to other
7 cities, how they do things, do you have
8 any ideas how we could maybe add not so
9 much shared lanes, but independent lanes
10 for people with the street grids that we
11 have and make it work where maybe some
12 streets are just bike streets and some
13 streets aren't? I don't know. Is that
14 something that's being looked at?

15 MR. PREVIDI: Yes, it is.
16 We're looking -- we're working with the
17 paving budget of the Streets Department,
18 and in many areas it's -- we really don't
19 want to get cast as taking parking lanes
20 away. We don't -- we feel that there's
21 enough space on existing streets for all
22 users.

23 That said, obviously places in
24 your district it's extremely tough. But
25 we've got approval for the 13th Street

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 and the 15th Street kind of -- it's a
3 combination sharrows kind of approach.
4 But basically what we do is, we're
5 telling the users of 13th and 15th to
6 expect bicyclists there, and you've got
7 the through street of Broad Street right
8 there. So if you want to go a little bit
9 faster, head over to Broad.

10 But we do think that -- we
11 think you're absolutely right. Depending
12 on what part of the City that you're in,
13 there are examples we can pull from all
14 over the country, but ultimately we have
15 to make it fit here in Philadelphia.
16 That's why we think it's so important
17 that we come together, we look at the
18 accident data, and we start to examine
19 streets and neighborhoods for their own
20 specific needs. What will Jefferson
21 Hospital teach us when we start to
22 understand what are these head traumas?
23 Where are these incidents happening? And
24 we start to work that out with all the
25 agencies and with all the stakeholders.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 We think that there are infinitely more
3 solutions to figure out how to share the
4 pavement so that everybody is kept happy.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you.
6 Thank you very much.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
8 Councilman.

9 I shared the reception with you
10 for the arts and culture, and what I
11 remember, Councilwoman Tasco, was that
12 each cultural group came up to thank the
13 District Councilperson, and my line might
14 have been six people. Councilman Squilla
15 had them doubled up. I thought they were
16 giving out food in his line. It was that
17 many people. But what they explained to
18 me was, a lot of those arts and culture
19 groups service the whole City, so I
20 didn't feel that bad. All right.

21 Councilwoman Bass.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.
23 Councilman Squilla, he has something
24 going on down there.

25 Well, good evening. And so,

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 Bob, the first thing I just want to
3 mention is that I heard you mention Broad
4 and Olney, as it's in my district.
5 That's the first I'm hearing. I'd like
6 to hear more about what your thoughts and
7 ideas.

8 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: We share a
9 district.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: That is
11 correct. That is correct. So we would
12 like to hear more information about any
13 plans for Broad and Olney.

14 MR. PREVIDI: Absolutely.
15 We're just taking a look at the data now.
16 We haven't kind of culminated any results
17 or anything yet. We're pulling together
18 that data now. So, yeah, absolutely.
19 We'd like to share that with both of you,
20 Councilwoman Tasco and Councilwoman Bass.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: It's one of
22 the busiest transportation hubs. I think
23 it's the second busiest in the City.

24 MR. PREVIDI: It is.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And so tens

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 of thousands of people use Broad and
3 Olney every single day, and so obviously
4 there would be a huge effect on our
5 constituents. So we want to make sure --

6 MR. PREVIDI: Absolutely.
7 Well, Ellen Kyner, who has a child at
8 Central, actually e-mailed me and she
9 said, You got to come out here and see
10 this, because she knows I'm always
11 interested in these issue, and I said,
12 Well, we'll start looking at it at the
13 Bicycle Coalition. And the data is
14 pretty clear that something needs to
15 happen there. So we're just pulling that
16 information together. I look forward to
17 having a meeting with you on it.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
19 Great.

20 And also for Jeri, I just
21 wanted to also applaud you for your
22 advocacy on behalf of the arts and
23 culture funding and making the office
24 permanent. And we have had some
25 conversations with Ms. Haynes regarding

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 that and look forward to having more
3 conversations to make sure that with the
4 exception of Councilman Squilla, that for
5 the rest of us, that we make sure that we
6 see the neighborhood groups get the
7 support that they need, because it's
8 heartbreaking when you've got --
9 particularly in the 8th District, we have
10 so many arts and cultural organizations
11 that are really on the verge constantly
12 of closing their doors. And so when we
13 look at where the funding needs to go, I
14 certainly hope as we continue the
15 conversations that that is a large part
16 of it and that there's a commitment from
17 the Office of Arts and Culture to make
18 sure that that is actually what is
19 happening.

20 MS. JOHNSON: Thank you for
21 saying that, yes.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Absolutely.

23 MS. JOHNSON: I wanted that
24 point to be across, and I'm so grateful
25 to have all the Council support. The

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 Philadelphia Cultural Fund is a critical
3 layer, but the next critical layer, like
4 you said, is that level playing field
5 that the Office of Arts and Culture and
6 the Creative Economy can give to those
7 small organizations. Thank you.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: That's
9 correct. Because it's important -- like
10 it's great to have our downtown
11 institutions, and we want them and we
12 want them to survive and to thrive and to
13 be supportive of them, but for some
14 people, they never get out of the
15 neighborhood. The neighborhood is where
16 it's at. And so they do their shopping,
17 you know, their schooling, their working
18 in the neighborhood. And so whatever we
19 can do to support neighborhood cultural
20 institutions is going to be obviously a
21 very important priority of mine, and I'm
22 glad to hear it's yours as well. So
23 thank you so much.

24 Thank you.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 Councilwoman.

3 I echo -- first of all, the
4 Black Pearl, I had an opportunity to see
5 you conduct that orchestra, and when I
6 tell you that you made me an instant fan,
7 you made me tired watching you conduct,
8 and it was just incredible and it's
9 vibrant, and it transformed the Dell
10 instantly, and I just -- I just loved it.

11 MS. JOHNSON: I just want to --
12 I can't take all the credit for that.
13 Thank you. It was a hot day and I was
14 tired, but the brilliant idea really, I
15 have to give all props to -- I'm sorry.
16 She's transcribing. I have to give all
17 credit to --

18 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: She can
19 take pops.

20 MS. JOHNSON: I have to give
21 all credit to Commissioner Slawson and
22 Department of Philadelphia Parks and
23 Recreation, because they had the vision
24 for what the Dell used to be and what it
25 could be again, and they brought me in on

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 that. And so really to see Parks and
3 Recreation, Arts and Culture working
4 together, that is the vision for the
5 City. That's it.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: So one of
7 the other intriguing things that I heard
8 from the testimony here today was making
9 places the center as opposed to creating
10 places and destinations and cultural
11 centers. Councilwoman Bass talked about
12 neighborhoods, but one of the things that
13 in our large shopping center, West Park,
14 we have transformed that from time to
15 time into a town square. We throw up a
16 stage, and it just transforms music and
17 entertainment and young kids dancing. It
18 just changed the whole atmosphere, and it
19 made it a destination for shoppers, and
20 it was vibrant to the businesses and
21 helped stimulate sales.

22 So one of the things that we're
23 looking at is working with the township.
24 You may not remember this. You're too
25 young, Councilwoman, but there used to be

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 a Sears out at 63rd Street. So they're
3 talking about reviving that to do
4 transit-oriented development and putting
5 a big parking lot there, and they wanted
6 to do things like have Shakespeare in the
7 parking lot.

8 MS. JOHNSON: I like the twist
9 on the name, yes.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: From pop-up
11 kind of venues and to create this kind of
12 vibrancy and people know about it. So
13 it's just interesting what a little bit
14 of creativity and a little bit of
15 resources can do.

16 MS. JOHNSON: Absolutely. And
17 to have Councilwoman Bass understand the
18 importance of a department or the
19 permanency of that Office of Arts and
20 Culture is critical, because we as
21 individual organizations have great ideas
22 and I have to say, I see arts and culture
23 and bikes and pedestrians and Parks and
24 Rec all aligned in the same mission for
25 the City. So we're all brothers and

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 sisters up here testifying, but the
3 critical aspect is having that
4 department-level support where they can
5 really reach across into everything and
6 really be integrated into the City's
7 plan. Not just accidentally on our own
8 making things happen, but really have a
9 concentrated effort to just bring the
10 level of the City to where we know
11 Philadelphia can be.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: On the bike
13 lanes, we were -- I was talking to one of
14 the reporters and they asked about the
15 Streets Department, and I said it was a
16 lovefest this afternoon, because people
17 really appreciated the responsiveness of
18 the Streets Commissioner. But one of the
19 things we talked about was the expansion
20 of the bike lane process, and he
21 explained some of the challenges and his
22 idea on how to do it. He was trying to
23 incorporate it into other work that was
24 being done in particular sections. And
25 the obvious pushback from that would be

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 if you do it in a piecemeal way, it won't
3 actually have the consistency and
4 continuity that if you planned it out
5 specifically.

6 MR. PREVIDI: Yeah.
7 Councilman, I'd like to have our Deputy,
8 who is here, Sarah Stuart, to talk
9 specifically on that issue. She wants to
10 speak specifically on the budget and the
11 plans going forward, but you're right.
12 It's kind of almost a two-pronged
13 approach, because in some respects you
14 want to -- like you know this on Ridge
15 Avenue. You want to get the laterals
16 done to the buildings so that when you
17 are finally paving it, you're not ripping
18 up the street a year later. So some of
19 it, I think it's a balancing act really
20 between both needs, because so many
21 people want to have access to the street.
22 But I'm going to defer to Sarah Stuart to
23 answer that question for you.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: I would
25 applaud that wisdom.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 All right. Are there any other
3 questions for this group of people to
4 testify?

5 (No response.)

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Seeing none,
7 thank you so much for your testimony.

8 (Thank you.)

9 THE CLERK: Ken Weinstein,
10 David Kanthor, Alex Doty.

11 (No response.)

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
13 all.

14 THE CLERK: Ken Weinstein,
15 David Kanthor, Alex Doty.

16 (No response.)

17 THE CLERK: Sarah Stuart, Joe
18 O'Hara, Basil Gibbs.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
20 all.

21 (Witnesses approached witness
22 table.)

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Ms. Stuart,
24 pull the mike a little closer to you.
25 State your name for the record and please

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 begin your testimony. Good evening.

3 MS. STUART: Thank you,
4 Mr. Chairman. My name is Sarah Clark
5 Stuart. I'm Deputy Director of the
6 Bicycle Coalition of Greater
7 Philadelphia. I thank you for the
8 opportunity to testify today, and I'm
9 here to make public comment on the
10 Streets Department Operating and Capital
11 Budgets.

12 I'd like to try to make four
13 points as quickly as possible. First, I
14 urge City Council to approve the proposed
15 Fiscal Year 2016 budgets for the Streets
16 Department's Operating and Capital
17 Programs. The proposed Fiscal Year 2016
18 budget increases the paving budget from
19 16 million to 20.4 million, which will
20 allow approximately 85 miles of streets
21 to be repaved, a vast improvement over
22 previous years. And we urge City Council
23 to approve this budget and ultimately
24 work with the next Mayor to raise it,
25 continue to raise the paving budget to at

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 least 32 million so that at least 130
3 miles can be repaved annually. That is
4 what the Streets Department has said it
5 needs to do in order to keep all of its
6 City streets in good state of repair.
7 And we applaud the Philadelphia Community
8 Sustainability Initiative that City
9 Council has developed for making the very
10 same recommendation.

11 On the operating side, the
12 Streets Department's transportation
13 projected FY16 Operating Budget is a
14 little bit over \$33 million, and this is
15 an increase of 1.17 million from what was
16 budgeted in Fiscal Year '15, and that
17 increase is very helpful and greatly,
18 greatly needed.

19 I will, however, note that it
20 still keeps the Streets Department on the
21 transportation side operating budget at
22 less than 1 percent of the General Fund.
23 I will also note that the transportation
24 side of the Streets Department is
25 one-third of the sanitation side's

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 operating budget. It's less than the
3 Fleet Department at 50 million and less
4 than Innovation and Technology Department
5 at 46 million.

6 So why is this so important?
7 Because the Streets Department is the key
8 to making Philadelphia streets safer, and
9 safer streets is a public safety issue.
10 As you know, if streets aren't repaved,
11 they start falling apart, as we've all
12 seen and witnessed. Cracks and bumps
13 develop. Manholes sink. Potholes open
14 up. Gravel is everywhere. Striping is
15 non-existent. And in the case -- and
16 they make it difficult for wheelchairs to
17 cross. They become tripping hazards.
18 They contribute to crashes, and cars and
19 bicycles blow out their tires or worse.
20 Just to put it simply, those kinds of
21 streets are unsafe. And in the case of
22 Philadelphia streets, there just hasn't
23 been enough resources made available to
24 the Streets Department to maintain the
25 streets that they are responsible for,

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 much less install innovative
3 infrastructure such as protected bike
4 lanes or curb bump-outs or speed humps or
5 roundabouts, all the things that we know
6 help make streets safer and people safer.

7 As was mentioned today this
8 afternoon by Commissioner Perri, the City
9 has 2,525 miles of streets that need to
10 be maintained, repaired, reconstructed,
11 repaved, restriped, and as of a year ago,
12 the City had a 900 mile backlog in
13 streets that needed to be repaved.

14 So what's happening is that the
15 paving budget hasn't been big enough for
16 the Streets Department to cut down on
17 that backlog, and its operating funds
18 have been going down almost every year
19 for the past ten years.

20 And compared to the budgets of
21 other cities, this looks even worse.
22 Baltimore spends \$143 per capita of its
23 operating budget on streets.
24 Philadelphia spends \$16. Baltimore's
25 operating budget for streets is 5.5

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 percent of its general fund.
3 Philadelphia's is 0.84 percent. New York
4 City has approximately one DOT worker for
5 every street mile. Philadelphia has one
6 Street Department worker for every five
7 miles.

8 So the math is pretty simple.
9 Only a more resourced Streets Department
10 can deliver safer streets and safer
11 citizens, and only safer streets will
12 contribute to safer communities. And
13 that's what we're here about as
14 communities of choice, communities where
15 people want to live and people where they
16 feel safe.

17 So two other points. As the
18 Community Sustainability Initiative calls
19 for, in its safety index, better streets
20 will increase neighborhood walkability
21 and vitality. It also calls for making
22 more retail corridors physically
23 attractive, and that's what the Streets
24 Department can do if it's sufficiently
25 resourced.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 So I'll wrap up there very
3 quickly that the City of Philadelphia is
4 on the right road. It's doing great
5 stuff, but it's being left behind by its
6 peer cities that are doing more. And we
7 just urge City Council to approve these
8 increases in budget so that the Streets
9 Department can help make Philadelphia a
10 safer city.

11 Thank you.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
13 Ms. Stuart. We're going to hold
14 questions until all of the panelists
15 present their testimony and we'll open it
16 up for questions.

17 MR. O'HARA: Hi. My name is
18 Joe O'Hara. I'm with a company called
19 Finn Land Corp. We follow tax sales and
20 mortgage foreclosure sales in
21 Philadelphia County and we help companies
22 and individuals and estates go through
23 the plight and journey of getting money
24 back from the sheriff sales. Sometimes a
25 home will sell at a tax sale for 40,000.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 The homeowner, after all municipals and
3 sheriff fees, may have only owed 30,000.

4 The municipals and sheriff fees are the
5 delinquent taxes and gas bills, nuisance
6 liens, parking tickets, probation, and
7 there is a percentage of tax sales which
8 create excess funds. Those excess funds
9 are due and payable to someone. They are
10 not the possession of the City's. They
11 are maintained by the City until the
12 appropriate party comes forward. There
13 are rules in place for all 67 counties.
14 This county does not follow them.

15 The rule is to order a title
16 report to say there's \$10,000 left over
17 and now we'll see if there's a mortgage,
18 if there's a registered lien from a
19 credit card company or anything else. If
20 there are none, it goes back directly to
21 the homeowner. The homeowner has to
22 physically petition for that.

23 The City Solicitor's Office set
24 up in 2010 a program called a
25 registered -- I'm sorry; Sheriff's

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 Registered Distribution Representative.
3 I signed up for that program to work on a
4 contingency fee basis to figure out who
5 is owed money and tell them and help them
6 get it back. My company is only paid if
7 we are successful. There's no up-front
8 fees. The Sheriff's Office does
9 everything it can to block and harangue
10 me and anybody else in this business.
11 There are many families that I coach and
12 do not sign up as a fee. I tell you, you
13 don't need it, you've already been in
14 there. And this isn't something just
15 against me. It's a problem there. There
16 is very little transparency.

17 Under the prior Administration,
18 there were two computers on the 5th floor
19 in the Real Estate Division of the
20 Sheriff's Office. Those computers were
21 for the public to use. You could look to
22 see and say, Oh, the property sold for
23 40. They paid water, sewer, taxes.
24 There may or may not be money. In 2011
25 when there was a shakeup at the Sheriff's

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 Office in January 7th, the Sheriff's
3 Office shut down for a little bit. When
4 it came back, they implemented a one
5 computer. Now, that one computer, there
6 was a maximum time of 30 minutes for the
7 public. However, many of the agencies in
8 the City -- and they seem to do with
9 taxes -- had to also use that one
10 computer. The Sheriff's Office had it
11 set up that there's no time limit for
12 that. So those computers could be used
13 for days.

14 In August 2013, at the decision
15 of someone in the Sheriff's Office, they
16 said no more public computer. So the
17 procedure to research a property that may
18 or may not have excess funds is to stand
19 in line, ask one of the people working at
20 the front desk, Could I have a fee screen
21 distribution for this property, which in
22 the past the public could just look. The
23 Sheriff's computer is absolutely very
24 slow. If someone like myself would ask
25 for four of them, they ask you to come

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 back because it takes a long time to
3 print them out.

4 Fiscally speaking, it makes
5 much more sense to just simply have a
6 computer for the City. The man hours
7 spent just printing these fee screen
8 distributions out is crazy.

9 I thought that today's meeting
10 was specifically to address the
11 Philadelphia Sheriff's Office. I see
12 that it's just a full budget meeting.
13 I've never spoke before. I do appreciate
14 this opportunity. I was going to bring
15 something up that recently -- things go
16 on for months and years. You go in and
17 ask for your funds. The Sheriff's Office
18 asks you for nothing at all. They never
19 respond. They may call the person that
20 you brought in their information for a
21 couple years later, and at any time they
22 can say, Oops, it's two years later, we
23 feel that you are slipping, even though
24 you live on your own. You have some type
25 of dementia, you will not receive your

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 funds.

3 Recently, the new rule for --
4 it's a new twist. I represent whoever is
5 owed the funds. So many times it's a
6 mortgage company. I'll get a letter a
7 couple of months after submitting a
8 claim. I have several of these letters.
9 This is kind of urgent because the woman
10 is in her 90's. I submitted a claim in
11 October of 2014. It's a very short
12 letter. I'll read it, if you don't mind.

13 December 9th, Joe O'Hara, Finn
14 Land, regarding Magnolia Highsmith,
15 mortgage lienholder.

16 Dear Mr. O'Hara, any claim that
17 you have to excess funds held by the City
18 of Philadelphia as a result of the tax
19 sale of Filbert Street has been
20 extinguished by operation of loan. The
21 Sheriff's Office will distribute the
22 funds to the property owner.

23 Sincerely, Joseph Vignola,
24 Undersheriff.

25 I've written to the Sheriff.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 I've written to Butkovitz. I've gotten
3 responses from many people other than the
4 Sheriff.

5 Prior to receiving this letter,
6 I was under the impression that a
7 mortgage could only be extinguished
8 through the recording of a mortgage
9 release or a mortgage satisfaction or a
10 court order signed by a judge. Since
11 receiving these letters -- it's more than
12 one -- I have pleaded with the Sheriff's
13 Office for an explanation, but have not
14 received one.

15 They're running amuck over
16 there. They don't like me. I'm fine
17 with that. This absolutely isn't about
18 me. They are holding tens of thousands,
19 and this is the lifeline for some people.
20 You have nothing. You lost your house.
21 You may have nothing. You're living with
22 your mom. You're living nowhere. It
23 would simply help and be fiscally
24 responsible to put the computers back in
25 so that the public, whether it be me or

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 an attorney or anyone who wants to look
3 at it rather than hassle the public when
4 they're simply asking for their funds.

5 I appreciate you listening. I
6 really did think this was a meeting
7 strictly to address the people at the
8 Sheriff's Office. I have no access to
9 those that be at the Sheriff's Office. I
10 have access to only the gatekeepers.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Councilwoman
12 Tasco.

13 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Well, the
14 Sheriff Department will come before the
15 Council to testify. Certainly we
16 appreciate your testimony and we'll take
17 notes from your testimony to ask
18 questions about this process.

19 MR. O'HARA: I would be very
20 happy to put my thoughts down, because I
21 live this, share it with you, and then
22 you ask the questions and the poignant
23 questions. Transparency is a big issue.
24 This would not only save money by putting
25 those computers back, it would go a long

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 way for transparency versus in August of
3 2013, the question was, hey, what
4 happened to the computer, why is it gone?

5 Oh, we're going online.
6 Everything is going to be online. Don't
7 worry about it.

8 So I stopped asking. But
9 people getting their money back is a big
10 issue. And it is not just about me.
11 This is a major issue, and this is only
12 the few people who know about the money.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: If you would
14 provide to the Chair a list of your
15 questions, I'm sure there are members of
16 Council that will follow it up. In
17 addition to having a public access
18 terminal, it seems to me that we might
19 have some in the neighborhoods where
20 people who have undergone the process of
21 sheriff sale can publicly find out where
22 the distribution of funds has gone.

23 But thank you for your
24 testimony.

25 Sir.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Can I say
3 one other thing. The letter that you
4 read that was from the Sheriff's Office,
5 Vignola's letter --

6 MR. O'HARA: I have copies of
7 the letter if you'd like one.

8 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: All right.
9 Thank you.

10 MR. O'HARA: I gave one to
11 Frank today in your office.

12 COUNCILWOMAN TASCO: Thank you.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: We can get
14 copies now. Thank you.

15 Sir.

16 MR. GIBBS: Before I get into
17 my -- I piggyback on Joe, this is my
18 first time meeting Joe in person. I'm
19 one of the people that Joe didn't take
20 funds from my sheriff sale, and he's been
21 coaching me, and Joe has been a great
22 aide to me. But just for not for so much
23 my sake, but for literally hundreds of
24 people out there, just like the State of
25 Pennsylvania has excess funds owed to

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 people and they will put it in the
3 newspaper from time to time, it is very,
4 very, very disheartening to see an
5 elected officer or Sheriff's Office that
6 would not want people to receive funds
7 from their property, whether they be
8 living in another state or whatever,
9 what-have-you. So I just want to say
10 that.

11 Now, my name is Basil Clark
12 Gibbs. I am probably -- some people kind
13 of seem young, but I'm the great-nephew
14 of Paul M. Lawson. He used to be a State
15 Representative here in Philadelphia and
16 ran the UAW in the '60s and the '70s
17 here. And I say that because the woman
18 who I stayed with was his wife, my
19 great-aunt, who just passed last year at
20 the age of 99. We were living -- I was
21 living here since -- back here since
22 2002. I used to live here in the late
23 '80s, early '90s with her in West
24 Philadelphia, 54th and Sampson.

25 Anyway, through a situation

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 unbeknownst to me, I don't have a
3 criminal record, I was -- and I say this
4 because we have record. I was literally
5 set up by Philadelphia Airport in 2010,
6 same with the Nigerian boy with the bomb
7 in his underwear, and I came back and had
8 to fight that case, only to win it from
9 January -- only to win it and have
10 everything dismissed in August.
11 Literally being drugs planted -- I never
12 saw a drug a day in my life. Literally
13 drugs planted on me by the Police at the
14 Philadelphia Airport, and they would not
15 show the videotape. And there was video
16 that was in the police report that they
17 saw me and my aunt going through. They
18 stuck a TSA computer on me going from
19 here to LA. I didn't know about it.
20 This is important. And coming back, I
21 was under investigation. They arrested
22 me. And anyway -- and anyway, from that
23 point on, from then to August, I wanted
24 the videotape so bad, because I knew I
25 was totally innocent. And so from that

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 situation after that -- because when I
3 won that, I turned the police officers
4 into Internal Affairs -- I started
5 getting harassed. That's why I left the
6 City. I don't live in Philadelphia since
7 2011. My aunt, she died last year in
8 Columbus. I had to fly her body back
9 here, because they harassed me. I've
10 been screaming. You don't even know.
11 I've been -- and I got a record, and I
12 want to say this, the prosecutor here in
13 the City told the judges over there at
14 the courtroom, he said, Listen, I told
15 you in July, no video, no trial. And
16 here's August, and she said -- he said,
17 What's the situation? Have you talked to
18 the detectives?

19 And he said -- she said, Well,
20 listen, you better get him on the line
21 and find out what's the situation.
22 Otherwise I'm throwing this out.

23 So he called us back later on
24 when the line went through, and she --
25 and the judge called her up, and she

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 said, I talked to him. She said -- the
3 judge said, What did they say?

4 She said, Well, they viewed him
5 live.

6 In other words, they viewed me
7 live doing whatever wrong I was supposed
8 to be doing. What was wrong with what
9 she said was -- this is on record now.
10 What was wrong with what she said -- I
11 had my 95-year-old aunt at the time. I
12 wouldn't put her life in jeopardy, let
13 alone my own. But what was wrong with
14 what she said was, they viewed me live.
15 If they viewed me live -- and this the
16 same week the Nigerian boy had the bomb
17 in his underwear at Christmastime. All
18 airports are Amber Alert. Why in the
19 world did they let me get on an airplane
20 and put everyone's life in jeopardy if I
21 did something, stole a computer or had a
22 bomb or something? Seriously. I have
23 all the record for all that.

24 But anyway, that's why I'm out
25 of the City. And when I left the City,

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 our house there on 54th and Sampson was
3 furnished, everything. We had clothes in
4 the closet. We just left with a few
5 things that we had. I was not contacted
6 about the sheriff sale, and I understand
7 they consider you have to be vacated. I
8 was back and forth within two years. I
9 wasn't like completely gone, and I'm
10 going through struggles and through court
11 stuff. Well, our house got sold, not
12 known to me, and with everything in it.
13 I mean, clothes, everything. And it got
14 ransacked. And so when I -- it was sold
15 for \$40,000. When I went and fought to
16 get my excess fund, I kept getting
17 ignored, ignored, ignored, ignored. I
18 bombarded, bombarded, and bombarded. I
19 got something like close to 20-something
20 thousand dollars, whatever, and then the
21 Pennsylvania Department of Revenue said I
22 owed them \$5,000. It was said that to
23 the Sheriff's paper, and I knew it wasn't
24 true. So I told Lieutenant Guest, Deputy
25 Lieutenant Guest, Do not send those funds

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 out. I told Deputy Guest, Do not send
3 those funds out to the Pennsylvania
4 Department of Revenue because that money
5 is not owed to them. There was a mistake
6 made with -- as far as me owing the
7 Pennsylvania Department of Revenue. And
8 so I dealt with my accountant and got
9 everything cleared up. And so I called
10 the Pennsylvania Department of Revenue.
11 They told me, Mr. Gibbs, you do not owe
12 us \$5,000 or whatever, what-have-you.
13 And so I went -- so I called Lieutenant
14 Guest I believe on a Thursday or Friday
15 last year around this time, if I can
16 finish up. Around this time I called him
17 on Thursday or Friday and told him that
18 I'll be in town as far as the next
19 following Monday. He said, Well, listen,
20 deal with Deputy Sheriff Brown, because I
21 won't be there and she'll handle it. So
22 that Monday I drove from Columbus, Ohio
23 to Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. I got
24 everything from the Pennsylvania
25 Department of Revenue, showed that I

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 don't owe them \$5,000 so the Sheriff's
3 Department -- the money comes to me, and
4 they already did all their so-called
5 disbursements. So I brought it here and
6 I went to the title office, to Sandiago's
7 office, because you don't double dip.
8 You only go through one title search,
9 \$300, supposed to be \$300. And I gave a
10 copy to them. I called them from
11 Harrisburg, came down, and I came down
12 here and I sat in the Sheriff's Office on
13 Monday, and Deputy Sheriff Brown was
14 notified that I was here. She came out.
15 She didn't even acknowledge me. She went
16 back in. I sat there all day. I came
17 back and I said, well, maybe lunch. Came
18 back. So I came back Tuesday, did the
19 same thing, totally ignored. Came back
20 Wednesday, the same thing. I'm here from
21 out of town. Totally ignored. My aunt
22 is inconvenienced, because she's with me.
23 I take care of her. And so here comes
24 Thursday. I don't come in. I come in
25 Thursday after Sheriff's Office talking

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 to Deputy Sheriff Parsons in the hallway
3 and, lo and behold, after 4 o'clock here
4 comes Deputy Brown off the elevator,
5 didn't even acknowledge me. She
6 acknowledges Parsons and said hi, and
7 Parsons said, Can I speak to you.

8 She said, Sure. They go in the
9 back. They come back out. She finally
10 talks to me. She's like, Mr. Gibbs, you
11 were supposed to call and we don't do
12 things certain ways, this and that.

13 I said -- I let her talk. I
14 said, Ma'am, excuse me. I said, being a
15 public servant, I said, I was here
16 Monday. You see me Monday. I stayed
17 here Tuesday. Here it is Thursday. I
18 got totally ignored. My time is gone,
19 and I said, you know, I just wanted the
20 situation -- as far as the money comes to
21 me, whatever. And so what happened was,
22 Paris comes -- Washington comes and
23 pushes the elevator getting ready to
24 leave. Then he turns around --

25 THE CLERK: Mr. Gibbs, can you

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 wrap up your testimony.

3 MR. GIBBS: Okay. Well, here's
4 the thing. Instead of the \$5,000 that I
5 was supposed to get back from
6 Pennsylvania Department of Revenue from
7 the Sheriff's Department they were
8 holding, they delayed it, and I kept
9 getting -- when they finally gave it to
10 me, it was only like 3,000 something
11 dollars. I said, Well, where is the
12 \$5,000? Because, you know, no excess
13 funds -- no money is supposed to be taken
14 out of that, and all my tickets,
15 everything was already paid for. And
16 they totally ignored me and said, Well,
17 we'll e-mail it to you.

18 Where it's at? It's been since
19 last year that I haven't got the extra
20 money, and Mrs. Blackwell and Paulette,
21 she's worked with me. She's been ignored
22 by Vignola's office, and it's like -- I
23 was like -- I told him, I said, who are
24 they accountable to? They bully people,
25 and people just -- listen, there are

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 people that got thousands of dollars out
3 there and they just quit because they
4 don't have the tenacity or they -- they
5 have stress, heart attacks. They don't
6 know who to go to, and they can't pay
7 lawyers.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: So what
9 we're going to do, if we could, is -- we
10 actually were listening and we were
11 writing some stuff -- I'm sorry. We were
12 listening and writing some of the issues
13 down, and the good thing about this time
14 of year but hearing from you is that we
15 actually get to have the Sheriff and the
16 departments here, and I would suggest
17 getting from the Clerk the schedule when
18 we have that so we could deal with your
19 specific issue.

20 But I think a bigger issue that
21 I heard you talk about, which is the
22 whole policy, that if your individual
23 case, yes, but the whole policy of how
24 access to that information is, and I
25 think we all heard you loud and clear.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 MR. GIBBS: And for people.

3 There should be a let know for those
4 funds so people whose houses sold in the
5 past that got money out of the Sheriff's
6 Department and their relatives so they
7 could be contacted. It's just simply not
8 right. It's not even humanly -- people
9 get stressed out, you know. No one can
10 pay medical bills and no one can pay for
11 lawyers. It should be just as a common
12 courtesy, you know.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: It's
14 actually a part of the law that we have
15 to do.

16 MR. GIBBS: And it doesn't
17 happen.

18 MR. O'HARA: It's not part of
19 law. There are rules to bring properties
20 to sale. You have to give notice. If
21 you can't find the person, you can post
22 the house. There is no rule that says
23 any government agency needs to look for
24 you afterwards, but the few people that
25 do find out about the funds really need

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 to be dealt with in a different way. If
3 a check is handed to me, there's
4 absolutely no transparency. They just
5 give me a check for \$10,000. It doesn't
6 say, look, here was 65,000 we started at
7 and A, B, C, and D.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: There's no
9 itemization of cost.

10 MR. O'HARA: But I would be
11 glad to submit some stuff to one of the
12 City Councilpeople and you fire away.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: We will
14 follow up on it --

15 MR. O'HARA: Thank you.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: -- with
17 questions to the Sheriff about your
18 individual case, but also --

19 MR. O'HARA: But there's no --
20 the City is doing nothing wrong by not
21 looking for Basil Gibbs. That's not
22 their responsibility. It's their
23 responsibility to give notice. It's the
24 public's responsibility in this county
25 and every other county to come forward,

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 whether it be a lienholder or a person.
3 So that's not my gripe. The gripe is the
4 few people that come forward are
5 stonewalled over and over and over.

6 MR. GIBBS: We get ignored.

7 MR. O'HARA: And I will follow
8 up with somebody.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
10 much.

11 MR. O'HARA: And I thank you.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: Are there
13 any questions for this group of people
14 that are testifying?

15 (No response.)

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: Seeing none,
17 thank you for your testimony.

18 MR. GIBBS: Thank you very much
19 for your time. And we were here today
20 because we understand the Sheriff was
21 supposed to be here, but they had a sale,
22 so they had postponed it. That's why.
23 I'm here from out of town, so...

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.
25 Who are the next group to

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 testify?

3 THE CLERK: Stephanie Singer,
4 Adrienne Jacoby, and Tara McCoy.

5 (Witnesses approached witness
6 table.)

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: By the way,
8 there is a hearing on the Sheriff
9 Department on the 28th of this month at 3
10 o'clock. I know you're out of town and
11 you have travel, but if you're available
12 or if you can have someone representing
13 you, that will be an appropriate time.

14 MR. GIBBS: Thank you.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

16 Thank you for your patience.

17 Please state your name for the record and
18 begin your testimony.

19 COMMISSIONER SINGER: City
20 Commissioner Stephanie Singer.

21 I'd like to say before I start,
22 looking at the School-Based Family
23 Services Center, I'd like to put in a
24 request that those include voter
25 registration, absentee ballot

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 applications, and other support for
3 families who want to be part of the
4 democratic process.

5 I know it's traditional to come
6 here and ask for more money for things,
7 but I'm here to ask Council to spend less
8 money, significantly less money, \$19
9 million less than is currently in the
10 Capital Budget.

11 Only ten years ago the City of
12 Philadelphia spent \$20 million to buy
13 voting machines via a process far removed
14 from the public eye. That process gave
15 us the voting machines we have today,
16 which have some serious drawbacks,
17 including write-in votes are notoriously
18 difficult to cast. There is no way to
19 re-count voter intent in case of
20 challenges, and there is only one vendor
21 qualified to maintain the machines. So
22 the Board of Elections is forced to pay
23 that vendor what the vendor asks,
24 currently several hundred thousand
25 dollars per year, and the Board of

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 Elections has no bargaining power.

3 The proposed Capital Budget for
4 the upcoming year, Fiscal Year 2016,
5 would set aside \$25 million to buy new
6 voting machines. Somebody seems to be in
7 a hurry to spend this money. The
8 procurement process is well underway,
9 though there seems to have been no
10 attempt to gather public input or even
11 input from poll workers or the technical
12 staff of the Board of Elections. In
13 other words, there seems to have been no
14 attempt to gather input from the people
15 who will be using the machines.

16 Why the hurry? Anyone who has
17 kept an eye on the voting machine market
18 knows that there are big changes brewing.
19 Obama's Presidential Commission on
20 Election Administration recommends open
21 source software deployed on commercial,
22 off-the-shelf hardware. LA County in
23 California and Travis County, Texas are
24 blazing the path, developing systems to
25 make that recommendation a reality. The

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 new systems will be substantially
3 cheaper. The not-for-profit Open Source
4 Election Technology Foundation estimates
5 that Philadelphia could purchase a new
6 system for as little as \$6 million.
7 That's \$19 million less than the City is
8 planning to spend this year.

9 So, again, why the hurry? If
10 we wait, we can get a system that doesn't
11 make us depend on one single maintenance
12 vendor, which should save significant
13 money every year in addition to the
14 up-front \$19 million savings.

15 Why the hurry? Federal
16 certification standards are in flux, and
17 Pennsylvania certification procedures are
18 also in flux as the Federal Election
19 Assistance Commission revamps standards
20 in response to lessons learned since the
21 last round of voting machine purchases.
22 If we wait, we can be sure to get a
23 system appropriate for the next 15 years
24 instead of a system created for the old
25 2002 standards.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 Some people are saying, Well,
3 we have to hurry because we want to
4 introduce the voting machines in 2017, a
5 year we expect voter turnout to be low,
6 but let's be honest, judging by past
7 performance, 2018 and 2019 are likely to
8 be low turnout years too. Why are we
9 hurrying?

10 Before approving \$25 million
11 for new voting technology, City Council
12 should make sure that there's an open
13 process to figure out what voters, poll
14 workers, and Board of Elections staff
15 want and don't want. City Council should
16 make sure that we don't waste \$19
17 million. That's enough money to raise
18 poll worker pay to minimum wage for 19
19 years or to close a substantial portion
20 of the school funding gap.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. We're
22 going to let everyone testify and then
23 we'll have questions for this panel.

24 So pull the mike to you. Good
25 evening.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 MS. JACOBY: Good evening.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Pull the
4 mike a little closer.

5 MS. JACOBY: Well, good
6 evening, Councilman Jones and
7 Councilwomen and Councilmen who are here.
8 I'm Adrienne Jacoby. I'm the Director of
9 Philadelphia Reads, and I'm delighted to
10 speak to you at this open budget hearing
11 today on behalf of Philadelphia Reads.

12 We are here to request a budget
13 item, here to request \$350,000 for
14 Philadelphia Reads, and it is, in case
15 you didn't know, an initiative of the
16 Mayor, and unlike other nearby cities
17 like Baltimore and Boston, we are
18 unfunded and we receive in-kind support,
19 which has decreased over the years as
20 well. It's nice to know other cities
21 support this Reads initiative and they do
22 around the country, but not in
23 Philadelphia.

24 So you know I said we were
25 formed by Mayor Rendell at the time right

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 after the President Summit that was held
3 here in 1997, and our goal then was to
4 have children -- is to provide supports
5 and materials and volunteers to help
6 children read on level by the time
7 they're in 4th grade.

8 Now, we've been doing this for
9 a long time, and today finally there's
10 another initiative called Read by 4th, of
11 which we are on the steering committee
12 and very much an active part of. Our
13 programs are included in that. Of
14 course, we don't receive funding for
15 that, but we would like to.

16 So in our deal to improve
17 children's literacy in this wonderful
18 city of ours in which we are doing so
19 much, it has become very costly, and
20 foundation money is decreasing, mainly
21 because it is not a national
22 organization. I mean, there's no
23 national group even though there's tons
24 of Reads organizations. However, it is
25 more costly not to fund what we do.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 Here's why -- or not to fund initiatives
3 like us. Nationally it's estimated that
4 more than \$2 billion is spent every year
5 on students who repeat a grade because of
6 reading problems. Nationally over one
7 million children drop out of school each
8 year, costing the nation over 240 billion
9 in lost earnings, foregone tax revenues,
10 and expenditures for social services.

11 Sixty percent of America's
12 inmates are illiterate, and 85 percent of
13 the juvenile offenders have reading
14 problems. We know this. This is an
15 awful thing.

16 So what do we do? We work from
17 a preventative model, and that is because
18 we want children to read on level by
19 grade four. Anyway, so can we afford as
20 a city not to support Philadelphia Reads
21 and what we do?

22 For example, one of the first
23 things that we did was to start a Power
24 Partners tutoring program. The tutoring
25 program has 975 children from about 25

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 schools across the City in Philadelphia.
3 They go to some of the most incredible
4 businesses and law firms here in
5 Philadelphia, from Dow Chemical, Blue
6 Cross, some of the largest law firms here
7 in the City, EPA, the judicial courts,
8 and they go there weekly for tutoring.
9 And what happens? They gain an
10 additional two to three months in their
11 reading ability as compared to their
12 peers.

13 The second thing we did was
14 that we opened the Children's Book Bank.
15 The Children's Book Bank gives out -- one
16 of the purposes was to have books in the
17 classroom, because the more you read, the
18 better you get at reading. So we have
19 this Children's Book Bank, which kind of
20 looks like Barnes and Noble for teachers,
21 and the teachers come and they can take
22 enough, 350 books and very often more,
23 for their classroom libraries so that
24 children can read more books.

25 We've estimated that we give

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 out about -- actually, we don't estimate.
3 We count -- over 100,000 books a year,
4 which is worth, if they bought them new,
5 millions of dollars. So we save the City
6 and we save the teachers quite a bit of
7 money. I mean, the service for tutoring
8 is quite a bit of money.

9 So the other thing we do is
10 that -- I'm on my wrong page.

11 So the other things we do is
12 that we run the Philadelphia Reading
13 Olympics for 2,000 children in the City,
14 public, charter, parochial, and
15 independent schools. They read 35,000
16 books to prepare for this program.

17 We also run an incredible
18 award-winning, nationally award-winning,
19 Summer Reads program, and for that the
20 children also do not lose anything over
21 the summer. In fact, they gain an
22 additional couple months, which is
23 phenomenal.

24 So we're asking you, can we
25 afford to lose a program like that in

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 Philadelphia? We don't have to if the
3 City begins to support an initiative that
4 is theirs. We do all this in the name of
5 the City. So we are asking for this
6 money to support these children.

7 I just have to give you a
8 couple of comments. For example, one
9 teacher wrote about the Power Partners
10 about how the child went -- it wasn't an
11 English-speaking child -- went from
12 emergent reading and she had to -- to
13 grade two level reading, and she felt
14 that it was because of the mentoring and
15 the tutoring. She said she does a lot,
16 but that really pushed the child over the
17 edge.

18 And teachers write, I walked
19 into my classroom. There were six books.
20 I came to the Book Bank. I could not
21 afford to do it any other way.

22 And then the Reading Olympics,
23 the children -- a child said, I like
24 reading, but when I got to Philadelphia
25 Reading Olympics, I loved reading. Now I

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 read almost all the time.

3 And the best quote of all is,
4 When I started reading for the Reading
5 Olympics, I stopped fighting because the
6 books were more interesting to me.

7 So I ask you, please support
8 Philadelphia Reads.

9 Thank you.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
11 for your testimony.

12 MS. JACOBY: And I have
13 handouts, by the way, for everyone. So
14 if you could give these out, please, that
15 would be great. You can see there's a
16 map there. You can see the thousand
17 teachers that come to the Book Bank. You
18 can see where they are.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you so
20 much.

21 Ma'am, are you ready?

22 MS. MCCOY: Yes. Good evening.
23 I too work at Philadelphia Reads. I'm
24 here to speak as an employee of
25 Philadelphia Reads, but also as an

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 educator and an advocate for our City's
3 children. I just want to first start off
4 by saying that I'm a proud product of our
5 public school system here in
6 Philadelphia, having attended some of the
7 finest schools here. But not only have I
8 attended Philadelphia public schools, but
9 I later went on to work in many of those
10 schools as an educator, as an
11 administrator, and an advocate for those
12 same schools for over a decade. And one
13 of the common factors that I noticed in
14 all of my experiences as it relates to
15 the success is the ability and presence
16 of partnerships with non-profit
17 organizations like Philadelphia Reads to
18 provide quality out-of-school-time
19 programming.

20 COURT STENOGRAPHER: Can you
21 state your name.

22 MS. McCOY: Sure. Tara McCoy.
23 As Adrienne has already
24 mentioned, Philadelphia Reads started in
25 1997 as an initiative of the Mayor's

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 Office, and we impact nearly 20,000 or
3 rather over 20,000 children's lives each
4 year, reaching an average of 1,000
5 classrooms. Meaning not only do we
6 impact the lives of the students that we
7 engage, but the teachers as well and the
8 homes of these children, not only at the
9 public schools, but also at the early
10 childhood learning facilities through our
11 four core programs, one of which Adrienne
12 mentioned, the Power Partners program,
13 which used to take place right here in
14 City Hall.

15 When the Mayor's Office
16 launched Philadelphia Reads as an
17 initiative to raise a city of readers, it
18 was sustained mainly through connections
19 and personal relationships of the founder
20 and then Mayor Rendell. But as time
21 moved on, those connections and those
22 friendships and those resources moved on
23 as well.

24 Today it's time for us to
25 return home to City Hall where it all

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 started and request for more sustainable
3 ways in which we cannot merely survive
4 but thrive as an organization.

5 As an out-of-school-time
6 program provider, we support the work of
7 Philadelphia's public schools through our
8 core programs, providing an average of \$2
9 million in books and supplies for our
10 City's classrooms and school libraries
11 through our Book Bank, an estimated
12 \$525,000 in tutoring services through our
13 Power Partners program, roughly \$400,000
14 through our Summer Reads program, which
15 is an academic preparation to prevent
16 summer learning loss. In addition, we
17 mobilize an average of 2,000 of
18 Philadelphia's children each year to
19 compete in our only -- it's the City's
20 only literacy competition where children
21 in grades four through eight read 20
22 chapter books, work together as a team,
23 which not only proves that our children
24 can in fact read, but they like to read,
25 and they will be willing to do so

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 provided with the quality and intriguing
3 literature to do so.

4 You may look at our outcomes
5 and think that we don't need any support
6 because we've been successful without it,
7 but that's not the case. We've lost
8 substantial funding over the years and
9 there's been cutbacks in areas of
10 programming, and currently we're down to
11 two staff members that are full time,
12 Adrienne and myself, and that's all due
13 to drastic and gradual drops in funding
14 support over the last several years.
15 We're at a really critical point, and as
16 a City initiative, bearing the City's
17 name as an initiative of the Mayor's
18 Office, we need to strengthen the
19 partnership between City Hall and
20 Philadelphia Reads.

21 As I noted earlier, the
22 beginning years of Philadelphia Reads
23 were based on friendships. Well, I'm
24 here today to ask if we can return to
25 that same model, looking to City Hall as

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 a friend of Philadelphia Reads.

3 Thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Wow. I have
5 questions, but I'm going to yield to my
6 colleague for all panelists. But I'm
7 going to yield to my colleague Councilman
8 Goode, who has not asked a question yet.

9 COUNCILMAN GOODE: So I need to
10 get on the record as asking a question.

11 Good evening, Commissioner.
12 Are you familiar with the fact that
13 Councilman Squilla posed several of your
14 concerns to the Office of Innovation and
15 Technology?

16 COMMISSIONER SINGER: I was not
17 aware of that. Thank you.

18 COUNCILMAN GOODE: And the
19 responses from the Director of that
20 office completely contradict everything
21 you just said. One, they have not come
22 up with a final plan.

23 COMMISSIONER SINGER: I'm
24 sorry. They have not?

25 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Come up with

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 a final plan.

3 Two, they are nowhere close to
4 putting out an RFP.

5 Three, there is a broad
6 committee involved that also involves the
7 Commissioners office.

8 Four, they're not sure what the
9 latest technology is, but they said they
10 wanted to make sure that they know what
11 the latest technology is before they do
12 any of that.

13 COMMISSIONER SINGER: Well --

14 COUNCILMAN GOODE: So I would
15 ask, where did your information come
16 from?

17 COMMISSIONER SINGER: So I'd
18 like to respond one by one, but I didn't
19 write down what you said. So --

20 COUNCILMAN GOODE: My question
21 is --

22 COMMISSIONER SINGER: My
23 information has come from my
24 communication with the Office of
25 Information and Technology and my

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 communication with Everett Gillison,
3 Deputy Mayor, and with the publication of
4 an RFI request for information last
5 October. The last communication that I
6 had from Mr. Gillison indicated that they
7 were -- they wanted to get an RFP out by
8 the end of March, and I have that letter.
9 I don't have it with me, but I could
10 provide that to you.

11 I am delighted to hear that
12 they are no longer aiming at the end of
13 March obviously, which has passed, or
14 aiming for any time soon. So I'm
15 delighted to hear what you tell me.

16 COUNCILMAN GOODE: And you also
17 understand that Council does not spend
18 money; Council appropriates money?

19 COMMISSIONER SINGER: Yes.
20 Absolutely. So my request is not to
21 appropriate \$25 million in Fiscal Year
22 '16 for voting machine purchases. That's
23 my request to Council.

24 COUNCILMAN GOODE: The Office
25 of Innovation and Technology is already

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 on the record saying that they don't know
3 what they're going to do. They haven't
4 made a final decision, that they're not
5 rushing that decision, and that the money
6 is not going to be spent that quickly.
7 And so I assume that it may be possible
8 that less money can be spent, but I don't
9 think anybody knows what that number is.

10 COMMISSIONER SINGER: That's
11 correct. It's going to take some time.

12 COUNCILMAN GOODE: So if no one
13 knows what that number is, then the wiser
14 thing to do is to put an amount within
15 the budget and within the Capital Program
16 so that we have sufficient funds there.

17 COMMISSIONER SINGER: Well,
18 given what you've just told me, which you
19 are the first person to tell me that the
20 process has slowed down, that the
21 Department of Innovation and Technology
22 is exploring a lot of options, I mean,
23 given that information --

24 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I'm simply
25 telling you that was the response to

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 Councilman Squilla's question. I'm not
3 vouching for that being true.

4 COMMISSIONER SINGER: Oh, okay.

5 All right. Fair enough. I mean, so let
6 me say that if that is true, I'm okay
7 with that kind of fiscal planning. I
8 mean, you know, the bottom line is, I
9 don't want to see the City squander even
10 \$5 million, not to mention \$19 million,
11 and I want to make sure that this City
12 gets quality voting technology.

13 Also, I believe you said
14 something that there was a response that
15 said that there was a committee that
16 involved the Commissioners office. I
17 believe that's a slight misstatement. I
18 understand that there has been a steering
19 committee that has met several times and
20 that Al Schmidt has been invited to
21 participate, but not as a liaison to the
22 Commissioners office. That was some kind
23 of independent thing. There was no
24 official information to the
25 Commissioners, and that steering

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 committee did a lot of work before anyone
3 in the Commissioners office or anywhere
4 else actually knew that it existed.

5 COUNCILMAN GOODE: The last
6 thing I would just mention for the
7 record -- and I'm not really taking sides
8 in this as much as I'm saying that I
9 listened very closely to the responses to
10 Councilman Squilla's questions, and the
11 last thing I heard was that they would
12 definitely take into consideration what
13 is the latest technology, and even what
14 we think the latest technology may be may
15 change before this RFP is done.

16 COMMISSIONER SINGER: Well, I'm
17 glad to hear that. If I could just ask
18 you to briefly go over your five points.
19 I just want to make sure that I responded
20 to all of them.

21 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I don't need
22 you to respond to anything other than
23 where you got your information.

24 COMMISSIONER SINGER: Okay. So
25 all of my information is, it's either

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 from public things like the Presidential
3 Commission on Election Administration --

4 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I meant in
5 terms of what the process is locally, and
6 my understanding is that the Office of
7 Innovation and Technology is actually
8 running that process locally.

9 COMMISSIONER SINGER: That is
10 true, yes.

11 COUNCILMAN GOODE: So we've had
12 recent testimony within Council, probably
13 within the last week or two, that that is
14 fresh information. So I was just
15 wondering whether your information was
16 fresher than that.

17 COMMISSIONER SINGER: No, it is
18 not.

19 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you.
20 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

21 COMMISSIONER SINGER: Thank
22 you, Councilman.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
24 Councilman.

25 A quick question. So I go way

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 back to the Jamestown and Shoup machines.

3 COMMISSIONER SINGER: Yes.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: With those

5 hard cast iron monsters, but they were

6 virtually indestructible.

7 COMMISSIONER SINGER: Yes.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: So we moved

9 away from that when?

10 COMMISSIONER SINGER: When?

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: When did we

12 move away from that?

13 COMMISSIONER SINGER: We moved

14 away from that in the early 2000's, like

15 the rest of the country in response to

16 the Help America Vote Act, which not

17 quite forced but really promoted the

18 transition to electronic voting

19 technology all over the country.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: So when we

21 did that, what was the anticipated life

22 expectancy of a machine?

23 COMMISSIONER SINGER: I don't

24 know that the Commissioners at that time

25 even asked that question.

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2 COUNCILMAN JONES: So since
3 2000, they've lasted 15 years?

4 COMMISSIONER SINGER: Actually,
5 they were implemented, I believe, between
6 2004 and 2006 in Philadelphia. So we're
7 going on ten years now.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: And before
9 that the Shoup machines had lasted how
10 many years?

11 COMMISSIONER SINGER: Decades.

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.

13 So I'm just asking. And so now what
14 we're trying to gauge, if I understood
15 you correctly, is where do we go
16 technologically going forward and there
17 might be some better technology, more
18 cost-effective technology, and the
19 Councilman so well put that we just want
20 to secure the money so that if we're
21 pleasantly surprised and it's less than
22 that, wonderful. If it's where we
23 anticipate it to be or others anticipate
24 it to be, we'll have it appropriated.

25 So my question becomes, how do

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 they make the determination what is best,
3 what type of machine? Who is going to do
4 that processing?

5 COMMISSIONER SINGER: Well, I
6 believe that that process should be --
7 there should be an open process where
8 input is solicited from all of the
9 stakeholders, and I have a white paper I
10 can provide you that --

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yeah.

12 COMMISSIONER SINGER: -- goes
13 into detail on that. So there needs to
14 be an open process.

15 Ideally, kind of following the
16 state law, which says that it is the City
17 Commissioners -- sorry; that it is the
18 Board of Elections that must purchase the
19 voting machines, ideally, this process
20 would start from the Board of Elections.
21 The Board of Elections would work with
22 the Office of Innovation and Technology.
23 Now, that's not the way it's happened
24 and, you know, that's because of where
25 the purse strings are, but I believe that

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 the Board of Elections should be much
3 more involved in a formal way. It's
4 going to put the City -- it's going to
5 put everybody in a bad position if the
6 Office of Innovation and Technology were
7 to procure machines that the Board of
8 Elections didn't think were the right
9 machines. That's setting up for a big
10 fight.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: So to the
12 best of your knowledge, how many vendors
13 are there out there that provide this
14 type of machine?

15 COMMISSIONER SINGER: So there
16 are -- so even the notion -- so the thing
17 that's new is that there are vendors that
18 will provide -- instead of providing
19 machines, specialized machines, they will
20 provide the service of integrating
21 software with off-the-shelf hardware. So
22 there's a new kind of vendor, and that's
23 part of this revolution that's happening
24 in voting technology.

25 Currently, traditional vendors,

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 there are three that are -- that
3 currently have machines certified in
4 Pennsylvania. And the way the RFI was
5 written, the expectation based on the RFI
6 was that we were going to choose from
7 among those three vendors and only those
8 three. There are -- there's the model of
9 Los Angeles and Austin, Texas, which is
10 Travis County, where they are putting out
11 an RFP for a whole system. And so you
12 get a different class of vendors who
13 respond in a much larger class of
14 vendors, which is part of the reason that
15 that model is cheaper. So it's just a
16 more modern -- I mean, it's kind of like
17 having a sales force instead of having
18 your own specialized consumer relations
19 management software, if that's -- I don't
20 know if that metaphor means anything to
21 you.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Not at all.

23 COMMISSIONER SINGER: Okay. So
24 it's more like -- Councilman Squilla, can
25 you help me out here? It's --

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 COUNCILMAN JONES: Councilman
3 Squilla.

4 COMMISSIONER SINGER: It's the
5 difference between saying I have to buy a
6 car because -- I have to go places, so I
7 must have a car, so I am going to buy a
8 car for myself versus saying I am going
9 to be a part of PhillyCarShare. That's
10 actually not a good metaphor either. I'm
11 going to get back to you on that one, if
12 I can.

13 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Point of
14 information. I think with the new
15 technology, there is new technology out
16 there that I think IT said they are aware
17 of, and I think the RFI did not actually
18 engage that new technology.

19 COMMISSIONER SINGER: That's
20 correct.

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: So I
22 don't -- I didn't really know -- I think
23 they were thinking about putting out an
24 RFP out. I don't know if the RFP would
25 engage the machines set up sort of the

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 way they are right now with the built-in
3 software or would they go and put an RFP
4 out to include those machines and the new
5 software technology, because it hasn't
6 even been approved by Pennsylvania yet,
7 the new technology.

8 COMMISSIONER SINGER: That's
9 right.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: So I think
11 that was the question on --

12 COUNCILMAN JONES: When you say
13 software technology, Councilman, are you
14 talking about online voting or just
15 software within the machine?

16 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Within the
17 machine to be able to calculate the tabs
18 and also --

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Got it.

20 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I mean,
21 online voting may happen too. I mean, I
22 don't know if that's a possibility within
23 the next couple years, but I do see that
24 maybe as a possibility in the future.

25 COUNCILMAN JONES: Well, you

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 get another bite at the apple during the
3 budget, right?

4 COMMISSIONER SINGER: I'm
5 actually not sure because of the ambient
6 confusion about whether when one is not
7 on the Board of Elections, if one is a
8 City Commissioner. So I wanted to -- I
9 hope I will, yes, get another bite at the
10 apple.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: You are a --
12 I'm not an attorney, but I have one, and
13 it's my understanding until January at
14 least --

15 COMMISSIONER SINGER: Yes.
16 That's right. That's my understanding as
17 well.

18 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Point of
19 information.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: Councilman
21 Goode.

22 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Yeah. I
23 would believe that the new machines
24 relate to this election or this election
25 year, so I think you're fine. I mean, if

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 you as a City Commissioner wants to make
3 a statement about technology in the
4 future, that's appropriate.

5 COMMISSIONER SINGER: Well,
6 thank you. Thank you very much.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. I
8 want to shift the books for a second, and
9 they've been real patient. Real quick,
10 who funds you now?

11 MS. JACOBY: Well, we have a
12 lot of funders. I mean, we have --

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Are you
14 independently funded, I guess?

15 MS. JACOBY: Well, the Power
16 Partner program, I would say that 75
17 percent of them pay for that service, and
18 so there's about 21 people that pay -- 21
19 companies that pay us for that service,
20 and the other funders -- I mean, we have
21 funders for the summer, like Dow
22 Chemical. We have funders like Comcast.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: So you're
24 not a City line item?

25 MS. JACOBY: No, I'm not a City

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 line item. We would like to be.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. I got
4 it. All right. Thank you so much for
5 your testimony.

6 MS. JACOBY: You're welcome.
7 And we're happy to do what we do. We
8 just want to do more.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: I got it.
10 Who are the next to testify?

11 THE CLERK: Mr. or Mrs. Wolk,
12 W-O-L-K. I can't read the first name.
13 Greg Seani (ph) and Elizabeth Uhlhorn.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Are there
15 any other people here to testify tonight?
16 (No response.)

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: Seeing none,
18 you're our last panel.

19 (Witnesses approached witness
20 table.)

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
22 for your patience. And would you say
23 your first and last name for the record.

24 MS. WOLK: Hi. Thank you for
25 the opportunity to testify. My name is

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 Coryn Wolk, C-O-R-Y-N, W-O-L-K. I'm here
3 to comment on the Streets Department
4 budget for the coming year, and I
5 represent Clean Air Council.

6 I'm the Sustainable
7 Transportation Outreach Coordinator for
8 Clean Air Council, and our Cleaner
9 Commute program supports employees and
10 employers in finding commute options
11 other than driving alone to work, such as
12 biking, public transit, carpooling, and
13 telecommuting. This supports Clean Air
14 Council's mission of protecting
15 everyone's right to breathe clean air by
16 reducing air pollution from car traffic
17 congestion. However, there's
18 transportation options of any other
19 individual and societal benefits such as
20 cost savings for commuters, physical
21 fitness improvements from biking, and
22 mental health benefits from active
23 commutes and easier public transportation
24 commutes.

25 While I've always been a

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 dedicated SEPTA rider, I began commuting
3 by bike after I took this position,
4 figuring that I should put my money where
5 my mouth is. Even though I was pretty
6 terrified when I started biking in
7 Philadelphia, it didn't take long for me
8 to fall in love with biking as
9 transportation. Besides being able to
10 speak from experience that biking is
11 doable, going from a terrified
12 non-cyclist to a regular bike commuter is
13 a huge asset and convincing people who
14 don't even own a bike to give bike
15 commuting a try. However, there are days
16 when I wonder if I'm being reckless to
17 continue riding my bike on the streets
18 and recommending it to others.

19 Coincidentally, today was a
20 perfect example. My usual commute takes
21 me down Spruce Street and over the South
22 Street Bridge to Center City. Each route
23 I can choose from offers these obstacles
24 in various combinations - lack of bike
25 lanes, bike lanes blocked by cars,

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 trolley tracks that can catch bike
3 wheels, high-speed traffic and, of
4 course, potholes and debris.

5 I chose my route in part
6 because the worst blocked bike lanes
7 usually don't overlap with streets that
8 have dreaded trolley tracks.
9 Unfortunately, today that wasn't the
10 case. While going around a truck parked
11 on the bike lane with some other
12 cyclists, I was forced to cross the
13 trolley tracks at a slight angle and they
14 caught my wheel and almost threw me off
15 my bike. Had I fallen, I would have
16 likely landed in oncoming traffic.
17 Fortunately, I didn't, and luckily the
18 driver behind me stopped in time, so I
19 was able to complete the rest of my ride
20 to work even though I was riding out of a
21 bike lane into traffic almost every block
22 because of the obstructions.

23 The road quality issues that
24 drivers complain about generally impact
25 cyclists even more. A pothole might

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 damage a car, but it can land a cyclist
3 in the hospital or worse. The same goes
4 for unclean streets after storms and
5 debris and trash in the roads.

6 In the conflict or accident
7 with a driver, cyclists are automatically
8 at a huge disadvantage. Hit with the
9 City's current underfunded Streets
10 Department, we generally get the dregs,
11 the most minimal bike lanes the City can
12 afford on some of the roads they can
13 afford to repave. Many of these lanes,
14 while counted towards their miles of bike
15 lanes, don't deserve to be called bike
16 lanes because they're too dangerous to
17 use. Even some of our most used or
18 celebrated bike lines such as Spruce
19 Street by Penn or Pine Street in Center
20 City are regularly blocked because the
21 City has not committed to that
22 infrastructure or invested in protected
23 bike lanes there. Additionally, after
24 winter storms, many of these lanes remain
25 uncleared, forcing cyclists into car

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 lanes. After a rainstorm or when snow
3 melts, without a physical barrier or any
4 maintenance, debris and gravel washes
5 into the bike lanes. This lack of
6 maintenance makes using these bike lanes
7 more dangerous than it should be and
8 encourages Philadelphians to stay in
9 their cars, add to congestion and
10 pollution, and continue to deteriorate
11 our roads at a higher rate than cyclists.
12 Other cities with fewer air quality
13 problems and equally tight streets are
14 quickly surpassing us on bike
15 infrastructure.

16 Many of Philadelphia's current
17 and potential cyclists affected by
18 dangerous road conditions that could be
19 improved with a larger Streets Department
20 budget are people who can afford a car or
21 don't want to rely on sparsely SEPTA
22 service to get to and from late night
23 shift work. Additionally, Philadelphia
24 is about to see an increase in novice
25 bike riders on its streets as Bike Share

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 gets underway. Maintaining our roads is
3 critical to ensuring the safety of our
4 residents and visitors on bike, in a car
5 or on foot. City Council should support
6 a robust budget for the Streets
7 Department and adding safe, high-quality
8 bike lanes where the Streets Department
9 recommends them.

10 Thank you.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you
12 for your testimony.

13 Sir, pull the mike a little
14 closer.

15 MR. SEANI: Hello. My name is
16 Greg Seani. I live in Philadelphia in
17 the area called Hawthorne. I didn't plan
18 on speaking, but I thought I'd share my
19 support for the Streets budget. I did
20 come here, though, because just a couple
21 weeks ago, less than two weeks ago, I did
22 have a bike accident. I was on my
23 scooter, and I was on North American
24 heading south at night and just above
25 Girard, the 1400 block area. And I don't

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 know if you are familiar with that area,
3 but it looks pretty much like third-world
4 road conditions.

5 And so I was riding, and
6 suddenly I was in an area where the
7 trolley tracks were elevated on concrete.
8 So it wasn't just the ordinary dangerous
9 trolley tracks. They were amplified
10 there because it was like an inch or so
11 of concrete that they were on. So I had
12 to stay between that and the side of the
13 road. Then suddenly there was all this
14 gravel coming in from the side of the
15 road, so it just narrowed where I was
16 riding. And so I slowed down to as slow
17 as I could get and my wheels hit the
18 gravel, though. The scooter went out
19 underneath me. My shoe came off from the
20 gravel and my foot was dragging on that.
21 And, you know, fortunately I only have a
22 bruised foot I'm still limping on and
23 strained tendon, but it could have been a
24 lot worse. It could have been a lot
25 worse. Oh, and gravel marks on my bike

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 I'm not too happy about.

3 So that area is pretty bad.

4 And I mentioned it to some other people,
5 and they said, yeah, they don't even like
6 to drive in that area. And, you know,
7 there's a lot of economic development
8 happening in that whole area, but it
9 seems like it just stops right there, and
10 I feel like for the economy, having that
11 looking nice is going to help move things
12 up and not look like the abandoned North
13 Philly, which it looks like.

14 But I guess really that's what
15 I wanted to say. I was angry about that,
16 so I just showed up.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: Sorry for
18 your bike. Are those tracks abandoned?

19 MR. SEANI: They're not used.
20 They're not -- it's not -- yeah.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Councilman
22 Squilla, is that -- I'm guessing that's
23 Sanchez or --

24 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I think
25 it's Darrell.

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 I think it's north of Girard,
3 right?

4 MR. SEANI: Yeah, it's just
5 north of Girard. You know how North
6 American then does a little kind of thing
7 so you can get on to Girard, but if you
8 go north around -- I think it's around
9 the 1400, below the Crane Arts area and
10 between Girard and that.

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I mean,
12 did you report -- I'm sorry.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Go ahead.

14 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Did you
15 report that condition to the Streets
16 Department?

17 MR. SEANI: No. I have a
18 friend who works with the City's bike
19 thing, and so I sent him an e-mail
20 saying, hey, this is what happened, but
21 that was it, you know. Honestly, I
22 didn't really think anything would come
23 of it.

24 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: It does
25 work. We had Streets here earlier today,

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 and if we report it and we give it to
3 them, they do get to it.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: We
5 complimented them earlier, because they
6 are responsive. We have one
7 Councilperson here that represents the
8 entire City, so he's keenly --

9 MR. SEANI: Oh, okay. Well, I
10 mean, I've lived here since 1999 and that
11 area has looked like that since 1999. So
12 I didn't think, you know, but...

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Things can
14 change. Thank you for your testimony.
15 Ma'am.

16 MS. UHLHORN: Last, but not
17 least.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Not at all.

19 MS. UHLHORN: Beth Uhlhorn and
20 I'm here also to speak on behalf of
21 Philadelphia Reads. So thank you guys
22 for sticking around here to the end.

23 I'd like to request your
24 support for Philadelphia Reads as a line
25 item. I'd like to speak on behalf of the

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 organization as a volunteer and as the
3 current Board Chair. I've been
4 volunteering with the Power Partners
5 program. That's the program that brings
6 the students to businesses around the
7 City for a power hour of tutoring
8 basically over our lunch hours. And so
9 I've been volunteering with that program
10 since I moved to Philadelphia in 2011.
11 And I read to three different little boys
12 over the course of the three academic
13 years prior to this one, each with very
14 different struggles and different
15 successes.

16 My first student was actually a
17 pretty excellent reader. He was reading
18 at grade level when he came into the
19 program, and I can tell he wasn't being
20 adequately challenged in school. And so
21 I would bring him new and increasingly
22 difficult words to stretch his
23 vocabulary, and we started working on
24 complicated phonics exercises, and I was
25 really able to push him in a way that his

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 teacher couldn't, as she had 25 other
3 students with much more demanding issues
4 than his.

5 My second year was more
6 difficult. I was assigned a child whose
7 first language was not English. He
8 struggled with pronouncing even the
9 sounds that letters make. But as we
10 moved through the year, he improved, and
11 by the end of the year, he could go
12 through the full alphabet and had
13 memorized enough words that even when he
14 saw them out of context, he recognized
15 them. It was a big improvement for him.

16 Last year I had a student who
17 was again reading well below grade level.
18 As with the prior student, we worked
19 through the year, and he improved
20 greatly, learning the alphabet and
21 learning how rhyming words shared many of
22 the same letters. But even more than
23 that, he learned that he had someone he
24 could talk to. He was very sensitive and
25 started out really shy. He relished the

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 one-on-one attention that he got through
3 the program, and I think it built his
4 confidence in himself.

5 This year I'm actually the
6 coordinator of the program for my
7 workplace, Dow Chemical, and I get to see
8 improvements in all of the kids who come
9 to Dow each week. We just got the most
10 recent reading test results, and all but
11 two of my kids jumped at least two
12 reading levels over where they were at
13 the beginning of the year and the
14 majority jumped three or four. My
15 volunteers have been telling me recently
16 that they've seen incredible improvements
17 and they're proud. They're proud of the
18 impact that this organization has allowed
19 them to have.

20 So you heard from Adrienne and
21 from Tara how important literacy is and
22 about the number of kids that we help
23 each year, and you heard the statistics
24 about literacy in the City and the
25 correlation between illiteracy and

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 delinquency, but I think these examples
3 that I have of how much this program has
4 meant to me and to the kids I've worked
5 with are just as compelling.

6 Philadelphia Reads is a
7 critical part of education and literacy
8 success in the City. With underfunded
9 schools and fewer teachers spread across
10 greater numbers of students, anyone can
11 get lost in the system. When Mayor
12 Rendell started this program, it was
13 visionary. By bringing students to the
14 volunteers' workplace, it makes
15 volunteering so easy and yet so
16 impactful. It uses the power of
17 volunteers in a way that very few
18 non-profits are able. But it's
19 struggling financially, and we need the
20 City's help. I ask you to consider
21 supporting Philadelphia Reads
22 financially. The organization needs to
23 have funding stability in order to be
24 able to plan for the future and meet
25 current programming requirements. We

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 need the City's continued financial
3 support to assure the sustainability of
4 the program and all its benefits. It
5 can't stop. The literacy of our young
6 people is too important.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: So
8 Ms. Graham here just informed me that she
9 volunteered for this program as a young
10 lawyer for the City, and one of the
11 things that I remember as a freshman that
12 struck me, Councilman Goode was talking
13 about some of the issues of literacy and
14 then he did a 4th grade -- by 4th grade
15 if young people don't read up to a
16 certain point, the predictors of bad
17 outcomes and even criminal behavior are
18 connected, and I never forgot that,
19 because when he presented that, I said,
20 Well, if that's true, then we can reverse
21 engineer a solution. And so I remember
22 that sticking to me.

23 And the other thing I wanted to
24 do is, there was an article by a
25 gentleman from New York and he was going

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 to a barber shop, and he had his children
3 there. He found out that there were no
4 age-appropriate materials for his child
5 to read. They were a little more mature,
6 if you know what I mean. And so he
7 started and embarked upon a program to
8 put age-appropriate books in the barber
9 shops, and I just thought it was so novel
10 to do that that it's something that in my
11 barber shops in my district I'm going to
12 take on.

13 So somehow even if -- you know,
14 I think it's meritorious of getting a
15 line item. We'll look at it. But even
16 if it isn't, it's okay to work with
17 individual Councilpeople that may be able
18 to find some resources. And Councilman
19 Squilla has the richest district in the
20 City of Philadelphia, so he could --

21 MS. UHLHORN: We'd love to host
22 something.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: No, really,
24 I would encourage maybe a sit-down with
25 all of us in caucus and talk about what

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 the possibilities are, particularly as we
3 start to fine-tune what this budget is
4 going to look like for the next fiscal
5 year.

6 MS. UHLHORN: Great. I
7 appreciate it. Thank you.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: Councilman
9 Goode.

10 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,
11 Mr. Chair.

12 Very briefly. Particularly
13 from the perspective of a volunteer,
14 Council has outlined three objectives you
15 see listed on the easels. One of them is
16 School-Based Family Services Center,
17 trying to have comprehensive services
18 take place within those geographic
19 locations.

20 If a condition of general
21 operating budget funds were that the
22 services had to be delivered within those
23 type of centers within schools, what
24 would be your perspective on that sort of
25 policy mandate?

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 MS. UHLHORN: I would like to
3 defer that question to not just the
4 volunteer here, but --

5 COUNCILMAN GOODE: No. I
6 actually asked you as a volunteer on
7 purpose.

8 MS. UHLHORN: So I'm sorry,
9 then. You're asking how I feel about if
10 it's mandated to be in schools?

11 COUNCILMAN GOODE: If the
12 services had to be delivered within
13 schools, within comprehensive family
14 service centers, what would you think
15 about that?

16 MS. UHLHORN: Well, I think
17 that we do offer programming that is in
18 schools over the summer, for example, but
19 I think that one of the advantages of
20 bringing the kids -- well, I think there
21 are a number of advantages of bringing
22 the kids to the workplaces, but for the
23 kids, it exposes them to that kind of
24 workplace, and I actually think that's
25 really beneficial and it's one of the

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.
2 things that is unique about the program
3 and it also makes it really convenient
4 for volunteers too on the other side. I
5 can sign 45 people up at my workplace to
6 be volunteers over their lunch hour
7 really easily because they don't have to
8 go to some school-based service center.

9 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I want you
10 to consider how it might also be
11 beneficial if those services did take
12 place within the school. I understand
13 the benefit of having it within the
14 workplace. It's easier for recruitment,
15 it's more convenient, and it's a model
16 that works. But in terms of as we're
17 looking at general operating budget
18 dollars and looking at what City
19 investment needs to take place within
20 schools and how to coordinate our
21 operating dollars with other funding
22 sources for the schools, that's one of
23 the things that we are actually trying to
24 prioritize, how we can have more services
25 take place within schools, and that's why

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 I asked the question. But thank you for
3 your testimony.

4 MS. UHLHORN: Okay.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you,
6 Councilman. That is, wisely, take as
7 much resources and bundle them when we
8 can to try to expand the impact of those
9 resources, and I just think and thank you
10 all for doing that. I remember -- so I
11 got to put on one of those Dr. Seuss
12 hats, went out to one of my schools
13 recently, and my favorite book as a child
14 learning to read was Green Eggs and Ham,
15 and I just loved Green Eggs and Ham. And
16 so I remember getting a book. It came in
17 the mail and it had my name on it. I
18 wanted to read my name, because I had my
19 first piece of mail. I've learned not to
20 like that so much now that I get bills,
21 but back then, it was a joy.

22 So thank you for what you guys
23 are doing and thank you all for your
24 testimony, particularly the bike folk.
25 We're going to take a look at the Streets

1 4/21/15 - WHOLE - BILL 150162, etc.

2 Department to see how we can like
3 minimize some of the dangers that you're
4 having. When you described your scooter
5 thing, I was holding on with bated
6 breath, because it was scaring me. So
7 let's see what we can do. All right?

8 Are there any others to testify
9 here today?

10 (No response.)

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Seeing none,
12 this Committee will stand at recess until
13 Wednesday, April 22nd, 2015 at 10:00
14 a.m., at which time we will reconvene in
15 Room 400.

16 Thank you all.

17 (Committee of the Whole
18 adjourned at 7:05 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings, evidence and objections are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me upon the
foregoing matter, and that this is a true and
correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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