

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Tuesday, June 5, 2012
4:09 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN W. WILSON GOODE, JR.
COUNCILMAN BILL GREEN
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM GREENLEE
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILMAN JAMES KENNEY
COUNCILMAN DENNIS O'BRIEN
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA
COUNCILWOMAN MARIAN TASCO
COUNCILMAN BRIAN O'NEILL

BILLS NO.: 120164, 120165, 120166, 120173,
120174, 120175, 120230, 120338,
120339, 120340, 120341, 120475,
120476, 120477, 120478
RESOLUTION: 120167

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2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good afternoon,
3 everyone. We have established a quorum. The
4 Committee shall now come into order. This is
5 the continuation of the Public Hearing of the
6 Committee of the Whole regarding Bills No.
7 120164, 120165, 120166, 120173, 120174, 120175,
8 120230, 120338, 120339, 120340, 120341, 120475,
9 120476, 120477, 120478 and Resolutions No.
10 120167.

11 Ms. Lewis, please read the title of the
12 Bills and Resolutions.

13 THE CLERK: Bill No. 120164, an Ordinance
14 to adopt a Capital Program for the six Fiscal
15 Years 2013 to 2018 inclusive.

16 Bill No. 120165, an Ordinance to adopt a
17 Fiscal 2013 Capital Budget.

18 Bill No. 120166, an Ordinance adopting the
19 Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2013.

20 Bill No. 120167, a Resolution providing for
21 the approval by the Council of the City of
22 Philadelphia of a Revised Five Year Financial
23 Plan for the City of Philadelphia covering
24 Fiscal Years 2013 through 2017, and

1 incorporating proposed changes with respect to
2 Fiscal Year 2012, which is to be submitted by
3 the Mayor to the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental
4 Cooperation Authority (the "Authority") pursuant
5 to the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement,
6 authorized by an ordinance of this Council
7 approved by the Mayor on January 3, 1992 (Bill
8 No. 1563-A), by and between the City and the
9 Authority.

10 Bill No. 120173, amending Section 19-1806,
11 entitled "Authorization of Realty Use and
12 Occupancy Tax," to further authorize the Board
13 of Education of the School District of
14 Philadelphia to impose a tax on the use or
15 occupancy of real estate within the School
16 District of Philadelphia, under certain terms
17 and conditions.

18 Bill No. 120174, amending Chapter 19-1500
19 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Wage and Net
20 Profits Tax," by repealing Section 19-1508,
21 entitled "Refunds and Forgiveness for Poverty
22 Income."

23 Bill No. 120175, authorizing real estate
24 taxes for the City of Philadelphia and the

1 School District of Philadelphia for Fiscal Year
2 2013 and thereafter, by amending Chapter 19-1300
3 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Real Estate
4 Taxes," to provide for a tax and tax rate on
5 real property, for exclusions, and for an
6 established predetermined ratio; and by amending
7 Chapter 19-1800 of The Philadelphia Code,
8 entitled "School Tax Authorization," to further
9 authorize the Board of Education of the School
10 District of Philadelphia, and providing for a
11 tax rate on real estate within the City of
12 Philadelphia, and providing for a tax rate and
13 for exclusions; all under certain terms and
14 conditions.

15 Bill No. 120230, authorizing real estate
16 taxes for the City of Philadelphia and the
17 School District of Philadelphia for Fiscal Year
18 2013 and thereafter, by amending Chapter 19-1300
19 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Real Estate
20 Taxes," to provide for a tax and tax rate on
21 real property; and by amending Chapter 19-1800
22 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "School Tax
23 Authorization," to further authorize the Board
24 of Education of the School District of

1 Philadelphia to impose a tax on real estate
2 within the City of Philadelphia, and providing
3 for a tax rate; all under certain terms and
4 conditions.

5 Bill No. 120338, an Ordinance amending
6 Section 19-1307 of The Philadelphia Code,
7 entitled "Deferrals of Real Estate Tax," by
8 further providing for certain deferrals of
9 payment of a certain portion of Real Estate
10 Taxes due to City of Philadelphia or the
11 Philadelphia School District, all under certain
12 terms and conditions.

13 Bill No. 120339, an Ordinance amending
14 Title 19 of The Philadelphia Code, by adding a
15 new Chapter 19-2900A, entitled "Special Real
16 Estate Tax Provisions for Low Income Taxpayers,"
17 providing for credits against real estate tax
18 for certain low income taxpayers, under certain
19 terms and conditions.

20 Bill No. 120340, an Ordinance enacting a
21 new Chapter 19-3800 of The Philadelphia Code
22 authorizing the granting of tax exemptions to
23 longtime owner-occupants of certain properties
24 in the City of Philadelphia.

1 Bill No. 120341, an Ordinance amending
2 Chapter 19-1300 of The Philadelphia Code,
3 entitled "Real Estate Taxes," by further
4 providing for installment payments of real
5 estate taxes, all under certain terms and
6 conditions.

7 Bill No. 120475, an Ordinance amending
8 Section 19-1806, entitled "Authorization of
9 Realty Use and Occupancy Tax," to further
10 authorize the Board of Education of the School
11 District of Philadelphia to impose a tax on the
12 use or occupancy of real estate within the
13 School District of Philadelphia, under certain
14 terms and conditions.

15 Bill No. 120476, an Ordinance authorizing
16 real estate taxes for the City of Philadelphia
17 and the School District of Philadelphia for
18 Fiscal Year 2013 and thereafter, by amending
19 Chapter 19-1300 of The Philadelphia Code,
20 entitled "Real Estate Taxes," to provide for a
21 tax and tax rate on real property, for
22 exclusions, and for an established predetermined
23 ratio; and by amending Chapter 19-1800 of The
24 Philadelphia Code, entitled "School Tax

1 Authorization," to further authorize the Board
2 of Education of the School District of
3 Philadelphia to impose a tax on real estate
4 within the City of Philadelphia, and providing
5 for a tax rate and for exclusions; all under
6 certain terms and conditions.

7 Bill No. 120477, an Ordinance authorizing
8 real estate taxes for the City of Philadelphia
9 and the School District of Philadelphia for
10 Fiscal Year 2013 and thereafter, by amending
11 Chapter 19-1300 of The Philadelphia Code,
12 entitled "Real Estate Taxes," to provide for a
13 tax and tax rate on real property; and by
14 amending Chapter 19-1800 of The Philadelphia
15 Code, entitled "School Tax Authorization," to
16 further authorize the Board of Education of the
17 School District of Philadelphia to impose a tax
18 on real estate within the City of Philadelphia,
19 and providing for a tax rate; all under certain
20 terms and conditions.

21 And Bill No. 120478, an Ordinance amending
22 Section 19-1806, entitled "Authorization of
23 Realty Use and Occupancy Tax," to further
24 authorize the Board of Education of the School

1 District of Philadelphia to impose a tax on the
2 use or occupancy of real estate within the
3 School District of Philadelphia, under certain
4 terms and conditions.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you,
6 Ms. Lewis. For purposes of a motion and an
7 adoption of Bill No. 120340, we will briefly go
8 into a Public Meeting.

9 The Chair recognizes Councilman Kenney.

10 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you,
11 Mr. President.

12 Mr. President, I move that the amendments
13 to Bill No. 120340 which had been circulated to
14 all Members of Council be adopted.

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Second.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Been moved and
17 properly seconded. Those in favor?

18 (Ayes)

19 Those opposed? Ayes have it.

20 Councilman Kenney.

21 COUNCILMAN KENNEY: Thank you,
22 Mr. Chairman.

23 I move that Bill No. 120340 as amended be
24 reported from this Committee with a favorable

1 recommendation. And further move the Rules of
2 Council be suspended so as to permit first
3 reading of this bill at the next session of
4 Council.

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Second.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Been moved and
7 properly seconded. That Bill No. 120340 as
8 amended by reported from this Committee with a
9 favorable recommendation. And further move that
10 the Rules of Council be suspended to permit
11 first reading of this Bill at the next session
12 of Council.

13 All those in favor of this motion, state by
14 saying aye.

15 (Ayes)

16 Those opposed?

17 COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Yes.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: One opposition.
19 Let the record reflect that that is Councilman
20 O'Brien.

21 This Bill will be reported out with a
22 favorable recommendation. And Committee will
23 be -- make sure I get this one right. Regarding
24 if all members haven't voted in the affirmative,

1 the motion carries.

2 Bill No. 120340 as amended will be reported
3 with this Committee with favorable
4 recommendation, the Rules suspension to allow
5 first reading at the next session of Council.
6 Thank you very much.

7 We will now go back into the Public
8 Hearing. Mr. Dubow.

9 MR. DUBOW: Good afternoon, Council
10 President Clarke --

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good afternoon.

12 MR. DUBOW: -- Members of the Committee of
13 the Whole. I am Rob Dubow and serve as Finance
14 Director for the City. With me today are Anna
15 Adams, Chief of Staff of the Finance Department
16 and Keith Richardson, Revenue Commissioner.

17 I am here to testify on Bills No. 120475,
18 476, 477 and 478. Each of those Bills provides
19 options for generating tax revenue for the City
20 and the School District. The first part of the
21 testimony repeats a portion of my testimony from
22 two weeks ago that summarized the
23 Administration's overarching goal for AVI. I am
24 not going to repeat those, since you have the

1 testimony within your -- before. The combined
2 impacts of 475 and 478 would differ from the
3 impact of the Administration proposed
4 legislation by increasing the amount of property
5 tax generated for the City, reducing the amount
6 of property tax generated for the District and
7 increasing the use and occupancy tax to generate
8 additional revenue for the City.

9 Based on conversations with Council, we
10 believe the hint of a legislation would be to
11 provide a grant to the District equal to the
12 additional funding generated for this City by
13 the property tax once the District has met
14 certain conditions. The two goals would meet
15 the Administration's policy objectives of
16 allowing for reduced tax rates when the Actual
17 Value Initiative is implemented to avoid massive
18 tax increases and providing crucially needed
19 additional funding for the District.

20 The legislation would however add another
21 step before the District could receive that
22 funding. And depending on when the District
23 received that funding, that added step could
24 complicate the District's attempts to pursue its

1 annual cash borrowing. Moreover, the District
2 may not be able to formally account for receipt
3 of that revenue in its budget documents, which
4 could further exacerbate its financial
5 situation.

6 Unlike the Administration's initial
7 proposals, this legislation would increase the
8 use and occupancy tax. This would reduce what
9 is likely a shift in tax burden under the Actual
10 Value Initiative from non-residential to
11 residential property owners. While reducing
12 that shift and as a result reducing the burden
13 on residential property owners is an important
14 goal, the proposal would also ensure that
15 residential property owners who appear to have
16 been relatively over assessed under the old
17 broken system -- I'm sorry, non-residential
18 property owners would continue to bear a higher
19 tax burden going forward.

20 The combined impact of Bills 476 and 477
21 would use current assessment to produce
22 additional property tax revenues for the City,
23 hold revenue for the School District constant
24 and increase the use and occupancy tax rate to

1 provide additional funding for the District. As
2 with 475 and 478, we believe the intent is to
3 provide a grant to the District equal to the
4 additional funding generated for the City by the
5 property tax once the District has met certain
6 conditions.

7 This legislation assumes that the Actual
8 Value Initiative will not be implemented this
9 year. We understand these bills were introduced
10 in order to keep all options on the table, but
11 the Administration could not agree with the
12 approach suggested by these two bills. The new
13 accurate assessments will be ready this fall.
14 And once those assessments are available, they
15 should be use. If the old inaccurate
16 assessments are used again, at the risk of
17 another adverse finding from the State Tax
18 Equalization Board, is very high. And it's
19 likely there would be a very large number of
20 appeals based on that ruling. Combined impact
21 of those appeal and the STEB Ruling could be an
22 enormous loss in revenue for the District and
23 the City.

24 Accordingly, in our view, it's essential to

1 have in place tax measures that will correspond
2 to the new assessments that we will be prepared
3 to issue in the fall.

4 That concludes my testimony. And we would
5 be happy to answer any questions you might have.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you
7 Mr. Dubow. Mr. Dubow, I want to make sure I
8 heard you right. You said that we should -- and
9 I may be paraphrasing. That we should address
10 these issues on the U and O when the values are
11 available in the fall? What exactly did you
12 say? I'm sorry. When the assessments are --
13 say that again. I just want to make sure I
14 heard you right.

15 MR. DUBOW: No. What I was saying is we
16 should have tax measures that will allow us to
17 have the appropriate rates in place in the fall
18 when we have the new assessments.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So, are you
20 suggesting that we can act in the fall on this?

21 MR. DUBOW: No. No. No. We need to act
22 now to make sure we have that in place for the
23 fall.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay. Because

1 I'm saying, if you had those available, we would
2 be able to appropriately address the measures.
3 But the reality is, the reason why we are here
4 and going through what we've been going through
5 for the last several weeks is that we don't have
6 the information before us. It would suggest
7 that somehow, you know, we can do "the right
8 thing." I'm not quoting you, but prior
9 conversations that I have had with individuals
10 and Administration, is to do it in hopes that
11 the values, you know, ultimately come to a point
12 where we will match what we are attempting to do
13 today.

14 So, when you throw out language about being
15 able to do it once the values are in, you know,
16 frankly speaking, that is exactly what we would
17 like to do.

18 MR. DUBOW: Right. But what we are saying
19 is that we would have in place the measure which
20 is the formula we've been talking about.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Of which we
22 can't vote on today.

23 MR. DUBOW: To get to the millage rate that
24 we -- to calculate the millage rate when you

1 have the assessed values, which is what we've
2 been saying, you know, all along.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All right.
4 Okay. I am going to leave it alone.

5 Councilman Green.

6 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
7 Mr. President. I hope I have just a limited
8 number of questions. I guess depend on the
9 response.

10 But the first question is --

11 MR. DUBOW: I will try to get the right
12 responses.

13 COUNCILMAN GREEN: What do you think the --
14 having done some work with City Council and
15 others, what do you think that the aggregate
16 value of our real estate is based upon your best
17 estimate?

18 MR. DUBOW: Let me answer it a little
19 differently, but I hope it gets at what you're
20 saying.

21 We have been working with Council and
22 Council's consultant. And based on that work,
23 we think it's reasonable to use a total assessed
24 value of 80 billion. It's kind of the working

1 number to do the analyses that we need to do.

2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: What percentage of that
3 is residential, and what percentage of that is
4 commercial and industrial?

5 MR. DUBOW: About two-thirds residential,
6 one-third nonresidential.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So, you are still at
8 around 58, 60 percent of value -- actual value
9 today for commercial and industrial properties?

10 MR. DUBOW: Going from about 56 to 66, 67.
11 Something like that, yes.

12 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. And for
13 residential properties, you're closer to the 40
14 percent of actual value rather than the
15 one-third that the 44 GMAs indicate of the
16 Administration?

17 MR. DUBOW: Based on some work that
18 Econsult has done, that is what their work
19 showed.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. So, what is
21 the -- what is the millage rate that is implied
22 with an \$80 billion exemption at the \$15,000
23 Homestead the Administration has suggested?

24 MR. DUBOW: Let me first -- it will take me

1 a second to find that. With no relief measures,
2 it's at about 1.6 percent. Take me a second to
3 find the 15,000. Have that here somewhere. I
4 think that would be closer to about 1.7.

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: 1.7 with 15,000?

6 MR. DUBOW: Yeah, about.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: We're looking at 1.8
8 with about 30,000?

9 MR. DUBOW: It's about right.

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Have you -- have
11 you costed out any of the other proposals that
12 are suggested by anybody?

13 MR. DUBOW: Can you be more precise?

14 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Some of the savings
15 provisions, the potential cost of the --

16 MR. DUBOW: We looked at the potential
17 cost.

18 COUNCILMAN GREEN: The Deferral Bill, for
19 example or --

20 MR. DUBOW: The Deferral Bill was
21 relatively small in our calculation. Probably 4
22 or 5 million. The Gentrification Bill that just
23 got voted out of committee, I think, has a \$30
24 million cap in it from what I understand. So,

1 that would be \$30 million -- 30 million, we
2 think that's probably about where it would cost.

3 COUNCILMAN GREEN: And so, the way that
4 this works, it's \$80 billion before you start.
5 And then you remove from the aggregate value the
6 cost of the Homestead Exemption, which you're
7 estimating to be 10 millage essentially. So,
8 that's -- how much is that? 8 billion or 5
9 billion you're taking out of the aggregate
10 value?

11 MR. DUBOW: More like 10.

12 COUNCILMAN GREEN: 10 million out of the
13 aggregate value. So, instead of taxing on 80
14 we're taxing on 70 for Homestead. And then any
15 other relief measure, we're lowering the --

16 MR. DUBOW: Right.

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: -- aggregate value by
18 that much, and that is what is driving the rate.

19 MR. DUBOW: Correct.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Do you have any
21 thoughts about the tax credit proposal that we
22 discussed the last time you testified?

23 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. I think we would like to
24 work something out on that. We would be willing

1 to work something out on that idea.

2 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Thank you.

3 That's all my questions, Mr. President.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you,
5 Councilman.

6 Chair recognizes Councilman Squilla.

7 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: My question is basic
8 on the, I guess, the tipping number now. Now
9 that we are down to \$80 billion aggregate.

10 MR. DUBOW: The tipping number?

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Tipping number
12 we're -- not 20 percent when you go out to eat
13 but --

14 MR. DUBOW: Depending on how generous you
15 are.

16 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yeah. But where you
17 are when the -- if it's a \$15,000 Homestead or
18 \$30,000 Homestead what, I guess, market value of
19 the home will sort of be, the median number
20 where we start seeing --

21 MR. DUBOW: Right. I would have to do that
22 -- we haven't done that analysis. We can do
23 that.

24 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All right. Because

1 then if we add the 15,000/30,000, that number is
2 actually coming down because we are starting at
3 a lower number. We are starting at 80 billion
4 now.

5 MR. DUBOW: Right.

6 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Then with the
7 Homestead, it will go down to 70 billion.

8 MR. DUBOW: There are a couple of changes.
9 The Homestead and then the Relief Measure that
10 just got voted out of committee. We would have
11 to run all that through.

12 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: If we can have that
13 for the -- the Chair just to see if --

14 MR. DUBOW: Sure.

15 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: -- where that number
16 is.

17 MR. DUBOW: We will work with Council staff
18 to come up with something that we all agree on.

19 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: The 70 billion that
20 you said would be from -- that was from \$15,000
21 Homestead?

22 MR. DUBOW: I think it was 30.

23 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: That was 30.

24 MR. DUBOW: Yeah.

1 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay. If the higher
2 we increase the Homestead, the higher the
3 millage will be on the rate, correct?

4 MR. DUBOW: Correct.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And then that would
6 then enforce the number or the tipping number
7 where you pay more would come down to a lower
8 value home, correct?

9 MR. DUBOW: Correct.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: So, we could basically
11 be done to a home that is 140/120,000 dollars at
12 this time maybe --

13 MR. DUBOW: I would want to look at it
14 before.

15 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Before you say that?
16 Do you -- do you feel by increasing the millage
17 rate -- I mean, increasing the Homestead, that
18 we will, in effect, help more people or hurt
19 more people? Residents.

20 MR. DUBOW: I think it will help more
21 residents than -- than hurt.

22 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: So, the higher the
23 Homestead.

24 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Point of information.

1 Point of information.

2 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yes. Go ahead.

3 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Under every scenario,
4 the higher the Homestead, the more people that
5 pay less.

6 MR. DUBOW: The more residents that pay
7 less.

8 COUNCILMAN GOODE: So, the higher the
9 Homestead, the more people that pay less.

10 MR. DUBOW: Yes.

11 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you.

12 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: So, that the
13 percentage -- what is the average, I guess,
14 number of 50 percent of the households and
15 below, what was the average market value?

16 MR. DUBOW: There is census data that says
17 that the average value home is \$120,000 in
18 Philadelphia. So half of that would be 60,000.
19 There is analysis from Econsult that says it's
20 more like 80. And they think that the census
21 numbers are exaggerated. So based on that, you
22 would say is like around 40.

23 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: So, about half the
24 houses are less than \$80,000 market value in the

1 City?

2 MR. DUBOW: No. It was an average. You're
3 asking median.

4 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: The median.

5 MR. DUBOW: I'd have to -- I will get you
6 that. I have that actually in the office. I
7 just didn't bring it with me.

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: 82?

9 MR. DUBOW: 82.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All right. Thank you.

11 MR. DUBOW: Sure.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you,
13 Councilman.

14 Chair recognizes Councilmember Johnson.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you, Rob. Just
16 a couple questions. We start off initially at
17 102 billion, correct? 112?

18 MR. DUBOW: We started off saying we didn't
19 know what it was going to be.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.

21 MR. DUBOW: So, we did not know where it
22 was.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: So, the 80 billion is
24 based upon --

1 MR. DUBOW: It's based on work that we have
2 done together with Council's consultant.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay. As we work
4 through this process to follow up on Councilman
5 Squilla's question regarding the Homestead
6 Exemption. The possibility of -- there is a
7 proposal to go to 30,000. There is also a
8 recommendation, some folks want to push it to
9 40,000. I guess because you are working with
10 the Administration we start getting e-mails to
11 the public saying that they can apply for
12 15,000.

13 MR. DUBOW: No. We said for "at least".

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: For at least.

15 MR. DUBOW: At least. It was very clear
16 that it could be more.

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Well, here is where I
18 am at. I guess as a Councilperson going through
19 this process doing constituent services, while
20 we are actually working through a hypothetical
21 formula, right?

22 MR. DUBOW: Right.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: We start getting
24 requests and e-mails applying for a Homestead

1 Exemption at a minimum 15,000.

2 MR. DUBOW: Right.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: But there is no set
4 maximum limit at this particular point in time
5 yet?

6 MR. DUBOW: Right. The maximum would be
7 half the median value of a home, so it's
8 probably around 40.

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Can you explain why
10 the need to move forward offering the Homestead
11 Exemption to the public prior to us bringing
12 this situation -- I mean, bringing this process
13 to an end?

14 MS. ADAMS: Under the State Legislation,
15 there was an amendment made to the State
16 Legislation that asked for 60-day application
17 period.

18 In order to meet that -- that time period
19 and allow us to have enough time to process them
20 and be able to send them out when we send out
21 the assessments in the fall, we had to have the
22 deadline set for July 31. In order to get 60
23 days back from that, that meant we had to start
24 the application period on June 1. So, that's

1 why we had to go with June 1.

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay. If I am a
3 homeowner and I am applying for this Homestead,
4 what's the actual value of my house if I'm going
5 through a process? Would I use this year's
6 numbers or --

7 MS. ADAMS: You don't need to know that for
8 the application. All you have to do is fill out
9 on the application your -- the owner's name;
10 your OPA number, which is the formal -- the BRT
11 number, which you can find either on the OPA
12 website or on the Revenue website or on your tax
13 assessment notice or your tax bill. It will
14 have the -- it will have the -- your OPA will be
15 your BRT number. Then you just have to fill
16 that in and send it to us. And then we will
17 process that and make it available.

18 MR. DUBOW: People are eligible regardless
19 of the value of their home.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay. All right. So,
21 it will just be on record. And then once the --

22 MS. ADAMS: Exactly. It's got no other
23 requirements. You just have to be a homeowner.
24 The application is pretty simple. It's a

1 straightforward one-page document. It's on our
2 website, so you can see all the instructions are
3 there. And you can go for more information on
4 the website. It's clear.

5 And we are going to be mailing this out to
6 everyone homeowner in the city with the
7 brochure, the application and some information.
8 So, every homeowner will get this information
9 and be able to apply it then as well as you can
10 download the PDF online.

11 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Last question. Has
12 the Administration factored in from a budgeting
13 standpoint for appeals? I know the School
14 District got hit with, I think it was, 40
15 million from STEB.

16 MR. DUBOW: Yes.

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Has that factored into
18 this process --

19 MR. DUBOW: Yes.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: -- moving forward?

21 MR. DUBOW: So, when we built the -- our
22 model to figure out the target revenue amount,
23 we assumed an increase in appeals. That is
24 included in the numbers.

1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And how did you come
2 up with that assumption of appeal number? Like,
3 what is that based upon moving forward?

4 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. We did about a 50
5 percent increased. Part of it was kind of, you
6 know, talking to our head assessor to think what
7 he thought. But part of it is that we haven't
8 been through something like this before. And I
9 think every jurisdiction where they go through
10 is going to be slightly different. So, there
11 weren't great samples to use of what to -- of
12 what the appeal number would be. A lot of it is
13 was just based on --

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: So, the 40 million, 50
15 million.

16 MR. DUBOW: It was --

17 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Do you mind providing
18 that number for me to take a look at what's been
19 applied to?

20 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. I think was, like 937,
21 but we will get you that exact number.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: 937?

23 MR. DUBOW: I think so. That's valued
24 lost.

1 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you,
3 Councilman.

4 Chair recognizes Councilmember Jones.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: Just -- thank you,
6 Mr. Chairman.

7 Just for the record, how did we go from 112
8 billion to 80 billion?

9 MR. DUBOW: We were never at 112 billion.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: Was that an estimate?

11 MR. DUBOW: I don't know where that -- I
12 don't know that number. What we said in
13 hearings here is we don't know what the number
14 will be.

15 Now, we spent time working with Econsult,
16 working with OPA. And we have an amount that we
17 think is reasonable to work with. To say that
18 is where we will wind up, but we think it's a
19 reasonable estimate.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: That's based on Econsult
21 and who other?

22 MR. DUBOW: Econsult and information we
23 have got from OPA and sales values for
24 commercial properties.

1 COUNCILMAN JONES: And you feel that's a
2 reasonable figure that we should lay our -- hang
3 our hats on?

4 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. I think it's a
5 reasonable figure that we should work with.

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
7 Mr. President.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you,
9 Councilman.

10 Mr. Dubow, where did you get the \$94
11 million figure from for the School District?

12 MR. DUBOW: The 94 million number came from
13 looking at market values in 2004 for residential
14 properties and average market value for
15 residential properties in 2012. We got that
16 from IHS Global Insight, which is our outside
17 economic consultant. They said that they
18 thought residential properties had grown about
19 25 percent, and that that -- that would be a
20 reasonable number to use for the growth in value
21 over that time. So, we applied that growth --
22 we applied that growth and came up with the \$94
23 million number.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: The \$94 million

1 is based on growth. That would mean that you
2 would have estimated a base that got you to the
3 94 million.

4 MR. DUBOW: Well, we used an amount of tax
5 dollars. We didn't use an assessment base, so
6 tax dollars.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: What's the --

8 MR. DUBOW: What's the difference?

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: You got to a
10 value -- all right. Let me cut to the chase.
11 Additional School District funding is based on
12 something, and it was based on the growth --

13 MR. DUBOW: Yup.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: -- of real
15 estate, right? Because it's not a tax increase
16 according to the Administration.

17 MR. DUBOW: Right.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So if you do a
19 less than \$100 billion base, that number will
20 not be 94 million for the School District.

21 MR. DUBOW: No. We were looking at
22 increase in revenue, right? So if revenue was
23 roughly a billion dollars and we were looking at
24 an increase over that amount, it didn't matter.

1 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Well, how did
2 you get to the revenue number?

3 MR. DUBOW: We know what we collected in --
4 we know what the estimated collections are for
5 12.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Right. So if
7 you do, centers of collections -- let me -- are
8 you telling me that this 94 million has no
9 relation to -- relationship to an increase in
10 the value of properties?

11 MR. DUBOW: So, what we did is we looked at
12 that increase in value, right, and then we
13 looked at what percent that was, looked at what
14 we collect in revenue and used that increase as
15 a percentage increase in revenue because the
16 assessments were so far off. We didn't know
17 where the total assessments were going to be.

18 So, the only way we could do it was off of
19 revenue, applying what a growth in value would
20 mean in terms of revenue increase.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So, what's the
22 difference between an increase in revenue and an
23 increase in values?

24 MR. DUBOW: The difference in -- the

1 increase in revenue, right, is based off what we
2 thought had happened to values. We had to base
3 it off of where revenues are because we don't
4 have a total.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: But if you
6 thought -- what you thought the values was
7 basically saying you estimated a base, right? I
8 mean, where do we get the base from? It's the
9 value.

10 MR. DUBOW: We get the base -- the base was
11 the average value of a home in 2004. But that
12 average value of a home in 2004 wasn't what was
13 in our system because our system didn't capture
14 values accurately.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So, what's the
16 -- where -- so, the 94 is based on the values in
17 2004?

18 MR. DUBOW: Based on a change in the value
19 of properties in 2004 to 2012.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So, that's an
21 increase in values.

22 MR. DUBOW: Yes.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So, that's what
24 I'm saying. You -- you -- so if you have a

1 number --

2 MR. DUBOW: No. We don't have a good
3 number for assessments.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Not saying you
5 have a good number. But I'm saying, you based
6 the 94 off of what you believe the numbers were
7 going to be in 2012 or what they were in 2012.
8 So, your suggestion that this extra 94 --

9 MR. DUBOW: Well, I mean, that's true to
10 the extent that your revenues obviously in '12,
11 come from where your assessments are in '12. So
12 if we had stayed with the same level of
13 assessments, the 36 billion I think is about
14 what the total is, that that would grow by an
15 additional 9 percent based on what had been
16 happening with values over that time. But that
17 doesn't get you where total assessments would be
18 when you go to actual value.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So, if we --
20 okay. Because I heard it characterized -- I
21 heard it was characterized somewhere else. The
22 94 was based on an increase in values, estimated
23 increase in values, that captured the growth in
24 revenue what this whole conversation is about.

1 MR. DUBOW: That's right. That's right.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So if you
3 calculated that that would then give you a \$94
4 million increase to the School District, then
5 you have a number -- an estimate of a number.

6 MR. DUBOW: We have an estimate of total
7 assessments. We have an old assessment number,
8 right, that was 36 billion. But that hadn't
9 captured what had happened in 2004, right? That
10 assessment, if you didn't go to actual value,
11 should go up by 9 percent just because of what
12 we hadn't captured in the last eight years or
13 ten years s. That doesn't make up for decades
14 of not having correct numbers.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay. So, we
16 are going to run the calculations tomorrow. And
17 based on 12, right?

18 MR. DUBOW: Okay.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: And we should
20 come out with 94 for the School District.

21 MR. DUBOW: Yeah.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay. All
23 right.

24 Chair recognizes Councilman Goode.

1 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you,
2 Mr. President. There are worse case scenarios.
3 And I think we are not looking at best case
4 scenarios right now.

5 The worst case scenario presented to us is
6 probably an \$80 billion base. There are some
7 things true about that as relates to the
8 Homestead Exemption. One, even before we look
9 at decreases, let's look at increases.

10 With a \$80 billion base with no Homestead
11 Exemption, over 300,000 people's/homeowners'
12 bills would go up. With a \$15,000 Homestead
13 Exemption the Administration suggested, 60,000
14 less people's bills would go up. If a 30,000
15 exemption, 100,000 less homeowners' bills would
16 go up. With a \$40,000 exemption, even less
17 bills will go up.

18 But let's talk about decreases, which I
19 like to do. With \$80 billion base, which is the
20 worst case scenario with no Homestead Exemption,
21 over 150,000 homeowners' bills would go down.
22 With the \$15,000 exemption that the
23 Administration suggested, over 200,000
24 homeowners' bills would go down. With a \$30,000

1 exemption, around 240,000 homeowners' bills
2 would go down. With a \$35,000 exemption, about
3 a quarter of a million homeowners' bills would
4 go down. With a \$40,000 exemption, about
5 270,000 homeowners' bills would go down. And
6 the 40,000 exemption is probably the height now
7 if the median value is really around 80.

8 So I applied for my Homestead this morning.
9 I mailed it off this morning. Actually
10 suggested everyone do that. At some point,
11 there will be a Homestead Exemption, and
12 Homestead Exemptions cause more people's bills
13 to go down. That's the simple truth.

14 Thank you.

15 (Applause)

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you,
17 Councilman.

18 Chair recognizes Councilman Green.

19 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
20 Mr. President.

21 I just have a -- do you agree with those
22 numbers? Is that based on 1.8 millage rate, the
23 ones -- the numbers that we just heard?

24 MR. DUBOW: You know what, I think they

1 were accurate. But I would need to kind of go
2 through them again.

3 COUNCILMAN GREEN: That's based on a 1.8
4 millage rate?

5 MR. DUBOW: Well, the millage rate would be
6 different depending on which one you use.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Sure. Okay. At 30,
8 it's based on 1.8.

9 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Point of information.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Chair recognizes
11 Councilman Goode for point of information.

12 COUNCILMAN GOODE: The 30,000 exemption is
13 based on 1.75. The 35,000 exemption is based on
14 1.78. And the 40,000 exemption is based on 1.8
15 according to the numbers I have right now.

16 COUNCILMAN GREEN: That does not include
17 gentrification?

18 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Does not.

19 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Got it. Thank
20 you. That's actually pretty interesting. I
21 guess you can say it another way, at 30,000
22 almost half the homeowners will have a decrease.
23 And I wonder if the Administration could provide
24 the median decrease and the median increase if

1 you agree with those numbers at all those levels
2 Councilman Goode mentioned. Because I think
3 that could be interesting information. I'm not
4 asking for it now, but if you can provide it to
5 the Chair. I would also like to know if --

6 MR. DUBOW: Let me just get one caveat. We
7 will see if we can actually get to the median.
8 If we can, we will provide that.

9 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. I would also like
10 to know if you could redo your presentation that
11 you sent to City Council that assumed a rate of
12 1.25 at -- at one point, you know, at a 15K
13 Homestead, a 30K Homestead and with
14 gentrification --

15 MR. DUBOW: Yes. We can do.

16 COUNCILMAN GREEN: -- as proposed. And
17 then, I guess, also just to -- just to, I think,
18 pick briefly up on the Council President's great
19 point, I think the first time those numbers came
20 out was at your presentation to PICA where what
21 you told PICA was that there was a three to four
22 times increase in the aggregate value of real
23 estate in the City. So, it was based on that
24 testimony that --

1 MR. DUBOW: That wasn't testimony. It was
2 discussion in a meeting.

3 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Discussion, sorry.

4 MR. DUBOW: And I think in testimony the
5 following week, I said we are really not sure
6 what is right.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: No. But based on --

8 MR. DUBOW: We said that pretty
9 consistently.

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I'm not arguing -- I'm
11 not trying to -- but it was three -- three
12 times, which was the low end of what PICA was
13 told in discussion is \$108 billion.

14 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. And I think we said we
15 didn't think -- we said pretty quickly after
16 that we didn't think that was right.

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Right. But as you -- of
18 course, you don't -- you don't choose a -- you
19 can choose a revenue based on -- revenue number
20 based on revenues you chose last year. But when
21 you're talking about real estate -- real
22 estate -- collecting money from real estate,
23 you're really talking about capturing the value
24 in growth and real estate. And I think what the

1 President's point is if you are not capturing
2 all the value that was assumed when you came up
3 with the 94 million, that it is only some
4 percentage of that 94 million, that would be
5 capturing value.

6 MR. DUBOW: I'm sorry. Say that again.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: If it's only \$80
8 billion, we are not capturing \$94 million in
9 value. We just decided we want \$94 million in
10 revenue.

11 MR. DUBOW: No. We still -- if you looked
12 at -- at the change in value on the old
13 assessment system, you are still seeing that
14 increase, right? I mean, that's kind of apples
15 to apples. It's the old assessment system you
16 have to look at.

17 If you are looking at the new assessment
18 system, then there's tens of billions of dollars
19 of value that we haven't captured, right?

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: We are talking about
21 capturing value in terms of the revenue
22 collected instead of in terms of what the
23 aggregate assessed value is. But, of course,
24 they are -- they are -- one cannot exist without

1 the other.

2 MR. DUBOW: Right. But there are two
3 things going on here. One is, if you did kind
4 of apples-to-apples comparison with the -- the
5 artificially low assessments from before, those
6 were missing out on 25 percent increase, right,
7 which then translates into the increase in
8 revenue.

9 If you're actually looking at all the value
10 that we didn't capture, that's tens of billions
11 of dollars. We're not trying to tax all that.
12 If we were actually trying to capture all that
13 revenue, then the increase would be tens of
14 millions of dollars more. We never said we were
15 capturing all of that.

16 COUNCILMAN GREEN: You basically --

17 MR. DUBOW: That's why we're reducing the
18 millage.

19 COUNCILMAN GREEN: You said it increased by
20 25 percent, which is \$94 million.

21 MR. DUBOW: From 2004 based on where we
22 went before we went to full value.

23 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Right. But the fact of
24 the matter is, that was based on census data

1 that showed the average home was 120,000, wasn't
2 it?

3 MR. DUBOW: No. That was based on analysis
4 that IHS did on market values. That was not
5 based on census data.

6 COUNCILMAN GREEN: What did they use for
7 their analysis?

8 MR. DUBOW: They looked at sales data.

9 COUNCILMAN GREEN: By GMA?

10 MS. ADAMS: They have a whole model. They
11 have an economic model that they use to help
12 with all of a forecast on a variety of things.
13 We asked them to look at what they had as the
14 average value in 2004 and what the average value
15 in 2012. And that's -- they have many, many
16 inputs into that model.

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Oh, great. I think we
18 asked for that in previous testimony.

19 MS. ADAMS: I don't think we have that.

20 COUNCILMAN GREEN: If you provide the model
21 to the Chair, I would appreciate it.

22 MS. ADAMS: We don't own the model. We
23 don't own the model. It's their model.

24 COUNCILMAN GREEN: How does that compare

1 with Econsult's model?

2 MS. ADAMS: We don't own Econsult's model,
3 so I don't think we have that.

4 MR. DUBOW: We have -- I mean, we saw from
5 Econsult was they had increases from, I guess,
6 2002 instead of 2004. And those were like 44
7 percent, so it doesn't seem inconsistent with
8 their 25 percent depending on how the 2002/2003
9 were.

10 COUNCILMAN GREEN: We solve for revenue
11 number not for capturing value?

12 MR. DUBOW: No. There is an increase in
13 value. And we were looking at capturing that.
14 We're not looking at capturing all of the change
15 in value from the old broken system to the new
16 system, because that's a change that's a
17 doubling and tripling. We are not looking to do
18 that.

19 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So, you want to capture
20 \$94 million in value and not more than that?

21 MR. DUBOW: No. We want to capture the
22 change since the last -- the last broad
23 reassessment. We would -- we use the old system
24 to look at that. The new system values are

1 completely different and much higher. We are
2 not saying that we want to capture all the
3 change from the broken system to the new system.
4 That would mean keeping the same rates and just
5 using the higher values, which we don't want to
6 do.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. Thank you,
8 Mr. President.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you,
10 Councilman.

11 Chair recognizes Councilman Squilla.

12 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yes. Thank you,
13 Mr. President.

14 How many total households are in the --

15 MR. DUBOW: There are about 577,000
16 properties; 470,000 roughly are residential.
17 And of those, maybe 340,000 are owner occupied.

18 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: 470,000 residential?

19 MR. DUBOW: Uh-huh.

20 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And how many are --

21 MR. DUBOW: Owner occupied? About 340.

22 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: 340. So, out of the
23 470,000, if we go to a \$40,000 Homestead;
24 400,000 would --

1 MR. DUBOW: You have to be owner occupied,
2 so it's out at 340,000.

3 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Out of the 340,000,
4 how many would go down?

5 MR. DUBOW: However many applied would get
6 the \$40,000 exemption. And then we have to do
7 that analysis that you were asking before to see
8 kind of where the --

9 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I know, I mean,
10 Councilman Goode was giving us numbers of
11 100,000. Councilman, can you just repeat those
12 numbers again.

13 COUNCILMAN GOODE: At 40,000, it would be
14 270,000.

15 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: How many?

16 COUNCILMAN GOODE: 270,000.

17 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: 270,000.

18 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Would go down.

19 Actually, 267,337 is the estimate.

20 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: So, would that be
21 270,000 of the 340,000 households?

22 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Yes.

23 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I mean, that's only
24 70,000 that would see an increase in value to

1 capture the extra \$94 million.

2 MR. DUBOW: No. That is all -- they
3 consume all of real estate. So, that would
4 include the nonresidential side, too.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: What do we believe the
6 non-residential --

7 MR. DUBOW: And the other non-residential.

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Commercial and
9 industrial.

10 MR. DUBOW: Yeah.

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And I think you said
12 this -- forgive me. But you think they are
13 around between -- around 70 percent of actual
14 value?

15 MR. DUBOW: Residential?

16 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: No. Commercial.

17 MR. DUBOW: Commercial?

18 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yeah.

19 MR. DUBOW: No. I think residential would
20 be around two-thirds, so we said before. The
21 residential values would be about two-thirds of
22 the total value.

23 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Right. I'm talking
24 about what is the -- you think at the market

1 value rate right now, CNI is approximately 70
2 percent.

3 MR. DUBOW: Oh, more like 60.

4 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: 60?

5 MR. DUBOW: More like 60. A little under.

6 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: When will we have
7 those numbers?

8 MR. DUBOW: Final numbers, probably mid
9 July.

10 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Mid July?

11 MR. DUBOW: Yeah.

12 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And then we would be
13 able to put this all together with the
14 Homesteads that we applied for, everybody
15 applied for, to come up at that point?

16 MS. ADAMS: We won't have all of the
17 Homestead applications in by mid July, so we
18 won't be able to do that until August.

19 MR. DUBOW: Right. We don't need the
20 Homesteads for the non-residential values. We
21 need them for residential. Non-residential
22 don't get Homesteads.

23 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Right. But it's still
24 a part of the whole aggregate number because

1 that would still affect the millage rate.

2 MR. DUBOW: Right. You just asked when
3 we'd have -- I thought you'd ask when we'd have
4 the assessed values for the non-residential.

5 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yeah. Because we have
6 to combine them --

7 MR. DUBOW: Yes.

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: With the residential
9 to come up with our aggregate number.

10 MR. DUBOW: But we won't have the
11 residential until we have done all the --

12 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: That would be some
13 time in August?

14 MR. DUBOW: Really early August.

15 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Early August. And
16 then everything would go out in October.

17 MR. DUBOW: September.

18 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: September?

19 MR. DUBOW: Yes.

20 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And if we add the
21 gentrification Homestead into the mix, that also
22 would increase the millage rate?

23 MR. DUBOW: Right. To compensate for --

24 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: To compensate for an

1 extra maximum of up to 30 million.

2 MR. DUBOW: Right.

3 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: So, our best bet is if
4 we go just with a fixed number, \$30,000 for now
5 with a gentrification over 1.8, approximately
6 over 1.8 for a millage rate, is that close?

7 MR. DUBOW: I think that's about right.

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: It's about right. So,
9 would it be a safe bet if we were telling people
10 if we went to AVI and they know approximately
11 what their value was for their home, to times
12 that by 1.8 and they would probably get what
13 their tax would be?

14 MR. DUBOW: Except if they increase by more
15 than 200 percent. They should just stop at 200
16 percent, and they need to subtract out whatever
17 the --

18 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Whatever the Homestead
19 was 15 or 30.

20 MR. DUBOW: Yeah.

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All right. Thank you.

22 MR. DUBOW: Sure.

23 (Councilman Jones stepping in as Chair
24 for Council President Clarke.)

1 COUNCILMAN JONES: Chair recognizes
2 Councilman Johnson.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you. Rob, I
4 just wanted to just follow up on just one last
5 issue I was trying to get some clarity on.

6 When is the deadline for the collections or
7 the opportunity for people to apply for the
8 Homestead Exemption that recently just went out?

9 MS. ADAMS: July 31.

10 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: July 31. Okay. And
11 as it stands right now, we are working off a
12 hypothetical formula, correct?

13 MS. ADAMS: For the Homestead?

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Not for the formula,
15 but just in terms of dealing with AVI just in
16 general because we don't have the actual --

17 MR. DUBOW: Correct.

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: -- numbers in yet.
19 Okay. And I'm thinking about constituents, so
20 that is where my mind frame is coming from.

21 MR. DUBOW: Yep.

22 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: So, the deadline is
23 July 21. And when are you able after that
24 deadline to -- essentially, you are going to be

1 getting your tax bill in the fall, right?
2 That's when the appeal process will probably
3 start. If anything else, if you aren't paying
4 attention to PCN or the Daily News or the
5 Inquirer, because this is like techy stuff. But
6 when you actually see your tax bill, you will
7 really start calling and really trying to find
8 out what happened.

9 After the 31st, when do people have that
10 opportunity or do people have the opportunity to
11 apply for Homestead Exemption for relief when
12 their new numbers come out?

13 MS. ADAMS: They would have to --

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: In other words --

15 MS. ADAMS: Following year. We wouldn't be
16 able to have them for this tax year. It would
17 have to be the following tax year.

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay. That's my
19 point. After you get your bill, if you are not
20 paying attention right now because this isn't --
21 to be quite frank with you -- a major sexy issue
22 that kind of sticks out.

23 MS. ADAMS: That's why we are doing a big
24 campaign on the Homestead. We will be putting

1 up posters in transit stations. We are mailing
2 out to every homeowner, putting on the website.
3 We are going to be doing PSAs. We are really
4 going to try and promote the Homestead to make
5 it clear that it's a real savings for
6 homeowners. That they should really --

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: If District call me
8 and say Councilman Johnson, I am applying for
9 something that I yet not know the value of my
10 home.

11 MS. ADAMS: It's still worth everybody
12 applying.

13 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I should apply.

14 MS. ADAMS: Absolutely.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And they going to say,
16 I should apply because I don't know if it's
17 going to hit me.

18 MS. ADAMS: But it's still going to be a
19 savings.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Just in case.

21 MS. ADAMS: Yes. Exactly. It's going to
22 save them money if they apply for it. It's a
23 tax savings.

24 MR. DUBOW: Even if their taxes are going

1 to go down, they should still qualify and still
2 should apply.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Is this mailed out to
4 every homeowner?

5 MS. ADAMS: That's right.

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: So, every homeowner is
7 actually receiving --

8 MS. ADAMS: Will be receiving in June.

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Receiving something in
10 the mail.

11 MS. ADAMS: Yup.

12 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And the total number
13 of homes is.

14 MS. ADAMS: So, we are going to be sending
15 out to about 470,000 homes.

16 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: 470,000. Are they
17 like in bright yellow/orange warning packets?

18 MS. ADAMS: The envelope is white with a
19 big blue label in it that says there is this tax
20 savings. You need to open it.

21 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Got you.

22 MS. ADAMS: We are trying to make it as
23 inviting as possible so people know what it is.
24 And then inside it has the brochure and the

1 letter and the application itself.

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay. I mean, I say
3 that jokingly. But I'm also concerned that
4 any -- homeowners are aware. And the way that
5 this process going, no matter how you look at
6 it, it's off a hypothetical. That is just my
7 mind state in trying to right a system that I do
8 understand. But I want to make sure that
9 individuals have that opportunity to participate
10 in this process.

11 So when I find out the deadline is July 31
12 and we get the numbers in the fall, and that's
13 probably when you actually see, you know, some
14 people get an increase, some people get a
15 decrease and want some type of help or some type
16 of reprieve. If they miss this process now
17 because it actually is -- it is a direct way of
18 going through the process, they may not have
19 that opportunity until after the fact.

20 So that's -- as we unravel this process and
21 look at it from a policy standpoint, those are
22 some of the things that stick out. But thank
23 you for answering the questions.

24 (Little applause)

1 COUNCILMAN JONES: Are you done,
2 Councilman?

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: While we have the
5 opportunity here and people are watching this on
6 Channel 64, what are the locations that you are
7 going to have these applications at for the
8 record?

9 MS. ADAMS: Okay. So, they are going to be
10 in the -- all the libraries. It's going to be
11 online. We are going to have them in rec
12 centers. We are going to be in City Hall. They
13 will be in MSB. We are trying to put them in as
14 many locations as possible.

15 COUNCILMAN JONES: Councilmembers' offices.

16 MS. ADAMS: If Councilmembers would like
17 them, we are printing them now. They are
18 available online, so everybody can go to
19 Phila.gov. And you can download the application
20 there and the brochure and all the details about
21 it, also.

22 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Point of
23 information.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Point of information,

1 Councilwoman.

2 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Thank you
3 very, very much. All of that is important and
4 extremely valuable. There are so many of our
5 seniors who don't have an understanding of what
6 online means. So, it's so critically important
7 given the advantage and benefit that we reach
8 deep and wide to citizens who don't own
9 computers, let alone have the ability to get
10 online.

11 So, every senior citizen center in this
12 city should have multiple copies of that
13 document.

14 MS. ADAMS: Okay.

15 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: There is a
16 room and opportunity for clergy in this process,
17 that professional organizations across the city
18 who care about their membership who would
19 benefit from this process. The schools for
20 sure. Online does not get us there ever for
21 anything that we do for citizens who are going
22 to be impacted by something like their taxes.

23 MS. ADAMS: And we've actually been working
24 with your staff, Councilwoman, to make sure we

1 are getting to all of your community groups as
2 they've been really helpful in saying that they
3 want to help get out this message.

4 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Yes.

5 MS. ADAMS: So, we've been working with
6 David to really hope that we can also reach the
7 community.

8 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Deep and
9 wide. It's so important. Because July 31 for
10 some folks is tomorrow when you think about what
11 they need to do to meet that deadline. Okay
12 then. Thank you.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you --

14 MS. ADAMS: We'll also -- can I just say,
15 Councilwoman, we're going to be translating into
16 Spanish and in traditional Chinese so that
17 people can also access it with language issues.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: We appreciate all of the
19 language access issues.

20 One of the issues is on that relief
21 application, do you have to have your property
22 ID number?

23 MS. ADAMS: You need to have your OPA
24 number, which is the former BRT number. This is

1 available on your -- either on your tax bill or
2 on your assessment notice. We can also -- it's
3 also at the Revenue Department website and the
4 OPA website. We can also help you find that.
5 We are going to put it on FAQs and provide more
6 information about that if people are struggling
7 to find that.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: I can see my Aunt -- my
9 Aunt Ida looking at FOQs/IDs. How do we
10 simplify this so we have complete applications?
11 Is there a technical assistance number that
12 people can call and say where do I get my BRT?

13 MS. ADAMS: We have to get that number. We
14 do have a number available especially on the
15 brochure.

16 COUNCILMAN JONES: Why don't we take this
17 advantage.

18 MS. ADAMS: Yes. There is a number that
19 people can call. It's 215-686-9200.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: So, they have to have
21 their address and their property identification
22 number.

23 MS. ADAMS: Yeah. That's what you need to
24 do to fill out the form. It's a simple form.

1 You say, name of the owner, the address.

2 COUNCILMAN JONES: If they don't know that
3 number they can call?

4 MS. ADAMS: They can call that number.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: What number is that
6 again?

7 MS. ADAMS: It's 215-686-9200.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: As many times as you can
9 repeat that in as many different venues, that's
10 important.

11 MS. ADAMS: If you have access to the
12 internet and we are making this the keystone
13 computer center so you can all go to the
14 library. You can also look it up online at the
15 OPA website or on the Revenue website. It's
16 very easy to find. And we're trying to make it
17 as easily accessible as possible so people know
18 where to look for it. But we need that to
19 process the applications.

20 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Can I ask a
22 favor of my colleagues? There are a number of
23 individuals here from the public that came down
24 to testify. And I see of number of them that

1 were actually at the other hearing that came
2 back today. So if at all possible, I see people
3 T'ing up as I'm speaking. Can we like just do
4 the last -- we got four here just real quickly
5 get Mr. Dubow -- because we are going to get
6 another bite at your apple on Thursday.

7 MR. DUBOW: Get a lot of bites at this
8 apple.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Yeah. Folks
10 came down here in good faith that have been
11 waiting that came the other day, and we didn't
12 have a hearing. So, I just want to kind of, if
13 at all possible, try to accommodate those
14 individuals.

15 Councilman Green.

16 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Thank you,
17 Mr. President. Just, I guess this is more of a
18 rhetorical question.

19 I'm not sure how you tell of the \$21
20 billion in value on residential value on the
21 books today compared to the 52, if it's at 40
22 percent that we are going to see after the
23 reevaluation, how do you disaggregate the
24 property value increase as a result of sales not

1 being occurred as a portion of the missing
2 aggregate value as opposed to the fact that just
3 reassessments weren't done as a portion of the
4 missing aggregate value?

5 I'm not sure -- I'm not quite sure yet how
6 you do that; although, it is a happy coincidence
7 that 9.9 percent or that the School District
8 increased the capturing of value just happens to
9 be the same percentage increase that happened on
10 the city side two years ago. Seems to be a
11 striking coincidence. But I won't ask you to
12 answer that question.

13 MR. DUBOW: I can. It's the same answer I
14 gave before. So, we can go back and forth.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Got it.

16 MR. DUBOW: But I appreciate you're not
17 asking for an answer.

18 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So, can you just explain
19 to us where you are in terms of the residential
20 real estate data input and what percentage is
21 now input of properties and walk us --

22 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. I don't know. I can't
23 give you the percent that's in -- I can tell you
24 that they are on schedule to be done by June 15.

1 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Inputting all data?

2 MR. DUBOW: Inputting -- yeah. By having
3 everything input and then actually taking a
4 first look at what it looks like.

5 COUNCILMAN GREEN: By June 15.

6 MR. DUBOW: Yeah.

7 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay. And so you have
8 the sales data for the last three years. I
9 assume that's all been put in the system?

10 MR. DUBOW: Again, I -- my question has
11 been kind of when are you going to be done and
12 are you on schedule. I haven't asked what
13 percent is in because I'm more concerned with
14 they're getting it done by the 15th.

15 COUNCILMAN GREEN: In theory, on June 16 we
16 can have a really good idea of what the actual
17 aggregate value of real estate is in the City.

18 MR. DUBOW: Well, yeah. Except then we
19 have to put the relief measures against it to
20 figure it out.

21 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Sure. Yeah, without
22 relief measures.

23 MR. DUBOW: But we should have decent sense
24 of the total.

1 COUNCILMAN GREEN: Okay.

2 MR. DUBOW: On residential. Not on
3 commercial.

4 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So that's a -- that
5 raises a good point. On commercial and
6 industrial, I understand three weeks ago or so
7 you sent out a form to all commercial and
8 industrial property owners in the city to ask
9 them to self report.

10 What other assessment efforts have been
11 done to reassess these property values in the
12 last two years?

13 MR. DUBOW: In the last two years? I am --
14 there is some commercial properties where it's
15 done on CNI. Some we look at sales, look at the
16 properties. So, there are a whole variety of --

17 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So, the moratorium
18 didn't apply to commercial and industrial
19 properties?

20 MR. DUBOW: No. I thought what you were
21 saying -- we've started -- we've been doing this
22 reassessment since August a year and a half ago,
23 or whatever. Almost -- been working on it for
24 almost two years.

1 COUNCILMAN GREEN: But what percentage of
2 commercial and industrial properties have been
3 revalued?

4 MR. DUBOW: I'm not sure I understand the
5 question.

6 COUNCILMAN GREEN: What percentage of the
7 100 and some thousand of commercial and
8 industrial properties in the City have a new
9 value as a result of the move to AVI because an
10 assessor has --

11 MR. DUBOW: No. This is -- what I was
12 talking about is this process, getting to the
13 new values that will be, you know, ready some
14 time in July. Other changes weren't part of
15 this process.

16 COUNCILMAN GREEN: I don't understand that
17 answer.

18 MR. DUBOW: If there were changes like if
19 there was, you know, a renovation to a building,
20 it might have a new assessment. But that wasn't
21 part of putting actual value in place.

22 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So, the inputting the
23 data part is -- is -- is all that's been done
24 over the past two years on commercial and

1 industrial?

2 MR. DUBOW: No. Just like with
3 residential, we are -- we are at the end of a
4 process that included, you know, going out and
5 inspecting properties. There's been a process
6 on commercial that's included inspecting
7 properties, looking at sales data, looking at
8 the income and expense.

9 COUNCILMAN GREEN: So, how many
10 properties -- for how many commercial industrial
11 properties has that process been completed?

12 MR. DUBOW: I'm not sure. But on that one,
13 they're kind of on track to be done by mid July.

14 COUNCILMAN GREEN: If you can provide the
15 exact number to the Chair tomorrow so that we
16 can talk about it on Thursday, I would
17 appreciate it.

18 Thank you, Mr. President.

19 MR. DUBOW: But I'm not 100 percent sure
20 that we are saying the same thing to each other,
21 so maybe we can talk afterwards. Because I'm
22 not sure I am understanding your question.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you,
24 Councilman.

1 Chair recognizes Councilwoman Bass.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. Thank you,
3 Mr. President. I just have a question just to
4 follow up on Councilman Green's question or line
5 of questioning.

6 Do you have -- you don't have any idea in
7 terms of, you know, an approximate percentage of
8 what's been done on the commercial side?

9 MR. DUBOW: I think at this point you're
10 probably -- no, I don't want to guess.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: You can guess.

12 MR. DUBOW: I don't want to guess. I know
13 when it will be done. But I don't know the
14 percent that's done now. So, I would --

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I mean, just broadly.
16 Could you say halfway done? Three quarters of
17 the way? You know, just to give us some sense
18 of -- you can't give us anything?

19 MR. DUBOW: I just think it might be way
20 off, so I don't want to do that. I mean, based
21 on everything they said, I am confident they
22 will be done by mid July, but I don't know what
23 percent they are at today.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. So in about six

1 weeks even we're confident they'll be done?

2 MR. DUBOW: Yes.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So even if they are at
4 0 today --

5 MR. DUBOW: They are not at 0.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. Somewhere
7 between 0 and 99.

8 MR. DUBOW: Yeah.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Just also, to back up
10 also to emphasize Councilman Jones and
11 Councilwoman Reynolds-Brown and their questions
12 and concerns about making sure that people
13 without access to the internet and people in
14 underserved communities have the Homestead
15 information.

16 MR. DUBOW: Yes.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Have you -- do you plan
18 to have a place where people can come and
19 actually have the form filled out? Is that a
20 possibility? You know, like with your IRS
21 forms, sometimes there's a place where you can
22 go and you can get your income tax forms filled
23 out for you. Or if you don't feel comfortable
24 with the simple forms, is that something that we

1 will be willing to do? Because I can see that
2 some folks will feel very intimidated by what
3 they receive in the mail despite whatever you
4 send out, whatever you post. However bright the
5 paper is, there will be a number of people who
6 will feel intimidated by it.

7 And, you know, for example, Councilman
8 Jones and his Aunt Ida, we want to make sure
9 that she, you know, is appropriately aware and,
10 you know, but has access to resources if the
11 City is offering them.

12 MS. ADAMS: I don't think we've -- we can
13 definitely try and look into that about how we
14 can help people fill in the forms themselves.
15 We talked about how we can have drop -- drop
16 boxes that people can drop them off in different
17 parts of the city.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well, not dropping them
19 off. I am talking about the hands-on, sitting
20 down with someone across the table.

21 MS. ADAMS: One of the challenges is that
22 we need a signature on it. I think we'd have to
23 talk to the Law Department about how we can do
24 that. But I think that's definitely something

1 we can look into about we could -- how we will
2 do that. I just don't know offhand how we will
3 do that right now. But we will definitely look
4 into it and let you know how we can do it.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. And when will
6 the Homestead information be sent out, you said?

7 MS. ADAMS: It will be sent in -- it will
8 be sent -- everybody will get it by the end of
9 June. It will mailed to every home in the city
10 by the end of June.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So, it will mailed to
12 every home by the end of June.

13 MS. ADAMS: Everybody will receive it in
14 their mailbox by the end of June.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And it's due by July
16 31?

17 MS. ADAMS: That's right.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And if you have
19 internet access --

20 MS. ADAMS: It's ready now.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Then you are ready now.

22 MS. ADAMS: You can apply now. Absolutely.
23 You can download the forms online. We're going
24 to make the forms available in libraries and in

1 as many places as possible so you can just fill
2 out the forms and send it in then.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: When will the forms be
4 in libraries and so forth?

5 MS. ADAMS: Right now we have -- we are
6 getting them printed. So, I am hoping to get
7 some printed by the end of the week, beginning
8 of next week. And then we will start putting
9 them in libraries and rec centers.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. And my
11 thought -- and the reason I ask those questions
12 is, again, my thought is that for folks in
13 underserved communities, they're already at a
14 disadvantage obviously because they won't have
15 the same amount of time. And we don't have the
16 tools in place to make sure there is some place
17 where they can come and sit down across the
18 table from someone that can help them.

19 So, already they have a shortened window,
20 and they don't have the information right now.
21 So, I think that in some ways by the way we are
22 operating, we may be doing a disservice to
23 people that we are really trying to be helpful
24 to. So, just, you know, a thought that you may

1 want to consider as we try to move forward and
2 try to correct that.

3 Can I ask one other quick question? Just
4 going back to the value, the total property
5 value of about 80 billion, Rob?

6 MR. DUBOW: Yup.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And you said that was
8 based on estimates from a consultant.

9 MR. DUBOW: From Econsult.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: From Econsult.

11 MR. DUBOW: Econsult, yes.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Is that in conjunction
13 or working with OPA estimates or --

14 MR. DUBOW: Econsult's model is based on
15 working with OPA.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. Okay. Thank
17 you.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you,
19 Councilwoman.

20 Following up on the Councilwoman's
21 question. I know we don't have as many as we
22 used to. The City has a number of Mayor's
23 Action Centers or Miniature City Halls we used
24 to call them. I know actually Revenue at one

1 time had staffers there. I think there is one
2 in Councilwoman's District on 22nd Street.

3 Is there still somebody there from Revenue?

4 MR. RICHARDSON: There is Revenue in that,
5 yes.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Is there the
7 possibility that somebody can be or the person
8 from Revenue who is currently there. I know
9 there is one in the Northeast somewhere.

10 MR. RICHARDSON: Right.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: And I don't know
12 where else we may have it, that can actually
13 assist those individuals that the Councilwoman
14 is talking about filling out the forms. Because
15 I know that people actually come to the one on
16 22nd Street. I can say because I am familiar
17 when they have these -- you need to do bills or
18 do whatever, the people that work there actually
19 assist them. It's probably not actually in
20 their job specifications.

21 But the reality is, there is a reason why
22 under the current Senior Citizens Tax Relief
23 Program, that we probably only have around 60,
24 65 percent of the people that apply that are

1 eligible. And a lot has to do with the fact
2 that people just are intimidated by forms. They
3 just simply don't know how to do that. So, if
4 that is in a position which -- I know you say
5 libraries. But the City of Philadelphia through
6 OAC has a contract with these things called
7 Neighborhood Advisory Councils that are known as
8 NACs and NSAs where we have contract with those
9 individuals and organizations throughout the
10 city whose responsibility it is to provide
11 information to the citizens.

12 So, I would really -- those are the more
13 recognizable locations in a lot of these
14 neighborhoods. So, if we can look at those
15 locations and target for Homestead applications
16 and all the other things. A number of them,
17 excuse me, a number of them do LIHEAP grants, I
18 believe. So, they are clearly are in a position
19 to assist with this type of activity. All
20 right.

21 MS. ADAMS: Yes.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

23 Chair recognizes Councilman Squilla -- I'm
24 sorry, Councilwoman Brown. Let me get her

1 because she hadn't -- she hadn't had a first
2 round.

3 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: I thank you,
4 but after careful consideration, I will not ask
5 that question at this hour.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: You know, we
7 really want to hear that question now,
8 Councilwoman. All right. Thank you,
9 Councilwoman.

10 Chair recognizes Councilman Squilla.

11 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I'm only going to ask
12 two quick questions, too. The Senior Tax Brief
13 that is available, too, is there access for the
14 seniors to get that?

15 MR. RICHARDSON: The next application roll
16 out is not until the fall. But there is
17 access -- we have information in the Revenue
18 Department for them to complete that application
19 if they want to come in or we can send
20 applications to them.

21 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Now, in the fall, will
22 they still be able to apply for this year?

23 MR. RICHARDSON: Yes.

24 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All right. Are they

1 going to do a sort of an outreach sort of like
2 what we are doing now with the Homestead or no
3 just --

4 MR. RICHARDSON: Well, we continue to do an
5 outreach through the Council offices and the
6 various locations within the community. We
7 always provide in this and the tax bills, also.

8 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Because I think it's
9 important now especially if AVI is approved and
10 moves forward, that we still -- I am sure there
11 is a lot of seniors that are eligible for the
12 tax freeze that haven't applied. And that may
13 be an option for them, also.

14 Is it possible when you mail out the forms
15 for the Homesteads, would it be able just to add
16 the BRT number onto the label?

17 MS. ADAMS: When you do get it in the mail,
18 it will have that. It's just for those online
19 or in libraries it doesn't have that.

20 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Okay. So --

21 MS. ADAMS: When you get it in the mail, it
22 will have it already filled out.

23 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: It will be already on
24 there for that person?

1 MS. ADAMS: Yeah.

2 COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: That's great. Thank
3 you very much. That's all. Thank you.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you,
5 Councilman.

6 We're going to -- if it's okay with the
7 members, let you guys go. But you know you will
8 be back.

9 MR. DUBOW: Thursday morning?

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Yeah. We'll let
11 you know the specific time.

12 MR. DUBOW: Okay.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so
14 much.

15 Ms. Lewis, call the first set of witnesses,
16 please.

17 THE CLERK: I am going to call a panel of
18 three witnesses. Rene Goodwin, Jeffrey Braff
19 and Candice DeCarlo.

20 (Panel of witnesses approach table.)

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good afternoon.

22 (Good afternoon.)

23 We're going to -- if at all possible, we're
24 going to ask you stick to around 3 or 4 minutes

1 in your testimony because --

2 (You got it.)

3 Thank you so much.

4 MS. GOODWIN: Mr. President, Members of
5 Council, fellow Philadelphians, my name is Rene
6 Goodwin. I'm here representing the Pennsport
7 Community. There is a riddle that asks, how
8 many so and sos does it take to challenge a
9 light bulb? Here is my version. How many
10 injustice does it take to equal fairness?

11 There is one -- there is no one I know who
12 is opposed to a change in the real estate tax
13 system or the school funding. What we object to
14 is implementation of AVI in a manner that is not
15 really well thought out and in a manner that
16 will bring the pain of unanticipated
17 consequences to all.

18 The real estate market is a major
19 enterprise in Philadelphia in hopes of what we
20 spend. Here are some points concerning that
21 industry to think about. If there are an
22 adequate remedies in tax increases, taxes
23 increase dramatically, people will have to move
24 out. Question is, who will be able to buy these

1 homes? It is a fact that in this economy many
2 who plan to buy homes are renting instead until
3 the economy improves. By the way, the real
4 estate market has just started to show signs of
5 improvement but I wouldn't count on it after
6 this.

7 If taxes go much higher, people will have
8 to lower the sale prices to sell so that buyers
9 can qualify. If the sale prices start to come
10 down and thus dictate value, then assessments
11 may have to come back down. We'll be back at
12 square one. As the new construction, it seems
13 many were able to buy a more expensive home due
14 to the tax abatement.

15 Ten years ago was a time when everything
16 and everyone was upwardly mobile. But life,
17 like the economy, goes up and down. And when it
18 came down, it came down hard. Many of these
19 hopefuls are now either underemployed or
20 unemployed. So what happens when the ten years
21 are up and not only do they pay the full tax
22 they have to pay, but they pay one that is
23 higher than anticipated? What happens when they
24 can't afford to pay and yet can't afford to sell

1 because no one can afford to buy.

2 What happens to those that have lived in an
3 area a long time before it gentrified and sank
4 everything they had to improving an old
5 property? Old properties, as many of us know,
6 are after all more expensive to improve, repair,
7 maintain and operate particularly since they are
8 energy and efficient.

9 Now, let's talk about rental properties
10 landlord have no option but to pass some of the
11 increases onto the tenants. If there are large
12 increases, however, they can't raise the tenants
13 rents, let's say, \$100 a month. So where does
14 that put that tenant and where does it put that
15 landlord?

16 And what about Section Eight renters? If
17 taxes increase up to 300 percent, it would be a
18 huge problem for landlords and tenants. The
19 landlord has a contract with PHA at a set rate.
20 PHA has raised the amount they will pay a
21 landlord, but there a limit to what they will
22 do. So, what happens to those tenants in
23 Section Eight units who may be moved out so that
24 the landlord can renegotiate the contract with

1 PHA?

2 My own story. At age four, my mother and I
3 were evicted because my dad became ill and could
4 no longer work. We moved in with my
5 grandmother. She had come from Poland and had
6 very lit -- hard life and raised her children
7 with very little. It wasn't easy. Many times I
8 slept in a bed with my mom and my grandmom
9 because there wasn't room for us. My dad died
10 at age 32 when I was 11.

11 I married in a early age and 10 years later
12 found myself as a single parent with no
13 financial support. I went to night school and
14 became the sole bread winner. It wasn't easy.
15 I worked hard and built a career in housing, low
16 income housing specifically. It was a
17 deliberate choice. I wanted other kids not to
18 have to experience what I did. I wanted them to
19 have a roof over their head and not just to keep
20 out the rain, but to give them a sense of
21 dignity, a sense of belonging and a place to
22 dream.

23 I now live in a house that is a very nice
24 house. My husband and I -- I married again.

1 And we've worked very hard to keep this. We
2 live in the northern end of Pennsport where the
3 properties there, over 50 percent of them are
4 new construction tax abated. My husband is 75
5 years old. He's served four years in the
6 military and worked 28 years as a public school
7 administrator. You better believe we believe in
8 public education.

9 I tell you this story to remind you that
10 numbers on spreadsheets represent people. The
11 sums that you move from Column A to Column B
12 represent the lives of children, of young
13 married just starting their families with the
14 dreams of homeownership, singles who give the
15 city a new energy, middle-agers with kids in
16 college and retired persons who play by the
17 rules all their lives.

18 So, what do I want? I want you to promise
19 me not to blind yourselves to the fact that your
20 decisions will severely impact the lives of
21 many. We are not just numbers. But what about
22 our children's education? Don't they deserve
23 something, too? Of course they do. They are
24 our future.

1 But whoever told you running this City in
2 this economic time is going to be easy? You
3 took the job. And now we need you all to do
4 what's right for all of us. As to Councilman
5 Goode's remarks two weeks ago about those who
6 have overpaid, I agree, sir, that that, too is
7 an injustice and it needs to stop. But neither
8 is it just to attempt to collect revenue through
9 an ill-conceived plan that is not quite ready
10 for public consumption.

11 Mayor Nutter seems to be asking Council to
12 provide him with a blank check to patch up a
13 problem, a big problem. Well, if he gets that
14 check with AVI without all the appropriate
15 remedies, let me tell you ladies and gentlemen,
16 the check is going to bounce because we just
17 don't have the money to cover it.

18 Here is my closing question. How many
19 elected officials does it take to create real
20 fairness?

21 Thank you.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

23 (Applause)

24 MR BRAFF: Good afternoon. I'm Jeff Braff,

1 President of the Center City Residents
2 Association. We represent residents and
3 homeowners from Broad Street to the Schuylkill
4 River, from South Street to JFK Boulevard. I
5 just want to make five -- five points.

6 Our organization, CCRA supports AVI.
7 Present system is not fair. This is motherhood
8 and apple pie. We need to change. But we
9 should not be implementing this until next year.
10 You can't set the tax rates without knowing what
11 the assessments are going to be.

12 I've listened to the hypothetical questions
13 that have been asked by Council of Mr. Dubow.
14 Mr. Dubow has done his best job in answering
15 those questions, and he's flummoxing around. We
16 don't know. We need to wait. We need to know
17 what the assessments are going to be in order to
18 address the likely harsh impacts that are going
19 to fall on vulnerable homeowners.

20 In order to calculate what the Homestead
21 Exemption should be, you need to know what the
22 real estate assessment is going to be. In order
23 to figure out what smoothing is going to be, you
24 need to have the numbers. In order to figure

1 out gentrification, you need to have the
2 numbers. We can't put the cart before the
3 house.

4 Point number four, don't combine AVI with
5 school tax -- with raising revenues for the
6 school. Those are two separate issues. They
7 need to be dealt with separately. The
8 Administration talks about transparency.
9 Smooshing it together is not transparent. Needs
10 to be addressed separately.

11 And the last thing, let's consider some
12 other forms of raising revenue in the City.
13 This is a tax increase. We've had two so-called
14 temporary real estate tax increases. They are
15 certainly other things that ought to be
16 examined.

17 One, we know we have a whole laundry list
18 of deadbeat taxpayers who haven't been paying
19 their taxes. I know the City, from what I read
20 in the Inquirer, the City is working on it.
21 They are not working hard enough. They need to
22 be accountable to this Body.

23 How about resurrecting the sugary beverage
24 tax? Something. Let's -- let's -- let's be

1 creative out there. Let's not drive the
2 taxpaying public away from Philadelphia.

3 Thank you very much.

4 MS. DECARLO: Amen.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, sir.

6 MS. DECARLO: Hello everyone. Candice
7 DeCarlo from South Philadelphia. Yeah. I would
8 just like to second everything that my
9 colleagues have said.

10 What came across most this afternoon
11 listening to everything is that we're guessing
12 about a very important issue, and one that's
13 going to deeply effect the people in South
14 Philadelphia. You're coming into neighborhoods
15 that literally can't afford these increases in
16 four, five, six, seven, eight thousand dollars a
17 year.

18 I'm very concerned about the health of
19 these neighborhoods and what's going to happen.
20 We live in these neighborhoods because that's
21 what we can afford now. That's why we live
22 there. And the unwritten agreement we have with
23 the city is that we work like dogs for our
24 neighborhoods. We do all the clean ups. We do

1 the fundraising to hire manual street cleaning.
2 We do all the plant work around the parks. We
3 put up the murals. And more than anything, we
4 anchor these neighborhoods while they start to
5 come together. And that's what I'm very
6 concerned about.

7 These are still violent neighborhoods.
8 Four people have been murdered across the street
9 from where I live in the past two years. I'm
10 not even going to go into the other crime that
11 we have to suffer. But this is -- this is what
12 we're trying to do, clean up these
13 neighborhoods. And if you raise taxes so that
14 we can no longer afford them, there is going to
15 be an exodus out. And I'm very concerned about
16 the health of the neighborhoods.

17 Thank you.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you for
19 your testimony.

20 (Thank you.)

21 You're welcome. Sorry. Councilman Goode.

22 COUNCILMAN GOODE: One simple question.
23 For those people who have been overpaying for
24 years, what's your best recommendation for what

1 we can do for them now.

2 MS. GOODWIN: Well, I think going forward
3 if there are going to be remedies for other
4 people who are concerned, like myself, about
5 being priced out of my home, then I think a
6 remedy should be developed for those people, as
7 well.

8 COUNCILMAN GOODE: The question is, for
9 those people who have been overpaying for years,
10 what do we do for them now?

11 MS. GOODWIN: You develop a remedy right
12 now for going forward to correct it. You have
13 that power. You have that desire. You have a
14 constituency that you care about, sir. Fix it
15 now.

16 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Okay.

17 MS. GOODWIN: I think if there is a way to
18 do that -- if there is will, there's a way. God
19 will show you.

20 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Thank you. I agree.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

22 THE CLERK: The next three speakers, Helen
23 Gym, Jason Budd and Pat Devin.

24 MR. BUDD: Good afternoon, Councilmembers.

1 My name is Jason Budd. I'm here from the
2 Archdiocese of Philadelphia. I would like to
3 apologize. I will explain in a minute.

4 I'm here neither in support of or in
5 opposition to any of the bills being discussed
6 here today. I was here. I was asked to come
7 and speak on behalf of cuts that have happened
8 and cuts that could possibly happen in the
9 future pursuant to nursing and the adjudication
10 and nursing situations at the schools. So, I'm
11 here to lend my support for however this is
12 resolved.

13 If we're in a position to look at cuts that
14 have happened or potentially could happen with
15 regards to nursing, I would ask humbly that we
16 reconsider those cuts or consider it with found
17 revenue to reinstate services that have been
18 rendered to students to schools in the area of
19 nursing.

20 Thank you.

21 MS. GYM: Hi. Good evening. My name is
22 Helen Gym. For the new Councilmembers, I'm a
23 public school parent and a cofounder for an
24 organization called Parents United for Public

1 Education. We are a collective of parents that
2 work to put -- to look at school budgets and see
3 how children in classrooms are being addressed
4 in schools. I want to thank all the members of
5 Council that are wrangling with a very difficult
6 issue today and understand an important
7 commitment to our city, to our public schools
8 and who are asking a lot of pointed questions
9 about responsibility for that money.

10 Last year Parents United for Public
11 Education joined a Citywide call on a campaign
12 around No Blank Checks for the School District.
13 With Council's support, I think we were
14 successful in assuring that busing was
15 considered a priority, full day kindergarten was
16 considered a priority, accelerated schools were
17 considered a priority. And that we've always
18 asked that Council make sure that there are --
19 there is accountability for the money that is
20 being provided to the School District.

21 At the top of our list this year we really
22 want to bring Council's attention as you are
23 discussing an important amount of money to go to
24 the schools, we want to put forward the issue of

1 school nurses and safety issues in schools
2 particularly around school police. At this time
3 last year, there were 101 more nursing positions
4 in the School District than there are today.
5 101 nurses -- the loss of 101 nurses has put --
6 meant that each school nurse which services, by
7 the way, not only public schools but parochial
8 schools and private religious schools throughout
9 the School District, which is an important thing
10 to understand.

11 This is not a public school issue. This is
12 an educational issue for children all across the
13 city. The school nurses are now on a 1 to 1,500
14 student ratio. They cover as many as five
15 schools for a single nurse. Because we don't
16 have enough school nurses in the schools, it
17 means that the principals have been relied upon
18 to dispense medication, address asthma attacks,
19 seizures, life threatening emergencies and make
20 other uninformed medical decisions for thousands
21 of children on a regular basis.

22 It forces families to leave their
23 neighborhood schools to find schools that have
24 full-time nursing support. It reduces

1 opportunities for students to receive annual
2 vision, hearing exams and scoliosis screenings
3 in middle school. I know that this in some ways
4 is really far removed from some of the AVI
5 discussions that we are having. But we have to
6 understand how important if the money is going
7 towards something, we have to understand what
8 it's going towards and that these are essential
9 services.

10 It's our feeling that the loss of school
11 nurses puts children in harms way on a daily
12 basis to save a few millions dollars a year. We
13 are asking Council to really think very
14 carefully. I know that you are discussing this
15 already. That you are in discussions about
16 dialoguing with the School District about where
17 the money goes.

18 We believe it's had an impact in the past.
19 And we are asking Council to do that again in
20 the future. We think Council can set essential
21 priorities, identify the core mission of the
22 School District, help them establish what is
23 fundamental for the basic needs of children.
24 Safety of children is primary. Nursing,

1 absolutely, medical care and also school
2 security officers.

3 I am just going to share a quick story.
4 Lewis McKann is a 21-year-old Veteran -- a
5 21-year Veteran at Germantown High School where
6 obviously there was a horrible tragedy a few
7 weeks ago. He was laid off. And he is now
8 volunteering full time at Germantown High School
9 so that he can be there because he knows how
10 much that school needs him.

11 And the last comment is, is that the School
12 District has made an announcement of new cuts;
13 39 counselors, 5 home-ec and industrial arts
14 teachers, 85 school improvement support
15 liaisons, 6 secretaries, 97 school support
16 assistants, 22 NTAs, 6 full-time classroom
17 assistants. And those are just the tip.

18 So, we need Council to establish the
19 essential priorities for the School District.
20 You've done it before in the past. You've done
21 a great job with it. You can help us do it
22 again.

23 Thank you.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: Before you go on. There

1 are very few people -- and I can count them on
2 both hands that when they testify about the
3 School Board, I perk up. I listen. And a
4 couple of them in the room, too, with you.

5 So before we go any further, I want to ask
6 a quick question. Can you raise your right
7 hand. I am swearing you in as a Council person
8 for about the next 30 seconds.

9 Would you vote for this AVI in order to get
10 that money to the School Board if you were a
11 council person knowing what we know and knowing
12 what we don't know and on accountability issues
13 raised up, what would you do right now? You
14 have 30 seconds.

15 MS. GYM: I have 30 seconds. Thank you
16 very much, Councilman. I would probably -- I am
17 speaking for myself, not for my organization.
18 Personally, for me, I would separate out the
19 school issue and the AVI. I believe in AVI very
20 strongly. I also believe that more money needs
21 to go to the schools. I am not sure where
22 Council is in determining how those two are
23 related. But I feel very strongly that more
24 money does need to go to the School District.

1 It's up to the local funding stream to take
2 a look at it. To look at it in a responsible
3 way. It's going to be necessary if we go to
4 Harrisburg. And we're going to go to
5 Harrisburg. Believe me on that.

6 But I also think that, you know, I have
7 said this before. There is no blank check for
8 the School District. I think they are
9 struggling with priorities. I don't think -- I
10 know that they have a mission for educating the
11 children, but it has been parents and community
12 people and with the help of City Council that
13 has helped them establish very clear priorities.
14 You can't touch this. So, the firewall has to
15 be built around specific things, and I would lay
16 them out.

17 If we're going to ask people to give, you
18 know, our hard earned money to the School
19 District, we need to know what we're buying.
20 And right now, if we don't know what we're
21 buying, that's a hard sell.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Well, those who are
23 still around from the last time, those who have
24 to consider this that are new, we're counting on

1 you -- we're going to -- I can't speak for the
2 Body. I can speak for myself. We are going to
3 be looking for accountability. But it is you
4 and others that are going to testify that have
5 to hold also their feet to the fire. I know you
6 give them hell. That's for sure.

7 But we rely on that in order to have trust
8 in the money that we are putting forth that it
9 is spent wisely, that we actually get what we
10 pay for and at the end of the day we produce
11 some students that can fend for themselves in
12 the real world.

13 MS. GYM: Absolutely.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: I just wanted to say
15 that --

16 MS. GYM: Thank you.

17 COUNCILMAN JONES: -- before we went on.
18 Councilwoman, did you -- you have to hit your
19 button.

20 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: Do you have
21 written testimony that you are going to leave
22 with us?

23 MS. GYM: I will develop written testimony.
24 Do you want the numbers.

1 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: You made a
2 number of important points that a number of us
3 want to factor in as we continue down this road.

4 MS. GYM: Absolutely.

5 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: So, that
6 information would be very useful for subsequent
7 work that we have to do.

8 MS. GYM: Thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN REYNOLDS-BROWN: You're
10 welcome. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right. One second.
12 Do you want to continue with testimony or do you
13 want to be recognized?

14 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Just real quick.
15 Helen, it's just something that you mentioned to
16 me that always kind of sticks out. And so maybe
17 now I'm in Council I can move forward on
18 addressing this issue.

19 So, you're saying the nurses, right, are
20 public school nurses as well as
21 parochial/private school nurses as well? And it
22 comes from the same budget?

23 MS. GYM: Correct.

24 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Is that a law?

1 MS. GYM: Yes. State law.

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Is that the same
3 reason why private and parochial schools are
4 able to get -- use -- get busing that comes from
5 the same pot of money?

6 MS. GYM: Yes.

7 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay. I just wanted
8 to get clarity. But both are state laws?

9 MS. GYM: Yes.

10 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you.

11 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good clarification,
12 Councilman.

13 MS. DEVIN: Thank you, Councilmembers for
14 having me here today. My name is Peg Devin. I
15 am a certified school nurse with the City of
16 Philadelphia. I am here to request today that
17 City Council hold the School District
18 accountable if it decides that funding will be
19 allocated to help relieve the school budget
20 crisis. If funds are allocated, I am requesting
21 that you designate \$6 million to restore the
22 certified school nurses and the school police.

23 In 1949, the Pennsylvania School Code
24 determined that each certified school nurse

1 would be responsible for no more than 1,500
2 students. Philadelphia School District
3 maintained a ratio of one nurse to 750 students
4 until June of last year. And then in January
5 this year, the ratio changed again. And the
6 nurses are now covering 1,500 students apiece.
7 That's the maximum allowed by state law.

8 Since '49, 1949, many laws have changed.
9 And one in particular is the Individuals With
10 Disabilities Act. This law allows some of our
11 most vulnerable citizens to attend public
12 schools. Students with physical and
13 intellectual disabilities are being cared for in
14 regular classrooms with accommodation.

15 For the past 20 years, I have been caring
16 for the students at Greenfield School on a full
17 time basis. That all changed in January. Today
18 Greenfield has allocated a nurse only two days a
19 week. 28 percent of the students there have a
20 diagnosis of asthma. There are 24 students at
21 Greenfield who are protected handicapped. Our
22 building is handicap accessible. We have an
23 elevator.

24 They receive accommodations in order for

1 them to be successful in school. We have
2 doctors orders for 60 medications for the
3 students at Greenfield including Epi pens and
4 rectal suppositories. Four of the medications
5 are given on a daily basis. And the remaining
6 56 should not be given without a nurse there to
7 do an assessment to determine if the medication
8 is truly needed.

9 The School District does not consider the
10 students medically fragile at Greenfield because
11 there are no daily injections and no treatments
12 like catheterizations or medications being
13 administered via a tube feeding. In January, a
14 school police officer at Greenfield was
15 reassigned to another school, as well.

16 Last Friday, someone walking by the school
17 aimed a gun and shot multiple rubber pellets at
18 the kindergarten classroom. One of the teachers
19 was hit in the face right to the side of her
20 eye. There was no nurse and no school police
21 officer in the building at the time.

22 If City Council determines that it will
23 further help to fund the public education, I
24 implore you to be very specific about how

1 funding is allocated. And I request that you
2 designate \$6 million to restore the certified
3 school nurses back to the 750 students to one
4 nurse ratio as it has in the past. And also
5 that you restore the school police officers who
6 have been removed.

7 Thank you.

8 COUNCILMAN JONES: I have a quick question.
9 But for you, who is going to do some of the
10 procedures that you just mentioned? Are they
11 actually asking or expecting administrators and
12 teachers to do it?

13 MS. DEVIN: They have designated the
14 principals. And the principals can then
15 designate anybody they choose to do the
16 medications. I have a granddaughter in my
17 school who has asthma. She many times has
18 needed her medication. She comes to me. I
19 listen to her lungs. I determine if she needs
20 it. And now I'm not there.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: I'm not going to raise
22 insurance liability questions about that
23 where -- it's hard enough being a trained
24 professional and avoiding some of the

1 malpractice issues that can occur. But to have
2 someone ad hoc administer suppository or this or
3 that and cause some kind of damage, I can see us
4 quickly getting past that \$6 million figure by
5 way of lawsuits.

6 MS. DEVIN: Well, just an example. The
7 student who received the wrong medication at
8 Nebinger was in the newspaper a few weeks ago.
9 The student grabbed the medicine from the
10 principal's desk and took the medication. The
11 principal rightly called the police, fire rescue
12 and the parent. Fox News put it on TV. That
13 child has not yet returned the school. That
14 mother is planning to sue and wants approved
15 private school for her son.

16 That is extremely costly. It's a penny
17 wise and pound foolish to cut the nurses in this
18 way.

19 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you for your
20 testimony. Are there any other questions for
21 this panel?

22 Seeing none, thank you very much. Can the
23 Clerk call the next set of witnesses.

24 THE CLERK: The next three witnesses are

1 Shelly Yanoff, Cathy Roccia and Amara Rockar.

2 COUNCILMAN JONES: Welcome. Welcome and
3 state your name for the record.

4 MS. YANOFF: I am Shelly Yanoff. I'm
5 Executive Director of Public Citizens for
6 Children and Youth. I want to thank you for
7 being here. I want to thank you for fighting
8 the good fight. It's a really -- you have a
9 really hard job. This is a really hard
10 decision, but there can be no question but that
11 this city needs to support its schools and we
12 have not done so adequately.

13 Certainly, the State does very much less
14 than it should, very much less than most other
15 states in the country. But we are left with an
16 obligation. We also, as a city, do not provide
17 enough local funding. I certainly think we need
18 to have accountable funding. We need to get the
19 funding now. I know that this is -- the timing
20 of this is awful. And I have a lot of sympathy
21 for the heavy lifting that you all have to do.
22 But the heavy lifting is what you do.

23 There are tens of thousands of kids whose
24 chance depends on your vote for this. So,

1 please, do what I know your heart and your head
2 tell you to do.

3 Thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

5 MS. ROCCIA-MEIER: Hi. My name is Cathy
6 Roccia-Meier. And I am parent of a student in
7 public school as well as an advocate for special
8 education. I am here to take, you know, thank
9 you for considering looking at different options
10 to fund the School District. I am not here to
11 advocate either way. Except that any funds
12 given to the District, that you earmark part of
13 it and ask for some type of control over where
14 the funds go.

15 And today I am more specifically asking for
16 the funds to look at restoring school nurses and
17 security. And, you know, when I think about the
18 situation in the schools, you know, I think of
19 -- I believe it's the hierarchy of needs. I
20 forget the name.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Maslov.

22 MS. ROCCIA-MEIER: Maslov. Thank you.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: I went to public school.
24 Maslov.

1 MS. ROCCIA-MEIER: And I think of what is
2 happening in the schools down at the school
3 level -- you know, one of the things that
4 Parents United and other parents keep asking is
5 that we want to go back to the core values just
6 for the basics. But I don't even feel like we
7 can ask for that. I can't feel like we can ask
8 for basic levels of instruction, support. I
9 feel like the only thing we can even ask for is
10 our child to be safe at this point in the
11 financial situation that unfortunately we find
12 our schools to be in.

13 So, at the very least, have a nurse there
14 so our children in emergency situations survive
15 and the security and the buildings there to keep
16 our children alive. I think the fact that we
17 are asking for such a basic thing is really
18 unfortunate in a city that started liberty and
19 things like that.

20 I apologize. I am a little nervous about
21 this testimony.

22 But I have a child who is special needs.
23 And he had a nonspecial need issue at his high
24 school where we now have a nurse two days a

1 week. Luckily the nurse was in that day. He
2 had a dime red mark on his leg. He saw the
3 nurse three times in the day. By the third time
4 I was at the doctor's and then at the hospital.
5 He was in the hospital for three days. And he
6 likely would have lost his leg if that nurse
7 hadn't been there that day.

8 My son graduated from Nebinger Elementary.
9 And I know the child that had unfortunately been
10 getting the wrong medication. Now that poor
11 child has been at the school for, I believe,
12 seven years now. He's part of the community.
13 It's part of his life. The teachers know him.
14 The staff knows him. He's not just a support
15 student. And now he's being removed from
16 everyone he knows and loves because of this
17 situation. And I really feel for the principal
18 because our principals are being asked to do
19 things they are not qualified to do.

20 Everyday lives in these schools, the child
21 with the nose bleeds that they can't control,
22 the asthmatic who is having an emergency. We
23 have a child with tubes and highly medically
24 fragile. And every time the feeding tube comes

1 out, they have to call 911 three and four times
2 a day. The things that are going on in our
3 schools are desperate. And we need to protect
4 our children.

5 So, I really hope when you go back and if
6 any money is offered to the School District, you
7 really look at where the funds go and how they
8 are used. I don't think the numbers that are
9 being offered from the District really show you
10 the costs in the schools. The security is
11 dangerous. Again, at Nebinger we also lost our
12 police officer and our full-time aid when we
13 have students with asthma, four full-time
14 autistic support classrooms. And I do
15 understand now there's been cuts to full time
16 classroom aids and many other areas that are
17 going to make the schools even more dangerous.

18 So, I just really hope you consider making
19 sure that any funds are used in a way to help
20 protect our children. Thank you.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

22 MS. ROCKAR: My name is Amara Rockar. And
23 I'm from the West Philly Coalition for
24 Neighborhood Schools, a grass-roots group that

1 seeks to bring the community and all of its
2 resources into our neighborhood schools. Our
3 current focus is Lea Elementary. And I actually
4 testified and mentioning the cutting of nurses
5 at City Council's Budget Hearing for the School
6 District last month. And I had not planned to
7 testify today. I actually volunteer at Lea
8 Elementary on Tuesday mornings in the library
9 program.

10 And was at the school from 8:30. And just
11 because of the different things that I was
12 doing, was in and out of the main office. You
13 know, I just wanted to bring to Council's
14 attention, even if the medically fragile
15 students are being covered, the other students
16 that are being left behind in the School
17 District at this time, just in my brief times
18 going in and out of the office, there was a poor
19 child, a kindergartener with a migraine, a paper
20 towel over his eyes because it was hurting so
21 bad. There was a student that had had one of
22 our wonderful pre-plated lunches trucked in from
23 Brooklyn for lunch, ran outside to recess, got
24 over excited running around, threw up. There is

1 another student who got bumped in the nose
2 during recess and her nose was bleeding.

3 And then the last time that I was in the
4 office for some thing as related to a grant,
5 there is a student who was saying that he was
6 ill. And they were calling his mother. And the
7 nurse during all of this, of course, wasn't in
8 today. And having a very difficult conversation
9 with the mother because the child is a young
10 child. And she's saying that he's going through
11 this phase where he is frequently crying wolf
12 and saying that he's sick when he's not. And
13 there is no one there to evaluate him medically
14 to say whether he's really ill or not. And
15 she's been having to take off time off work to
16 come and pick him up all these times when he
17 wasn't sick. And she's worried about losing her
18 job.

19 And I think that it's just -- the School
20 District has put students, staff and parents in
21 such an unfair situation. And I think that if
22 you are to give any additional money to the
23 School District in whatever manner, some of it
24 has to absolutely be earmarked to restore the

1 school nurses and the school police because it's
2 just run untenable even for the students that
3 are not considered medically fragile. Thank
4 you.

5 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you. I know we
6 keep statistics on instances of criminal acts,
7 violence, disruptions from a security point of
8 view. Do we keep statistics on medical threats,
9 responses to? And if so, do we rank them by way
10 of severity when we have to call a medic unit or
11 something like that? I think that's an
12 important statistic for us to maintain.

13 MS. YANOFF: I believe, Councilman, that
14 we -- there are statistics about when we have to
15 go outside of the school to get help. But I
16 think that in general we don't have the kind of
17 statistics readily available that you're
18 referring to.

19 I do want to note that the schools that you
20 have in past sessions talked about when you were
21 in school -- when I was in school and when many
22 of us were in school, kids that came to school
23 often had parents at home and they had -- they
24 didn't go to school if they had a lot of medical

1 issues. That's not true now. Most kids go to
2 school, their parents can't afford to stay home
3 if they think they are coming down with the flu.
4 They get to school. They need to have -- there
5 is a real need to have the nurse that's
6 different from what it was when we were kids.

7 I do think that in talking about
8 accountability, that I believe very strongly we
9 have to give this funding. We have to pass AVI
10 with the 94 million or 90 million. But I also
11 think that it is really important for Council to
12 call back the leadership of the schools
13 frequently and ask what they are doing and why.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: I can tell you one vote
15 that would pass that accountability issue would
16 pass 17-0. But we need to -- hopefully, God
17 willing, we do restore the nurses. But I'm
18 dreading the number of instances now that won't
19 be treated in the hallway or in the nurse's room
20 that turn into something more serious because it
21 wasn't given immediate attention at the time.

22 So, I do agree. We have to be very
23 cautious about where we cut. Because at the end
24 of the day, if you cut the day and then tomorrow

1 you pay twice as much because of things that
2 could have been prevented, that's a travesty.

3 MS. YANOFF: Thank you.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: Any other questions for
5 this group?

6 Seeing none. Thank you so much for your
7 testimony. We call the next set of witnesses.

8 THE CLERK: Fred Fisher.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: How are you, Mr. Fisher.
10 Always a pleasure to see you.

11 MR. FISHER: My knees are hurting me, so
12 let me just sit down. I'm a year older. I've
13 been here many times. I'm sorry to see that
14 most of the Councilpersons have left.

15 The first two questions a perspective buyer
16 has when he looks at the house is, of course,
17 what is the price. The next question is, what
18 are the property taxes. That's the next biggest
19 expense. Increasing the property taxes is going
20 to kill the rebirth of Center City because
21 prices are going to have to go down to
22 compensate for the increase of price -- of
23 property taxes.

24 I think we have a situation here where we

1 heard about the 1 percent or the 99 percent.

2 Unfortunately, I think we have a situation here
3 where we have the 50 percent and the 50 percent.

4 We have the 50 percent who like myself got
5 an education, got a job, got married and then
6 had children. Then we have the rest -- the
7 other 50 percent who are having children out of
8 wedlock, with multiple sex partners and we're
9 supposed to take care of them, educate them,
10 make sure that they have their -- all their
11 needs taken care of. And I personally don't
12 think that's right.

13 I don't want to be a parent surrogate for
14 somebody who doesn't have parents to take care
15 of them. And this tax increase is not neutral.

16 First of all, it's an idea -- it's
17 advertised as being neutral. Now it's a 94
18 percent increase. And of course, if you're an
19 individual homeowner and you get a big tax
20 increase, it certainly won't look neutral to
21 you. So, I am really concerned that we, the 50
22 percent who have followed the rules, are going
23 to be penalized to support those 50 percent who
24 do not follow the rules. Maybe we ought to have

1 Maury Povich come in and have everybody take a
2 DNA test to figure out who the fathers of these
3 children are who could support them.

4 COUNCILMAN JONES: All right.

5 MR. FISHER: There are --

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Your time is up right
7 now. Right now. Thank you so much.

8 Chair recognizes Councilman Goode.

9 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Let me tell you what I
10 think is fair. I think that everyone should
11 receive a fair --

12 MR. FISHER: My mic, is it on?

13 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I believe that everyone
14 should have a same right to appeal. I believe
15 that everyone should receive the same Homestead
16 Exemption. I believe that everyone should
17 receive the same tax rate. And I refuse to
18 believe that that's based upon education,
19 demographics, someone's family life or anything
20 else.

21 Unless you can prove that that's true,
22 explain to me how that figures into the
23 assessment process, the appeal process, the
24 exemption process and the tax rate -- unless you

1 can do that, your testimony went in one ear and
2 out the other.

3 MR. FISHER: Well, there's nobody here to
4 listen to it except for a couple of
5 Councilpersons. This is my belief.

6 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I am asking you to
7 explain how it affects the appeal process? How
8 it affects exemption? How it affects the tax
9 rate? Explain it to me.

10 MR. FISHER: Well, my taxes are going to go
11 up since I'm living in my --

12 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Since you think you are
13 so educated, explain it to me.

14 MR. FISHER: I will say that those of us
15 who have worked hard to --

16 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I worked hard. I
17 graduated from Ivy League Institution.

18 MR. FISHER: Well, you asked me to explain
19 it. But when I try to, you talk over me.

20 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Absolutely.

21 MR. FISHER: Well, then you don't want me
22 to explain it.

23 COUNCILMAN GOODE: Not unless you're going
24 to talk about how it affects the assessment

1 process, how it affects --

2 MR. FISHER: Well, obviously, I don't agree
3 with the \$15,000 exemption. It is unrealistic
4 number one.

5 COUNCILMAN GOODE: I'm asking you, how
6 would you describe it affects that process.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you very much for
8 your testimony.

9 MR. FISHER: You're welcome.

10 COUNCILMAN JONES: Is there anyone else to
11 testify? Please come up and state your name for
12 the record.

13 MR. BRENNAN: You want my speech?

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes. Someone will come
15 and get it. Thank you so much. Have a seat and
16 welcome.

17 MR. BRENNAN: Thank you, sir.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: State your name for the
19 record and please proceed.

20 MR. BRENNAN: Okay. Can you hear that
21 good?

22 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yes, I hear you.

23 MR. BRENNAN: My name is William J.
24 Brennan. I'm here asking for the -- against the

1 AVI Bill and for the following reason. I'm 75
2 years old, and I have lived all my life at 624
3 South 26th Street having been born there. If
4 the Almighty grants me another four years, it
5 will mark the 100th Anniversary of my family in
6 the house.

7 Despite desperate times, my grandmother was
8 offered the house six months rent free with the
9 option to buy if she could repair the wreckage
10 the previous tenants had inflicted upon it.
11 Rats had to be exterminated. With the great
12 business head, she skillfully bargained with
13 contractors, made it livable. And the home was
14 ours for a total of five generations.

15 The home saw my family through two World
16 Wars and the Depression. It brought my mother
17 through rough time and myself through numerous
18 childhood illnesses with my grandmother carrying
19 me on her back. I still have graphic memories
20 of my Uncle going off to war as a combat
21 engineer of 1942.

22 It saw 51 years of a loving marriage with
23 Mary and I and a blessing of our only child Neil
24 who went to eternal reward six years ago. It

1 would be criminal if I admitted the sweat, toil
2 and devotion that Mary has put into the
3 maintenance of our home, particularly the
4 expertise she required after graduating from JFK
5 School of Furniture Refinishing.

6 The doors, jambs and baseboards she
7 physically restored to their pristine 1887
8 state. Her rose garden is a reflection of her
9 love for her home. Neither of us ever drank or
10 were extravagant and used every dime to enhance
11 our home and to raise our son. He won a half
12 scholarship to Villanova and made the Dean's
13 List and was listed as Who's Who in the East
14 before he died in Switzerland.

15 With our son gone we are now alone. We are
16 both on fixed incomes. Realtors are constantly
17 offering free advice. For Mary and I to be
18 forced or taxed out of our homes is a sentence
19 of death. We enjoy contributing and interacting
20 with people of all ages and diversity. If
21 offered, we would not take a million dollars.

22 Our sacred memories are not for sale. Just
23 as a home requires additional upkeep, so do our
24 bodies require additional medicine as we age.

1 Medicines is a necessity. I apologize for the
2 length of my talk, but it's tough to summarize
3 75 years in a few paragraphs. So, I hope I'm
4 not too well hit by the AVI or whatever you want
5 to call it.

6 Thank you, sir.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you. A lot of the
8 provisions that -- (Applause) -- a lot of the
9 provisions that you're hearing recommended are
10 for residents just like you with those memories.
11 The last thing we want to do is tax you out of
12 your home. So, thank you so much for your
13 testimony.

14 Are there any people here left to testify?
15 Please come up. Welcome.

16 MR. KING: My name is Tony Fax King. I
17 just had a comment.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: Sure.

19 MR. KING: I love the line of questioning
20 from the Council today. Especially --

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Councilman Goode?

22 MR. KING: Councilman Goode. Especially to
23 Mr. Jones and everybody else here, Ms. Brown, as
24 well. I loved the line of questioning. And I'm

1 confident that you are going to make the right
2 decision regarding these new taxes. The
3 questions are very interesting, especially new
4 Councilman Squilla also new Councilman Johnson,
5 Kenyatta Johnson.

6 Yeah, I am confident now that you guys are
7 gonna -- gonna make the right decision because
8 you are very wise to not let, you know, anybody
9 slip in the new legislation, pull the wool over
10 the taxpayers head, so to speak. So I'm really
11 impressed. I don't get a chance to come down
12 here too, often, but I will. I will start
13 coming more.

14 COUNCILMAN JONES: We want you to.

15 MR. KING: I love the way you guys are
16 scrutinizing the Board about the taxes. You
17 looking sharp. You look sharp. Mr. Goode looks
18 sharp. You look sharp. Everybody looks great.
19 And I like to see the smiles on your faces,
20 okay.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you.

22 MR. KING: All right. See y'all.
23 Good-bye.

24 COUNCILMAN JONES: We appreciate your

1 testimony. That's a good way to end this
2 session.

3 Are there any others to testify? Seeing
4 none, this Committee will stand in recess until
5 Thursday, June 7, 2012 at 12 p.m. Thank you.

6 (Committee Meeting adjourned at 6:12 p.m.)

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

I, hereby certify that the proceedings and evidence noted are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me in the foregoing matter, and that this is a correct transcript of the same.

ANGELA M. KING, RPR, Notary Public

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A	52:16 64:16 66:21	39:23 86:8	87:22	answering 56:23 85:14
abated 83:4	ad 103:2	Administration's 10:23 11:15 12:6	ahead 23:2	anticipated 80:23
abatement 80:14	Adams 10:15	administrator 83:7	aid 108:12	anybody 18:12 102:15 121:8
ability 58:9	26:14 27:7,22	administrators 102:11	aids 108:16	apiece 100:6
able 12:2 15:2,15 26:20 28:9 49:13,18 52:23 53:16 76:22 77:15 79:24 80:13 99:4	44:10,19,22	admitted 119:1	aimed 101:17	apologize 90:3 106:20 120:1
absolutely 54:14	45:2 49:16 52:9	adopt 2:14,16	alive 106:16	appeal 13:21 29:2 29:12 53:2 115:14,23 116:7
71:22 94:1	52:13 53:13,15	adopted 8:14	allocated 99:19 99:20 100:18 102:1	appeals 13:20 28:13,23
97:13 98:4	53:23 54:11,14	adopting 2:18	allow 10:4 14:16 26:19	appear 12:15
110:24 116:20	54:18,21 55:5,8	adoption 8:7	allowed 100:7	applause 38:15 56:24 84:23 120:8
accelerated 91:16	55:11,14,18,22	advantage 58:7 60:17	allowing 11:16	apple 62:6,8 85:8
access 59:17,19	57:9,16 58:14	adverse 13:17	allows 100:10	apples 42:14,15
61:11 69:13	58:23 59:5,14	advertised 114:17	Almighty 118:4	apples-to-apples 43:4
70:10 71:19	59:23 60:13,18	advice 119:17	Amara 104:1 108:22	application 26:16 26:24 27:8,9,24 28:7 56:1 57:19 59:21 76:15,18
76:13,17	60:23 61:4,7,11	Advisory 75:7	Amen 87:4	applications 49:17 57:7 60:10 61:19 75:15 76:20
accessible 61:17	70:12,21 71:7	advocate 105:7,11	amended 8:23 9:8 10:2	applied 29:19 31:21,22 38:8 47:5 49:14,15 77:12
100:22	71:13,17,20,22	affect 50:1	amending 3:10,18 4:2,6,18,21 5:5 5:13 6:1,7,18,23 7:10,14,21	apply 25:11 28:9 52:7 53:11 54:13,16,22 55:2 65:18 71:22 74:24 76:22 123:18
accommodate 62:13	72:5 75:21	affirmative 9:24	amendment 26:15	applying 25:24 27:3 33:19 54:8 54:12
accommodation 100:14	77:17,21 78:1	afford 80:24,24 81:1 87:15,21 88:14 112:2	amendments 8:12	appreciate 44:21 59:18 63:16 67:17 121:24
accommodations 100:24	add 11:20 21:1 50:20 77:15	afternoon 2:2 10:9,11 78:21 78:22 84:24 87:10 89:24	amount 11:4,5 28:22 30:16 32:4,24 72:15 81:20 91:23	approach 13:12 78:20
account 12:2	added 11:23	age 82:2,10,11 119:24	analyses 17:1	
accountability 91:19 95:12 97:3 112:8,15	adding 5:14	ages 119:20	analysis 20:22 23:19 44:3,7 47:7	
accountable 86:22 99:18 104:18	additional 11:8 11:12,19 12:22 13:1,4 32:11 35:15 110:22 119:23,24	aggregate 16:15 19:5,9,13,17 20:9 40:22 42:23 49:24 50:9 63:2,4 64:17	anchors 88:4	
accurate 13:13 39:1	address 14:9 15:2 60:21 61:1 85:18 92:18	ago 10:22 63:10 65:6,22 80:15 84:5 94:7 103:8 118:24	and/or 123:20	
accurately 34:14 123:7	addressed 86:10 91:3	agree 13:11 21:18 38:21 40:1 84:6 89:20 112:22 117:2	ANGELA 123:13	
act 14:20,21 100:10	addressing 98:18	agreement 3:5	Anna 10:14	
Action 73:23	adequate 79:22		Anniversary 118:5	
activity 75:19	adequately 104:12		announcement 94:12	
acts 111:6	adjourned 122:6		annual 12:1 93:1	
actual 11:16 12:9 13:7 17:8,14 27:4 35:18 36:10 48:13	adjudication 90:9		answer 14:5 16:18 63:12,13 63:17 66:17	
	administer 103:2			
	administered 101:13			
	Administration 11:3 13:11 15:10 17:16,23 25:10 28:12 32:16 37:13,23			

appropriate 14:17 84:14	assist 74:13,19 75:19	31:14 34:11,12 44:1,14,14	34:7 43:16	30:9 32:19,23
appropriately 15:2 70:9	assistance 60:11	AVI 10:23 51:10	basics 106:6	35:13 36:8 37:6
approval 2:21	assistants 94:16	52:15 66:9 77:9	basis 92:21 93:12	37:10,19 41:13
approved 3:7 77:9 103:14	94:17	79:14 84:14	100:17 101:5	42:8 62:20 73:5
approximate 68:7	Association 85:2	85:6 86:4 93:4	Bass 1:12 68:1,2	billions 42:18
approximately 49:1 51:5,10	assume 64:9	95:9,19,19	68:11,15,24	43:10
Archdiocese 90:2	assumed 28:23	112:9 118:1	69:3,6,9,17	bills 1:20 2:6,12
area 81:3 90:18	40:11 42:2	120:4	70:18 71:5,11	10:17,18 12:20
areas 108:16	assumes 13:7	avoid 11:17	71:15,18,21	13:9,12 37:12
arguing 41:10	assumption 29:2	avoiding 102:24	72:3,10 73:7,10	37:14,15,17,21
artificially 43:5	assuring 91:14	aware 56:4 70:9	73:12,16	37:24 38:1,3,5
arts 94:13	asthma 92:18	awful 104:20	bear 12:18	38:12 74:17
asked 26:16 44:13	100:20 102:17	aye 9:14	bed 82:8	77:7 90:5
44:18 50:2	108:13	Ayes 8:18,19 9:15	beginning 72:7	bite 62:6
64:12 85:13	asthmatic 107:22		behalf 90:7	bites 62:7
90:6 91:18	attacks 92:18	B	belief 116:5	BLACKWELL
107:18 116:18	attempt 84:8	B 83:11	believe 11:10 13:2	1:13
asking 24:3 40:4	attempting 15:12	back 10:7 26:23	35:6 48:5 75:18	blank 84:12 91:12
47:7 63:17	attempts 11:24	62:2 63:14 69:9	83:7,7 93:18	96:7
84:11 91:8	attend 100:11	73:4 78:8 80:11	95:19,20 96:5	bleeding 110:2
93:13,19 102:11	attention 53:4,20	80:11 102:3	105:19 107:11	bleeds 107:21
105:15 106:4,17	91:22 109:14	106:5 108:5	111:13 112:8	blessing 118:23
116:6 117:5,24	112:21	112:12 118:19	115:13,14,16,18	blind 83:19
asks 79:7	August 49:18	bad 109:21	belonging 82:21	BLONDELL
assessed 12:16	50:13,14,15	bargained 118:12	benefit 58:7,19	1:12
16:1,23 42:23	65:22	base 32:2,5,19	best 16:16 37:3	blue 55:19
50:4	Aunt 60:8,9 70:8	34:2,7,8,10,10	51:3 85:14	Board 3:12 4:9,23
assessment 12:21	Authority 3:4,4,9	37:6,10,19	88:24	6:10 7:1,16,24
27:13 32:5 36:7	Authorization	baseboards 119:6	bet 51:3,9	13:18 95:3,10
36:10 42:13,15	3:11 4:8,23 6:8	based 11:9 13:20	better 83:7	121:16
42:17 60:2	7:1,15,22	16:16,22 17:17	beverage 86:23	BOBBY 1:15
65:10 66:20	authorize 3:12	23:21 24:24	big 53:23 55:19	bodies 119:24
85:22 101:7	4:9,23 6:10 7:1	25:1 29:3,13	84:13 114:19	Body 86:22 97:2
115:23 116:24	7:16,24	30:20 32:1,11	biggest 113:18	books 62:21
assessments	authorized 3:6	32:12 34:1,16	bill 1:14 2:13,16	born 118:3
13:13,14,16	authorizing 3:23	34:18 35:5,15	2:18,20 3:7,10	borrowing 12:1
14:2,12,18	4:15 5:22 6:15	35:22 36:17	3:18,23 4:15 5:5	Boulevard 85:4
26:21 33:16,17	7:7	38:22 39:3,8,13	5:13,20 6:1,7,15	bounce 84:16
35:3,11,13,17	autistic 108:14	39:13,14 40:23	7:7,21 8:7,13,23	boxes 70:16
36:7 43:5 80:10	available 13:14	41:7,19,20	9:3,7,11,21 10:2	Braff 78:18 84:24
85:11,17	14:11 15:1	43:21,24 44:3,5	18:18,20,22	84:24
assessor 29:6	27:17 57:18	68:20 73:8,14	27:13 53:1,6,19	bread 82:14
66:10	60:1,14 71:24	115:18	60:1 118:1	Brennan 117:13
	76:13 111:17	basic 20:7 93:23	billion 16:24	117:17,20,23,24
	average 23:13,15	106:8,17	17:22 19:4,8,9	BRIAN 1:18
	23:17 24:2	basically 22:10	20:9 21:3,7,19	brief 76:12
			24:17,23 30:8,8	109:17

briefly 8:7 40:18 bright 55:17 70:4 bring 24:7 79:16 91:22 109:1,13 bringing 26:11,12 broad 45:22 85:3 broadly 68:15 brochure 28:7 55:24 57:20 60:15 broken 12:17 45:15 46:3 Brooklyn 109:23 brought 118:16 Brown 1:12 75:24 120:23 BRT 27:10,15 59:24 60:12 77:16 Budd 89:23,24 90:1 budget 2:17,19 12:3 98:22 99:19 109:5 budgeting 28:12 budgets 91:2 building 66:19 100:22 101:21 buildings 106:15 built 28:21 82:15 96:15 bulb 79:9 bumped 110:1 burden 12:9,12 12:19 business 118:12 busing 91:14 99:4 button 97:19 buy 79:24 80:2,13 81:1 118:9 buyer 113:15 buyers 80:8 buying 96:19,21 C C 123:1,1 calculate 15:24	85:20 calculated 36:3 calculation 18:21 calculations 36:16 call 54:7 60:12,19 61:3,4 73:24 78:15,17 91:11 103:23 108:1 111:10 112:12 113:7 120:5 called 75:6 90:24 103:11 calling 53:7 110:6 campaign 53:24 91:11 Candice 78:19 87:6 cap 18:24 Capital 2:14,17 capture 34:13 43:10,12 45:19 45:21 46:2 48:1 captured 35:23 36:9,12 42:19 capturing 41:23 42:1,5,8,21 43:15 45:11,13 45:14 63:8 care 58:18 89:14 94:1 114:9,11 114:14 cared 100:13 career 82:15 careful 76:4 carefully 93:14 caring 100:15 carries 10:1 carrying 118:18 cart 86:2 case 37:2,3,5,20 54:20 cash 12:1 catheterizations 101:12 Cathy 104:1 105:5	cause 38:12 103:3 cautious 112:23 caveat 40:6 CCRA 85:6 census 23:16,20 43:24 44:5 center 58:11 61:13 85:1 113:20 centers 33:7 57:12 72:9 73:23 certain 3:16 4:13 5:3,8,9,11,18,18 5:23 6:5,13 7:6 7:19 8:3 11:14 13:5 certainly 86:15 104:13,17 114:20 certification 123:17 certified 99:15,22 99:24 102:2 certify 123:5 certifying 123:21 Chair 8:9 20:6 21:13 24:14 30:4 36:24 38:18 39:10 40:5 44:21 46:11 51:23 52:1 67:15 68:1 75:23 76:10 115:8 Chairman 8:22 30:6 98:10 challenge 79:8 challenges 70:21 chance 104:24 121:11 change 34:18 42:12 45:14,16 45:22 46:3 79:12 85:8 changed 100:5,8 100:17	changes 3:1 21:8 66:14,18 Channel 57:6 Chapter 3:18 4:2 4:7,18,21 5:15 5:21 6:2,19,23 7:11,14 characterized 35:20,21 chase 32:10 check 84:12,14,16 96:7 Checks 91:12 Chief 10:15 child 103:13 106:10,22 107:9 107:11,20,23 109:19 110:9,10 118:23 childhood 118:18 children 82:6 83:12 91:3 92:12,21 93:11 93:23,24 96:11 104:6 106:14,16 108:4,20 114:6 114:7 115:3 children's 83:22 Chinese 59:16 choice 82:17 choose 41:18,19 102:15 chose 41:20 CINDY 1:12 circulated 8:13 citizen 58:11 citizens 58:8,21 74:22 75:11 100:11 104:5 city 1:2,6 2:21,23 3:8,24 4:11,16 5:2,10,24 6:16 7:4,8,18 10:14 10:19 11:5,8,12 12:22 13:4,23 16:14 24:1 28:6 40:11,23 57:12	58:12,17 63:10 64:17 65:8 66:8 70:11,17 71:9 73:22,23 75:5 75:10 83:15 84:1 85:1 86:12 86:19,20 87:23 91:7 92:13 96:12 99:15,17 101:22 104:11 104:16 106:18 109:5 113:20 Citywide 91:11 clarification 99:11 clarity 52:5 99:8 Clarke 1:11 2:2 8:5,16 9:6,18 10:10,11 14:6 14:19,24 15:21 16:3 20:4 24:12 30:2 31:8,24 32:7,9,14,18 33:1,6,21 34:5 34:15,20,23 35:4,19 36:2,15 36:19,22 38:16 39:10 46:9 51:24 61:21 62:9 67:23 73:18 74:6,11 75:22 76:6 78:4 78:10,13,21 84:22 87:5 88:18 89:21 classroom 94:16 101:18 108:16 classrooms 91:3 100:14 108:14 clean 87:24 88:12 cleaning 88:1 clear 25:15 28:4 54:5 96:13 clearly 75:18 clergy 58:16 Clerk 2:13 78:17 89:22 103:23,24
--	---	---	--	---

113:8	comment 94:11	73:12	correct 19:19	16:13 17:2,7,12
close 51:6	120:17	consequences	22:3,4,8,9 24:17	17:20 18:5,7,10
closer 17:13 18:4	commercial 17:4	79:17	36:14 52:12,17	18:14,18 19:3
closing 84:18	17:9 30:24 48:8	consider 73:1	73:2 89:12	19:12,17,20
CNI 49:1 65:15	48:16,17 65:3,5	86:11 90:16	98:23 123:9	20:2,5,6,7,11,16
Coalition 108:23	65:7,14,18 66:2	96:24 101:9	correspond 14:1	20:24 21:6,12
Code 3:19 4:3,7	66:7,24 67:6,10	108:18	cost 18:15,17 19:2	21:15,19,23
4:19,22 5:6,14	68:8	consideration	19:6	22:1,5,10,15,22
5:21 6:2,19,24	Commissioner	76:4	costed 18:11	22:24 23:2,3,8
7:11,15 99:23	10:16	considered 91:15	costly 103:16	23:11,12,23
cofounder 90:23	commitment 91:7	91:16,17 111:3	costs 108:10	24:4,8,10,13,15
coincidence 63:6	committee 1:3 2:4	considering 105:9	council 1:2,11 2:2	24:20,23 25:3,4
63:11	2:6 8:24 9:8,22	consistently 41:9	2:21 3:6 8:5,14	25:14,17,23
colleagues 61:22	10:3,12 18:23	constant 12:23	8:16 9:2,4,6,10	26:3,9 27:2,20
87:9	21:10 122:4,6	constantly 119:16	9:12,18 10:5,9	28:11,17,20
collect 33:14 84:8	communities	constituency	10:11 11:9 14:6	29:1,14,17,22
collected 33:3	69:14 72:13	89:14	14:19,24 15:21	30:1,3,5,10,20
42:22	community 59:1	constituent 25:19	16:3,14,21 20:4	31:1,6,9 36:24
collecting 41:22	59:7 77:6 79:7	constituents	21:17 24:12	37:1 38:17,18
collections 33:4,7	96:11 107:12	52:19	30:2 31:8,24	38:19 39:3,7,9
52:6	109:1	construction	32:7,9,14,18	39:11,12,16,18
collective 91:1	compare 44:24	80:12 83:4	33:1,6,21 34:5	39:19 40:2,9,16
college 83:16	compared 62:21	consultant 16:22	34:15,20,23	41:3,7,10,17
Column 83:11,11	comparison 43:4	25:2 31:17 73:8	35:4,19 36:2,15	42:7,20 43:16
combat 118:20	compensate 50:23	consume 48:3	36:19,22 38:16	43:19,23 44:6,9
combine 50:6	50:24 113:22	consumption	39:10 40:11,18	44:17,20,24
86:4	complete 60:10	84:10	46:9 51:24	45:10,19 46:7
combined 11:1	76:18	contained 123:6	61:21 62:9	46:10,11,12,18
12:20 13:20	completed 67:11	continuation 2:5	67:23 73:18	46:20,22 47:3,9
come 2:4 15:11	completely 46:1	continue 12:18	74:6,11 75:22	47:10,11,13,15
21:18 22:7 29:1	complicate 11:24	77:4 98:3,12	76:6 77:5 78:4	47:16,17,18,20
35:11 36:20	computer 61:13	contract 75:6,8	78:10,13,21	47:22,23 48:5,8
49:15 50:9	computers 58:9	81:19,24	79:5 84:11,22	48:11,16,18,23
53:12 69:18	concerned 56:3	contractors	85:13 87:5	49:4,6,10,12,23
72:17 74:15	64:13 87:18	118:13	88:18 89:21	50:5,8,12,15,18
76:19 80:9,11	88:6,15 89:4	contributing	91:5,18 93:13	50:20,24 51:3,8
82:5 88:5 90:6	114:21	119:19	93:19,20 94:18	51:18,21,23
110:16 115:1	concerning 79:20	control 105:13	95:7,11,22	52:1,2,3,10,14
117:11,14	concerns 69:12	107:21 123:20	96:12 98:17	52:18,22 53:14
120:15 121:11	concludes 14:4	conversation	99:17 101:22	53:18 54:7,8,13
comes 98:22 99:4	conditions 3:17	35:24 110:8	112:11 120:20	54:15,20 55:3,6
102:18 107:24	4:14 5:4,12,19	conversations	Councilman 1:11	55:9,12,16,21
comfortable	6:6,14 7:6,20	11:9 15:9	1:13,14,14,15	56:2 57:1,2,3,4
69:23	8:4 11:14 13:6	Cooperation 3:4	1:15,16,16,17	57:15,24 59:13
coming 21:2	confident 68:21	3:5	1:17,18 8:9,10	59:18 60:8,16
52:20 87:14	69:1 121:1,6	copies 58:12	8:15,20,21 9:5	60:20 61:2,5,8
112:3 121:13	conjunction	core 93:21 106:5	9:17,19 16:5,6	61:20 62:15,16

63:15,18 64:1,5 64:7,15,21 65:1 65:4,17 66:1,6 66:16,22 67:9 67:14,24 68:4 69:10 70:7 75:23 76:10,11 76:21,24 77:8 77:20,23 78:2,5 84:4 88:21,22 89:8,16,20 94:24 95:16 96:22 97:14,17 98:11,14,24 99:2,7,10,11,12 102:8,21 103:19 104:2 105:4,21 105:23 108:21 111:5,13 112:14 113:4,9 115:4,6 115:8,9,13 116:6,12,16,20 116:23 117:5,7 117:10,14,18,22 120:7,18,21,21 120:22 121:4,4 121:14,21,24 Councilmember 24:14 30:4 Councilmembers 57:15,16 89:24 90:22 99:13 Councilperson 25:18 Councilpersons 113:14 116:5 Councils 75:7 Councilwoman 1:12,12,13,18 57:22 58:1,2,15 58:24 59:4,8,15 68:1,2,11,15,24 69:3,6,9,11,17 70:18 71:5,11 71:15,18,21 72:3,10 73:7,10 73:12,16,19	74:13 75:24 76:3,8,9 97:18 97:20 98:1,5,9 Councilwoman's 73:20 74:2 Council's 16:22 25:2 91:13,22 109:5,13 counselors 94:13 count 80:5 95:1 counting 96:24 country 104:15 couple 21:8 24:16 95:4 116:4 course 41:18 42:23 83:23 110:7 113:16 114:18 cover 84:17 92:14 covered 109:15 covering 2:23 100:6 create 84:19 creative 87:1 credit 19:21 credits 5:17 crime 88:10 criminal 111:6 119:1 crisis 99:20 critically 58:6 crucially 11:18 crying 110:11 current 12:21 74:22 109:3 currently 74:8 CURTIS 1:11 cut 32:10 103:17 112:23,24 cuts 90:7,8,13,16 94:12 108:15 cutting 109:4 D dad 82:3,9 daily 53:4 93:11 101:5,11	damage 103:3 dangerous 108:11 108:17 DARRELL 1:11 data 23:16 43:24 44:5,8 63:20 64:1,8 66:23 67:7 David 1:17 59:6 day 62:11 91:15 97:10 107:1,3,7 108:2 112:24,24 days 26:23 100:18 106:24 107:5 deadbeat 86:18 deadline 26:22 52:6,22,24 56:11 59:11 dealing 52:15 dealt 86:7 Dean's 119:12 death 119:19 decades 36:13 DeCarlo 78:19 87:4,6,7 decent 64:23 decided 42:9 decides 99:18 decision 104:10 121:2,7 decisions 83:20 92:20 decrease 39:22,24 56:15 decreases 37:9,18 deep 58:8 59:8 deeply 87:13 Deferral 18:18,20 deferrals 5:7,8 definitely 70:13 70:24 71:3 deliberate 82:17 demographics 115:19 DENNIS 1:16 Department 10:15 60:3	70:23 76:18 depend 16:8 depending 11:22 20:14 39:6 45:8 depends 104:24 Depression 118:16 describe 117:6 deserve 83:22 designate 99:21 102:2,15 designated 102:13 desire 89:13 desk 103:10 desperate 108:3 118:7 despite 70:3 118:7 details 57:20 determine 101:7 102:19 determined 99:24 determines 101:22 determining 95:22 develop 89:11 97:23 developed 89:6 Devin 89:23 99:13 99:14 102:13 103:6 devotion 119:2 diagnosis 100:20 dialoguing 93:16 dictate 80:10 died 82:9 119:14 differ 11:2 difference 32:8 33:22,24 different 29:10 39:6 46:1 61:9 70:16 105:9 109:11 112:6 differently 16:19 difficult 91:5 110:8	dignity 82:21 dime 107:2 119:10 direct 56:17 123:20 Director 10:14 104:5 disabilities 100:10,13 disadvantage 72:14 disaggregate 62:23 discussed 19:22 90:5 discussing 91:23 93:14 discussion 41:2,3 41:13 discussions 93:5 93:15 dispense 92:18 disruptions 111:7 disservice 72:22 District 3:13,16 4:1,10,17,24 5:11 6:11,13,17 7:2,9,17 8:1,3 10:20 11:6,11 11:13,19,21,22 12:1,23 13:1,3,5 13:22 28:14 31:11 32:11,20 36:4,20 54:7 63:7 74:2 91:12 91:20 92:4,9 93:16,22 94:12 94:19 95:24 96:8,19 99:17 100:2 101:9 105:10,12 108:6 108:9 109:6,17 110:20,23 District's 11:24 diversity 119:20 DNA 115:2 doctors 101:2
--	--	--	--	---

doctor's 107:4	33:3,11,24	80:17	6:24 7:12,15,22	exact 29:21 67:15
document 28:1	34:10,18,22	Econsult 17:18	envelope 55:18	exactly 14:11
58:13	35:2,9 36:1,6,18	23:19 30:15,20	Epi 101:3	15:16 27:22
documents 12:3	36:21 38:24	30:22 45:5 73:9	equal 11:11 13:3	54:21
dogs 87:23	39:5 40:6,15	73:10,11	79:10	exaggerated
doing 25:19 53:23	41:1,4,8,14 42:6	Econsult's 45:1,2	Equalization	23:21
54:3 65:21	42:11 43:2,17	73:14	13:18	examined 86:16
72:22 77:2	43:21 44:3,8	educate 114:9	especially 60:14	example 18:19
109:12 112:13	45:4,12,21	educated 116:13	77:9 120:20,22	70:7 103:6
dollars 22:11 32:5	46:15,19,21	educating 96:10	121:3	exams 93:2
32:6,23 42:18	47:1,5 48:2,7,10	education 3:13	essential 13:24	excited 109:24
43:11,14 87:16	48:15,17,19	4:9,24 6:10 7:2	93:8,20 94:19	exclusions 4:5,13
93:12 119:21	49:3,5,8,11,19	7:16,24 83:8,22	essentially 19:7	6:22 7:5
doors 119:6	50:2,7,10,14,17	91:1,11 101:23	52:24	excuse 75:17
doubling 45:17	50:19,23 51:2,7	105:8 114:5	establish 93:22	Executive 104:5
download 28:10	51:14,20,22	115:18	94:18 96:13	exemption 17:22
57:19 71:23	52:17,21 54:24	educational 92:12	established 2:3	19:6 25:6 26:1
dramatically	62:5,7 63:13,16	effect 22:18 87:13	4:6 6:22	26:11 37:8,11
79:23	63:22 64:2,6,10	efficient 81:8	estate 3:15,23 4:3	37:13,15,16,20
drank 119:9	64:18,23 65:2	efforts 65:10	4:11,15,19 5:1,7	37:22 38:1,2,4,6
dreading 112:18	65:13,20 66:4	eight 36:12 81:16	5:9,16,17 6:3,5	38:11 39:12,13
dream 82:22	66:11,18 67:2	81:23 87:16	6:12,16,20 7:3,8	39:14 47:6 52:8
dreams 83:14	67:12,19 68:9	either 27:11 60:1	7:12,18 8:2	53:11 85:21
drive 87:1	68:12,19 69:2,5	80:19 105:11	16:16 32:15	115:16,24 116:8
driving 19:18	69:8,16 73:6,9	elected 84:19	40:23 41:21,22	117:3
drop 70:15,15,16	73:11,14 78:9	Elementary 107:8	41:22,24 48:3	exemptions 5:22
dropping 70:18	78:12 85:13,14	109:3,8	63:20 64:17	38:12
Dubow 10:8,9,12	due 5:10 71:15	elevator 100:23	79:12,18 80:4	exist 42:24
10:13 14:7,7,15	80:13	eligible 27:18	85:22 86:14	exodus 88:15
14:21 15:18,23		75:1 77:11	estimate 16:17	expecting 102:11
16:11,18 17:5	E	emergencies	30:10,19 36:5,6	expense 67:8
17:10,17,24	E 123:1	92:19	47:19	113:19
18:6,9,13,16,20	ear 116:1	emergency	estimated 32:2	expensive 80:13
19:11,16,19,23	early 50:14,15	106:14 107:22	33:4 34:7 35:22	81:6
20:10,14,21	82:11	emphasize 69:10	estimates 73:8,13	experience 82:18
21:5,8,14,17,22	earmark 105:12	enacting 5:20	estimating 19:7	expertise 119:4
21:24 22:4,9,13	earmarked	energy 81:8 83:15	eternal 118:24	explain 26:9
22:20 23:6,10	110:24	enforce 22:6	evaluate 110:13	63:18 90:3
23:16 24:2,5,9	earned 96:18	engineer 118:21	evening 90:21	115:22 116:7,9
24:11,18,21	easily 61:17	enhance 119:10	everybody 49:14	116:13,18,22
25:1,13,15,22	East 119:13	enjoy 119:19	54:11 57:18	extent 35:10
26:2,6 27:18	easy 61:16 82:7	enormous 13:22	71:8,13 115:1	exterminated
28:16,19,21	82:14 84:2	ensure 12:14	120:23 121:18	118:11
29:4,16,20,23	eat 20:12	enterprise 79:19	Everyday 107:20	extra 35:8 48:1
30:9,11,22 31:4	economic 31:17	entitled 3:11,19	evicted 82:3	51:1
31:10,12 32:4,8	44:11 84:2	3:21 4:3,8,19,22	evidence 123:6	extravagant
32:13,17,21	economy 80:1,3	5:7,15 6:3,8,20	exacerbate 12:4	119:10

extremely 58:4 103:16 eye 101:20 eyes 109:20 e-mails 25:10,24	fend 97:11 fight 104:8 fighting 104:7 figure 28:22 31:2 31:5,11 64:20 85:23,24 103:4 115:2 figures 115:22 fill 27:8,15 60:24 70:14 72:1 filled 69:19,22 77:22 filling 74:14 Final 49:8 Finance 10:13,15 financial 2:22 12:4 82:13 106:11 find 18:1,3 27:11 53:7 56:11 60:4 60:7 61:16 92:23 106:11 finding 13:17 fire 97:5 103:11 firewall 96:14 first 9:2,11 10:5 10:20 16:10 17:24 40:19 64:4 76:1 78:15 113:15 114:16 Fiscal 2:14,17,19 2:24 3:2 4:1,17 6:18 7:10 Fisher 113:8,9,11 115:5,12 116:3 116:10,14,18,21 117:2,9 five 2:22 85:5,5 87:16 92:14 118:14 Fix 89:14 fixed 51:4 119:16 flu 112:3 flummoxing 85:15 focus 109:3 folks 25:8 59:10	62:9 70:2 72:12 follow 25:4 52:4 68:4 114:24 followed 114:22 following 41:5 53:15,17 73:20 118:1 foolish 103:17 FOQs/IDs 60:9 forced 119:18 forces 92:22 forecast 44:12 foregoing 123:8 123:17 forget 105:20 forgive 48:12 Forgiveness 3:21 form 60:24,24 65:7 69:19 formal 27:10 formally 12:2 former 59:24 forms 69:21,22,24 70:14 71:23,24 72:2,3 74:14 75:2 77:14 86:12 formula 15:20 25:21 52:12,14 forth 63:14 72:4 97:8 forward 12:19 26:10 28:20 29:3 73:1 77:10 89:2,12 91:24 98:17 found 82:12 90:16 four 40:21 62:4 82:2 83:5 86:4 87:16 88:8 101:4 108:1,13 118:4 Fox 103:12 fragile 101:10 107:24 109:14 111:3 frame 52:20	frank 53:21 frankly 15:16 Fred 113:8 free 118:8 119:17 freeze 77:12 frequently 110:11 112:13 Friday 101:16 full 43:22 80:21 91:15 94:8 100:16 108:15 fully 123:6 full-time 92:24 94:16 108:12,13 fund 101:23 105:10 fundamental 93:23 funding 11:12,19 11:22,23 13:1,4 32:11 79:13 96:1 99:18 102:1 104:17,18 104:19 112:9 fundraising 88:1 funds 99:20 105:11,14,16 108:7,19 Furniture 119:5 further 3:12 4:8 4:23 5:8 6:3,9 7:1,16,23 9:1,9 12:4 95:5 101:23 future 83:24 90:9 93:20	generous 20:14 gentlemen 84:15 gentrification 18:22 39:17 40:14 50:21 51:5 86:1 gentrified 81:3 Germantown 94:5,8 getting 25:10,23 53:1 59:1 64:14 66:12 72:6 103:4 107:10 give 36:3 63:23 68:17,18 82:20 83:14 96:17 97:6 110:22 112:9 given 58:7 101:5 101:6 105:12 112:21 giving 47:10 Global 31:16 GMA 44:9 GMAs 17:15 go 8:7 10:7 20:12 21:7 23:2 25:7 27:1 28:3 29:9 30:7 35:18 36:10,11 37:12 37:14,16,17,21 37:24 38:2,4,5 38:13 39:1 46:23 47:4,18 50:16 51:4 55:1 57:18 61:13 63:14 69:22 78:7 80:7 88:10 91:23 94:24 95:5,21,24 96:3 96:4 105:14 106:5 108:5,7 111:15,24 112:1 113:21 116:10 goal 10:23 12:14 goals 11:14 God 89:18 112:16
F			G	
F 123:1 face 101:19 faces 121:19 fact 43:23 56:19 63:2 75:1 80:1 83:19 106:16 factor 98:3 factored 28:12,17 fair 85:7 115:10 115:11 fairness 79:10 84:20 faith 62:10 fall 13:13 14:3,11 14:17,20,23 26:21 53:1 56:12 76:16,21 85:19 familiar 74:16 families 83:13 92:22 family 115:19 118:5,15 FAQs 60:5 far 33:16 93:4 fathers 115:2 favor 8:17 9:13 61:22 favorable 8:24 9:9,22 10:3 Fax 120:16 feeding 101:13 107:24 feel 22:16 31:1 69:23 70:2,6 95:23 106:6,7,9 107:17 feeling 93:10 feet 97:5 fellow 79:5			garden 119:8 general 52:16 111:16 generate 11:7 generated 11:5,6 11:12 13:4 generating 10:19 generations 118:14	

goes 80:17 93:17 going 10:24 12:19 15:4,4 16:4 17:10 24:19 25:18 27:4 28:5 29:10 33:17 35:7 36:16 43:3 52:24 54:3,4,15 54:17,18,21,24 55:14 56:5,18 57:7,9,10,11,12 58:21 59:15 60:5 62:5,22 64:11 67:4 71:23 73:4 76:11 77:1 78:6 78:17,23,24 84:2,16 85:11 85:17,18,22,23 87:13,19 88:10 88:14 89:2,3,12 93:6,8 94:3 96:3 96:4,17 97:1,2,4 97:21 102:9,21 108:2,17 109:18 110:10 113:19 113:21 114:22 116:10,23 118:20 121:1 gonna 121:7,7 good 2:2 10:9,11 35:2,5 62:10 64:16 65:5 78:21,22 84:24 89:24 90:21 99:11 104:8 117:21 122:1 Goode 1:13 22:24 23:3,8,11 36:24 37:1 39:9,11,12 39:18 40:2 47:10,13,16,18 47:22 88:21,22 89:8,16,20 115:8,9,13 116:6,12,16,20 116:23 117:5	120:21,22 121:17 Goode's 84:5 Goodwin 78:18 79:4,6 89:2,11 89:17 Good-bye 121:23 grabbed 103:9 graduated 107:8 116:17 graduating 119:4 granddaughter 102:16 grandmom 82:8 grandmother 82:5 118:7,18 grant 11:11 13:3 110:4 granting 5:22 grants 75:17 118:4 graphic 118:19 grass-roots 108:24 great 29:11 40:18 44:17 78:2 94:21 118:11 121:18 Green 1:14 16:5,6 16:13 17:2,7,12 17:20 18:5,7,10 18:14,18 19:3 19:12,17,20 20:2 38:18,19 39:3,7,16,19 40:9,16 41:3,7 41:10,17 42:7 42:20 43:16,19 43:23 44:6,9,17 44:20,24 45:10 45:19 46:7 62:15,16 63:15 63:18 64:1,5,7 64:15,21 65:1,4 65:17 66:1,6,16 66:22 67:9,14 Greenfield	100:16,18,21 101:3,10,14 GREENLEE 1:14 8:15 9:5 Green's 68:4 group 108:24 113:5 groups 59:1 grow 35:14 grown 31:18 growth 31:20,21 31:22 32:1,12 33:19 35:23 41:24 guess 16:8 20:8 20:18 23:13 25:9,18 39:21 40:17 45:5 62:17 68:10,11 68:12 guessing 87:11 gun 101:17 guys 78:7 121:6 121:15 Gym 89:23 90:21 90:22 95:15 97:13,16,23 98:4,8,23 99:1,6 99:9 H half 23:18,23 26:7 39:22 65:22 119:11 halfway 68:16 Hall 1:6 57:12 Halls 73:23 hallway 112:19 hand 95:7 handicap 100:22 handicapped 100:21 hands 95:2 hands-on 70:19 hang 31:2 happen 87:19 90:8,14	happened 34:2 36:9 53:8 63:9 90:7,14 happening 35:16 106:2 happens 63:8 80:20,23 81:2 81:22 happy 14:5 63:6 hard 80:18 82:6 82:15 83:1 86:21 96:18,21 102:23 104:9,9 116:15,16 harms 93:11 Harrisburg 96:4 96:5 harsh 85:18 hats 31:3 head 29:6 82:19 105:1 118:12 121:10 health 87:18 88:16 hear 76:7 117:20 117:22 heard 14:8,14 35:20,21 38:23 114:1 hearing 2:5 10:8 62:1,12 93:2 109:5 120:9 hearings 30:13 heart 105:1 heavy 104:21,22 height 38:6 Helen 89:22 90:22 98:15 hell 97:6 Hello 87:6 help 22:18,20 44:11 56:15 59:3 60:4 70:14 72:18 93:22 94:21 96:12 99:19 101:23 108:19 111:15	helped 96:13 helpful 59:2 72:23 HENON 1:15 Hi 90:21 105:5 hierarchy 105:19 high 13:18 94:5,8 106:23 higher 12:18 22:1 22:2,22 23:4,8 46:1,5 80:7,23 highly 107:23 hint 11:10 hire 88:1 hit 28:14 54:17 97:18 101:19 120:4 hoc 103:2 hold 12:23 97:5 99:17 home 20:19 22:8 22:11 23:17 26:7 27:19 34:11,12 44:1 51:11 54:10 71:9,12 80:13 89:5 111:23 112:2 118:13,15 119:3,9,11,23 120:12 homeowner 27:3 27:23 28:6,8 54:2 55:4,6 114:19 homeowners 37:15,21,24 38:1,3,5 39:22 54:6 56:4 85:3 85:19 homeownership 83:14 homes 55:13,15 80:1,2 119:18 Homestead 17:23 19:6,14 20:17 20:18 21:7,9,21 22:2,17,23 23:4 23:9 25:5,24
---	--	--	---	---

26:10 27:3 37:8 37:10,12,20 38:8,11,12 40:13,13 46:23 49:17 50:21 51:18 52:8,13 53:11,24 54:4 69:14 71:6 75:15 77:2 85:20 115:15 Homesteads 49:14,20,22 77:15 home-ec 94:13 hope 16:7,19 59:6 108:5,18 120:3 hopefully 112:16 hopefuls 80:19 hopes 15:10 79:19 hoping 72:6 horrible 94:6 hospital 107:4,5 hour 76:5 house 27:4 82:23 82:24 86:3 113:16 118:6,8 households 23:14 46:14 47:21 houses 23:24 housing 82:15,16 huge 81:18 humbly 90:15 hurt 22:18,21 hurting 109:20 113:11 husband 82:24 83:4 hypothetical 25:20 52:12 56:6 85:12	60:21 identify 93:21 IHS 31:16 44:4 ill 82:3 110:6,14 illnesses 118:18 ill-conceived 84:9 immediate 112:21 impact 11:3 12:20 13:20 83:20 93:18 impacted 58:22 impacts 11:2 85:18 implementation 79:14 implemented 11:17 13:8 implementing 85:9 implied 17:21 implore 101:24 important 12:13 58:3,6 59:9 61:10 77:9 87:12 91:6,23 92:9 93:6 98:2 111:12 112:11 impose 3:14 5:1 6:11 7:3,17 8:1 impressed 121:11 improve 81:6 improvement 80:5 94:14 improves 80:3 improving 81:4 inaccurate 13:15 include 39:16 48:4 included 28:24 67:4,6 including 101:3 inclusive 2:15 income 3:22 5:16 5:18 67:8 69:22 82:16 incomes 119:16 inconsistent 45:7	incorporating 3:1 increase 12:7,24 22:2 28:23 32:15,22,24 33:9,12,14,15 33:20,22,23 34:1,21 35:22 35:23 36:4 39:24 40:22 42:14 43:6,7,13 45:12 47:24 50:22 51:14 56:14 62:24 63:9 79:23 81:17 86:13 113:22 114:15 114:18,20 increased 29:5 43:19 63:8 increases 11:18 37:9 45:5 79:22 81:11,12 86:14 87:15 increasing 11:4,7 22:16,17 113:19 indicate 17:15 individual 114:19 individuals 15:9 56:9 61:23 62:14 74:13 75:9 100:9 industrial 17:4,9 48:9 65:6,8,18 66:2,8 67:1,10 94:13 industry 79:21 inflicted 118:10 information 15:6 22:24 23:1 28:3 28:7,8 30:22 39:9,11 40:3 57:23,24 60:6 69:15 71:6 72:20 75:11 76:17 98:6 initial 12:6 initially 24:16	Initiative 11:17 12:10 13:8 injections 101:11 injustice 79:10 84:7 input 63:20,21 64:3 inputs 44:16 inputting 64:1,2 66:22 Inquirer 53:5 86:20 inside 55:24 Insight 31:16 inspecting 67:5,6 installment 6:4 instances 111:6 112:18 Institution 116:17 instruction 106:8 instructions 28:2 insurance 102:22 intellectual 100:13 intent 13:2 interacting 119:19 interesting 39:20 40:3 121:3 Intergovernme... 3:3,5 internet 61:12 69:13 71:19 intimidated 70:2 70:6 75:2 introduced 13:9 inviting 55:23 IRS 69:20 issue 14:3 52:5 53:21 87:12 91:6,24 92:11 92:12 95:19 98:18 106:23 112:15 issues 14:10 59:17 59:19,20 86:6 92:1 95:12	103:1 112:1 Ivy 116:17 J J 117:23 jamb 119:6 JAMES 1:16 JANNIE 1:13 January 3:7 100:4,17 101:13 Jason 89:23 90:1 Jeff 84:24 Jeffrey 78:18 JFK 85:4 119:4 job 74:20 84:3 85:14 94:21 104:9 110:18 114:5 Johnson 1:15 24:14,15,20,23 25:3,14,17,23 26:3,9 27:2,20 28:11,17,20 29:1,14,17,22 30:1 31:6 52:2,3 52:10,14,18,22 53:14,18 54:7,8 54:13,15,20 55:3,6,9,12,16 55:21 56:2 57:3 98:14,24 99:2,7 99:10 121:4,5 joined 91:11 jokingly 56:3 Jones 1:11 30:4,5 30:10,20 31:1 51:23 52:1 57:1 57:4,15,24 59:13,18 60:8 60:16,20 61:2,5 61:8,20 69:10 70:8 94:24 96:22 97:14,17 98:11 99:11 102:8,21 103:19 104:2 105:4,21 105:23 108:21
---	---	--	--	---

111:5 112:14 113:4,9 115:4,6 117:7,10,14,18 117:22 120:7,18 120:21,23 121:14,21,24 JR 1:11,13 July 26:22 49:9 49:10,17 52:9 52:10,23 56:11 59:9 66:14 67:13 68:22 71:15 June 1:7 26:24 27:1 55:8 63:24 64:5,15 71:9,10 71:12,14 100:4 122:5 jurisdiction 29:9	121:15,22 123:13 knees 113:11 know 15:7,11,15 16:2 24:19,21 27:7 28:13 29:6 30:11,12,13 33:3,4,16 38:24 40:5,10,12 47:9 51:10 54:9,16 55:23 56:13 61:2,17 63:22 66:13,19 67:4 68:7,12,13,17 68:22 69:20 70:7,9,10 71:2,4 72:24 73:21,24 74:8,11,15 75:3 75:4 76:6 78:7 78:11 79:11 81:5 85:16,16 85:21 86:17,19 93:3,14 95:11 95:12 96:6,10 96:18,19,20 97:5 104:19 105:1,8,17,18 106:3 107:9,13 109:13 111:5 121:8 knowing 85:10 95:11,11 known 75:7 knows 94:9 107:14,16	laundry 86:17 law 70:23 98:24 99:1 100:7,10 laws 99:8 100:8 lawsuits 103:5 lay 31:2 96:15 Lea 109:3,7 leadership 112:12 League 116:17 leave 16:4 92:22 97:21 left 104:15 109:16 113:14 120:14 leg 107:2,6 legislation 11:4 11:10,20 12:7 13:7 26:14,16 121:9 lend 90:11 length 120:2 letter 56:1 let's 37:9,18 81:9 81:13 86:11,24 86:24,24 87:1 level 35:12 106:3 levels 40:1 106:8 Lewis 2:11 8:6 78:15 94:4 liability 102:22 liaisons 94:15 liberty 106:18 libraries 57:10 71:24 72:4,9 75:5 77:19 library 61:14 109:8 life 80:16 82:6 92:19 107:13 115:19 118:2 lifting 104:21,22 light 79:9 LIHEAP 75:17 limit 26:4 81:21 limited 16:7 line 68:4 120:19 120:24 list 86:17 91:21	119:13 listed 119:13 listen 95:3 102:19 116:4 listened 85:12 listening 87:11 lit 82:6 literally 87:15 little 16:18 49:5 56:24 82:7 106:20 livable 118:13 live 82:23 83:2 87:20,21 88:9 lived 81:2 118:2 lives 83:12,17,20 107:20 living 116:11 local 96:1 104:17 locations 57:6,14 75:13,15 77:6 long 81:3 longer 82:4 88:14 longtime 5:23 look 22:13 29:18 37:8,9 42:16 44:13 45:24 56:5,21 61:14 61:18 64:4 65:15,15 70:13 71:1,3 75:14 90:13 91:2 96:2 96:2 105:16 108:7 114:20 121:17,18 looked 18:16 33:11,13,13 42:11 44:8 looking 18:7 31:13 32:21,23 37:3 42:17 43:9 45:13,14,17 60:9 67:7,7 97:3 105:9 121:17 looks 64:4 113:16 121:17,18 losing 110:17	loss 13:22 92:5 93:10 lost 29:24 107:6 108:11 lot 29:12 62:7 75:1,13 77:11 91:8 104:20 111:24 120:7,8 love 119:9 120:19 121:15 loved 120:24 loves 107:16 loving 118:22 low 5:16,18 41:12 43:5 82:15 lower 21:3 22:7 80:8 lowering 19:15 Luckily 107:1 lunch 109:23 lunches 109:22 lungs 102:19
K				M
keep 13:10 82:19 83:1 106:4,15 111:6,8 keeping 46:4 Keith 10:16 Kenney 1:16 8:9 8:10,20,21 Kenyatta 1:15 121:5 keystone 61:12 kids 82:17 83:15 104:23 111:22 112:1,6 kill 113:20 kind 16:24 29:5 39:1 42:14 43:3 47:8 53:22 62:12 64:11 67:13 98:16 103:3 111:16 kindergarten 91:15 101:18 kindergartener 109:19 King 120:16,16 120:19,22	L			M 123:13 mail 55:10 70:3 77:14,17,21 mailbox 71:14 mailed 38:9 55:3 71:9,11 mailing 28:5 54:1 main 109:12 maintain 81:7 111:12 maintained 100:3 maintenance 119:3 major 53:21 79:18 making 61:12 69:12 108:18 malpractice 103:1 manner 79:14,15 110:23 manual 88:1 MARIAN 1:18

mark 1:17 107:2 118:5	110:13 111:3	99:21 102:2	moved 8:16 9:6 81:23 82:4	neighborhoods 75:14 87:14,19
market 20:18 23:15,24 31:13 31:14 44:4 48:24 79:18 80:4	medication 92:18 101:7 102:18 103:7,10 107:10	103:4 112:10,10 119:21	moves 77:10	87:20,24 88:4,7 88:13,16
marriage 118:22	medications 101:2,4,12 102:16	millions 43:14 93:12	moving 28:20 29:3	Neil 118:23
married 82:11,24 83:13 114:5	medicine 103:9 119:24	mind 29:17 52:20 56:7	MSB 57:13	neither 84:7 90:4 119:9
Mary 118:23 119:2,17	Medicines 120:1	Miniature 73:23	multiple 58:12 101:17 114:8	nervous 106:20
Maslov 105:21,22 105:24	meet 11:14 26:18 59:11	minimum 26:1	murals 88:3	Net 3:19
massive 11:17	meeting 8:8 41:2 122:6	minute 90:3	murdered 88:8	neutral 114:15,17 114:20
match 15:12	members 8:14 9:24 10:12 78:7 79:4 91:4	minutes 78:24	N	never 30:9 43:14
matter 32:24 43:24 56:5 123:8	membership 58:18	missing 43:6 63:1 63:4	N 123:1	new 5:15,21 13:12 14:2,18 42:17 45:15,24 46:3 53:12 66:8,13 66:20 80:12 83:4,15 90:22 94:12 96:24 121:2,3,4,9
Maury 115:1	memories 118:19 119:22 120:10	mission 93:21 96:10	NACs 75:8	News 53:4 103:12
maximum 26:4,6 51:1 100:7	mentioned 40:2 98:15 102:10	mix 50:21	name 27:9 61:1 79:5 90:1,21 99:14 104:3 105:5,20 108:22 117:11,18,23 120:16	newspaper 103:8
Mayor 3:3,7 84:11	mentioning 109:4	model 28:22 44:10,11,16,20 44:22,23,23 45:1,2 73:14	Nebinger 103:8 107:8 108:11	nice 82:23
Mayor's 73:22	message 59:3	mom 82:8	necessary 96:3	night 82:13
McKann 94:4	met 11:13 13:5	money 41:22 54:22 84:17 91:9,19,23 93:6 93:17 95:10,20 95:24 96:18 97:8 99:5 108:6 110:22	necessity 120:1	nonresidential 17:6 48:4
mean 22:17 26:12 32:1 33:20 34:8 35:9 42:14 45:4 46:4 47:9,23 56:2 68:15,20	mic 115:12	month 81:13 109:6	need 14:21 17:1 26:10 27:7 39:1 49:19,21 51:16 55:20 59:11,23 60:23 61:18 70:22 74:17 84:3 85:8,16,16 85:21,24 86:1,7 86:21 94:18 95:24 96:19 104:17,18 106:23 108:3 112:4,5,16	nonspecial 106:23
means 58:6 92:17 123:19	mid 49:8,10,17 67:13 68:22	months 118:8	needed 11:18 101:8 102:18	non-residential 12:10,17 48:6,7 49:20,21 50:4
meant 26:23 92:6	middle 93:3	moratorium 65:17	needs 84:7 86:9 93:23 94:10 95:20 102:19 104:11 105:19 106:22 114:11	Northeast 74:9
measure 15:19 19:15 21:9	middle-agers 83:15	morning 38:8,9 78:9	neighborhood 75:7 92:23 108:24 109:2	northern 83:2
measures 14:1,16 15:2 18:1 64:19 64:22	migraine 109:19	mornings 109:8		nose 107:21 110:1 110:2
median 20:19 24:3,4 26:7 38:7 39:24,24 40:7	military 83:6	mother 82:2 103:14 110:6,9 118:16		Notary 123:13
medic 111:10	millage 15:23,24 17:21 19:7 22:3 22:16 38:22 39:4,5 43:18 50:1,22 51:6	motherhood 85:7		note 111:19
medical 92:20 94:1 111:8,24	million 18:22,24 19:1,1,12 28:15 29:14,15 31:11 31:12,23,24 32:3,20 33:8 36:4 38:3 42:3,4 42:8,9 43:20 45:20 48:1 51:1	motion 8:6 9:13 10:1		noted 123:6
medically 101:10 107:23 109:14		move 8:12,23 9:1 9:9 26:10 66:9 73:1 79:23 83:11 98:17		notes 123:7

29:18,21 30:12 30:13 31:12,20 31:23 32:19 33:2 35:1,3,5 36:5,5,7 41:19 45:11 49:24 50:9 51:4 55:12 59:22,24,24 60:11,13,14,18 60:22 61:3,4,5 61:22,24 67:15 70:5 73:22 75:16,17 77:16 86:4 98:2,2 112:18 117:4 numbers 23:21 27:6 28:24 35:6 36:14 38:22,23 39:15 40:1,19 47:10,12 49:7,8 52:18 53:12 56:12 83:10,21 85:24 86:2 97:24 108:8 numerous 118:17 nurse 92:6,15 99:15,24 100:3 100:18 101:6,20 102:4 106:13,24 107:1,3,6 110:7 112:5 nurses 92:1,5,5,13 92:16 93:11 98:19,20,21 99:22 100:6 102:3 103:17 105:16 109:4 111:1 112:17 nurse's 112:19 nursing 90:9,10 90:15,19 92:3 92:24 93:24 Nutter 84:11	object 79:13 objectives 11:15 obligation 104:16 obviously 35:10 72:14 94:6 117:2 occupancy 3:12 3:15 6:9,12 7:23 8:2 11:7 12:8,24 occupied 46:17,21 47:1 occur 103:1 occurred 63:1 October 50:16 offered 108:6,9 118:8 119:21 offering 26:10 70:11 119:17 offhand 71:2 office 24:6 109:12 109:18 110:4 officer 101:14,21 108:12 officers 94:2 102:5 offices 57:15 77:5 officials 84:19 Oh 1:17 44:17 49:3 okay 14:24 16:4 17:12,20 18:10 19:20 20:2 22:1 24:20 25:3 27:2 27:20 30:1 35:20 36:15,18 36:22 39:7,19 40:9 46:7 52:10 52:19 53:18 56:2 57:9 58:14 59:11 64:7 65:1 68:2,24 69:6 71:5 72:10 73:16,16 77:20 78:6,12 89:16 99:7,10 117:20 121:20 old 12:16 13:15	36:7 42:12,15 45:15,23 81:4,5 83:5 118:2 older 113:12 once 11:13 13:5 13:14 15:15 27:21 ones 38:23 one-page 28:1 one-third 17:6,15 online 28:10 57:11,18 58:6 58:10,20 61:14 71:23 77:18 OPA 27:10,11,14 30:16,23 59:23 60:4 61:15 73:13,15 open 55:20 operate 81:7 operating 2:19 72:22 opportunities 93:1 opportunity 52:7 53:10,10 56:9 56:19 57:5 58:16 opposed 8:19 9:16 63:2 79:12 opposition 9:18 90:5 option 77:13 81:10 118:9 options 10:19 13:10 105:9 order 2:4 13:10 26:18,22 85:17 85:20,22,24 95:9 97:7 100:24 orders 101:2 ordinance 2:13,16 2:18 3:6 5:5,13 5:20 6:1,7,15 7:7,21 organization 85:6	90:24 95:17 organizations 58:17 75:9 ought 86:15 114:24 outreach 77:1,5 outside 31:16 109:23 111:15 overarching 10:23 overpaid 84:6 overpaying 88:23 89:9 owner 46:17,21 47:1 61:1 owners 12:11,13 12:15,18 65:8 owner's 27:9 owner-occupants 5:23 O'Brien 1:16 9:17 9:20 O'NEILL 1:18	49:24 66:14,21 66:23 105:12 107:12,13 participate 56:9 particular 26:4 100:9 particularly 81:7 92:2 119:3 partners 114:8 parts 70:17 pass 81:10 112:9 112:15,16 Pat 89:23 patch 84:12 pay 22:7 23:5,6,9 80:21,22,22,24 81:20 97:10 113:1 paying 53:3,20 86:18 payment 5:9 payments 6:4 PCN 53:4 PDF 28:10 Peg 99:14 pellets 101:17 penalized 114:23 Pennsport 79:6 83:2 Pennsylvania 1:6 3:3 99:23 penny 103:16 pens 101:3 people 22:18,19 23:4,9 27:18 51:9 52:7 53:9 53:10 55:23 56:14,14 57:5 59:17 60:6,12 60:19 61:17 62:2 69:12,13 69:18 70:5,14 70:16 72:23 74:15,18,24 75:2 79:23 80:7 83:10 87:13 88:8,23 89:4,6,9
---	---	--	---	---

O

O 14:10 123:1
OAC 75:6

95:1 96:12,17 119:20 120:14 people's 37:14 38:12 people's/homeo... 37:11 percent 17:8,14 18:2 20:12 23:14 29:5 31:19 33:13 35:15 36:11 43:6,20 45:7,8 48:13 49:2 51:15,16 62:22 63:7,23 64:13 67:19 68:14,23 74:24 81:17 83:3 100:19 114:1,1,3,3,4,7 114:18,22,23 percentage 17:2,3 23:13 33:15 42:4 63:9,20 66:1,6 68:7 period 26:17,18 26:24 perk 95:3 permit 9:2,10 person 74:7 77:24 95:7,11 personally 95:18 114:11 persons 83:16 perspective 113:15 PHA 81:19,20 82:1 phase 110:11 Philadelphia 1:2 1:6 2:22,23 3:14 3:16,19,24 4:1,3 4:7,10,12,16,17 4:19,22 5:1,2,6 5:10,11,14,21 5:24 6:2,11,13 6:16,17,19,24 7:3,4,8,9,11,14	7:17,18 8:1,3 23:18 75:5 79:19 87:2,7,14 90:2 99:16 100:2 Philadelphians 79:5 Phila.gov 57:19 Philly 108:23 physical 100:12 physically 119:7 PICA 40:20,21 41:12 pick 40:18 110:16 pie 85:8 place 14:1,17,22 15:19 66:21 69:18,21 72:16 72:16 82:21 places 72:1 plan 2:23 69:17 80:2 84:9 planned 109:6 planning 103:14 plant 88:2 play 83:16 please 2:11 78:16 105:1 117:11,19 120:15 pleasure 113:10 point 15:11 22:24 23:1 26:4 38:10 39:9,11 40:12 40:19 42:1 49:15 53:19 57:22,24 65:5 68:9 86:4 106:10 111:7 pointed 91:8 points 79:20 85:5 98:2 Poland 82:5 police 92:2 99:22 101:14,20 102:5 103:11 108:12 111:1 policy 11:15	56:21 poor 107:10 109:18 portion 5:9 10:21 63:1,3 position 75:4,18 90:13 positions 92:3 possibility 25:6 69:20 74:7 possible 55:23 57:14 61:17 62:2,13 72:1 77:14 78:23 possibly 90:8 post 70:4 posters 54:1 pot 99:5 potential 18:15,16 potentially 90:14 pound 103:17 Poverty 3:21 Povich 115:1 power 89:13 precise 18:13 predetermined 4:6 6:22 prepared 14:2 Present 1:10 85:7 presentation 40:10,20 presented 37:5 President 1:11 2:2 8:5,11,12,16 9:6,18 10:10,11 14:6,19,24 15:21 16:3,7 20:3,4 24:12 30:2 31:7,8,24 32:7,9,14,18 33:1,6,21 34:5 34:15,20,23 35:4,19 36:2,15 36:19,22 37:2 38:16,20 39:10 46:8,9,13 51:24 61:21 62:9,17	67:18,23 68:3 73:18 74:6,11 75:22 76:6 78:4 78:10,13,21 79:4 84:22 85:1 87:5 88:18 89:21 President's 40:18 42:1 pretty 27:24 39:20 41:8,15 prevented 113:2 previous 44:18 118:10 pre-plated 109:22 price 113:17,22 priced 89:5 prices 80:8,9 113:21 primary 93:24 principal 103:11 107:17 principals 92:17 102:14,14 107:18 principal's 103:10 printed 72:6,7 printing 57:17 prior 15:8 26:11 priorities 93:21 94:19 96:9,13 priority 91:15,16 91:17 pristine 119:7 private 92:8 99:3 103:15 probably 18:21 19:2 26:8 37:6 38:6 49:8 51:12 53:2 56:13 68:10 74:19,23 95:16 problem 81:18 84:13,13 procedures 102:10	proceed 117:19 proceedings 123:5 process 25:4,19 26:12,19 27:5 27:17 28:18 53:2 56:5,10,16 56:18,20 58:16 58:19 61:19 66:12,15 67:4,5 67:11 115:23,23 115:24 116:7 117:1,6 produce 12:21 97:10 professional 58:17 102:24 Profits 3:20 program 2:14 74:23 109:9 promise 83:18 promote 54:4 properly 8:17 9:7 properties 5:23 17:9,13 30:24 31:14,15,18 33:10 34:19 46:16 63:21 65:14,16,19 66:2,8 67:5,7,10 67:11 81:5,9 83:3 property 4:5,21 6:21 7:13 11:4,6 11:13 12:11,13 12:15,18,22 13:5 59:21 60:21 62:24 65:8,11 73:4 81:5 113:18,19 113:23 proposal 12:14 19:21 25:7 proposals 12:7 18:11 proposed 3:1 11:3 40:16
---	---	--	--	---

protect 108:3,20 protected 100:21 prove 115:21 provide 4:4,20 6:20 7:12 11:11 13:1,3 39:23 40:4,8 44:20 60:5 67:14 75:10 77:7 84:12 104:16 provided 91:20 provides 10:18 providing 2:20 4:10,12 5:2,8,17 6:4 7:4,19 11:18 29:17 provisions 5:16 18:15 120:8,9 PSAs 54:3 public 2:5 8:8 10:7 25:11 26:11 61:23 83:6,8 84:10 87:2 90:23,24 91:7,10 92:7,11 98:20 100:11 101:23 104:5 105:7,23 123:13 pull 121:9 purposes 8:6 pursuant 3:4 90:9 pursue 11:24 push 25:8 put 49:13 57:13 60:5 64:9,19 81:14,14 86:2 88:3 91:2,24 92:5 103:12 110:20 119:2 puts 93:11 putting 53:24 54:2 66:21 72:8 97:8 p.m 1:7 122:5,6 Q qualified 107:19	qualify 55:1 80:9 quarter 38:3 quarters 68:16 question 16:10 20:7 25:5 28:11 62:18 63:12 64:10 66:5 67:22 68:3,4 73:3,21 76:5,7 79:24 84:18 88:22 89:8 95:6 102:8 104:10 113:17 questioning 68:5 120:19,24 questions 14:5 16:8 20:3 24:16 56:23 69:11 72:11 76:12 85:12,15 91:8 102:22 103:20 113:4,15 121:3 quick 73:3 76:12 94:3 95:6 98:14 102:8 quickly 41:15 62:4 103:4 quite 53:21 63:5 84:9 quorum 2:3 quoting 15:8 R R 123:1 rain 82:20 raise 81:12 88:13 95:6 102:21 119:11 raised 81:20 82:6 95:13 raises 65:5 raising 86:5,12 ran 109:23 rank 111:9 rate 4:4,11,12,20 5:3 6:21 7:5,13 7:19 12:24	15:23,24 17:21 19:18 22:3,17 38:22 39:4,5 40:11 49:1 50:1 50:22 51:6 81:19 115:17,24 116:9 rates 11:16 14:17 46:4 85:10 ratio 4:6 6:23 92:14 100:3,5 102:4 Rats 118:11 reach 58:7 59:6 read 2:11 86:19 readily 111:17 reading 9:3,11 10:5 ready 13:13 66:13 71:20,21 84:9 real 3:15,23 4:3,5 4:11,15,19,21 5:1,7,9,15,17 6:3,4,12,16,20 6:21 7:3,8,12,13 7:18 8:2 16:16 32:14 40:22 41:21,21,22,24 48:3 54:5 62:4 63:20 64:17 79:12,18 80:3 84:19 85:22 86:14 97:12 98:14 112:5 reality 15:3 74:21 really 38:7 41:5 41:23 50:14 53:7,7 54:3,6 59:2,6 64:16 72:23 75:12 76:7 79:15 91:21 93:4,13 104:8,9,9 106:17 107:17 108:5,7,9,18 110:14 112:11 114:21 121:10	Realtors 119:16 Realty 3:11 6:9 7:23 reason 15:3 72:11 74:21 99:3 118:1 reasonable 16:23 30:17,19 31:2,5 31:20 reassess 65:11 reassessment 45:23 65:22 reassessments 63:3 reassigned 101:15 rebirth 113:20 rec 57:11 72:9 receipt 12:2 receive 11:21 70:3 71:13 93:1 100:24 115:11 115:15,17 received 11:23 103:7 receiving 55:7,8,9 recess 109:23 110:2 122:4 recognizable 75:13 recognized 98:13 recognizes 8:9 20:6 24:14 30:4 36:24 38:18 39:10 46:11 52:1 68:1 75:23 76:10 115:8 recommendation 9:1,9,22 10:4 25:8 88:24 recommended 120:9 reconsider 90:16 record 9:19 27:21 30:7 57:8 104:3 117:12,19 rectal 101:4 red 107:2	redo 40:10 reduce 12:8 reduced 11:16 reduces 92:24 reducing 11:5 12:11,12 43:17 reevaluation 62:23 referring 111:18 Refinishing 119:5 reflect 9:19 reflection 119:8 Refunds 3:21 refuse 115:17 regarding 2:6 9:23 25:5 121:2 regardless 27:18 regards 90:15 regular 92:21 100:14 reinstate 90:17 related 95:23 110:4 relates 37:7 relation 33:9 relationship 33:9 relatively 12:16 18:21 relied 92:17 relief 18:1 19:15 21:9 53:11 59:20 64:19,22 74:22 relieve 99:19 religious 92:8 rely 97:7 remaining 101:5 remarks 84:5 remedies 79:22 84:15 89:3 remedy 89:6,11 remind 83:9 remove 19:5 removed 93:4 102:6 107:15 rendered 90:18 Rene 78:18 79:5
---	---	---	---	---

renegotiate 81:24	resolved 90:12	76:3 97:20 98:1	82:9 95:4	64:12
renovation 66:19	resources 70:10	98:5,9	112:19	scholarship
rent 118:8	109:2	rhetorical 62:18	rose 119:8	119:12
rental 81:9	respect 3:1	Richardson 10:16	rough 118:17	school 3:13,15 4:1
renters 81:16	response 16:9	74:4,10 76:15	roughly 32:23	4:8,9,17,22,24
renting 80:2	responses 16:12	76:23 77:4	46:16	5:11 6:10,13,17
rents 81:13	111:9	riddle 79:7	round 76:2	6:24 7:2,9,15,17
repair 81:6 118:9	responsibility	right 9:23 14:8,14	RPR 123:13	7:24 8:3 10:20
repealing 3:20	75:10 91:9	15:7,18 16:3,11	rubber 101:17	12:23 28:13
repeat 10:24	responsible 96:2	18:9 19:16	rules 9:1,10 10:4	31:11 32:11,20
47:11 61:9	100:1	20:21,24 21:5	83:17 114:22,24	36:4,20 63:7
repeats 10:21	rest 114:6	24:10 25:21,22	ruling 13:20,21	79:13 82:13
report 65:9	restore 99:21	26:2,6 27:20	run 21:11 36:16	83:6 86:5,6
reported 8:24 9:8	102:2,5 110:24	32:10,15,17,22	111:2	90:23 91:2,12
9:21 10:2	112:17	33:6,12 34:1,7	running 84:1	91:20 92:1,2,4,6
reporter 123:21	restored 119:7	36:1,1,8,9,17,23	109:24	92:9,11,13,16
represent 83:10	restoring 105:16	37:4 39:15 41:6		93:3,10,16,22
83:12 85:2	result 12:12 62:24	41:16,17 42:14	S	94:1,5,8,10,11
representing 79:6	66:9	42:19 43:2,6,23	s 36:13	94:14,15,19
reprieve 56:16	resurrecting	48:23 49:1,19	sacred 119:22	95:3,10,19,24
reproduction	86:23	49:23 50:2,23	safe 51:9 106:10	96:8,18 98:20
123:19	retired 83:16	51:2,7,8,21	safety 92:1 93:24	98:21 99:15,17
request 99:16	returned 103:13	52:11 53:1,20	sale 80:8,9 119:22	99:19,22,22,23
102:1	revalued 66:3	55:5 56:7 61:20	sales 30:23 44:8	99:24 100:2,16
requesting 99:20	revenue 10:16,19	71:3,17 72:5,20	62:24 64:8	101:1,9,14,15
requests 25:24	11:8 12:3,23	74:10 75:20	65:15 67:7	101:16,20 102:3
require 119:24	13:22 27:12	76:8,24 84:4	samples 29:11	102:5,17 103:13
required 119:4	28:22 32:22,22	89:11 95:6,13	sank 81:3	103:15 105:7,10
requirements	33:2,14,15,19	96:20 98:11,19	save 54:22 93:12	105:16,23 106:2
27:23	33:20,22 34:1	101:19 114:12	savings 18:14	106:24 107:11
requires 119:23	35:24 41:19,19	115:4,6,7,14	54:5,19,23	108:6 109:5,10
rescue 103:11	42:10,21 43:8	121:1,7,22	55:20	109:16 110:19
residential 12:11	43:13 45:10	rightly 103:11	saw 45:4 107:2	110:23 111:1,1
12:13,15 17:3,5	60:3 61:15	risk 13:16	118:15,22	111:15,21,21,22
17:13 31:13,15	73:24 74:3,4,8	River 85:4	saying 9:14 14:15	111:22,24 112:2
31:18 46:16,18	76:17 84:8	road 98:3	15:1,18 16:2,20	112:4 119:5
48:15,19,21	86:12 90:17	Rob 10:13 24:15	24:18 25:11	schools 58:19
49:21 50:8,11	revenues 12:22	52:3 73:5	34:7,24 35:4,5	90:10,18 91:4,7
62:20 63:19	34:3 35:10	Roccia 104:1	46:2 59:2 65:21	91:16,24 92:1,7
65:2 67:3	41:20 86:5	Roccia-Meier	67:20 98:19	92:8,8,15,16,23
residents 22:19	Revised 2:22	105:5,6,22	110:5,10,12	92:23 95:21
22:21 23:6 85:1	reward 118:24	106:1	says 23:16,19	99:3 100:12
85:2 120:10	REYNOLDS	Rockar 104:1	55:19	104:11 105:18
Resolution 1:22	1:12	108:22,22	scenario 23:3	106:2,12 107:20
2:20	Reynolds-Brown	roll 76:15	37:5,20	108:3,10,17,24
Resolutions 2:9	57:22 58:2,15	roof 82:19	scenarios 37:2,4	109:2 111:19
2:12	59:4,8 69:11	room 1:6 58:16	schedule 63:24	112:12

Schuylkill 85:3 scoliosis 93:2 screenings 93:2 scrutinizing 121:16 seat 117:15 second 8:15 9:5 18:1,2 87:8 98:11 seconded 8:17 9:7 seconds 95:8,14 95:15 secretaries 94:15 Section 3:10,20 5:6 6:8 7:22 81:16,23 security 94:2 105:17 106:15 108:10 111:7 see 21:13 28:2 40:7 47:7,24 53:6 56:13 60:8 61:24 62:2,22 70:1 91:2 103:3 113:10,13 121:19,22 seeing 20:20 42:13 103:22 113:6 122:3 seeks 109:1 seizures 92:19 self 65:9 sell 80:8,24 96:21 send 26:20,20 27:16 70:4 72:2 76:19 sending 55:14 senior 58:11 74:22 76:12 seniors 58:5 76:14 77:11 sense 64:23 68:17 82:20,21 sent 40:11 65:7 71:6,7,8 sentence 119:18 separate 86:6	95:18 separately 86:7 86:10 September 50:17 50:18 serious 112:20 serve 10:13 served 83:5 services 25:19 90:17 92:6 93:9 session 9:3,11 10:5 122:2 sessions 111:20 set 26:3,22 78:15 81:19 85:10 93:20 103:23 113:7 seven 87:16 107:12 severely 83:20 severity 111:10 sex 114:8 sexy 53:21 share 94:3 sharp 121:17,17 121:18,18 Shelly 104:1,4 shift 12:9,12 shortened 72:19 shot 101:17 show 80:4 89:19 108:9 showed 17:19 44:1 sick 110:12,17 side 48:4 63:10 68:8 101:19 signature 70:22 signs 80:4 simple 27:24 38:13 60:24 69:24 88:22 simplify 60:10 simply 75:3 single 82:12 92:15 singles 83:14 sir 84:6 87:5	89:14 117:17 120:6 sit 72:17 113:12 sitting 70:19 situation 12:5 26:12 105:18 106:11 107:17 110:21 113:24 114:2 situations 90:10 106:14 six 2:14 68:24 87:16 118:8,24 skillfully 118:12 slept 82:8 slightly 29:10 slip 121:9 small 18:21 smiles 121:19 Smooching 86:9 smoothing 85:23 sole 82:14 solve 45:10 somebody 74:3,7 114:14 someone's 115:19 son 103:15 107:8 119:11,15 sorry 12:17 14:12 41:3 42:6 75:24 88:21 113:13 sort 20:19 77:1,1 sos 79:8 South 85:4 87:7 87:13 118:3 so-called 86:13 Spanish 59:16 speak 90:7 97:1,2 121:10 speakers 89:22 speaking 15:16 62:3 95:17 special 5:15 105:7 106:22 specific 78:11 96:15 101:24 specifically 82:16	105:15 specifications 74:20 speech 117:13 spend 79:20 spent 30:15 97:9 spreadsheets 83:10 square 80:12 Squilla 1:17 20:6 20:7,11,16,24 21:6,12,15,19 21:23 22:1,5,10 22:15,22 23:2 23:12,23 24:4,8 24:10 46:11,12 46:18,20,22 47:3,9,15,17,20 47:23 48:5,8,11 48:16,18,23 49:4,6,10,12,23 50:5,8,12,15,18 50:20,24 51:3,8 51:18,21 75:23 76:10,11,21,24 77:8,20,23 78:2 121:4 Squilla's 25:5 staff 10:15 21:17 58:24 107:14 110:20 staffers 74:1 stand 122:4 standpoint 28:13 56:21 stands 52:11 start 19:4 20:20 24:16 25:10,23 26:23 53:3,7 72:8 80:9 88:4 121:12 started 24:18 65:21 80:4 106:18 starting 21:2,3 83:13 state 9:13 13:17	26:14,15 56:7 99:1,8 100:7 104:3,13 117:11 117:18 119:8 states 104:15 stations 54:1 statistic 111:12 statistics 111:6,8 111:14,17 stay 112:2 stayed 35:12 STEB 13:21 28:15 stenographic 123:7 step 11:21,23 stepping 51:23 stick 56:22 78:24 sticks 53:22 98:16 stop 51:15 84:7 story 82:2 83:9 94:3 straightforward 28:1 stream 96:1 street 74:2,16 85:3,4 88:1,8 118:3 striking 63:11 strongly 95:20,23 112:8 struggling 60:6 96:9 student 92:14 103:7,9 105:6 107:15 109:21 110:1,5 students 90:18 93:1 97:11 100:2,3,6,12,16 100:19,20 101:3 101:10 102:3 108:13 109:15 109:15 110:20 111:2 stuff 53:5 submitted 3:2
--	--	--	---	--

subsequent 98:6	swearing 95:7	11:13,16,18	tens 42:18 43:10	108:21 111:3,5
subtract 51:16	sweat 119:1	12:8,9,19,22,24	43:13 104:23	113:3,6 115:7
successful 91:14	Switzerland	13:5,17 14:1,16	terms 3:16 4:13	117:7,15,17
101:1	119:14	19:21 27:12,13	5:3,12,19 6:5,14	120:6,7,12
sue 103:14	sympathy 104:20	32:4,6,15 43:11	7:6,20 8:4 33:20	121:21 122:5
suffer 88:11	system 12:17	51:13 53:1,6,16	42:21,22 52:15	theory 64:15
sugary 86:23	34:13,13 42:13	53:17 54:23	63:19 68:7	thing 15:8 67:20
suggest 15:6	42:15,18 45:15	55:19 60:1	test 115:2	86:11 92:9
suggested 13:12	45:16,23,24	69:22 74:22	testified 19:22	106:9,17 110:4
17:23 18:12	46:3,3 56:7 64:9	76:12 77:7,12	109:4	120:11
37:13,23 38:10	79:13 85:7	79:12,22 80:14	testify 10:17	things 37:7 43:3
suggesting 14:20		80:21 83:4	61:24 95:2 97:4	44:12 56:22
suggestion 35:8	T	85:10 86:5,13	109:7 117:11	75:6,16 86:15
summarize 120:2	T 123:1,1	86:14,24 114:15	120:14 122:3	96:15 106:3,19
summarized	table 13:10 70:20	114:19 115:17	testimony 10:21	107:19 108:2
10:22	72:18 78:20	115:24 116:8	10:21 11:1 14:4	109:11 113:1
sums 83:11	take 17:24 18:2	120:11	40:24 41:1,4	think 16:13,15,23
supervision	29:18 60:16	taxed 119:18	44:18 79:1	18:4,23 19:2,23
123:21	79:8,10 84:19	taxes 3:24 4:4,16	88:19 97:21,23	21:22 22:20
support 82:13	96:1 105:8	4:20 5:10 6:3,5	98:12 103:20	23:20 28:14
90:4,11 91:13	110:15 114:9,14	6:16,20 7:8,12	106:21 113:7	29:6,9,20,23
92:24 94:14,15	115:1 119:21	54:24 58:22	116:1 117:8	30:17,18 31:4
104:11 106:8	taken 114:11	79:22 80:7	120:13 122:1	35:13 37:3
107:14 108:14	123:7	81:17 86:19	thank 8:5,10,21	38:24 40:2,17
114:23 115:3	talk 37:18 67:16	88:13 113:18,19	10:6 14:6 16:6	40:19 41:4,14
supports 85:6	67:21 70:23	113:23 116:10	20:2,4 23:11	41:15,16,24
supposed 114:9	81:9 116:19,24	121:2,16	24:10,12,15	44:17,19 45:3
suppositories	120:2	taxing 19:13,14	30:1,2,5 31:6,8	48:11,12,19,24
101:4	talked 70:15	taxpayers 5:16,18	37:1 38:14,16	51:7 59:10 68:9
suppository 103:2	111:20	86:18 121:10	38:19 39:19	68:19 70:12,22
sure 9:23 14:7,13	talking 15:20	taxpaying 87:2	46:7,9,12 51:21	70:24 72:21
14:22 21:14	29:6 41:21,23	teachers 94:14	52:3 56:22 58:2	74:1 77:8 79:21
24:11 39:7 41:5	42:20 48:23	101:18 102:12	59:12,13 62:16	89:2,5,17 91:13
51:22 56:8	66:12 70:19	107:13	67:18,23 68:2	93:13,20 96:6,8
58:20,24 62:19	74:14 112:7	technical 60:11	73:16,18 75:22	96:9 104:17
63:5,5 64:21	talks 86:8	techy 53:5	76:3,8 78:2,3,4	105:17,18 106:1
66:4 67:12,19	target 28:22	tell 62:19 63:23	78:13 79:3	106:16 108:8
67:22 69:12	75:15	83:9 84:15	84:21,22 87:3,5	110:19,21
70:8 72:16	TASCO 1:18	105:2 112:14	88:17,18,20	111:11,16 112:3
77:10 91:18	tax 3:12,14,20 4:4	115:9	89:20,21 90:20	112:7,11 113:24
95:21 97:6	4:4,8,11,12,20	telling 33:8 51:9	91:4 94:23	114:2,12 115:10
108:19 114:10	4:20,22 5:1,3,7	temporary 86:14	95:15 97:16	115:10 116:12
120:18	5:16,17,22 6:9	ten 36:13 80:15	98:8,10 99:10	thinking 52:19
surrogate 114:13	6:11,21,21,24	80:20	99:13 102:7	third 107:3
survive 106:14	7:3,5,13,13,15	tenant 81:14	103:19,22 104:6	thought 29:7
suspended 9:2,10	7:17,19,23 8:1	tenants 81:11,12	104:7 105:3,4,8	31:18 34:2,6,6
suspension 10:4	10:19 11:5,6,7	81:18,22 118:10	105:22 108:20	50:3 65:20

72:11,12,24 79:15 thoughts 19:21 thousand 66:7 87:16 thousands 92:20 104:23 threatening 92:19 threats 111:8 three 40:21 41:11 41:11 64:8 65:6 68:16 78:18 89:22 103:24 107:3,5 108:1 threw 109:24 throw 15:14 Thursday 62:6 67:16 78:9 122:5 time 19:22 22:12 26:4,18,19 30:15 31:21 35:16 40:19 50:13 66:14 72:15 74:1 78:11 80:15 81:3 84:2 92:2 94:8 96:23 100:17 101:21 107:3,24 108:15 109:17 110:3,15 112:21 115:6 118:17 times 40:22 41:12 51:11 61:8 82:7 102:17 107:3 108:1 109:17 110:16 113:13 118:7 timing 104:19 tip 94:17 tippling 20:8,10 20:11 22:6 title 2:11 5:14 today 10:14 15:13 15:22 17:9 62:2 62:21 68:23	69:4 90:6 91:6 92:4 99:14,16 100:17 105:15 109:7 110:8 120:20 toil 119:1 told 40:21 41:13 84:1 tomorrow 36:16 59:10 67:15 112:24 Tony 120:16 tools 72:16 top 91:21 total 16:23 33:17 34:4 35:14,17 36:6 46:14 48:22 55:12 64:24 73:4 118:14 touch 96:14 tough 120:2 towel 109:20 track 67:13 traditional 59:16 tragedy 94:6 trained 102:23 transcript 123:9 123:18 transit 54:1 translates 43:7 translating 59:15 transparency 86:8 transparent 86:9 travesty 113:2 treated 112:19 treatments 101:11 tripling 45:17 trucked 109:22 true 35:9 37:7 112:1 115:21 truly 101:8 trust 97:7 truth 38:13 try 16:11 54:4	62:13 70:13 73:1,2 116:19 trying 41:11 43:11,12 52:5 53:7 55:22 56:7 57:13 61:16 72:23 88:12 tube 101:13 107:24 tubes 107:23 Tuesday 1:7 109:8 turn 112:20 TV 103:12 twice 113:1 two 10:22 11:14 13:12 43:2 63:10 65:12,13 65:24 66:24 76:12 84:5 86:6 86:13 88:9 95:22 100:18 106:24 113:15 118:15 two-thirds 17:5 48:20,21 type 56:15,15 75:19 105:13 T'ing 62:3 U U 14:10 Uh-huh 46:19 ultimately 15:11 unanticipated 79:16 Uncle 118:20 underemployed 80:19 underserved 69:14 72:13 understand 13:9 18:24 56:8 65:6 66:4,16 91:6 92:10 93:6,7 108:15 understanding	58:5 67:22 unemployed 80:20 unfair 110:21 unfortunate 106:18 unfortunately 106:11 107:9 114:2 uninformed 92:20 unit 111:10 United 90:24 91:10 106:4 units 81:23 unravel 56:20 unrealistic 117:3 untenable 111:2 unwritten 87:22 upkeep 119:23 ups 87:24 upwardly 80:16 use 3:11,14 6:9,12 7:23 8:2 11:7 12:8,21,24 13:15 16:23 27:5 29:11 31:20 32:5 39:6 44:6,11 45:23 99:4 useful 98:6 V valuable 58:4 value 11:17 12:10 13:8 16:16,24 17:8,8,14 19:5 19:10,13,17 20:18 22:8 23:15,17,24 26:7 27:4,19 31:14,20 32:10 33:10,12,19 34:9,11,12,18 35:18 36:10 38:7 40:22 41:23 42:2,5,9	42:12,19,21,23 43:9,22 44:14 44:14 45:11,13 45:15,20 47:24 48:14,22 49:1 51:11 54:9 62:20,20,24 63:2,4,8 64:17 66:9,21 73:4,5 80:10 valued 29:23 values 14:10 15:11,15 16:1 30:23 31:13 33:23 34:2,6,14 34:16,21 35:16 35:22,23 44:4 45:24 46:5 48:21 49:20 50:4 65:11 66:13 106:5 variety 44:12 65:16 various 77:6 venues 61:9 version 79:9 Veteran 94:4,5 view 13:24 111:8 Villanova 119:12 violence 111:7 violent 88:7 vision 93:2 volunteer 109:7 volunteering 94:8 vote 15:22 95:9 104:24 112:14 voted 9:24 18:23 21:10 vulnerable 85:19 100:11 W W 1:13 Wage 3:19 wait 85:16 waiting 62:11 walk 63:21
---	--	--	---	---

walking 101:16	98:10 104:2,2	words 53:14	121:6	20:9 37:6,10,19
want 14:7,13	117:9,16 120:15	work 16:14,22	year 2:19,22 3:2	42:7
22:13 25:8 42:9	went 43:22,22	17:17,18 19:24	4:1,17 6:18 7:10	\$80,000 23:24
45:19,21 46:2,5	51:10 52:8	20:1 21:17 25:1	13:9 41:20	\$94 31:10,22,24
56:8,15 59:3	82:13 97:17	25:3 30:17 31:5	53:15,16,17	36:3 42:8,9
62:12 68:10,12	105:23 116:1	74:18 82:4	65:22 76:22	43:20 45:20
68:20 70:8 73:1	118:24	87:23 88:2 91:2	85:9 87:17	48:1
76:7,19 83:18	weren't 29:11	98:7 110:15	91:10,21 92:3	
83:18 85:5 91:4	63:3 66:14	worked 82:15	93:12 100:4,5	0
91:22,24 95:5	West 108:23	83:1,6 116:15	113:12	0 69:4,5,7
97:24 98:3,12	We'll 59:14 78:10	116:16	years 2:15,24	1
98:13 104:6,7	80:11	working 16:21,24	36:12,13 63:10	1 26:24 27:1
106:5 111:19	we're 18:7 19:14	25:9,20 30:15	64:8 65:12,13	92:13 114:1
114:13 116:21	19:15 20:12	30:16 52:11	65:24 66:24	1,500 92:13 100:1
117:13 120:4,11	43:11,17 45:14	58:23 59:5	80:15,20 82:11	100:6
121:14	59:15 61:16	65:23 73:13,15	83:5,5,6 88:9,24	1.25 40:12
wanted 52:4	69:1 71:23 78:6	86:20,21	89:9 100:15	1.6 18:2
82:17,18 97:14	78:23,23 87:11	works 19:4	107:12 118:2,4	1.7 18:4,5
99:7 109:13	88:12 90:13	world 97:12	118:22,24 120:3	1.75 39:13
wants 103:14	96:4,17,19,20	118:15	year's 27:5	1.78 39:14
war 118:20	96:24 97:1	worried 110:17	yellow/orange	1.8 18:7 38:22
warning 55:17	114:8	worse 37:2	55:17	39:3,8,14 51:5,6
Wars 118:16	we've 15:4,20	worst 37:5,20	Yep 52:21	51:12
wasn't 34:12 41:1	16:1 58:23 59:5	worth 54:11	young 83:12	10 19:7,11,12
44:1 66:20 82:7	65:21,21 70:12	wouldn't 53:15	110:9	82:11
82:9,14 110:7	83:1 86:13	80:5	Youth 104:6	100 66:7 67:19
110:17 112:21	91:17	wrangling 91:5	Yup 32:13 55:11	100th 118:5
watching 57:5	white 55:18	wreckage 118:9	73:6	100,000 37:15
way 19:3 33:18	wide 58:8 59:9	written 97:21,23	y'all 121:22	47:11
39:21 56:4,17	William 1:14	wrong 103:7		101 92:3,5,5
68:17,19 72:21	117:23	107:10	\$	102 24:17
80:3 89:17,18	willing 19:24 70:1	www.strehlowc...	\$100 32:19 81:13	11 82:10
92:7 93:11 96:3	112:17	123:24	\$108 41:13	112 24:17 30:7,9
103:5,18 105:11	WILSON 1:13	Y	\$120,000 23:17	12 33:5 35:10,11
108:19 111:9	wind 30:18	Yanoff 104:1,4,4	\$15,000 17:22	36:17 122:5
121:15 122:1	window 72:19	111:13 113:3	20:17 21:20	120,000 44:1
ways 72:21 93:3	winner 82:14	yeah 18:6 19:23	37:12,22 117:3	120164 1:20 2:7
website 27:12,12	wise 103:17 121:8	20:16 21:24	\$21 62:19	2:13
28:2,4 54:2 60:3	wisely 97:9	29:4,20 31:4	\$30 18:23 19:1	120165 1:20 2:7
60:4 61:15,15	witnesses 78:15	36:21 41:14	\$30,000 20:18	2:16
wedlock 114:8	78:18,20 103:23	48:10,18 49:11	37:24 51:4	120166 1:20 2:7
week 41:5 72:7,8	103:24 113:7	50:5 51:20	\$35,000 38:2	2:18
100:19 107:1	wolf 110:11	60:23 62:9	\$40,000 37:16	120167 1:22 2:10
weeks 10:22 15:5	won 119:11	63:22 64:2,6,18	38:4 46:23 47:6	2:20
65:6 69:1 84:5	wonder 39:23	64:21 69:8 78:1	\$6 99:21 102:2	120173 1:20 2:7
94:7 103:8	wonderful 109:22	78:10 87:7	103:4	3:10
welcome 88:21	wool 121:9		\$80 17:22 19:4	120174 1:20 2:7

3:18	19-3800 5:21	37:14 39:12,21	6 94:15,16
120175 1:20 2:7	1942 118:21	300 81:17	6:12 122:6
3:23	1949 99:23 100:8	300,000 37:11	60 17:8 26:22
120230 1:20 2:8	1992 3:7	31 26:22 52:9,10	49:3,4,5 74:23
4:15		56:11 59:9	101:2
120338 1:20 2:8	2	71:16	60,000 23:18
5:5	20 20:12 100:15	31st 53:9	37:13
120339 1:21 2:8	200 51:15,15	32 82:10	60-day 26:16
5:13	200,000 37:23	340 46:21,22	624 118:2
120340 1:21 2:8	2002 45:6	340,000 46:17	64 57:6
5:20 8:7,13,23	2002/2003 45:8	47:2,3,21	65 74:24
9:7 10:2	2004 31:13 34:11	35,000 39:13	66 17:10
120341 1:21 2:8	34:12,17,19	36 35:13 36:8	67 17:10
6:1	36:9 43:21	39 94:13	
120475 1:21 2:8	44:14 45:6		7
6:7 10:17	2012 1:7 3:2		7 122:5
120476 1:21 2:9	31:15 34:19	4	70 19:14 21:7,19
6:15	35:7,7 44:15	4 18:21 78:24	48:13 49:1
120477 1:21 2:9	122:5	4:09 1:7	70,000 47:24
7:7	2013 2:15,17,19	40 17:13 23:22	75 83:4 118:1
120478 1:21 2:9	2:24 4:2,18 6:18	26:8 28:14	120:3
7:21	7:10	29:14 62:21	750 100:3 102:3
140/120,000 22:11	2017 2:24	40,000 25:9 38:6	
15 51:19 63:24	2018 2:15	39:14 47:13	8
64:5	21 52:23	400 1:6	8 19:8
15K 40:12	21-year 94:5	400,000 46:24	8:30 109:10
15th 64:14	21-year-old 94:4	44 17:15 45:6	80 16:24 19:13
15,000 18:3,5	215-686-9200	470,000 46:16,18	21:3 23:20
25:12 26:1	60:19 61:7	46:23 55:15,16	24:23 30:8 38:7
15,000/30,000	22 94:16	475 11:2 13:2	73:5
21:1	22nd 74:2,16	476 10:18 12:20	82 24:8,9
150,000 37:21	24 100:20	477 10:18 12:20	85 94:14
1563-A 3:8	240,000 38:1	478 10:18 11:2	
16 64:15	25 31:19 43:6,20	13:2	9
17-0 112:16	45:8	49 100:8	9 35:15 36:11
1887 119:7	26th 118:3		9.9 63:7
19 5:14	267,337 47:19	5	90 112:10
19-1300 4:2,18	270,000 38:5	5 1:7 18:22 19:8	911 108:1
6:2,19 7:11	47:14,16,17,21	94:13	937 29:20,22
19-1307 5:6	28 83:6 100:19	50 23:14 29:4,14	94 31:12 32:3,20
19-1500 3:18		83:3 114:3,3,4,7	33:8 34:16 35:6
19-1508 3:20	3	114:21,23	35:8,22 36:20
19-1800 4:7,21	3 3:7 78:24	51 118:22	42:3,4 112:10
6:23 7:14	30 19:1 21:22,23	52 62:21	114:17
19-1806 3:10 6:8	39:7 51:1,19	56 17:10 101:6	97 94:15
7:22	95:8,14,15	577,000 46:15	99 69:7 114:1
19-2900A 5:15	30K 40:13	58 17:8	
	30,000 18:8 25:7	6	