

FISCAL
3/14/2022

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

Remote location using Microsoft® Teams
Monday, March 14, 2022
9:30 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB, CHAIR
COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL, VICE-CHAIR
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA
COUNCILMAN ISAIAH THOMAS

RESOLUTION: 200406

1 - - -

2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Good morning,
3 everyone.

4 This hearing is called to
5 order. I recognize the presence of a
6 quorum of Committee members. Members of
7 the Committee in attendance are our
8 Vice-chair Brian O'Neill, Councilmembers
9 Brooks, Sanchez, Squilla and Thomas.
10 Thank you all for being here. This is
11 the public hearing of the Committee on
12 Fiscal Responsibility and
13 Intergovernmental Cooperation. The
14 purpose of this public hearing is to
15 hear testimony on Resolution 200406.

16 I understand that state law
17 currently requires that the following
18 announcement be made at the beginning of
19 every remote public hearing as follows:
20 Due to the current public health
21 emergency, City Council Committees are
22 currently meeting remotely. We are
23 using Microsoft Teams to make these
24 remote hearings possible.

25 Instructions for how the public

1 may view and offer public testimony at
2 public hearings of Council Committees
3 are included in the public hearing
4 notices that are published in the Daily
5 News, Inquirer and Legal Intelligencer
6 prior to the hearings and can also be
7 found on PHLCouncil.com.

8 The Clerk will now please read
9 the title of the resolution before the
10 Committee today.

11 THE CLERK: Authorizing the
12 Committee on Fiscal Stability and
13 Intergovernmental Cooperation to hold
14 quarterly hearings that include monthly
15 reporting requirements, to discuss the
16 fiscal position and overarching social
17 impact goals of the City, included and
18 related to the Five Year Plan and the
19 reporting requirement set forth in the
20 QCMR, as submitted to the Pennsylvania
21 Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority.

22 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.
23 And again, thanks everybody for being
24 here, especially with our time change I
25 know that an early Monday morning start

1 is not the easiest. But I appreciate
2 all of you joining us today.

3 I think a financial reporting
4 is an essential part of our work here in
5 City Council and monitoring whether or
6 not we're underperforming or hitting our
7 targets and performing or exceeding
8 performance is essential to figuring out
9 how we manage Philadelphia's economic
10 recovery, especially coming from this
11 pandemic. We're managing a precarious
12 economy right now, so I want to thank
13 everyone. So let's get started.

14 Mr. Grbach, please call the
15 first panel of witnesses.

16 THE CLERK: Our first panel
17 includes Rob Dubow, Marisa Waxman and
18 Harvey Rice.

19 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Finance
20 Director Rob Dubow, good morning. If
21 you would like to get started.

22 MR. DUBOW: Good morning.
23 Sure, thanks. And good morning, Chair
24 Domb and members of the Committee. Rob
25 Dubow, the Finance Director. I'm here

1 to testify on Resolution 200406
2 regarding the current fiscal position of
3 the City. I'm joined by Marisa Waxman,
4 our Budget Director who will be doing
5 some of the -- presenting, you know, as
6 we do each quarter we'll walk you
7 through a PowerPoint.

8 We also have representatives
9 from IHS Markit, Jim Diffley and Tom
10 Jackson, here to help answer any
11 questions and representatives from
12 Revenue and OPA. With that, so I'll get
13 started.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank
15 you.

16 MR. DUBOW: Sure. If we go to
17 Slide 2, give a broad overview of what
18 the quarterly report shows in terms of
19 our revenues and expenditures and our
20 projected FY22 fund balance. So we're
21 now projecting revenues of a little bit
22 under 4.2 -- 5.2 billion, sorry, which
23 is about 72 million less than in our
24 original budget, but over 100 million
25 more than our target budget. Our

1 expenses are about 5.37 billion, which
2 is more than the original target budget
3 and even a little more than the target
4 budget.

5 Putting all that together, what
6 that means for our fund balance is it's
7 actually higher than the adopted budget
8 by almost 50 million, and it's about
9 \$134 million. And as we talked about it
10 before, while 134 million sounds like a
11 lot of money, it's less than 10 days of
12 spending or about 2.5 percent, which is
13 well below our internal goal which is
14 being 6 to 8 percent or the Government
15 Finance Office Association's best
16 practice which is about 17 percent.

17 And the next slide shows that
18 graphically. As you can see, our
19 projected fund balance is a lot lower
20 than it was before the pandemic started
21 when it was about 439 million. Now,
22 it's actually above our internal target
23 between 6 to 8 percent. But even that
24 was well below the GFOA target, and we
25 have made a conscious decision that we

1 can't really get to the GFOA target, but
2 we do think that our internal target
3 meets the trade-off between being our
4 ongoing needs and ensuring long-term
5 fiscal stability. As you see in '20 --
6 sorry, not quite ready -- we drew down
7 on that fund balance. And in '22, we're
8 continuing -- we're showing another draw
9 which would take us well below our
10 targets.

11 The next slide is an overall
12 view of our revenues. As you can see,
13 the second quarter revenues were higher
14 than our target and higher than FY21,
15 but still below where we were in FY20.
16 And if revenues continue to grow at the
17 pace where they've been growing before
18 '20, we would have been much higher than
19 where we are now.

20 We projected at the end of the
21 year we'll be at about 5.2 billion.
22 That's helped by strong sales, parking
23 and wage tax collections accounting for
24 most of that increase. If you look at
25 the next slide, you can see that those

1 stronger tax collections have us over
2 the original target, also over the
3 original target for our local fees and
4 fines, but that's partially offset by
5 being under target for revenues from
6 other governments.

7 As we go into obligations, I'm
8 going to flip this over to Marisa to
9 walk you through the next slides.

10 MS. WAXMAN: Thank you. So in
11 the second quarter, we've spent over a
12 shade over \$1 billion. That's in line
13 with our target budget. This is still
14 less than our actuals from last year.
15 As far as our year-end projections, we
16 are on track to spend \$5.4 billion.
17 That's \$103 million more than the
18 original budget. This quarter we've
19 raised it about 24 billion. But most of
20 the increase stems from changes we made
21 in the first quarter related to labor
22 costs.

23 In the second quarter, the main
24 changes are pension contributions due to
25 the sales tax. As Rob just mentioned,

1 our sales tax has been coming in strong.
2 Because a portion of that automatically
3 goes to the Pension Fund, that means our
4 spending for putting money into the
5 Pension Fund automatically increases.

6 Additionally, there were court-
7 ordered costs at the Prisons for COVID
8 tests and other related medical needs.
9 That was part of the fall transfer
10 ordinance approved by City Council, so
11 that drove the \$24 million increase
12 compared to last year's quarter
13 presentation in terms of overall
14 spending for the year.

15 Next, we look at our overtime
16 spending, and this is something that we
17 track and report out fairly regularly.
18 Overall our spending is about 7 percent
19 less on overtime year-to-date compared
20 to this time last year. Overtime for
21 the quarter was a little over \$10
22 million lower than it was in the second
23 quarter of FY20, the last prepandemic
24 quarter.

25 And as you know, we've got a

1 lot of different things that impact what
2 is happening with our overtime. One has
3 to do with -- and then we'll go into it
4 in a couple of moments -- how many
5 workers there are available to do work.
6 And so, how many positions are filled,
7 how many of those filled positions are
8 the people available to work versus out
9 on leave. But also then, we have a lot
10 of changes over the past year or two in
11 terms of what services are we providing
12 in some areas. We've got 24/7
13 operations that have to be staffed even
14 when folks are out sick or caring for
15 family. In other places we've had
16 operations that have been dramatically
17 curtailed for public health reasons.
18 And so, there's been a lot of variation
19 by department and overtime for the past
20 three years.

21 Additionally, the cost of
22 overtime even if the number of hours
23 stayed exactly the same as we have
24 increases in pay for City employees, the
25 cost of overtime will always go up even

1 if the amount of hours remain the same.

2 And so, our year-to-date though so far
3 this year was about \$98 million in
4 overtime spending.

5 As I'm mentioning this is
6 really tied in part to our leave usage.
7 Our median leave usage in the second
8 quarter of FY22 was 16.1 percent, and
9 that is an increase over the prior year,
10 but lower than the leave usage two years
11 ago in FY20 2Q. So year-to-date is
12 about 8 percent higher. When we're
13 thinking about December, it will be
14 really interesting when we look at the
15 third quarter, Omicron and the impacts
16 there and what that did for folks being
17 out.

18 There are still areas of
19 ongoing concern with some of our public-
20 facing agencies with Streets -
21 Sanitation, Sheriff, Police - Uniform
22 and Prison staff due to the impacts of
23 COVID-19 on employee's personal health
24 and to care for children and family
25 members and quarantine and isolation

1 requirements. And so, you can see that
2 our highest areas as I just mentioned
3 concentrated Police, Prisons, but then
4 some of our lowest areas are in some of
5 our independent offices, District of
6 Attorney, Register of Wills.

7 As I was saying, the number of
8 people available to perform work is
9 really driven also by how many positions
10 are filled. Also, this is a topic not
11 just locally in City government, but
12 nationally and globally in terms of
13 hiring and filling positions. But you
14 can see here that as of the end of
15 December, the number of filled positions
16 we have was about 4300 individuals less
17 than we were budgeted for. And you're
18 seeing that we are also having just a
19 decrease in terms of how many were
20 filled at the end of FY21, so over six
21 months as well as the nearly 4 percent
22 decrease compared to this time last
23 year. 815 of those are in our General
24 Fund, so a real concentration there, 80
25 percent in the General Fund.

1 And so, from there obviously
2 how many folks we have available to work
3 can really impact the quality of
4 services delivered. So even despite
5 being lower in the number of filled
6 positions, we are finding that 78 out of
7 109 performance measures reported in the
8 Quarterly City Manager's Report are on
9 track. There are a couple that lag a
10 quarter and some that don't get reported
11 right away. We do still have a bit less
12 than a third that are not on track. And
13 so, I'll go a little deeper to give you
14 a sense of where things are going as
15 expected and where we're falling short.

16 To start with just to give you
17 an overview, we present -- actually the
18 Budget Office collects over 500
19 performance measures. Many are in or
20 all of them are in our Five Year Plan,
21 and some of them we present quarterly
22 across Public Safety, Health and Human
23 Services, Commerce, Finance, Children
24 and Family Services, Transportation &
25 Infrastructure, Operational Support.

1 And so, I wanted to talk to you
2 about some things that are on track,
3 going as expected. Licenses and
4 Inspections, the number of building,
5 electrical, plumbing and zoning permits
6 issued, they're targeting 53,000 for the
7 year. We're over 25,000 at the end of
8 the December, expecting that we will
9 meet that target.

10 For some of these, it's
11 important to know that there is some
12 seasonality. And so, even if we're not
13 50 percent there or halfway through the
14 year, there are times where folks can
15 say we're still on track to get the
16 total amount we need. Additionally, the
17 Office of Homeless Services is providing
18 homeless prevention assistance so far to
19 over 727 households. They're expecting
20 that they will meet or exceed their 1400
21 household target for this year.

22 And I mentioned, there are some
23 areas where our operations are not
24 meeting our expectations or our targets
25 for those performance measures. In the

1 area of on-time trash collection, we're
2 at 68 percent, which is a significant
3 improvement over where we were this time
4 last year, but still below where we were
5 prepandemic at our new goal of 70
6 percent, so still some movement there.

7 The Free Library has seen real
8 variation in participation of their
9 programming. And so, their team program
10 attendance, their target at 38,000 for
11 the year. But so far this year, they've
12 just had about over 5,000 attendees and
13 that's actually trailing where we were
14 last year, so some interesting things to
15 check out there.

16 Going back to the Streets
17 Department, the recycling rate we're
18 nearly hitting our 10 percent goal but
19 we are not quite there yet at 9.4
20 percent. Again, tremendous improvement
21 compared to where we were last year, but
22 still not where we were in the last full
23 prepandemic year at 14.1 for our
24 recycling rate. And so, we're seeing
25 basically across Streets Department

1 improvement, but not full recovery yet.

2 So that's our performance.

3 We also, you know, the QCMR

4 goes through December. We do those

5 quarterly, but we're also on a monthly

6 basis looking at our spending seeing

7 where we are to make sure we are on

8 track. And so, at this point through

9 February about two-thirds of the year

10 has elapsed, 66.7 percent. Luckily,

11 some of our spending overall we are

12 still just at under 58 percent. So

13 there's a lot of seasonality, and I'll

14 talk through in a moment what some of

15 those are, but there's no major red

16 flags here in terms of where we might

17 end up here. Obviously, path of the

18 virus, giant blizzards, all sorts of

19 things can affect us in the back-end of

20 the year, but at least so far where we

21 are it's looking pretty stable.

22 And so, what this slide here is

23 presenting is across all classes, all of

24 the spending to date. So the dotted

25 line is showing that 66 percent, that

1 all departments spent in an even clip
2 throughout the year, that's what you
3 would expect to see. But you do see
4 some real variation here that some are
5 spending beneath, some may be a little
6 ahead and there's been a seasonality. A
7 good example of this is the Department
8 of Human Services, they transfer in
9 expenses back and forth from grants, and
10 it doesn't necessarily line up from when
11 the dollars are expended. You'll see
12 things like the City Commissioners, they
13 have real seasonality around when
14 elections can occur, so that can affect
15 this.

16 So this is across all classes,
17 and you can again see this as we focus
18 in on Class 100, which really should
19 queue a bit closer to being 66 percent
20 with two-thirds of the year of a lapse,
21 but again this is where you will see
22 some of those seasonal variations. City
23 Commissioners, again low. Things like
24 Finance, which I believe here looks like
25 the lowest, but keeping in mind that our

1 Class 100 in Finance includes pension
2 payments, also the medical benefits, so
3 those don't go out at an even clip.

4 But so as we look at this, we
5 see that our spending is basically where
6 we would expect it to be given where we
7 are in the fiscal year. So that
8 concludes our presentation. We're happy
9 to take any questions you have. Thank
10 you very much.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you. I
12 just want to recognize the presence of
13 Councilmember Cindy Bass and
14 Councilmember Helen Gym. Thank you both
15 for joining.

16 I think we're going to go to
17 Harvey Rice for his presentation, and
18 then we'll come back to you for
19 questions for the whole panel.

20 So, Harvey, take it away.

21 MS. RICE: Good morning,
22 Chairperson Domb and members of the City
23 Council Fiscal Stability and
24 Intergovernmental Cooperation Committee.
25 As you know, my name is Harvey Rice.

1 I'm the Executive Director of PICA, the
2 state oversight agency for the City of
3 Philadelphia. We didn't prepare a
4 PowerPoint because it's generally very
5 similar to what the City prepares. So
6 I'm just going to go over some
7 highlights of not only the QCMR, but
8 some revenue projections and actuals
9 that we've seen coming in so far this
10 year.

11 FY21, the year-end fund balance
12 is estimated at 298 million, almost 220
13 million higher than what was previously
14 projected of 78.7 million. This was
15 primarily due to a higher revenue of 140
16 million and lower obligations of 201
17 million in Fiscal Year 2021.

18 As Rob and Marisa mentioned,
19 the projected fund balance for '22,
20 Fiscal Year '22, is 133.7 million,
21 slightly lower than what was projected
22 in the revised plan, which was issued on
23 October 29th. This represents as Rob
24 said, 2.5 percent of total obligations
25 or about a week's worth of expenses,

1 which is far less than the City's own
2 target of 6.8 percent and the GFOA's
3 recommended target of 17 percent of
4 obligations.

5 The projected revenues of the
6 City are now 5.184 billion or 104.3
7 million higher than what was projected
8 in the revised Five Year Plan of
9 October. The projected obligations are
10 currently 5.372 billion or 24 million
11 higher than what was projected in the
12 revised Five Year Plan.

13 The projected overtime costs
14 are now 198.8 million, an increase of
15 13.4 million over the City's first
16 quarter projection. This is due
17 primarily to the increase and overtime
18 spending in three departments, Police,
19 Prisons and Streets. Through January
20 '22, the City has spent 120.6 million or
21 over 60 percent of their allocation for
22 overtime for this fiscal year.

23 Going into tax revenue
24 collections, through February 2022 the
25 City has collected tax revenue of a

1 little over \$2 billion as compared to
2 the adjusted 2021 total of 1.752 billion
3 collected through February 2021. This
4 was an increase of 257.8 million or
5 about a little less than 15 percent. If
6 compared to Fiscal Year '20, a total of
7 1.375 billion collected through February
8 2020. There is an increase of 634.1
9 million or 46.1 percent, but we need to
10 understand why that percent is high
11 during that -- in Fiscal Year 2020,
12 there was the 1 percent incentive for
13 people to pay their real estate taxes
14 early, which is February 28th of that
15 year. So that's what carried the
16 revenue collections, we believe, high in
17 that year at that time.

18 Through February 2022 every tax
19 revenue category saw year-to-year date
20 increases over '21. The City's portion
21 of wage and earnings and net profits tax
22 increased by 32.3 million or 3.2
23 percent. The Business Income Receipts
24 Tax increased by 62.2 million or 46.9.
25 Real estate increased by 7 million or

1 4.1 percent. Realty transfer increased
2 by 78.6 million or 36.3 percent, and
3 City sales tax increased 26.7 million or
4 19.5 percent. The year-to-date parking
5 and amusement taxes also increased
6 considerably driven by strong monthly
7 collections increases.

8 As Marisa just pointed out,
9 through February 2022 the City has
10 obligated over 3.048 billion or 56.7
11 percent at their \$5.4 billion budget.
12 The City's 12 largest departments
13 accounted for 87 percent of that total
14 obligations. Thank you for allowing me
15 to testify, and I'm here to answer any
16 questions that you or the Committee may
17 have.

18 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
19 Mr. Rice. And I have a couple of
20 questions.

21 And I also want to recognize
22 Councilmember Katherine Gilmore
23 Richardson who has joined us. Good
24 morning and thanks for being here.

25 Let's start off with I think,

1 Rob, you had that first chart that
2 showed revenues and expenses. It was
3 one of the first charts. I just want to
4 take another look at that to make sure I
5 understand. Can we pull that one up?
6 Yeah, that's it. That's the one.

7 I want to make sure I
8 understand what we're saying here. It
9 says in the budget, 104 million higher
10 than the target budget and 24 million
11 more than the target budget on expenses.
12 Does that mean there's an \$84 million
13 delta in revenue?

14 MR. DUBOW: It means that the
15 amount by which revenues were higher
16 than budget is 80 million higher than
17 the amount by which expenses are in the
18 target budget. I think that's what
19 you're asking.

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So it's good
21 news actually that we're 80 million
22 ahead than what we expected basically?

23 MR. DUBOW: Than target budget.
24 So, yeah, I think there's mixed news
25 here in that we're showing the fund

1 balance is really the number that we
2 look on. And as Harvey said, that's
3 right around where the fund balance was
4 in the revised Five Year Plan. And so,
5 that's good. Obviously, there's still
6 lots of uncertainties and lots of
7 threats, so we still have a lot of
8 concern.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Right. When
10 the target budget was done, that was
11 prior to that spike that occurred at the
12 end of December and January, wasn't it?

13 MR. DUBOW: Yes.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Do these
15 numbers reflect what occurred in January
16 and February?

17 MS. WAXMAN: So, no, these are
18 through December, our collections. And
19 the increase in revenues, a good chunk
20 of that comes from a strong wage tax,
21 which on the one hand yay, great. But
22 we still are not putting on our party
23 hats because our concern is that there
24 still will be significant refund
25 requests at the end of the year from

1 commuters.

2 Our sort of senses -- we're
3 getting a sense of what employers are
4 choosing to do. Rather than them try
5 and guess as we go through different
6 variants and closures and open and
7 close, we think a significant number of
8 them are continuing to withhold as if
9 the employees are 100 percent of the
10 time in Philadelphia. But when they are
11 not, they will then be entitled to a
12 refund later.

13 And so, there's still some
14 uncertainty that the strong collections
15 we're seeing right now will be reduced
16 once folks start filing for refunds
17 later. As we get into this tax season,
18 we'll learn a bit more about Calendar
19 Year 2021, so there will be more
20 information over time, but there's
21 really still uncertainty with that wage
22 tax that even though it was going
23 gangbusters through December, what that
24 will actually pan out to be could be
25 different.

1 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So is the
2 story here that I think you're trying to
3 share with us is that the revenues are
4 generally okay, the expenses are
5 generally okay, but our big deficiency
6 is fund balance?

7 MR. DUBOW: Well, two things.
8 One, I think there's still -- as Marisa
9 said, there's still uncertainty around
10 the wage tax because of the refunds and,
11 yes, our fund balance is lower than
12 where it should be.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. I have
14 a question on the collection rates. And
15 I know that it's probably for
16 Commissioner Breslin. I know we dropped
17 a lot of enforcement mechanisms during
18 the pandemic. But I was wondering what
19 we're doing right now to bring that back
20 online. And maybe the Commissioner can
21 comment to all of us. I know he did a
22 really good job on what the collection
23 rates were prior to the pandemic, and
24 then give us some idea what they are
25 today and what we are planning to do to

1 ramp them back up again.

2 COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: Sure.

3 Frank Breslin, Revenue Commissioner. As
4 you said correctly, really during the
5 pandemic the Department focused on
6 recovery and making payment agreements
7 and putting programs together,
8 assistance programs to help businesses
9 and taxpayers during the pandemic and
10 part of that curtailing most enforcement
11 efforts.

12 We have since started to resume
13 enforcement. It's been gradual, but
14 we're getting to the point where we're
15 almost to full enforcement or we'll be
16 towards the end of this fiscal year, but
17 we're still keeping the support
18 mechanisms there, payment agreements and
19 making it easy for taxpayers to get into
20 compliance.

21 With everything that was going
22 on, the pandemic as well as our
23 curtailing of enforcement, our
24 collection rates in some taxes have
25 reduced slightly and we're seeing an

1 increase in delinquency. The real
2 estate tax, the one that we track the
3 most closely and as you know our
4 collection rate, has been around 96
5 percent. That has stayed relatively
6 secure. So even without enforcement,
7 that has stayed pretty much at 96
8 percent. We have seen some increase in
9 delinquencies there too, and we're
10 seeing that across our business taxes
11 which would be expected as many
12 businesses were significantly impacted
13 by the pandemic.

14 And as we institute our
15 enforcement measures, I think you'll
16 start to see those collection rates
17 improve, but it will be gradual because
18 many businesses will require payment
19 agreements to come into compliance so
20 that gets them on track, but gradually.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: That's great.
22 And by the way, I remember maybe six or
23 seven years ago the collection rates
24 were dramatically lower than where they
25 were in '18 and '19 and even today, so

1 that's kudos to you and your department
2 really.

3 COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: Thank
4 you. We're very proud of the great
5 progress that we've made. The pandemic
6 set us back a little bit. But I think
7 we're in a good spot to get back on
8 track.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Do you think
10 there's a realistic goal for our
11 expectations on collections? Is it 96,
12 97, 98? What do you think that number
13 should be?

14 COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: Well,
15 we've been pretty much staying around 96
16 to 97 percent. So like I said, we've
17 slipped a little bit there and would
18 like to get us back to above 96 percent.
19 And I think that's achievable hopefully
20 I'll say next fiscal year.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: All right.
22 Okay. Thank you. Keep up the good
23 work. And again, thank you to you and
24 your department. It's great.

25 COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: Thank

1 you.

2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I got a
3 question on the ARP dollars. I want to
4 get an idea of how much in ARP dollars
5 we're spending in Fiscal Year '22 and
6 how does that compare maybe to future
7 years?

8 MR. DUBOW: So in FY22 we are
9 projecting we'll spend about \$250
10 million in ARP money. And our ARP
11 spending will likely gradually increase
12 slightly each year until we get to FY25,
13 by which we have to spend all the money.
14 And we will have had all 1.4 billion
15 spent by that time, by December of '24.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Is the
17 majority of the ARP 1.4 billion over the
18 period of time being used for revenue
19 replacement?

20 MR. DUBOW: Yes, it is. When
21 we projected the impact on our Five Year
22 Plan of the pandemic, it was a \$1.5
23 billion hit. So the 1.4 billion was an
24 amazing lifeline, but it didn't even
25 replace all of what we thought we were

1 losing.

2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Right. And
3 is there any possibility that we would
4 reconsider and invest the money in what
5 we thought could be productive to expand
6 our base versus just using it for
7 revenue replacement?

8 MR. DUBOW: So what we want to
9 be careful of is making sure as we look
10 out over five years into our Five Year
11 Plan that we maintain balance even in
12 the back years after the dollars are
13 gone. So you don't want to make the
14 investment upfront and then three years
15 later have to make cuts because we
16 didn't replace revenue that was being
17 lost.

18 COUNCILMAN DOMB: No, I'm
19 talking about using the money to
20 actually expand the base, which you
21 could interpret many different ways.
22 But I'm saying instead of just using it
23 for revenue replacement in the four or
24 five years from now, using it to figure
25 out a way that we can expand the

1 tax-paying base and bring more people
2 and business into the City.

3 MR. DUBOW: Yeah. So a part of
4 replacing lost revenue means that we can
5 do things like open back up Parks & Rec
6 centers, open up libraries, improve the
7 services we provide, improve our
8 investment in economic stimulus and the
9 things that the Commerce Department
10 does, so they're all part of actually
11 trying to expand the base. So without
12 this money, we wouldn't be able to make
13 the kind of investments that we're
14 making in our Five Year Plan, and it's
15 really likely that the base would have
16 actually contracted.

17 I see Marisa lit up, so I see
18 she probably wants to add something to
19 that.

20 MS. WAXMAN: (Shakes head).

21 MR. DUBOW: No, okay.

22 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. I hear
23 you. I'm not saying I agree, but I hear
24 you. I have some questions on the
25 performance. We all hear about trash

1 and picking up trash in the streets and
2 so forth. Our current performance level
3 I think Marisa showed it was 68 percent
4 versus two years ago it was 81 percent.

5 What are we doing to increase
6 that dramatically even to get to 90
7 percent? Do we have a plan to do that?

8 MS. WAXMAN: Yeah. So the
9 Streets Department has been working
10 really hard to look at staffing up.
11 We've approved a number of just having
12 enough people there to do the work and
13 how they're scheduling. And so, that's
14 really how they're attacking this.
15 Obviously, a reduction in the volume of
16 trash would help as well. There's
17 always unexpected weather events. Those
18 are challenging, but really the
19 concerted effort has been around
20 staffing and shift scheduling so that
21 they can assure that they have adequate
22 folks there.

23 Another thing that's really
24 important to maintain for on-time trash
25 pickup, making sure that fleet is

1 adequately resourced because you need a
2 truck to go get the trash. And so,
3 there are folks who still shutter when
4 they talk about the compactor crisis of
5 2013, so making sure that we have
6 adequate staff and parts so that they
7 can keep those vehicles on the street is
8 really an important part of that.

9 Obviously, some crunch on that
10 in the past couple of weeks, fuel
11 prices, things like that are going to be
12 impacting budgets. But Streets is
13 looking at the staffing piece and
14 maintaining the fleet piece so that they
15 have the equipment ready is really the
16 approach there.

17 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I'm just
18 mentioning it because we all hear that
19 the basic services is what we need to
20 improve on, including public safety is
21 number one. But trash and picking up
22 the trash is right up there, so is
23 schools and other things. But that's
24 really a key component, if we can get
25 that trash pickup to 90 percent, that

1 will be a big improvement I believe. I
2 don't know if they have a plan, but I
3 would like to see a plan of how they're
4 going to get there if we can get a copy
5 of it.

6 I'm trying to figure out why
7 are the libraries so underutilized,
8 especially since last year. The drop is
9 so dramatic. Why would that be?

10 MS. WAXMAN: So I think some of
11 it shifts back and forth from online
12 programming to inperson programming,
13 changes in school schedules and remote
14 learning. Because what I put up there
15 was the teen program, so I think that
16 there has just been not enough
17 consistency for them to build programs.
18 And we can certainly go back to the
19 library and ask for a bit more
20 information. But there's been real
21 changes in just people's patterns and
22 where they're spending their time.

23 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So I'd like
24 to ask the Library for a plan on how
25 they plan on going forward programming

1 in the libraries to --

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

3 Mr. Chairman.

4 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Yes.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

6 Mr. Chairman, point of information I

7 would just like to bring up around the

8 libraries. As the Chair of the

9 Committee under which the libraries

10 fall, the libraries as we all know have

11 been woefully underfunded for a very

12 long time.

13 And during the pandemic, the

14 libraries for the most part when we talk

15 about usage have overall really just

16 been closed. Most of our libraries have

17 been closed and they have not had the

18 level of staffing and been open on any

19 level to provide any level of consistent

20 opportunities for folks to be able to

21 use them. So I really just wanted to

22 add that. I have no doubt that

23 Ms. Waxman's comments are accurate, but

24 there's also a Part 2 to that.

25 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,

1 Councilmember Bass. That's important.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,
3 Mr. Chairman.

4 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.
5 Okay. I have a few more questions, but
6 I want to recognize my colleagues. And
7 let me start with Councilmember Sanchez
8 who has a question.

9 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:
10 Good morning. Thank you, Mr. Chair, for
11 the opportunity.

12 I want to go back to the
13 operational department with the overtime
14 challenges, and we can use Streets
15 Department. The Chairman was speaking
16 to that as an example. I want to be
17 real clear because this is one of the
18 line items that all of us have been
19 critical about, and I want to make sure
20 we can explain, particularly with the
21 staffing shortages, right, because I
22 want to make sure we're funding
23 departments adequately and then when
24 we're calculating their overtime, we're
25 saying the overtime, they're not fully

1 staffed because there's a staffing
2 crisis or is the overtime related to us
3 not properly funding them from the
4 beginning.

5 So can we drill down on that a
6 little bit. Is this just a staffing
7 issue or is this an initial funding
8 issue?

9 MS. WAXMAN: So how I would
10 start that question is that, one, in
11 some places overtime is --

12 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Mr. Chair.
13 I'm sorry, Mr. Chair. This is
14 Councilmember Thomas. I'm so sorry to
15 interrupt, but I am following along
16 closely. Can that slide be pulled up so
17 I can understand exactly what
18 Councilmember Sanchez is asking because
19 I too want to hear the answer. I
20 apologize.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: No problem.
22 Thank you, Councilmember.

23 MS. WAXMAN: So I will pull up
24 here the slide we have on overtime. And
25 so, again to recap actually our overtime

1 this quarter and year-to-date is below
2 where it was last year. So we have been
3 reducing the amount of overtime compared
4 to where we were. Generally, we review
5 overtime as a pool. Sometimes it is the
6 best tool for the job. Sometimes it is
7 sort of our last resort to deliver
8 needed services. And so, we monitor it
9 and it looks different in different
10 places.

11 In departments that have 24/7
12 365 operations where they must be
13 minimum coverage, you can't just do it
14 next week when somebody gets back from
15 vacation, that's a place where it is
16 core to service delivery. There's other
17 times where we simply look at if we're
18 trying to provide X amount of service,
19 does it make more sense to hire more
20 people to contract something out, to
21 make a technological investment. And
22 there are times when we evaluate and
23 overtime is the best option we have.
24 And then also right now where there are
25 periods where we have kind of a number

1 of vacancies where we just are simply
2 relying on it to get the job done.

3 And so, as the Councilmember
4 was asking is this an issue where we
5 didn't fund them enough and then if we
6 didn't give them enough positions and
7 then they're forced into overtime,
8 that's not great. There's other times
9 where we budget that in or they've
10 budgeted to fill the positions, they
11 have a number of vacancies, but because
12 of timing like recruitment and how
13 classes go in and how many folks make it
14 through that process, the money is there
15 for the straight time for the new
16 employees. But if the positions aren't
17 filled, we use the budget.

18 So I think it would probably
19 make sense if there are specific
20 departments we can go back and look. We
21 know for example the Fire Department, in
22 order for them to have 0 overtime, they
23 would need to be fully staffed with 3300
24 employees. But given how many people
25 can get through the academy, given the

1 nature, we know that we can't fund that
2 and boom, overnight. And so, what we do
3 is we build into their budget, as we
4 work towards that staffing, adequate
5 money for the overtime.

6 So it does vary department by
7 department. Some of are fully funded
8 for all of their staff and money is not
9 the problem. There's other places where
10 they're not fully funded, but the
11 challenge is getting folks onboard, so
12 even if they had the money, they
13 wouldn't be able to do it. If there's
14 specific places where money would solve
15 the problem, get people onboard, reduce
16 the overtime, those are things we really
17 try to make sure are adequately funded
18 from the jump.

19 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:

20 So, Marisa, one of the things,
21 particularly with the Streets
22 Department, under COVID the sanitation
23 and our trash situation has changed
24 drastically, right. People are
25 incredibly frustrated around the level

1 of dumping, and I know our Streets
2 Department staff works incredibly hard
3 because I know how they respond or
4 attempt to respond in districts like
5 mine. Because people are doing more
6 home deliveries, all of that, the other
7 stuff, our trash situation has changed.

8 And what I'd like to see, and
9 particularly when we get to the budget
10 discussion, to make sure that we have
11 adequately shifted and funded the
12 Department outside of the staffing
13 challenges that we see across the board
14 because we can have the same discussion
15 around L&I, right, not fully staffed,
16 don't have the overtime, but permits are
17 still high and inspection requirements
18 are still high.

19 But on the trashing stuff, what
20 are the COVID changes related to these
21 departments and how are we responding to
22 them? On every block, there's 10 Amazon
23 deliveries that add to our disposal
24 situation. How are you making sure
25 we're funding for that because that's

1 one of the biggest levels of
2 restoration? So what has changed given
3 that this is kind of the new norm and
4 all of these deliveries are happening?

5 MS. WAXMAN: So I will say
6 Streets has been hiring and they've been
7 approved for bringing folks on, temps
8 when they needed those, bringing on
9 additional laborers to make sure they're
10 staffed. Looking at their shifts,
11 looking at a number of different
12 policies. I don't have all of the
13 details, but it is something I'm
14 certainly happy to go back to Streets to
15 get more information because they have
16 been attacking this.

17 Additionally, simply making
18 sure that they're funded in the waste
19 disposal budget and that also is a real
20 pressure on us. As the volume in tons
21 go up, we pay per ton for trash
22 disposal. So that's another pressure
23 that needs to be funded unless we can
24 just sort of stop getting stuff. So
25 we're looking at both the operational

1 and the staff and the Class 100, but
2 also we spend a significant amount on
3 the waste disposal, and that's purely
4 based on the tonnage.

5 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:

6 Well, we're going to be looking for
7 that. I know it's not zero-based
8 budgeting, but I think COVID has changed
9 how some departments had to operate and
10 are going continue to operate because of
11 changed behavior. And again,
12 notwithstanding staffing crises across
13 the board, and we'll have that
14 discussion when we talk about the
15 personnel office and what we're doing
16 there because it is unacceptable that we
17 continue to budget for jobs and they
18 don't have the capacity to process.

19 But let's speak to, for
20 instance, L&I. You spoke about they
21 were in line for permitting. The same
22 could be said for L&I as construction
23 has remained high and their ability to
24 get off the ground. What, if anything,
25 are we doing differently right now to

1 help them meet the need, right? The
2 permitting activity demonstrates the
3 need for more staffing. What are we
4 doing to bridge that gap?

5 MS. WAXMAN: In the FY22
6 budget, one of the elements there was
7 increasing funding and partnerships with
8 CCP to get more inspectors on so that we
9 could get the staff and also really
10 develop pipelines, so that is helping
11 fill stuff in. Additionally, when I
12 talked about the different ways that we
13 can provide service, and sometimes it's
14 overtime, sometimes it's straight time,
15 sometimes it's technology investment,
16 the investments in eCLIPSE have been
17 really impactful because they let the
18 folks that can do something quickly
19 online get that done, so that frees up
20 existing staff for the folks who need a
21 different type of service or more manual
22 individual care.

23 And so, technology investments,
24 the creating better pipeline so that we
25 have staff, but really in this market

1 where real estate and all sort of allied
2 professions has continued to thrive
3 compared to a number of others, the
4 tracking staff is going to be a
5 challenge for a number of positions that
6 they have.

7 So we continue to look at that,
8 look at the overall market and try and
9 understand what are the different ways
10 that we can do this through staffing,
11 through technology investments, through
12 changing how things work. So that is
13 something L&I has really been looking at
14 so that we can keep up.

15 And there's also -- as you
16 know, the changes with the 10-year tax
17 abatement, the implementation of the
18 construction and impact tax are changing
19 behaviors in the market and creating
20 sort of spikes in activity as folks were
21 looking to do that towards the end of
22 the year.

23 And so, we'll really be looking
24 to see how much of that volume of
25 activity is like a new normal and

1 sustained versus how much was just a
2 time shift in a spike. And so, there's
3 a lot of looking at what can we inspect.
4 Is the second quarter of FY22, is that
5 abnormal or is that a new normal, and
6 that's something we'll continue to
7 monitor so that operations can adjust to
8 that.

9 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:

10 Okay. Well, again we'll look forward to
11 that conversation around adapting to the
12 new behavior. I know that December was
13 crazy for the Department of L&I. I know
14 they did the best they could to make
15 those abatement deadlines, and eCLIPSE
16 has been very helpful. But what is
17 going on, on the ground is more
18 activity.

19 One of the spikes that we're
20 getting is complaint-driven around
21 construction sites, you know, damage to
22 properties, info work and some of the
23 traditional service deliveries. So on
24 the one hand, we're getting
25 efficiencies, how are we redeploying

1 staff, do we still have enough staff on
2 the other end to respond, again to the
3 basic services request where we're
4 getting spikes to do that kind of
5 request for service, so we'll look
6 forward to that conversation.

7 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

8 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you --

9 MR. RICE: Mr. Councilperson
10 Domb, can I add and --

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Sure.

12 Absolutely.

13 MR. RICE: -- go back to the
14 Streets question that the Councilwoman
15 asked. At the end of the second quarter
16 which was the end of September 2021, the
17 staffing level of Streets was 98.6
18 percent, so that's the staffing level
19 compared to their overtime.

20 But you also have to look at
21 their leave usage. And their leave
22 usage was pretty high. It was almost 20
23 percent. That's due to the nature of
24 their work, one, COVID and the increase
25 of trash pickup, the tonnage of trash

1 that they had to pick up causing a
2 larger sick leave in that department.

3 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:

4 No, I totally agree. I just think we
5 have a lot more dumping going on that
6 is, you know, the impact of that dumping
7 has to really be analyzed around the
8 work we do. And that's why I was asking
9 about tonnage, right.

10 Again, we have an incredible
11 increase of tonnage as people stayed
12 home. And so, that may become something
13 that we have to budget better for as we
14 move in the future, as we'll have some
15 hybrid working. So I totally agree with
16 you. So that's why I'm asking.

17 What I don't want to see is us
18 complain about a department's overtime
19 if we're not giving them the money on
20 the front end for what our new needs are
21 and then managing the overtime based on
22 that. That is one of the most difficult
23 jobs that a department has hit
24 incredibly through COVID.

25 So I want to have and I

1 appreciate, Harvey, you putting that in
2 context around the leave based on COVID
3 outbreaks that were in the department,
4 but also the increased state of need on
5 the backend. I just think that we're
6 going to have to spend some time on the
7 Streets Department because it's the one
8 that is the most frustrating for people,
9 but there's a behavioral science to
10 this, right, where do they dump, all of
11 this dumping that we need to find on the
12 front end.

13 So thank you very much,
14 Mr. Chair.

15 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
16 Councilmember Sanchez. Very good
17 pointed questions you raised, really
18 adapting to the new world, so thank you.

19 I want to recognize
20 Councilmember Kathy Gilmore Richardson.

21 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE
22 RICHARDSON: Good morning, Mr. Chair and
23 good morning, colleagues. And thank you
24 so very much for this hearing. I just
25 wanted to circle back to a few things I

1 heard during the testimony. And I will
2 start with where Councilmember Sanchez
3 has left off because I think this is a
4 really important issue that we really
5 need to have a whole governmental
6 approach around resolving and preparing
7 for what our new normal will look like,
8 not just with trash recollection, but
9 also with our staffing levels. As we
10 know, a number of companies across the
11 world continue to struggle with
12 staffing.

13 And so, I wanted to start
14 where, Marisa, you left off. And you
15 had mentioned what would help will be a
16 reduction in getting into our waste
17 stream. But what I wanted to talk about
18 is how you all are thinking from a City
19 government perspective of a circular
20 economy strategy around waste reduction,
21 you know, around our materials used,
22 redesigning of materials to be less
23 resource-intensive, and just how we are
24 thinking about a circular economy
25 strategy as a whole and supporting those

1 efforts from a government perspective,
2 because we are not going to magically
3 get a reduction in our waste stream out
4 of nowhere, particularly to Councilwoman
5 Sanchez's point around all of the
6 deliveries during COVID and continuing
7 mixed with the staffing challenges we
8 have.

9 So how are you all thinking
10 about a true circular economy strategy
11 for the City of Philadelphia and how are
12 you supporting those efforts externally?

13 MS. WAXMAN: So I think
14 certainly I would probably really want
15 to bring in my colleagues from
16 Sustainability, from Commerce looking at
17 the different ways we are linking sort
18 of all of the work we are doing around
19 sustainability and the environment with
20 our economic development efforts and
21 seeing how that will work. But
22 obviously, with the plastic bag ban,
23 there are a lot of public sector
24 interventions that have been made and
25 can continue to be made.

1 And so, both sort of attacking
2 it from sort of that root problem of
3 where does the trash come from as well
4 as do we have a good plan to manage it.
5 You saw that our recycling rate is
6 getting closer to what our target was.
7 Just missed that by a bit this past
8 quarter. So I think that all of that is
9 happening together. I don't have a ton
10 of specifics, but I will be happy to go
11 back to my colleagues and get more
12 information for you.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

14 RICHARDSON: Sure. Well, I'll
15 definitely be talking about that during
16 the budget process obviously, but I just
17 wanted to bring that up because we won't
18 magically see a reduction in our waste
19 stream without targeted interventions,
20 whole government approach to what that
21 reduction could look like for
22 Philadelphia, and that's something that
23 we will have to lead.

24 I mean, even at the U.S. EPA
25 they are talking about a circular

1 economy strategy from an EPA perspective
2 in helping municipalities with this.
3 And so, I think we have to do a better
4 job of thinking about what that
5 reduction looks like on the backend and
6 on the front end, and even around the
7 building decarbonization conversation.
8 We need to figure out how we can get in
9 front of this with multiple departments
10 and agencies, so that was the first
11 thing.

12 And then secondly, I wanted to
13 talk about the Rainy Day Fund. I heard
14 my colleague Councilmember Domb mention
15 I guess the increase in what we have at
16 the end of this year, I guess it was
17 fiscal year relative to how much we have
18 in our Rainy Day Fund based on what we
19 anticipated.

20 Can you just go back to that
21 slide for me and let me know the amount,
22 and then also what the percentage is and
23 how that compares to the GFOA
24 recommended levels for our Rainy Day
25 Fund?

1 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Sure, and
2 that's Slide 3. So we're projecting
3 that the end of FY22 we'll have a fund
4 balance of about \$134 million. In the
5 plan that PICA approved or advised plan,
6 we were showing a fund balance of 133.8
7 million, so it's basically unchanged
8 from the plan that PICA approved in the
9 fall. But --

10 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

11 RICHARDSON: Okay.

12 MR. DUBOW: -- as you can see,
13 it's well below, and that's the column
14 all the way over on the right, if we
15 were looking at the GFOA recommendation,
16 we'd be about 900 million. We know that
17 given all the demands and the services
18 that we really are never going to get up
19 to that level. But before the pandemic,
20 we were at what we've created as our
21 internal target between 6 and 8 percent.
22 So to get to there, we need to be
23 somewhere between about 310 million and
24 415 million, so we need a much larger
25 balance than we have now.

1 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

2 RICHARDSON: Got it. And so, to your
3 point how does that impact or
4 potentially impact our credit rating in
5 the future, because that will be
6 important to our ability just around all
7 of the capital projects and just
8 borrowing in general?

9 MR. DUBOW: Right. Good
10 question. So the rating agencies look
11 at a few things when they look at your
12 ratings. But fund balance one of the
13 most important things, they stress that
14 all the time, that they would like to
15 see a fund balance and really they like
16 to see fund balance more in line with
17 the GFOA level, and there are a number
18 of cities that actually get up to that
19 level.

20 So having a low fund balance is
21 something that when they look at us
22 they'll think, you know, there's a
23 reason that you're the second lowest
24 rated of the top 10 cities. It's
25 because you have a low fund balance.

1 But also, look at things like pensions
2 where, you know, we're showing some real
3 improvement.

4 They also want to know how
5 flexible your spending is and what
6 ability you have to do things like
7 change your revenue stream, control your
8 expenditures. They've always given us
9 pretty good marks on that. So it's a
10 number of things, but a low fund balance
11 is definitely something that raises
12 concerns for them.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

14 RICHARDSON: Okay. I just wanted to
15 bring that up, particularly because for
16 FY22 obviously it's the lowest it has
17 been in quite some time, and you all
18 have done a great job on the pension
19 piece and also with the reduction of
20 expenses through the COVID period, but
21 some of that is more natural than
22 anything else just because of folks
23 having to shelter in place. So I just
24 wanted to call attention to that issue.

25 And lastly, I wanted to talk

1 about the staffing piece overall.
2 Knowing that we have a retirement crisis
3 that we could potentially see from a
4 City government staffing perspective,
5 not just a specific department, but what
6 are you doing overall from OHR civil
7 service strategy to ensure that we have
8 adequate pipelines into these jobs
9 knowing the attrition that we're seeing,
10 because it's everywhere? It's not just
11 Streets and Police and Fire.

12 And I heard you talk about if
13 Fire was fully staffed, you would have
14 to have a certain amount of employees in
15 in order not to have overtime, but
16 that's almost every single department.
17 So what are we doing as an overall
18 staffing readiness plan to ensure that
19 these departments can be fully staffed?

20 We know we have looming
21 retirements. We know how many
22 individuals are in drop. We know we're
23 down a significant number of police
24 officers. So what are we doing to
25 really address that from an overall HR

1 perspective?

2 MS. WAXMAN: So I think as we
3 get closer to the FY23 budget, that is
4 something that we're certainly talking
5 about, thinking about and we'll have
6 more to share then. But there's a
7 couple of different parts to this. Some
8 of this is around recruitment and sort
9 of lowering access on barriers to
10 accessing these jobs.

11 And so, certain things about
12 standing up remote testing and then
13 making that easier so that it is easier
14 to come into our civil service system.
15 OHR has also been working with the
16 Office of Diversity, Equity and
17 Inclusion and specific departments
18 looking at how the testing works, the
19 requirements, so that we make sure that
20 we have a big pool as possible for
21 qualified folks that were not sort of
22 ruling folks out in ways that we don't
23 need to.

24 We're starting to talk a lot
25 more about pipeline and training. I

1 already mentioned some of the work
2 between L&I and CCP. And so, we're
3 looking at how do we get folks in. We
4 also are looking to make sure how do we
5 make sure this is a work environment
6 where folks want to stay, so continuing
7 to look at sort of as we're figuring out
8 the nature of work training and making
9 sure that we can be an employer of
10 choice. And so, we're looking at how do
11 we maintain folks here.

12 In certain areas though, it's
13 going to be very specific to the nature
14 of the work. There are larger trends
15 that aren't just Philadelphia alone.
16 We'll have to continue to work on as I
17 mentioned, you know, competition from
18 the real estate industry versus general
19 changes about folks wanting to go into
20 policing.

21 And so, some of this will have
22 to be looking department by department,
23 but we're looking at a number of ways to
24 make better connections to the folks who
25 want jobs and make sure that it's easier

1 to get in and making sure that that
2 process really doesn't have as many
3 roadblocks as it once did.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE

5 RICHARDSON: Okay. Well, thank you for
6 that response, and I'll circle back on
7 that during budget. But I did want to
8 give a shout-out to OHR for the
9 partnership they did with the School
10 District last week around the trades
11 helper position and looking at the specs
12 for that position to align it with
13 graduates of CTE programs. And I was on
14 that program last week, so they are
15 doing that work. I'm just talking about
16 an overall strategy from an
17 Administration perspective so that we
18 are fully prepared for the needs and to
19 provide quality service for the citizens
20 of Philadelphia.

21 Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

22 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
23 Councilmember Gilmore Richardson, for
24 those questions.

25 And I think there's a point of

1 information from Councilmember Sanchez.

2 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:

3 Yes. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

4 I just wanted to add as you
5 begin to build that city-wide strategy,
6 it'd be very important to go back to OHR
7 and look at how people are being
8 disqualified for some of these jobs.

9 There is a trend. And I'll use the Fire
10 Department as an example where I got a
11 lot of complaints about the drop-off
12 between people passing the test or
13 scoring and going through the process.

14 So I would say to you looking
15 at how we disqualify people to your
16 point around access to barriers and
17 access to the job is a huge one. Having
18 them do a historical context I think
19 will be illuminating about why we don't
20 have the pipeline of employees in all of
21 the departments.

22 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

23 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
24 Councilmember.

25 Can we just go back for a

1 minute to that slide on the fund
2 balance. I'll ask my question while
3 we're going there. Compared to other
4 cities, if we have fixed assets, whether
5 it's PGW or real estate, how do we
6 compare to other cities in our fixed
7 assets value? Of course, maybe we can
8 also see a comparison of our fixed
9 assets less the liabilities that are
10 liened against those assets, what the
11 net value is, how do we compare to other
12 cities in fixed asset value?

13 MR. DUBOW: I have to get back
14 to you on that. I think though that we
15 are probably relatively high. I think
16 we're probably a little more extensive
17 infrastructure than a lot of other
18 cities. I think that's also something
19 that you see in terms of -- and the
20 trade-off we have to make every year
21 between investments in our
22 infrastructure and our fixed costs
23 because we have such a wide array of
24 assets we have a higher amount of
25 infrastructure costs than other places

1 would have.

2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Does the
3 company that values the fund balance
4 take that into account that while we may
5 not have the cash reserves, we have
6 positive balances on our fixed assets?

7 MR. DUBOW: Today we look at it
8 in two ways. I think that they would
9 look at that as a positive, but also
10 look at it as something that increases
11 our fixed cost, an unavoidable cost, so
12 it will probably go both ways.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank
14 you very much. Maybe you can get back
15 to me on that. I'm just curious to see
16 what the total asset value is less
17 liabilities and net value. Thank you.

18 I think we have the next
19 question from Councilmember Isaiah
20 Thomas.

21 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank you,
22 Mr. Chair.

23 Just a couple clarifying
24 questions, and some of this I might have
25 missed so I do apologize. I know we're

1 talking about Streets right now. I'm
2 wondering outside of the Streets
3 Department, and I know Fire is always on
4 the list, where else did we see a
5 significant amount of spending in
6 overtime?

7 MS. WAXMAN: So let me --

8 MR. RICE: We see it in Prisons
9 and Police.

10 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Now, were
11 there any other areas or were they the
12 main ones that ate up the bulk of the
13 overtime?

14 MS. WAXMAN: In --

15 MR. RICE: The -- go ahead,
16 Marisa.

17 MS. WAXMAN: Oh, I would say in
18 terms of dollars, those are going to be
19 our largest departments in terms of
20 overtime, will be Police, Fire, Prisons
21 and Sanitation. Those will have the
22 largest in terms of dollars.

23 MR. RICE: If you look at even
24 though it's small dollars, and this goes
25 to I think Marisa's point early on,

1 where Records had a significant increase
2 in overtime but that's a good thing
3 because they were so far behind in
4 processing deeds and transfer, realty
5 transfer, that the realty transfer tax
6 was lagging behind, so that as part of
7 their implementation to bring that back
8 up and get that backload filled, part of
9 that was they had employees working
10 overtime, so there's a positive aspect
11 of overtime. Because as I mentioned in
12 my statement that realty transfer tax is
13 coming in very high and part of that is
14 because that department is getting
15 through that backlog.

16 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Are there
17 any other examples of that where we
18 found that producing either more
19 manpower or let's say more dollars in
20 technology have put us in a position
21 where we've generated more revenue? We
22 talked about the illegal dumping in the
23 City. Multiple people have talked about
24 it. Has there been any idea around
25 investing in let's say cameras?

1 I know being the Chair of the
2 Streets Department and talking to the
3 Streets Commissioner the more cameras we
4 get up, the more people we can catch for
5 illegal dumping since it's such a big
6 issue. That's a possible way to
7 generate revenue. Have we explored any
8 other areas where we can say if we spend
9 more money either on technology or
10 manpower it can generate us more
11 revenue?

12 MS. WAXMAN: Yeah, I think
13 there are a lot of our
14 revenue-generating agencies,
15 particularly those technology
16 investments that that either, one, may
17 can find the easiest thing to do. So if
18 you look at eCLIPSE or you look at the
19 new prison system being implemented in
20 the Department of Revenue, what those
21 are designed to do is make compliance
22 what you're supposed to when you're
23 supposed to upfront easier, which then
24 means more dollars in our City pockets
25 generally up earlier --

1 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: How much do
2 you think we've saved from that
3 particular example you've just provided
4 around Prisons? Do we have numbers on
5 this stuff where it's telling us how
6 much we've saved in different areas
7 based on -- even in our L&I Department,
8 which is something that I would love to
9 hear more about as it relates to how we
10 can invest in technology and different
11 means to be able to help, it may cost a
12 little bit on the front end but generate
13 more revenue for the City on the
14 backend.

15 MS. WAXMAN: I can certainly
16 get back to you with some examples. We
17 even have another really good one from
18 the Department of Revenue a couple years
19 back. We invested in a data warehouse
20 and we structured that contract that
21 basically the vendor would get paid a
22 share of our increase in revenues and we
23 tracked that very carefully, so that
24 technology investment not only paid for
25 the upfront investment in the data

1 warehouse, but also generated increased
2 revenues above and beyond that. So I
3 will be happy to get back to you with
4 some areas where we've been able to make
5 those investments to increase revenue
6 collections.

7 COUNCILMAN THOMAS: Thank you.
8 I'm listening to everything that's
9 happening and I'm thinking as
10 constituents view our budget and look at
11 the areas of spending and similar to
12 what our Chair said, we're not
13 necessarily producing the desired
14 outcomes as it relates to those
15 services.

16 So if I'm a constituent and I
17 found out our four biggest areas of
18 spending are where they are, and I think
19 about some of the issues that we have as
20 a municipality, one would question if
21 they're getting the best bang for their
22 buck. So I think it's important that we
23 continue to do a deep dive into what it
24 is that we're doing and how we're
25 spending money and try our best to be as

1 efficient as possible as government.

2 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,

4 Councilmember Thomas. Good question.

5 Thank you.

6 Now, Councilmember Kendra

7 Brooks.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you

9 so much, Councilmember.

10 This is a different question

11 for me. I usually don't have these

12 types of questions. But in relation to

13 all the work we've done around renters

14 and housing, I've received several phone

15 calls and questions from midsize

16 landlords and businesses in reference to

17 fines and fees accumulated over COVID

18 when services weren't available and

19 weren't open.

20 And I was just wondering, you

21 mentioned payment plans as a way to, you

22 know, we want this revenue, we want it

23 to come in, but in order for us to

24 reach, what was the number, 92 or 90

25 percent, 97 percent collections

1 expectations, what is being put in place
2 for those midsize landlords or property
3 owners to make sure they're able to meet
4 that repayment plan? Because when
5 someone called and said they owed the
6 City \$8 million, I think in my world
7 that's a lot of money, and I'm pretty
8 sure in anyone's world. And it wasn't
9 the actually fee. These were
10 accumulated fines over time, some of
11 which were during COVID.

12 So I was wondering what are we
13 doing to make sure that we're able to
14 recoup the money, but also making sure
15 the divestment of those fines are fair
16 to those businesses because so much
17 slack I get is we put so much hardships
18 on businesses, but the reality is this
19 is something that we can remedy and be
20 fair with? So what does that look like?
21 Is there a system to track that or to
22 assist folks that are navigating this
23 currently?

24 MR. DUBOW: I'm going to ask
25 Commissioner Breslin to talk about what

1 kind of programs we have in the Revenue
2 Department to help businesses through
3 this period and what kind of -- to help
4 make sure they're able to pay.

5 COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: Thank
6 you. So, Councilmember, primarily what
7 we're seeing is taxes impacted by COVID
8 where businesses had disruption to their
9 income and fell behind on taxes and
10 we've put payment agreements together to
11 assist them. We've reduced or
12 eliminated in some cases the requirement
13 for a down payment. We have shorter
14 term payment agreements, a one-year kind
15 of COVID payment agreement term where
16 all interest and penalty is abated.

17 We have longer term payment
18 agreements with significant abatement of
19 interest and penalty. And then we're
20 also looking at kind of our consolidated
21 actions where we're looking at taxpayers
22 that have beyond just tax liabilities.
23 They have as you mentioned it could be
24 fines, it could be fees, other charges,
25 L&I charges and we're working kind of in

1 partnership with those departments such
2 as L&I to try to get taxpayers into
3 compliance.

4 So kind of our message has been
5 throughout the pandemic for the last two
6 years to taxpayers and citizens is
7 anyone who is not in compliance, that
8 they should reach out to Revenue and
9 will work with them to try to get them
10 into compliance regardless of what type
11 of debt they have.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you
13 so much.

14 COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: You're
15 welcome.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
17 Councilmember Brooks.

18 I will say that recently -- I
19 don't know if you know about this,
20 Commissioner Breslin -- that
21 Philadelphia has some of the most
22 progressive tax collection policies of
23 any municipality in the country. I
24 guess our goal is to make sure that
25 people know about it so they can enter

1 into those programs, but we have some
2 really good programs.

3 Let's go to Councilmember Helen
4 Gym I think who has a question.

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

7 So I have two areas of
8 questions. I wanted to follow up on
9 Councilmember Bass' questions about the
10 Free Library. And I recognize that the
11 Library isn't here to answer some of
12 these questions, but I'm trying to
13 understand a little bit about how
14 different are we right now from the
15 Library's budget versus, say, FY2019?

16 MS. WAXMAN: I can certainly
17 pull that up. Let me do that. I will
18 say as I am buying time as I scroll
19 through a variety of things, that in
20 addition to just the raw numbers one
21 thing to remember is that certain costs
22 sort of shift and change overtime. For
23 example, over the past few years in the
24 Free Library there were certain costs
25 like rent for their regional operation

1 center that used to be paid for by the
2 Foundation. Those costs then got
3 shifted onto the City starting last
4 year. And then sometimes we move those
5 rental costs.

6 Some may sit in the Free
7 Library's budget. Some of those move
8 over to DPP. So when we're looking to
9 do a full analysis, we can get back to
10 you on some of those shifts. But what I
11 can tell you is that our FY22 current
12 projection for the Free Library is \$45.3
13 million. That's about \$2.3 million more
14 than our original adopted budget folding
15 in the cost of labor contracts as well
16 as the year increases. That's an
17 increase from FY21 where our budget was
18 40 million, so 45 versus 40 last year.

19 It's going to take me another
20 moment of scrolling to get to the FY19
21 actual spending, which was our last
22 prepandemic year. And I don't know,
23 Rob, if you have that handier than I do,
24 but I will get that momentarily -- nope,
25 not there, sorry. My computer is

1 feeling a lit pokey this morning. But I
2 will say that -- let's see, nearly
3 there, nearly there. So for -- oh,
4 shoot, not quite there yet.

5 Apologies. I will be there
6 momentarily. So as I was saying, '22 is
7 45 million, '21 was 40 million. And as
8 I get to FY19, that number was 42
9 million. So actually this year we are
10 going to be about \$3 million more than
11 our actuals in FY19. So we are above
12 where we are obviously, though changes
13 in labor costs, things like that do
14 impact what that gets us. But we are
15 above our funding from where we were in
16 '19.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. So in
18 2019, which is our last prepandemic year
19 and this year, one of the things that
20 I'm sure I share with many of my
21 colleagues is the concern that as we
22 head into the spring and then into the
23 summer, given the fact that we've had so
24 many difficulties with our public
25 schools.

1 One of the areas that we've
2 been looking at is that the School
3 District calls out almost 1,000
4 substitutes a day or has a need for
5 1,000 substitutes a day, which is 30,000
6 children who do not have their regular
7 teacher in front of them on any given
8 day and many of them have not had a
9 regular teacher in front of them for a
10 number of months, so it's a very, very
11 serious issue.

12 And we really need to recognize
13 also that there are only five or six
14 staff librarians in our Philadelphia
15 public schools, maybe less than 20
16 actual functioning libraries that are
17 working in our public schools, and we've
18 got a library system where not a single
19 branch is open on the weekends. In 2019
20 we made a commitment that we would be on
21 a full five-day a week with the intent
22 of going to six days a week and that had
23 a certain kind of set of projected cost.
24 Right now the \$45 million budget for
25 FY23, is that right, or '22?

1 MS. WAXMAN: 45 is FY22. We
2 will be coming out with the FY23 at the
3 end of this month.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So FY22 at
5 45 million keeps us to where less than
6 80 percent of our libraries are five
7 days a week. Now, I recognize that may
8 not entirely be due to the budget. It
9 may, in fact, be to the 88 staffing
10 vacancies that we have in there, but
11 budgeting an aspect of this. And so,
12 our interest is to get our libraries
13 where we are open towards the six days
14 of week. And do you have an estimate on
15 how much that would cost?

16 MS. WAXMAN: That's something I
17 can check on. I do not have that off
18 the top of my head. It's something
19 obviously as we're setting up working on
20 the FY23 budget, looking at what it
21 takes to be open different numbers of
22 days.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: For clarity,
24 I thought that the FY19 budget had a
25 five-day a week with a projection of six

1 days a week, which would have been FY20,
2 the old FY20, maybe not the actual FY20
3 or the revised FY20. So that would
4 be -- my understanding is that it should
5 have been baked into our calculation.
6 So if you could get back to us on that,
7 I think that will be helpful.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GYM:

9 Additionally, I think we have to look at
10 opening the library on at least one, if
11 not, both weekend days for me
12 personally. We're going to have to look
13 at what that takes. I don't think it
14 has to be seven days a week. It could
15 still be at six days a week and maybe
16 one of the days closest during the week,
17 but we're going to have to figure out
18 how to get our libraries open on the
19 weekends. It seems unsustainable the
20 way it currently is. And I think this
21 question -- thank you so much, Marisa.
22 I really appreciate all your work and
23 your thoroughness.

24 My second question is for Rob
25 Dubow, just to put this on the record.

1 Obviously, there's been a lot of back
2 and forth with the Philadelphia Parking
3 Authority. And one of the things that
4 we wanted to get some clarification on
5 was to figure out in FY -- well, I guess
6 this year, right.

7 So it will be FY22 and FY21 --
8 I'm not sure if it was FY21, but FY22
9 they delivered \$0 to the School
10 District, and then they kind of --
11 there's a threshold limit for the City.
12 Can we find out if the Parking Authority
13 ever met its financial obligation to the
14 City of Philadelphia in both FY22 and I
15 guess FY21? I guess FY22 is not done
16 for them yet; is that right --

17 MR. DUBOW: Correct, they're
18 still --

19 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: -- because
20 it's still March?

21 MR. DUBOW: For FY21, I'd have
22 to look at the finals, but I think they
23 came in underneath the caps. The caps
24 are 41 million, and I think they were
25 more like in the 20s, but I need to

1 confirm that.

2 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. That
3 will really be helpful because I think
4 that does matter to us a little bit, so
5 thank you so much. And then I guess my
6 last question is obviously with the
7 transfer of the wage, you know, with the
8 move to work at home, especially for
9 many of the commuting individuals, our
10 current law requires us to only collect
11 wage and income tax if the work being
12 performed I assume, not the job, but the
13 work being performed is physically
14 within the boundaries of the City of
15 Philadelphia; is that the right way to
16 put it?

17 MR. DUBOW: The way to put it I
18 think is that taxpayers who don't live
19 in the City are not required to pay the
20 wage tax if their employer requires them
21 to work from home. If they had the
22 choice of working in the City in their
23 office or at home, they still have to
24 pay the wage tax.

25 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: How does

1 that work with the -- so how does that
2 work with the current guidelines around
3 work from home, like mandates or I guess
4 is that up to companies, that kind of
5 thing?

6 MR. DUBOW: Yes. So if
7 companies make it optional, the tax is
8 still due. If companies require people
9 to work from home, then they don't have
10 to pay a tax.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: How in the
12 world are you figuring this out in an
13 individual taxpayer level, because I
14 think that it's very -- I think a lot of
15 companies are leaving it fairly open,
16 right. The new environment is not to
17 mandate a work in, but to leave it
18 optional. Certainly, that's what we're
19 hearing with a lot of the larger
20 companies. So how are you figuring this
21 out?

22 MR. DUBOW: Yeah, I'll ask
23 Commissioner Breslin to step into that
24 detail so I don't get it wrong.

25 COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: So it's

1 correct, the nonresident is subject to
2 wage tax if they are working in the City
3 or working outside of Philadelphia as
4 required by their employer. And this
5 comes down to policy by the employer.
6 And the way -- most of that is handled
7 by the employer. We start by doing a
8 lot of communication with tax
9 professionals and with the community,
10 and we've done it through our guidance
11 throughout the pandemic about this rule,
12 so we want to make employers
13 knowledgeable about this rule because
14 the burden is at their level. They have
15 to withhold properly. And many of them
16 understand that and withhold at 100
17 percent, and then that's the reason why
18 we see the refund process. Then the
19 employee has to apply for the refund and
20 we would check it.

21 And the way we check it to
22 answer your question is we check it two
23 ways. One way we check is at the
24 employer level. So when we do an audit,
25 we audit the business taxes, one of

1 which is the wage tax. And if they are
2 withholding it less than 100 percent on
3 their nonresidents, then we would ask
4 them for their policy and we would check
5 that policy to make sure that it is
6 requiring employees to work remotely.

7 In the absence of that, we
8 would expect them to be withholding at
9 100 percent. And then the other place
10 we're checking is when employees file
11 for employee wage tax refunds, we're
12 reviewing the refunds and asking for the
13 appropriate documentation. And part of
14 that required documentation with the
15 refund is a letter from the employer
16 stating the employee was required to
17 work remotely or the employer actually
18 has to -- there's a spot where the
19 employer can sign verifying that the
20 refund is appropriate. When they do
21 that, they become responsible if it is
22 incorrect.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. And
24 then have we done any calculation in
25 terms of the growth in wage tax revenue

1 that has gone out to our surrounding
2 counties over the last two years? I
3 mean, it's not really our
4 responsibility, but I'm just curious
5 about whether there's been any
6 analysis -- and I see that Larry's on
7 here from Pew -- to see what the
8 shift-over is into our surrounding
9 counties. Are you aware of any of that,
10 Commissioner Breslin?

11 COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: I don't
12 have anything at hand. I know that
13 there have been different studies about
14 the shift, but I don't have any
15 statistics at hand. I can look to see.
16 And I don't know if anyone else on the
17 call has any information about that.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. I
19 mean, I think it's a point of interest.
20 I do think that there's been -- I would
21 assume that given the massive shift in
22 our budget and wage and income tax
23 revenue that there has been a
24 significant increase, because obviously
25 those individuals now pay the wage and

1 income tax in surrounding counties, so
2 those surrounding counties' budgets I
3 assume have seen some amount of
4 increase. I'm not clear how much, but
5 it would be interesting to see
6 regionally who are the biggest financial
7 beneficiaries in the last two years on a
8 county level, and we should continue to
9 work regionally. I think that that's
10 very important.

11 I think if this pandemic showed
12 us anything, that there is a tremendous
13 amount of regional codependency and
14 co-reliance, however we want to say it,
15 and there might be a potential for us to
16 just be more strategic regionally if we
17 need to think about bigger investments
18 further down the road. So thank you
19 very much, everybody.

20 And thank you, Mr. Chair.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
22 Councilmember Gym.

23 And now, I would like to
24 recognize Councilmember Cindy Bass for a
25 question.

1 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,
2 Mr. Chairman. I think Councilwoman
3 Sanchez might be before me. Did she
4 already go for her point of information?

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Yes, she
6 already went. She's good.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. All
8 right. Sorry, I just didn't want to
9 jump the line here. That can be a
10 problem sometimes.

11 So just a couple of questions
12 that I had. I wanted to go back to
13 Councilwoman Brooks and her question
14 around the accumulation of fines and
15 penalties for a debt in the City of
16 Philadelphia. And I wanted to ask -- I
17 know we talked primarily about
18 businesses, but I wanted to ask about
19 homeowners because as you all may
20 remember some time ago, I introduced a
21 bill calling for the City to offer tax
22 amnesty for homeowners because the rate
23 of interest and penalty that the City
24 applies is just so incredibly heavy,
25 that a lot of homeowners are unable to

1 dig themselves out from underneath that.

2 So I know we talked about
3 businesses. I wanted to know
4 specifically about homeowners, if there
5 is the same sort of resources and
6 programs available that there were for
7 businesses?

8 MR. DUBOW: We have extensive
9 programs for residents, including
10 payment plans that actually offer \$0
11 payment plans, but I'll let the
12 Commissioner give more details on that.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Great.

14 COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: Yes.
15 For homeowners, we probably have one of
16 the most progressive assistance programs
17 in the country. Our Owner-Occupied
18 Payment Agreement plan, and that allows
19 homeowners to get into a tiered
20 agreement, which means they get into an
21 agreement where their payment is based
22 on their income, so it's an affordable
23 payment plan.

24 Actually, in its lowest tier
25 there's actually no payment due and it

1 keeps them in compliance and avoids any
2 type of enforcement, so there's five
3 tiers in. And Tier 4 can be a minimum
4 payment as low as \$25 a month with a
5 full abatement of interests and penalty.

6 And in comparison to amnesty, that's
7 much more forgiving in that for two
8 reasons. One, most amnesty programs
9 require payment in full or a portion of
10 the interest and penalty to be abated.

11 In our case with our OOPA
12 programs there is no down payment
13 required in those tiers, and interest
14 and penalty can be fully abated. So
15 it's a much more liberal plan in terms
16 of meeting taxpayers with a program
17 that's based on their income, and it's
18 much less of a one-size-fits-all
19 program, which amnesty programs tend to
20 be.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And can you
22 talk a little bit about over the course
23 of the pandemic the usage of that
24 program? I don't know if you have any
25 statistics there with you or if you

1 could get some for us, but what's the
2 usage of that program prepandemic versus
3 during the pandemic versus now, if you
4 could sort of give us a sense of how
5 much this has been used?

6 COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: It is
7 frequently used. I don't have numbers
8 in front of me, but we publish an annual
9 OOPA report that shows the annual usage.
10 So I don't have the Fiscal Year 2021 in
11 front of me, but that one is out. And
12 it also does a comparison of prior years
13 so you can see the usage. And we'll be
14 publishing one later this year for
15 Fiscal Year 2022. So we publish that
16 annually with all of the participants.
17 You can see how many applied, how many
18 are in the program from year to year.

19 And one of the most effective
20 ways for us to get the word out about
21 those programs is with our
22 communications work. We're doing as
23 much communication as we can. Most of
24 that is remote throughout the pandemic,
25 but we have resumed inperson

1 appearances, so we're out there and have
2 partnered with Council and community
3 organizations in the past and are
4 excited to say that we're back doing
5 that prepandemic. We were doing in
6 excess of 300 events, inperson events,
7 per year. So that is really an
8 effective way for us to get the message
9 out there and get people enrolled in our
10 assistance programs.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

12 Because I -- well, I'm glad to hear you
13 talk about communications. I haven't
14 heard a lot about the outreach that your
15 office is doing. And I would think that
16 as members of Council, particularly
17 District members, that we would be
18 hearing about these outreach efforts so
19 I don't know if maybe I'm just missing
20 it or maybe if we can talk about ways to
21 make it a little more robust so that we
22 can make sure that the word is getting
23 out to our constituents that we know.

24 In particular, neighborhoods
25 that we know are heavily impacted by tax

1 issues and houses are turning over and
2 gentrification is happening as a result,
3 and there's all kinds of negative things
4 beyond just not paying the taxes and
5 accumulating fines and penalties. It
6 goes much further than that.

7 COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: As I
8 said, we're just starting to resume
9 inperson events and they've been very
10 limited, not our participation, but we
11 know there's been a very reduced number
12 of those events taking place. But we
13 look to get back to the number of events
14 that we had prepandemic when we were
15 really very actively engaged with City
16 Council and all of their events.

17 And over the course of the
18 pandemic, we did a significant amount of
19 outreach through other methods and we
20 had our guidance page up throughout, and
21 that's still up there, our COVID-19 tax
22 guidance, and that informed taxpayers of
23 changes in rules, changes in due dates,
24 how to stay in compliance, and we do a
25 lot of social media work, but we look

1 forward to getting to that inperson
2 work. We know that's the most effective
3 outreach and we'll communicate with your
4 office and other Councilmembers to
5 resume those inperson outreach events
6 with you.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. And
8 are there specific programs for seniors?

9 COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: There
10 are. Obviously, they can participate in
11 OOPA, but we also have the Senior Tax
12 Freeze program, which is a really
13 important program. That will freeze
14 their taxes at the current level, also
15 freezes their assessed value so that's a
16 very, valuable program. And we also
17 have the installment program where they
18 can pay their taxes over 12 months
19 rather than have to pay it in full by
20 the due date of March 31st. We realize
21 that seniors on a fixed income, that is
22 often a burden for them, so we give them
23 the ability to pay their taxes
24 throughout the year.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Just two

1 other questions. So one is can you talk
2 about -- and I may have missed this.
3 You may have said this already. But can
4 you talk about just throughout the
5 pandemic in the last couple of years,
6 the tax collection and what has the
7 change been in terms of particularly
8 real estate tax collection in
9 Philadelphia?

10 COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: In terms
11 of the collection rate?

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes.

13 COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: The
14 collection rate has stayed around 96,
15 which is below 96 percent. And at one
16 point, prepandemic we were above 96
17 percent. So it stayed pretty steady and
18 we're really happy with that considering
19 that we had essentially no enforcement
20 throughout the pandemic. More gradually
21 resuming enforcement, I did speak a
22 little bit about that earlier.

23 We're gradually resuming
24 enforcement. We're getting our
25 delinquent billing back up. We had

1 paused billing. We had paused all types
2 of enforcement letters. We had paused
3 use of collection agents, so we really
4 shifted our focus from enforcement to
5 communicating to taxpayers about
6 recovery and about what services we had
7 to help them stay compliant with their
8 taxes. We're continuing to do that as
9 we start to resume, as we gradually
10 resume enforcement action.

11 And as Councilman Domb had said
12 earlier, we do have some of the most
13 progressive programs nationally and
14 throughout the pandemic. You know, not
15 all jurisdictions paused enforcement.
16 Many stayed business as usual, but we
17 chose to really focus on our taxpayers
18 and our residents and try to focus on
19 recovery rather than enforcement,
20 realizing that that was really a
21 difficult time in putting a financial
22 burden on many people.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. One
24 last thing that I wanted to just mention
25 while I have you on the hot seat,

1 Commissioner. And that's around
2 something you and I had talked about.
3 This is not necessarily related, but in
4 some ways I guess it is. But it's
5 really around operations in Revenue.

6 And that was the conversation
7 you and I had some time ago about one of
8 my constituents who actually a few years
9 ago showed up on my front steps one
10 evening in the summertime and told me he
11 was losing his house because he paid at
12 the wrong window. And I don't know if
13 you remember that particular
14 conversation we had, but he had
15 basically came into Revenue. He paid --
16 he thought he paid his tax bill. His
17 money was accepted. Check was cashed,
18 and received a notice that his home was
19 going into sheriff's sale some time
20 later. And so, we were able to untangle
21 the whole situation, but obviously it
22 took a lot.

23 So I know that since then
24 you've done a lot of work around sort of
25 reforming or addressing some of the

1 issues within Revenue in terms of
2 payments and how people can pay and
3 making sure that there's efficiency
4 there. But just last week it was
5 brought to my attention that a business
6 owner said I think that they were in
7 real estate, they had several properties
8 I believe. I think this is what it was.
9 And anyway, they came to a window to pay
10 at Revenue and were told that they could
11 only take a certain number of
12 transactions. And after those
13 transactions were completed, they had to
14 get back in line to the back of the line
15 and start all over again. Are you
16 familiar with this or does this ring a
17 bell or can you talk about that?

18 COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: Yes, I
19 can talk about that, for sure. We do
20 have a process where there's a limited
21 number of transactions that the cashier
22 can process while a customer waits. And
23 the reason we do that -- prepandemic I'm
24 sure there have been times if you've
25 been through MSB, you can see that at

1 tax due dates the line can get really
2 long.

3 So the process that we've put
4 in place is we've told customers that
5 they can leave that payment with us and
6 leave the payment documents on an
7 unlimited number if they choose to have
8 them all processed at once, and that we
9 will process them and they come back
10 later in the day or at their
11 convenience. It doesn't have to be that
12 same day or within any certain amount of
13 time, and that we will give them all the
14 receipts and it will be all processed.
15 So that's just a process to keep the
16 line moving.

17 We don't ask people to get back
18 into the line and wait in the line
19 again. Now, somebody might choose to do
20 that if they want to do everything right
21 at once, but that would be their choice.
22 Our recommendation would be for them to
23 leave the documents with us and leave
24 their check, and we would process it all
25 at that time. Of course, if they're

1 paying in cash, we would not allow them
2 to leave the cash with us while we
3 process everything, we wouldn't want
4 that. But that's the exception.
5 Usually property owners that are coming
6 in paying for a large number of
7 properties are paying by check. And of
8 course, we're always promoting
9 electronic payment.

10 And thank you for giving me an
11 opportunity to plug our new computer
12 system. We have a new integrated tax
13 system that's in place right now. It's
14 a two-phase implementation. So real
15 estate tax is not in that yet. It will
16 be in, in October and we look to see
17 lots of improvements next tax season for
18 real estate taxes when that is all in
19 our new system with a new portal that
20 makes it really easy, much easier to do
21 business electronically with us.

22 Our business taxes are in that
23 system this year. So our business
24 income and receipts tax, our wage tax,
25 our net profits tax, so we think that is

1 going to make it much easier for
2 taxpayers to do business with us
3 remotely.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. I
5 hear what you're saying and I understand
6 the need to keep the lines moving and
7 all of that, but I do think that there
8 really should be a better way rather
9 than asking somebody to get back in line
10 after a certain number of
11 transactions --

12 COMMISSIONER BRESLIN: Yeah,
13 but we won't ask them to get back in
14 line. We'll just ask them to leave the
15 check and the payment documents and
16 we'll process them, and they can come
17 back and pick them up at any time.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yeah. If
19 somebody doesn't feel comfortable doing
20 that I guess is what their question is.
21 I'm assuming that this person who
22 mentioned this didn't feel comfortable
23 just leaving everything and coming back,
24 and maybe it wasn't convenient.

25 COMMISSIONER BRESLIN:

1 Certainly, and we always try to
2 accommodate any taxpayer that we can.
3 Right now, especially during the
4 pandemic, we're trying to keep the lines
5 moving. This is the first tax season
6 since the pandemic that we're fully open
7 to taxpayers in the cashiering section
8 so we're monitoring daily the lines and
9 the number of people there because we
10 want to keep our taxpayers safe and
11 healthy.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Got you.

13 Okay. Thank you.

14 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

15 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
16 Councilmember Bass. And thank you,
17 Commissioner Breslin.

18 I do have a couple of quick
19 questions. I'm going to call it a
20 lightening round, which means you can
21 give me extremely quick answers, okay,
22 in the interest of time. Overall -- I
23 guess this is a question to the
24 Administration. Who manages the
25 improvements to the operations that some

1 of my colleagues and myself have talked
2 about, and who's pushing each department
3 to try to become more efficient maybe
4 with new technology, new systems, new
5 processes and things that can hopefully
6 reduce services, cost and improve the
7 efficiency of the department, who would
8 that person be?

9 MR. DUBOW: It will be the
10 Cabinet member working with probably the
11 Chief Administrative Officer and the
12 Mayor's Office.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. And
14 then my next question is for actually
15 IHS. I don't want them to be on this
16 call and have to answer a question, it's
17 just a general question. Is it Tom
18 Jackson or Jim Diffley's on the call?
19 And here is my question to them: Tom,
20 maybe you can answer this question. I
21 know we don't have the information, but
22 from what you can see in your
23 forecasting, do you think the months of
24 January and February with the Omicron
25 variant, do you think that's going to

1 have any impact on any of our financial
2 information that we were sharing today?

3 MR. JACKSON: It could have a
4 little bit, probably on I would think
5 sales tax will be the most directly
6 impacted. But given some of the shifts
7 that we've seen in other things, I think
8 it would be relatively low and some of
9 it can be made up in later months.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Great.
11 I just wanted to check with you on that.
12 Thank you so much for all the work
13 you're doing to help us on this. Last
14 question on this panel is to our OPA
15 Director James Aros. I believe he's on
16 the call. So I have two questions for
17 the Director.

18 One is, how is the
19 implementation of CAMA going, and are
20 you happy with it and is there anything
21 we can do to help with that
22 implementation?

23 MR. AROS: Good morning,
24 Councilmember. I had to check the time
25 to make sure we were still before noon,

1 but happy to be here. For the record,
2 James Aros, Chief Assessment Officer at
3 the OPA. So CAMA implementation has
4 gone well. We are through Phase 1 of
5 the implementation and there are two
6 additional phases that are currently
7 being worked on. Those are newer and
8 additional functionality for field and
9 mobile collection, for instance, and
10 other elements that we did not
11 previously have before, so it's not
12 hindering us from doing what we do, but
13 it's added stuff that comes with the
14 system that we can use into the future.

15 I would say the implementation
16 went fairly well under any circumstance,
17 but with the pandemic considering we had
18 to halt training very early as the City
19 sort of shut down and shifted to remote
20 and then pick that up as quickly as it
21 could. I would say I certainly would
22 think it went better than I could have
23 ever expected with those circumstances
24 that we've had to deal with as we went
25 live with the system beginning live back

1 in February of 2020.

2 So there were some bumps like
3 any implementation of any new kind of
4 technology that you're going to have and
5 then throw the pandemic in there and
6 switching to remote work, but all things
7 considered I think we've handled that
8 fairly well and the system is working
9 well for us to this point.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Great.

11 And one last question, I'm not sure you
12 can answer it but I'll ask it anyway.
13 Any trends that you're seeing in our
14 real estate evaluations that I'm sure
15 you'll be reporting to the
16 Administration on over the next week or
17 two that might be coming forward that
18 you can share today?

19 MR. AROS: Wouldn't want to
20 talk in specifics until we finalize
21 numbers and deliver them to the Mayor
22 and later to Council. But in
23 generalities, there's plenty of
24 information out there on how some of the
25 sectors of real estate have changed over

1 the last couple of years, and we haven't
2 done a reassessment in a couple of years
3 obviously. And the last reassessment
4 that we did used data that was current
5 as of 2018 as far as sales.

6 So I would just say to folks no
7 matter whether you're a high-rise office
8 building owner or you own a single
9 family rowhome in Southwest Philly, you
10 have access and knowledge of any of the
11 changes that have happened over the last
12 three years. We're going to be trying
13 to pick those up as best we can and that
14 we're going to be capturing a couple of
15 years' worth of changes in the market,
16 not just one year because of the fact
17 that we haven't done any reassessments
18 since Tax Year 2020.

19 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank
20 you. Keep up the great work. Thank you
21 very much.

22 So I'd like to ask, if
23 possible, the Finance team, at least Rob
24 and Marisa, to hang on for the next
25 panel. But I want to thank our Finance

1 Director Rob Dubow, our Budget Director
2 Marisa Waxman, PICA Executive Director
3 Harvey Rice and Tom and Jim from IHS and
4 Commissioner Breslin and OPA Director
5 James Aros for their testimony today and
6 for answering the questions. Thank you
7 all very much.

8 And we're going to go into the
9 next panel. So, Ms. Grbach, please call
10 the next panel of witnesses.

11 THE CLERK: Our second panel is
12 Larry Eichel from the Pew Charitable
13 Trusts.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay.
15 Mr. Eichel, as soon as you're ready,
16 please proceed with your testimony.

17 MR. EICHEL: All right. We're
18 getting the deck up. Okay. Thanks very
19 much for having me. I welcome this
20 opportunity to talk about our work. I'm
21 Larry Eichel, Senior Advisor to the
22 Philadelphia Research Initiative at the
23 Pew Charitable Trusts. In partnership
24 with the William Penn Foundation, we at
25 Pew have embarked on the project taking

1 an indepth look at the City's fiscal and
2 economic future as it emerges from the
3 pandemic.

4 We think the next few years are
5 pivotal for Philadelphia as it seeks to
6 recover to adjust to new realities and
7 to work toward more equitable growth,
8 and we hope to inform the decisions that
9 you and others will have to make and to
10 engage the public as well. As part of
11 that project, we've released several
12 reports about Philadelphia's economy,
13 two of which I want to highlight here
14 today.

15 Both are based on research that
16 we commissioned from Econsult Solutions.
17 In our research thus far we've used
18 jobs, the number of jobs, the type of
19 jobs, who has those jobs and what
20 sectors of the economy those jobs are
21 located as the key metric to judge the
22 City's economic health.

23 In the first report, we looked
24 at the pandemic economic impact. In
25 terms of jobs, COVID-19 has hit

1 Philadelphia hard, with the City
2 substantially underperforming the
3 nation. As you can see in this graphic,
4 national unemployment was down 2. --
5 national employment rather was down 2.6
6 percent as of this past September and
7 Philadelphia's employment was down to
8 about 7.6 percent, a gap of 5 percentage
9 points. Now, the number through the end
10 of the year showed the City doing a
11 little better, but the gap remains.

12 The job losses have hit some
13 groups harder than others. In this
14 graphic where you see the orange line
15 above the blue bar, that group has
16 suffered disproportionate job loss,
17 Black workers, women and people without
18 college degrees. Another way to look at
19 the data is to group the sectors of the
20 economy into higher, middle and lower
21 wage groups. Do that and you see that
22 the lost jobs were overwhelmingly in the
23 lower wage category, a category that
24 includes sectors such as retail and
25 leisure and hospitality, both of which

1 have large numbers of Black and Hispanic
2 workers.

3 We also examined five key
4 trends that emerged from the pandemic
5 that will influence what comes next.
6 One, of course, is remote work.
7 Econsult estimates that three years from
8 now we may see 14 to 27 percent more
9 work being done remotely than
10 prepandemic, which has profound
11 influence -- implications rather from
12 many aspects of the City's economy and
13 finances.

14 Another trend is the change in
15 the workforce and the terms of the jobs
16 that people will and won't take, the
17 wages they demand and the fact that
18 fewer Philadelphians are seeking work.
19 And you see the other trends on the
20 screen as well.

21 In our second report, we
22 focused on the future by developing four
23 scenarios for how this City's economy
24 might develop through 2025. These
25 scenarios are not meant to be

1 predictions and we don't assign
2 probabilities to any of them. Rather
3 they are informed estimates of plausible
4 outcomes, and they illustrate the
5 importance of the public and private
6 sector decisions that are being made now
7 and will be made in the future,
8 including those about the level and
9 structure of taxation, public
10 investments, City services, business
11 expansion or downsizing, the need for
12 office space and remote work policies.
13 These will affect the lives and
14 livelihoods of thousands of
15 Philadelphians and commuters.

16 To start constructing the
17 scenarios, Econsult examined the City's
18 economic performance since March 2020
19 and determined that the key future
20 unknowns fall into two categories. One
21 is inperson activity, which is on the
22 vertical axis of the graph, and that's
23 the degree that which workers, travelers
24 and consumers presume patronizing local
25 retail establishments, dining out and

1 attending meetings and conventions. In
2 this regard, workers coming back to the
3 office are a key element.

4 The other category shown on the
5 horizontal axis we called attractiveness
6 and competitiveness, the City's ability
7 to support the expansion and importation
8 of existing businesses and the formation
9 of new ones through business attraction,
10 research and development grants, real
11 estate investment and development and
12 the quality-of-life issues that impact
13 population, growth and retention.

14 We started with a scenario tied
15 to the economic forecast that was the
16 basis of the City's current Five Year
17 Plan, which by these standards assumes
18 high attractiveness and competitiveness,
19 but low inperson activity. We call that
20 uneven gains, a continuation of the
21 economy we had before the pandemic. The
22 other three are stunted recovery, which
23 is the lower left which is the worst of
24 the four, competitive loss and overall
25 growth in the upper right which is the

1 best. Details of all of them are in the
2 report and I can talk more about them if
3 you like.

4 What I like about the
5 scenario-building exercise is it
6 demonstrates quite vividly just as much
7 is at stake. As this graph shows, in
8 two of the four scenarios Philadelphia
9 would still be below prepandemic job
10 levels three years from now. And the
11 gap between the best scenario and the
12 worst is more than 70,000 jobs, about 10
13 percent of the number that the City has
14 right now.

15 Having or not having those jobs
16 would affect the City's revenues, its
17 businesses and the lives of thousands of
18 people. Recently we also released a
19 brief on the state's Uniformity Clause
20 in the State Constitution in how it
21 prevents the City from various options,
22 including graduating wage tax rates by
23 income or imposing a higher property tax
24 rate on \$50 million office buildings
25 than on \$50,000 homes.

1 And last year we looked at --
2 rather earlier this year we looked at
3 how cities are using the money they're
4 getting from the American Rescue Plan.
5 As you know and was discussed earlier,
6 Philadelphia's planning to use all of
7 the 1.4 billion it's getting for what's
8 called revenue replacement helping to
9 balance the budget over the next several
10 years and maintain services.

11 Other cities are using at least
12 some of the money for special projects
13 often having to do with health and
14 equity. And we have much more coming,
15 including a report that looks at the
16 potential impacts that those four
17 economic scenarios I've discussed here
18 today might have on City revenues and
19 how they would affect the tax burden
20 felt by residents in particular.

21 We'll have an indepth look at
22 the City's property tax and how it
23 compares to other cities, cost-analysis
24 of how the City's current tax structure
25 affects both businesses and residents,

1 looking at the taxes paid by companies
2 and households across a wide range of
3 financial situations. And we'll keep
4 monitoring City finances and the local
5 economy to see which of the
6 pandemic-induced changes prove to be
7 fleeting and which are long-lasting.
8 Again, thanks for having me and I'm
9 happy to try to answer any questions you
10 might have about our research.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

12 That's good. Great presentation. I do
13 have a few questions. I guess our goal
14 is to get to that category that was the
15 purple, which is, what, the 71,000-type
16 jobs. In this report, are you basically
17 outlining two issues, one being the
18 inperson activity of bringing people
19 back to offices and, two, in simple
20 terms the attractiveness and
21 competitiveness of the City?

22 As legislators that are on this
23 call and the Administration is on this
24 call if we're all trying to work
25 together as a team, any suggestions on

1 what we can do?

2 MR. EICHEL: Well, we don't
3 make policy recommendations in this
4 report. We may or may not make some
5 policy recommendations as time goes on.
6 I think to a large degree it depends on
7 how you think the economy is going to
8 play out. You know, one outlook might
9 be that you want to try to do the best
10 you can to make the City more attractive
11 to businesses.

12 You may also think that at
13 least some businesses are able to hire
14 people from anywhere for jobs, that
15 perhaps Philadelphia has an advantage
16 certainly in East Coast terms of being
17 an attractive and still relatively
18 affordable place to live. And if that's
19 the case, then you might want to think
20 more about making the City a more
21 attractive place to live and whether
22 that will be through services, through
23 amenities, through investments. So
24 there's are a lot of ways to go and it
25 sort of depends on how things develop

1 and how you think they're going to
2 develop.

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: The other
4 question I have was if I recall, I can't
5 put my fingers on it, I thought I read
6 in your report that the industries that
7 were most affected in employment loss
8 was hospitality that had the lowest
9 numbers. If I recall, most industries
10 had minor losses except for hospitality
11 and was in the 25 percent range or
12 something of employment loss; which was
13 interesting I think in government it had
14 actually grew as a percentage -- I mean,
15 government was the only growing business
16 basically in that chart, but everything
17 else seemed to have a small loss, but
18 hospitality got crushed. Is that par --

19 MR. EICHEL: That's basically
20 right. Government has been stable,
21 pretty much stable across the board. I
22 think that's relatively true in a lot of
23 places. I think one of the interesting
24 things that we found out in this report
25 was that sort of the attractiveness,

1 competitiveness -- I mean, the returned
2 inperson activity is something we can
3 see. And obviously, it's important.
4 It's particularly important for the
5 leisure and hospitality and the retail
6 sectors.

7 But from an overall economic
8 standpoint, the analysis was the
9 attractiveness, competitiveness angle
10 was more important in terms of jobs as
11 we move forward. And that's simply
12 because -- largely because the sectors
13 in those categories are bigger than the
14 sectors than the inperson activity.
15 When we talk about professional
16 services, we talk about finance and we
17 talk about health care.

18 Obviously, health care has both
19 kind of inperson and attractiveness,
20 competitiveness components. But our
21 health care industry, and that includes
22 pharmaceuticals and other aspects, we
23 always sell its services, a lot of its
24 services, outside of the City. It
25 attracts patients and attracts

1 investment, so it was categorized here
2 as the attractiveness, competitiveness
3 category. And so, they are more
4 important for overall job growth.

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. In the
6 report, did it also show -- I was
7 surprised by this number -- is it
8 one-third of our employees are basically
9 in the eds and meds world?

10 MR. EICHEL: Yeah, that's been
11 pretty constant for a while. We do a
12 State of the City report every year and
13 we look at the economy by employment,
14 and we've been doing that since 2009.
15 And as far as I can remember, it's
16 always been in the 20 to 33 percent
17 range. It is certainly the biggest
18 piece of the private sector economy in
19 the City.

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And just for
21 my own knowledge, the eds and meds in
22 other cities, are they basically tax
23 simile to Philadelphia when they're
24 exempt from certain taxes, it's not a
25 lot of difference?

1 MR. EICHEL: I can't say in any
2 detail about obviously specific cities,
3 but obviously many hospitals in
4 particular certainly are exempt from
5 property taxes, but a lot of cities
6 don't have -- most cities don't have
7 wage taxes. So the local people who
8 work at the local institutions pay that.
9 That would not be the case in other
10 cities.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. I
12 guess my question is, the reason why we
13 see so high of a percentage of eds and
14 meds compared to other cities, do they
15 have one-third of their employment force
16 in eds and meds?

17 MR. EICHEL: There are some
18 that do. Actually some older cities,
19 actually older smaller cities that have
20 seen no population growth over time,
21 which is not us, a lot of them have high
22 eds and meds percentages. And in that
23 situation, that's not seen as a great
24 sign because it largely means there's
25 not too much going on economically.

1 Especially if you have an aging
2 population, you're still going to have a
3 big certainly health care industry. So
4 there may be cities that have higher
5 percentages, but in our case it's
6 certainly not a bad sign.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: It looks like
8 to me that the eds and meds are an area
9 that we've been relatively successful
10 with, that possibly could expand further
11 because it's been so successful. The
12 only negative of that is they're exempt
13 from a lot of taxes. That's the issue.

14 MR. EICHEL: Right.

15 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Let me
16 ask Rob -- thank you, Larry, for your
17 presentation. I think there will be
18 some questions too. Let me ask Rob and
19 Marisa about this presentation and their
20 thoughts and opinions on how do we
21 achieve the best overall growth strategy
22 that Pew outlined for us and what steps
23 can we take hopefully to achieve getting
24 back those 70,000 jobs that we want to
25 get to.

1 MR. DUBOW: Yeah, I think Larry
2 summed it up well. You need to look at
3 where the economy's going and how do you
4 make the City more attractive, the
5 combination of amenities, basic services
6 and the amount you charge for them works
7 best. And now, that's the process we go
8 through as we try to put the plan
9 together and then when we work with
10 Council during the budget process.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Marisa, you
12 want to add to that?

13 MS. WAXMAN: I think really
14 everything Rob said and the idea of
15 making sure we're a place that people
16 want to be in. The barriers we're
17 choosing because everything is a
18 trade-off makes sense and not trying to
19 see where we can capitalize on trends,
20 if there's areas we can bump them, but
21 being really sort of cognizant of what
22 is realistic in the short-term but also
23 understanding what are some of the long-
24 term things. There are certain
25 interventions we can do right now that

1 won't bear fruit for a generation and
2 trying to sort of do that sort of time
3 trade-off.

4 The other thing that we're
5 thinking a lot more intentional around
6 is equity in these decisions. It makes
7 us think about when we're thinking about
8 different tax types and the burdens, how
9 do those currently fall in terms of
10 race, are people more disproportionately
11 impacted based on seeing people of color
12 for certain tax changes versus others
13 and making sure we're thinking through
14 that equity piece. Same with making
15 sure that we're providing adequate
16 services and doing the things we want.

17 And I will say we do always
18 remain challenged by our being a city
19 and a county. I think very few people
20 decide where to live and open up a
21 business based on how great are their
22 prisons, what's their court system like.
23 Things have to go really, really wrong
24 for people to base their business or
25 residential location decisions on a lot

1 of those county functions, so that just
2 presents an extra level of challenges as
3 we think these things through.

4 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I agree with
5 you. I would say on the big picture
6 maybe what we ought to focus on, we know
7 that as a small example self-therapy is
8 a growth area for the City. And I think
9 we're the third largest in the country
10 for self-therapy. And the goal should
11 be how do we become No. 1.

12 I know back in June we lost I
13 think a hundred few thousand square feet
14 of self-therapy office space in the
15 suburbs, but we should probably come up
16 with a plan on how do we become No. 1 in
17 self-therapy, because it's not the jobs
18 of self-therapy. It is the economic job
19 multiplier of that particular job that
20 is 4 or 5 to 1 that can really bolster
21 our economy, and we already have the
22 science here and we have the people
23 here. I just think that should be a big
24 focus for us in order to gain more jobs.
25 That is just one example. We should

1 probably have 100 examples.

2 All right. I'll stop there.

3 And I know my colleague Councilmember

4 Maria Sanchez has a question for us.

5 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:

6 Sophie Bryan -- oh, wait, Larry. Thank

7 you so very much to Pew and for all the

8 work you're doing. We talk about this

9 equity lens and Marisa mentioned it.

10 Can you speak to what you saw as it

11 related to small businesses, small

12 businesses of color and when you were

13 looking at some of these wage numbers,

14 anything that stuck out to you that you

15 would like to kind of highlight for us

16 that we should be aware of as we talk

17 about recouping the 70,000-plus other

18 jobs?

19 MR. EICHEL: In this research

20 we didn't really look too much at

21 businesses by color. We did look at

22 employment and we certainly saw that

23 Black workers were hit

24 disproportionately and women and

25 noncollege educated. My colleague Tom

1 Ginsberg has looked a lot at small
2 businesses and how businesses have done,
3 and perhaps we can get back to you on
4 that.

5 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:

6 I think it's important for us to figure
7 out what the intersection between some
8 of those small businesses and then job
9 recovery, right, particularly if we want
10 to do an equitable lens. So it would be
11 interesting to see based on this new
12 data that you have and then some of the
13 small business data if we want to
14 recover more equitable, where do we need
15 to incentivize better. Clearly, we know
16 we have a disproportionate number of
17 businesses of color. And in this space,
18 everybody is jockeying to do more, but I
19 just don't see kind of this
20 comprehensive plan around this is what
21 we should be doing for businesses of
22 color outside of capitalizing, which is
23 a huge issue, access to capital.

24 But I was wondering from the
25 employment perspective since the

1 majority of the jobs are in small
2 businesses from an employment
3 perspective, did you see anything that
4 popped out that you want us to be aware
5 of? We had a lot of losses with
6 population of color, I'm sure that
7 impacted women of color. What are those
8 skill sets, retail being one, but what
9 other things do we need to be aware of
10 as we talk about bringing people back in
11 the City or having people in the City
12 wanting to come back into the City?

13 MR. EICHEL: Yeah. We didn't
14 get into a lot of that in this report.
15 One thing I recall from some earlier
16 research we did is I know people talk a
17 lot about the importance of small
18 businesses, and certainly small
19 businesses are important, it's in
20 neighborhoods and a lot of other
21 situations, but my memory is that one of
22 the things that stands out about
23 Philadelphia's economy is that there's
24 actually a very large proportion of the
25 jobs that, in fact, are not in small

1 businesses, that they are with larger
2 employers. And again, that's not to
3 minimize the importance of the small
4 businesses, but I think that's one of
5 the distinctive things about the City's
6 economy.

7 COUNCILWOMAN QUINONES-SANCHEZ:

8 Thank you, Larry.

9 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
11 Councilmember Sanchez.

12 You know, there is, Larry, on
13 Page 6 a report -- I don't know if
14 Councilmember Sanchez was referring to
15 this -- it shows equity implications.
16 And it talks about in the overall growth
17 strategy everyone does pretty well. But
18 in the work strategy, it looks White
19 people and people with Bachelor's
20 degrees do the best. Then it says all
21 groups do poorly under stunted recovery,
22 in which the job total falls 4.6
23 percent, with Hispanics and Asians
24 faring the worst.

25 MR. EICHEL: Yeah. I mean,

1 part of the reason that I didn't include
2 that in our presentation was that it
3 kind of -- it was kind of the outliers
4 in these scenarios. The variability
5 isn't very big in it, as you say. In
6 the best scenarios everybody does well,
7 but pretty constantly people with
8 college degrees do better across the
9 board.

10 There are a couple of weird,
11 not weird, but interesting variations in
12 that in the worst scenario as I recall
13 Black workers did less poorly than some
14 other groups, and that was because Black
15 workers are represented in government,
16 which doesn't fluctuate in those
17 scenarios and in health care, which
18 doesn't go down as much in the poorer
19 scenarios. And again, it's sort of
20 relatively stable.

21 In projecting that, we didn't
22 see any great changes in the equity
23 formula for the economy in any event.

24 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank
25 you. I will say this is a great report.

1 I want to thank Pew and you, Larry. And
2 I think we should put together between
3 Council and the Administration some sort
4 of a plan of how we achieve the best
5 analysis, which is the overall growth
6 strategy. What do we have to do --
7 almost like a business plan, what do we
8 have to do to achieve the overall growth
9 strategy in the City and put together
10 those tactics and objectives to get
11 there. So I'll throw that out there as
12 a challenge. And happy to work on it
13 myself, but I just want to put it out
14 there. I think we should really focus
15 on this.

16 Are there any other questions
17 from any of my colleagues for Larry
18 Eichel from Pew?

19 (No response.)

20 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Seeing
21 none, Larry, thank you again and thank
22 you to Pew for your presentation. Also
23 want to thank everyone for being here
24 today and for your insight. We
25 appreciate your testimony today. I look

1 forward to working with you in the
2 future. I don't believe there's any
3 public witnesses here today.

4 (No response.)

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Seeing none,
6 so thank you again. This concludes the
7 hearing on Resolution 200406, and the
8 hearing is adjourned. And thank you
9 again for the great information. Thank
10 you so much. Have a good day.

11 MR. EICHEL: Thank you.

12 (Committee on Fiscal Stability
13 and Intergovernmental Cooperation
14 concluded at 11:41 a.m.)

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6 this is a correct transcript of the same.
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