

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Monday, April 15, 2019
10:22 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL
COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB
COUNCILMAN DEREK S. GREEN
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE
COUNCILWOMAN HELEN GYM
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN
COUNCILMAN AL TAUBENBERGER

BILLS 190152, 190153, and 190154
RESOLUTION 190164

- - -

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: We're
3 going to start the hearing. Members will
4 be coming down. Sorry for the delay.

5 If I could have everybody's
6 attention, please.

7 Good morning. This hearing is
8 called to order. This is the public
9 hearing of the Committee of the Whole
10 regarding Bill Nos. 190152, 190153,
11 190154, and Resolution No. 190164.

12 Mr. Stitt, please read the
13 titles of the bills and the resolution.

14 THE CLERK: Bill No. 190152, an
15 ordinance to adopt a Capital Program for
16 the six Fiscal Years 2020 through 2025
17 inclusive.

18 Bill No. 190153, an ordinance
19 to adopt a Fiscal 2020 Capital Budget.

20 Bill No. 190154, an ordinance
21 adopting the Operating Budget for Fiscal
22 Year 2020.

23 Resolution No. 190164,
24 resolution providing for the approval by
25 the Council of the City of Philadelphia

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 of a Revised Five Year Financial Plan for
3 the City of Philadelphia covering Fiscal
4 Years 2020 through 2024, and
5 incorporating proposed changes with
6 respect to Fiscal Year 2019, which is to
7 be submitted by the Mayor to the
8 Pennsylvania Intergovernmental
9 Cooperation Authority (the "Authority")
10 pursuant to the Intergovernmental
11 Cooperation Agreement, authorized by an
12 ordinance of this Council approved by the
13 Mayor on January 3, 1992 (Bill No.
14 1563-A), by and between the City and the
15 Authority.

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
17 you.

18 Today we continue the public
19 hearing of the Committee of the Whole to
20 consider the bills read by Mr. Stitt that
21 constitute proposed operating and capital
22 spending measures for Fiscal Year 2020, a
23 Capital Program, and a forward-looking
24 Capital Plan for Fiscal Year 2020 through
25 Fiscal Year 2025.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Today we will hear testimony
3 from the following City departments: The
4 Free Library, Mural Arts, City
5 Representative, Parks and Recreation, and
6 then later this afternoon there is public
7 testimony.

8 Mr. Stitt, the first person or
9 people to testify today are?

10 THE CLERK: Siobhan Reardon.

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good
12 morning. We have your written testimony.
13 I know you know the way it goes here. If
14 you could give us a briefing. Thank you.

15 MS. REARDON: Good morning,
16 Councilman Greenlee and members of City
17 Council. I'm Siobhan Reardon, President
18 and Director of the Free Library of
19 Philadelphia, and I'm joined this morning
20 by my Board Chair -- with my Board Chair
21 of the Board of Trustees, Judge Pamela
22 Dembe, who will also make some comments.

23 I'd like to begin by extending
24 our appreciation to Mayor Kenney for
25 proposing a \$2 and a half million

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 increase to the Free Library's budget.
3 We all share the same goal - to open more
4 of our libraries for more hours and more
5 days and to ensure that all of
6 Philadelphia's residents have maximum
7 access to our resources and services.

8 The additional 2 and a half
9 million has been allocated in two
10 tranches. Two million, along with the
11 million dollars in Library state funds,
12 will be used to open all neighborhood
13 libraries for six days of service a week
14 during the school year, and then half a
15 million in maintenance support will be
16 dedicated to emergency repairs to prevent
17 closures.

18 Once the doors are open, the
19 Library offers a plethora of services to
20 our customers. Children's literacy is
21 particularly important and is manifest
22 through our new Play-and-Learn spaces at
23 our Cecil B. Moore, Whitman, and Wyoming
24 Libraries; our work in infusing literacy
25 in STAR 1 and 2 childcare facilities in

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 the Logan and Kingsessing neighborhood;
3 and the Library's leadership of the Read
4 by 4th.

5 Workforce development is also a
6 service much in demand. We have
7 partnered with CareerLink to place
8 workforce navigators in 20 neighborhood
9 libraries, including Bustleton, Northeast
10 Regional, and Nicetown, providing classes
11 and one-on-one assistance to those who
12 are looking for work.

13 In Paschalville, the Library is
14 leading a multi-partner, multi-year
15 collaboration focused on meeting the
16 needs of the unemployed in that
17 neighborhood. Skills building and resume
18 preparation are offered specifically for
19 teens at our Haddington Library.

20 I know many of you have heard
21 about bias and discrimination at the
22 Library, which we all find disturbing and
23 intolerable. I applaud the staff that
24 stepped forward and raised the issue and
25 want to assure you that I and the Board

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 take these concerns seriously.

3 I have made a statement to all
4 Library employees about my commitment to
5 addressing racial bias, homophobia,
6 Islamophobia and other issues, and have
7 named an internal diversity and inclusion
8 officer. Her charge includes the
9 creation of a committee to review Library
10 policies, examine hiring and promotional
11 practices, job descriptions, civil
12 service exams but, most importantly, to
13 research and define best practices for
14 the entire Free Library organization.
15 This body will also hear staff concerns
16 through the establishment of employee
17 relation groups and be integrally
18 involved in developing responses that are
19 timely, meaningful, impactful, and
20 sensitive.

21 I readily acknowledge that
22 these first steps are small. Creating a
23 bias-free workplace is a significant
24 undertaking and not something that can be
25 achieved in short order or if ever,

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 realistically. This is not meant as an
3 excuse, but rather as a recognition of
4 the enormity of what we are trying to do.

5 And thank you, as always, for
6 your support of the Free Library.

7 Judge Dembe.

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Your
9 Honor, how are you?

10 JUDGE DEMBE: Good morning, and
11 good morning, Councilmembers.

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: A little
13 more into the microphone, please.

14 JUDGE DEMBE: It's rare that
15 people can't hear me.

16 I hope some of you got back to
17 sleep after your phones all went off at
18 3:22 this morning.

19 I just want to add a couple
20 more points to what Siobhan said.

21 The first thing is that we
22 really have taken the claims of a lack of
23 diversity or discrimination quite
24 seriously. I've put together a board
25 committee which will be overseeing and

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 recommending things for the executive
3 staff of the Library to move forward on.
4 We all are -- we're saddened that we
5 spent so much of the last several years
6 working on making an incredible customer
7 experience for all the citizens and kind
8 of forgot to take care of our own
9 perhaps. So we are on it.

10 After a dozen years, we finally
11 finished the first big stage of
12 renovating the Central Library, and if
13 you haven't been there, come see it. And
14 the opening to the public was on Friday,
15 and the new Teen Center was packed. So
16 the citizens are appreciating what you
17 have helped to bring about, and we're
18 going to be doing revamps to teen spaces
19 in other branches.

20 One of the many, many programs
21 that -- and I don't want to put you all
22 to sleep by reciting them, but one of
23 them that has been a really big hit and
24 it was put together by a librarian, not
25 something that came down from the top,

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 prison and reentry services. And at our
3 last Borrowers' Ball, we had an auction
4 to raise money specifically for that, and
5 it was enthusiastically supported, and in
6 that one, the Department of Prisons has
7 been a very good partner, and we thank
8 them for that.

9 Everything else I think is
10 probably going to be repetitive either of
11 what we've said before or what Siobhan
12 has told you, so I'm sure you have
13 questions, whatever you want to do.

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.

15 JUDGE DEMBE: Thank you very
16 much.

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you
18 both.

19 I'm glad, Judge, you mentioned
20 the prison and reentry services. That's
21 one of the things I highlighted in the
22 testimony, because I think obviously
23 that's really important to try to get our
24 returning citizens back in the swing of
25 things as soon as possible.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Just a couple questions, and I
3 know Councilmember has a question too.
4 In your budget detail, you highlight 61
5 vacancies in your department out of 708.
6 Could you tell us, are there plans to
7 decrease that number and are there
8 particular positions that are most
9 challenging to fill?

10 MS. REARDON: Sure. So, yes,
11 there are substantial vacancies in our
12 municipal guard and library assistant
13 titles, and we are working with the
14 Office of Human Resources to tighten up
15 that pipeline, but it is -- there's a lot
16 of movement within the system as well as
17 people in and out of the Free Library
18 into other City departments. And so
19 keeping those positions filled has always
20 been -- it's one of the -- two of the
21 toughest positions to maintain a fill
22 rate.

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: The
24 library assistant, is that maybe salary
25 level is one, or what is the reason you

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 think that that is a particular
3 challenge?

4 MS. REARDON: So let me ask
5 Joe.

6 So we know that, yes, of
7 course. These are not highly paid
8 positions, whether it's the municipal
9 guard or the library assistant position,
10 and these are positions that you can
11 transfer from department to department
12 within the City of Philadelphia.

13 (Witness approached witness
14 table.)

15 MS. REARDON: The question is
16 keeping the fill rate on the department.

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please
18 identify yourself and proceed.

19 MR. BENFORD: Hi. I'm Joe
20 Benford, Deputy Director of Customer
21 Engagement at the Free Library.

22 Traditionally the library
23 assistant position does start at a
24 relatively low salary. So that once we
25 hire, usually generally what we do is, we

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 hire part-time library assistants or
3 clerical assistants and then eventually
4 promote them to full time, but they
5 definitely have a leg up for other jobs
6 offered throughout the City. Many of
7 them are clerical assistants.

8 The salary level of the library
9 assistant is a pay grade 6, which is
10 relatively small. So when they get
11 opportunities to go to 3-1-1 or Water or
12 Finance, they jump.

13 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: They move
14 on?

15 MR. BENFORD: They jump ship.
16 Rightfully so.

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I got
18 you. If you can make more money, I can't
19 blame them for that.

20 You do mention municipal guard.
21 I know there's been problems in the
22 past -- I don't know if they continue --
23 where branches don't open because the
24 guard is not available. Is that --

25 MR. BENFORD: Right.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: -- still
3 a continuing problem?

4 MR. BENFORD: So under a
5 previous administration, we were -- we
6 had an agreement that our neighborhood
7 libraries would be clean and safe places,
8 and part of the safe quality of those
9 places meant that we should have a
10 municipal guard while the library was
11 open. The problem is that there's only
12 one library guard per neighborhood
13 library. So if they have time, if they
14 are sick or if they're taking vacation,
15 then we have to scramble to get guard
16 coverage for that neighborhood library
17 during the week.

18 So we do use the contract guard
19 PO and we also hire seasonal, temporary
20 seasonal library facility guards, which
21 do everything that the municipal guard
22 does, but they only work 16 hours a week.
23 So we can plug them in, but you still --
24 you're always going to have occasions
25 where you can't find guard coverage.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And then
3 the library --

4 MR. BENFORD: Well, then it's
5 up to the neighborhood library manager of
6 that particular agency and the cluster
7 leader to decide whether or not staff
8 feels safe in remaining open without a
9 guard, and in some of the neighborhoods,
10 they don't feel safe, so...

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.
12 All right. I appreciate that.

13 Now, you mentioned, Ms.
14 Reardon, your \$2.5 million increase in
15 the budget. We all like to see
16 increases. I think there's a few people
17 in here -- I see a sign that says "not
18 enough." I think we might be hearing
19 from some people this afternoon on that.
20 But for what it is in the budget, I see
21 in your detail you show a \$2 million
22 increase. It's described as FY20 six-day
23 service during school year. Now, is that
24 where you're seeing most of this increase
25 going, that 2.5, to the --

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. REARDON: Two million.

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: --

4 six-day service?

5 MS. REARDON: Two million of it
6 will go to six-day service for the school
7 year, which means that it's a September
8 through May open six-day roster, and then
9 there's a half a million dollars that
10 will go to our maintenance budget to
11 ensure that our buildings are opened at
12 least from -- are able to be open at
13 least from a facility standpoint.

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Last
15 question for me, and sorry if I'm putting
16 you on the spot a little bit. Obviously
17 there's some people who would like to see
18 more money in the budget. I'm sure you
19 would too. What would be the priority if
20 there was additional money? Could you
21 prioritize that a little bit? What would
22 you particularly like to see?

23 MS. REARDON: Well, of course
24 we're always going to be interested in
25 ensuring the integrity of the six-day

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 service. That will always be our top
3 priorities, ensuring that our libraries
4 are open six-day service.

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: So that
6 would be priority --

7 MS. REARDON: Yeah.

8 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: -- just
9 trying to keep six-day service?

10 MS. REARDON: Yes.

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay. I
12 appreciate that.

13 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
15 morning. Good morning.

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good
17 morning.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good
19 morning.

20 JUDGE DEMBE: Good morning.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I am in
22 total agreement with everybody, all of
23 the activists for the Library, that the
24 Library deserves more funding. So that's
25 important. I have actually visited a

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 number of libraries since I wrote you
3 your letter to see for myself up close
4 and personal. I was particularly struck
5 by the library in Councilwoman
6 Quinones-Sanchez's district and what the
7 children and parents and visitors and
8 guests have to endure on their way to the
9 library, so I'll be curious to know how
10 your organization deals with that type of
11 special circumstance throughout the
12 system.

13 How long have you been with us,
14 Madam President of the Library?

15 MS. REARDON: Ten and a half
16 years.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Ten and a
18 half years. And I do certainly recall
19 when you first arrived, there were a lot
20 of questions and concerns regarding the
21 Board of Directors. So, first, let's
22 first speak to the progress you've made
23 towards that particular part of your
24 organization.

25 MS. REARDON: Yes. So that is

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 one of the most diverse boards I've ever
3 seen.

4 I don't know if, Pam, you want
5 to talk to that at all.

6 But it is a mixture of men and
7 women. It is across the demographic
8 divide, whether race or profession, but
9 it is a remarkably --

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So that's
11 one of the more diverse boards that it
12 has become.

13 MS. REARDON: Yes.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Upon your
15 arrival, it was not diverse at all. So
16 please tell me in detail how many Board
17 members you have and the demographic
18 breakdown under your leadership.

19 MS. REARDON: There are 22
20 Board members, and I'll have to get you
21 the demographic breakdown. Hold on. I
22 think it's in here.

23 JUDGE DEMBE: I will tell you
24 that when I was looking to put together
25 a -- while she's looking for the page,

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 which you can never find when you're
3 looking for it. When I was looking to
4 put together an oversight committee on
5 this diversity and inclusion issue, I had
6 no problem at all putting together a
7 diverse group of people.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I'm sorry.
9 I did not hear you. Please repeat that.

10 JUDGE DEMBE: I said when I was
11 putting together this Diversity and
12 Inclusion Oversight Committee of Board
13 members, it was not at all difficult to
14 make it a diverse board among our
15 members. It is a rich pool in which to
16 drop your fishing line.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well,
18 that's progress over the last ten years
19 under the leadership of -- I'm not
20 calling your last name because I don't
21 want to mispronounce your last name. So
22 why don't you tell us. Pronounce your
23 last name, because I always get it
24 incorrect.

25 JUDGE DEMBE: Dembe.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: No.

3 MS. REARDON: Reardon.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Reardon.

5 I don't want to be disrespectful.

6 So while someone provides me or
7 secures the demographics of the Board,
8 let's move to the letter that I sent you
9 on March 11th, 2019. That was before the
10 Mayor's budget address, I think, and it
11 was before the article on March the 25th,
12 and I thank you very, very much for the
13 detailed response to the letter.

14 On Page 2 of that letter, you
15 state, or maybe I state, All clusters
16 host monthly staff training development
17 sessions where we provide -- so this is
18 your response -- where we provide
19 specific training on any number of issues
20 and policies. The diversity, equity, and
21 inclusion protocols, as well as implicit
22 bias trainings, are among the areas where
23 you will provide more regularized
24 education.

25 So when does that start?

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. REARDON: It's actually
3 already started. So we have had implicit
4 bias training in every single one of our
5 clusters through the past Fiscal Year
6 2018, early 2019 and then as we begin to
7 develop, as you say, the diversity,
8 equity, and inclusion. So it will begin
9 probably effective July 1st as we go into
10 the new fiscal year to ensure that each
11 of the trainings that we have every month
12 and --

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And of
14 those that took place in 2017 -- I'm
15 trying to stay on top of my notes here --
16 what happens in instances where employees
17 register concerns? What is the level of
18 followup and followthrough for instances
19 like that?

20 MS. REARDON: So that is,
21 Councilwoman, an area that absolutely
22 needs to be improved. There's no doubt
23 about it. We take too long, I would
24 admit that, and then making sure that
25 we're getting back to every single

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 employee. And I think the other part of
3 the concerns of the employee is the
4 integrity in which somebody does make a
5 claim, what happens in ensuring the
6 integrity of the claim --

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Fairness.
8 Fairness and the followthrough.

9 MS. REARDON: Fairness and
10 followthrough. Thank you.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So what
12 will be the strategies then to ensure --
13 because it's one thing to listen to what
14 people say. It's another to watch what
15 they do.

16 MS. REARDON: Precisely.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And so
18 what will be the strategy in ensuring
19 followup and helping employees feel that
20 their issues are being fairly addressed?

21 MS. REARDON: So in addition to
22 establishing the Office of Diversity and
23 Inclusion, which is headed by a woman by
24 the name of Donyale Henderson, there are
25 two vacant positions which are crucial to

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 this process in employee relations, and
3 both of those need to be filled with
4 folks who know how to handle these
5 claims.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: How old is
7 that particular office?

8 MS. REARDON: It's brand new.
9 It's within the past six months.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So that's
11 why the two vacancies?

12 MS. REARDON: So the two
13 vacancies were people who are human
14 resources specialists, have left the
15 department to go on to bigger and better
16 things.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: How many
18 branches are there?

19 MS. REARDON: There are 53
20 neighborhood libraries -- there are 49
21 neighborhood libraries, three regional
22 libraries, a Central Library, Library for
23 the Blind and Physically Handicapped, and
24 then the Rosenbach.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Might you

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 have somewhere in your testimony the
3 demographics of the branch managers? Are
4 any of them led by women -- no. Tell me
5 those led by women and those led by
6 people of color.

7 MS. REARDON: All right.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Of the 53.

9 MS. REARDON: So of the branch
10 managers, it's predominantly women. I
11 want to say 60 percent women.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I'm sorry.
13 You said 53 percent?

14 JUDGE DEMBE: 60.

15 MS. REARDON: 60 percent.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And what
17 percentage of those are led by black and
18 brown professionals?

19 MS. REARDON: So I'm going
20 to -- I have to get that information. I
21 apologize, Councilwoman. I'm not laying
22 my fingers on that one, but I want to say
23 it is probably about 35 percent.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: The bell
25 has rung, and so we have to circle to the

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 next colleague, and I'll circle back when
3 my time arrives.

4 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
6 you, Councilwoman.

7 Councilman Taubenberger,
8 please.

9 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Thank
10 you, Mr. Chairman.

11 I have a couple questions, and
12 they really relate about hours of
13 operation. Are they standard throughout
14 the City?

15 MS. REARDON: Yes. Pretty
16 much, yes.

17 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: So
18 the Northeast Regional Library is open
19 about the same time as the main branch?

20 MS. REARDON: So, no. The
21 Parkway Central Library is open 67 hours
22 a week, and that's a state mandate that
23 that specific unit has to be open that
24 many hours, because it's the largest of
25 the collection and it is -- because of

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 the size of the collection and it is the
3 Central Library. So that's a state
4 mandate.

5 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: So
6 that is different, but then the rest of
7 the libraries are open pretty much
8 similar timing?

9 MS. REARDON: Right; roughly 42
10 hours a week.

11 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: 42
12 hours a week. And if there are some
13 problems, of course we'll discuss that in
14 a moment. I will have a detailed
15 question. Let me follow up on the state
16 mandate. Does the state give any dollars
17 toward the operation?

18 MS. REARDON: Sure. The state
19 provides about \$6.7 million to the Free
20 Library of Philadelphia, predominantly to
21 support the public service operations,
22 mostly at the Central Library but also
23 for Library collections and maintenance
24 of our buildings.

25 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: So

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 the Central Library is open -- could you
3 give me --

4 MS. REARDON: 67 hours a week.

5 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: 67
6 hours. What does that entail?

7 MS. REARDON: So Monday through
8 Thursday it's 9:00 to 9:00, Friday it is
9 9:00 to 6:00, and Saturday it is 10:00 to
10 6:00 and -- 10:00 to 5:00 -- 9:00 to
11 5:00, and four hours on Sunday.

12 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: And
13 four hours. So from like 12:00 to 4:00
14 or something like that?

15 MS. REARDON: 1:00 to 5:00.

16 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Okay.
17 And the state mandates that because it's
18 the largest collection in the state; is
19 that correct?

20 MS. REARDON: Right. And the
21 Free Library of Philadelphia is one of
22 four research centers as determined by
23 the state librarian, us and the Carnegie
24 Library in Pittsburgh, Penn State, and
25 the State Library. So we are recognized

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 as one of the vast resources in the
3 Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

4 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: How
5 many dates or, I guess, hours is the
6 question I have -- and this I would like
7 a detailed answer if you don't have it
8 now, but I would like you to come back to
9 the Committee and particularly myself.
10 How many hours have been lost because
11 guards were not available to work at a
12 particular branch?

13 MS. REARDON: Right. I'll get
14 back to you.

15 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: But
16 that's important. There's a lot of young
17 people, most of which are nameless, we'll
18 never know who they are, that really
19 depend on the libraries for a lot of
20 things - a safe place to study, a place
21 where the resources are there. You would
22 be surprised how many quotes you can get
23 from people that are very successful on
24 how important a library is in their
25 growing up and their livelihood, and I'm

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 one of those kids in as far as I enjoy
3 going to the library. I could study
4 there quietly. My parents had a deli and
5 it was a busy deli. And, yes, it was my
6 duty as the only son of two German
7 immigrants when I worked in that deli,
8 but I also enjoyed my time at the
9 library, because I was my own boss. I
10 didn't have to answer the buzzer when
11 someone came in and slice a half a pound
12 of baloney.

13 MS. REARDON: You and me both.

14 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: My
15 parents are gone now, so I can say that.
16 They may catch up with me when we all
17 meet again upstairs, but I'll tell you
18 very bluntly, it meant a lot to me to
19 have uninterrupted time to study and it
20 was a great place to do that. I'd like
21 that to happen for other children.

22 MS. REARDON: We all would too,
23 yes.

24 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:
25 Because they're not alone. And there may

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 not be a lot of numbers, but when it's
3 all said and done, we've done a great
4 service for a lot of children and can
5 help them greatly.

6 MS. REARDON: Thank you.

7 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Mr.
8 Chairman, that is it.

9 I thank you very much. If you
10 could get that back to me.

11 MS. REARDON: I will.
12 Absolutely.

13 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:
14 Actually, my staff will have a card, so
15 we'll have a quicker e-mail.

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
17 you, Councilman. And, Councilman, I
18 believe you were probably a great slicer
19 of baloney. I'm sure of that.

20 Councilwoman Blackwell, please.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
22 you.

23 Good morning.

24 MS. REARDON: Good morning.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 you for all that you do.

3 Now, per your budget, we should
4 not have to worry about libraries open
5 six days?

6 MS. REARDON: Yes.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay.
8 Thank you.

9 We are looking forward to not
10 this year's budget but next year having
11 George's Library, you know, started, and
12 we would like to -- we've been talking
13 for about a couple weeks. Are you part
14 of Rebuild's press conferences? Yes, you
15 are, because you're on --

16 MS. REARDON: We are within --
17 sure, sure, sure.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: All
19 right. Now, I would like to have two
20 press conferences I'm asking for, one
21 new. Kingsessing with my \$17 million.

22 MS. REARDON: Yes.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Can I
24 have it like yesterday? And I've been
25 asking -- and Judge with all that long

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 hair. Geez, she waits until she gets
3 it -- she's got hair --

4 JUDGE DEMBE: You can yank me
5 off stage.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I'm
7 telling you.

8 And I would like to have one on
9 George's Library to stand there on
10 Lancaster Avenue and let the public know
11 it's coming. Can you help me with that?
12 I need two press conferences.

13 MS. REARDON: We'll take a look
14 and I'll talk to my communications staff,
15 sure.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay.
17 And of course we'd like to have them no
18 later than the end of next week. I'm not
19 pushing anybody.

20 MS. REARDON: Yeah; not at all.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: So we
22 are really excited about -- and they're
23 on opposite ends in my district. We
24 really want to let people know, so I'll
25 follow up.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. REARDON: Great.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Okay.

4 Thank you.

5 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
7 you, Councilwoman.

8 Councilwoman Bass.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
10 morning.

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Good
12 morning.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
14 morning.

15 JUDGE DEMBE: Good morning.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: How are
17 you?

18 MS. REARDON: Good morning.
19 How are you?

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I'm very
21 well.

22 I have a few questions, and I
23 wanted to jump right in here. And I
24 wanted to talk about first the Mayor's
25 proposal for \$2 and a half million in a

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 funding increase to the Free Library's
3 budget. And I've been on record saying
4 that I think that the Library System
5 needs a whole lot more than that, and we
6 need --

7 (Applause.)

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: The friends
9 of group have asked for, I think, around
10 15 million. I think based on the visit
11 to my libraries, that the number is
12 probably close to 25 million, because as
13 I --

14 (Applause.)

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: As I talk
16 to them about some of the things that
17 they were including in what was needed, I
18 recognize from being in my libraries in
19 my district that there are still some
20 things that have not been included just
21 for the sake of we're just trying to get
22 over the hump, if you will. And some of
23 the things that we need to see -- and I'm
24 just going by -- I'll use the Nicetown
25 branch as an example, which I had a

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 recent visit to, which you and I have
3 discussed. It has a lot of needs, and we
4 can't get to the bottom of Nicetown's
5 needs alone with \$2 and a half million.
6 It's just not going to do what we need to
7 do.

8 (Appause.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: One of the
10 things that I noticed in my district -- I
11 stretch from Chestnut Hill, Mount Airy,
12 Germantown, Nicetown, Tioga, parts of
13 Olney, parts of Logan, parts of West Oak
14 Lane, parts of Feltonville, and parts of
15 North Philadelphia. So it's a whole lot
16 of real estate to cover.

17 One of the things that I
18 noticed in the more affluent
19 neighborhoods is that there are these
20 little library boxes. You know, they're
21 cute. They look like little birdhouses.
22 People put them in front of their front
23 doors, and you can come and you can put a
24 book in or you can take a book out. It's
25 sort of the concept of sort of this

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 giving and sharing throughout the
3 community and the love of books and of
4 literature. But we don't have those cute
5 little library boxes and the like down in
6 sort of the rougher neighborhoods, so to
7 speak, and we don't have libraries that
8 are open so that you have access to books
9 and materials and computers like other
10 neighborhoods do.

11 So I just for the life of me, I
12 have to say -- listen, I understand
13 that -- I was going to say some increases
14 are better than nothing, but this is
15 almost, in my opinion, this is almost
16 nothing. Two and a half million dollars
17 is not enough to do nearly the level of
18 work that needs to be done to the
19 libraries. And how can we as a city keep
20 talking about a poverty agenda? We keep
21 talking about how we're so focused on
22 eliminating poverty. The best way you
23 can eliminate poverty and do something
24 about it is to make sure you have an
25 educated populus, and the way to do that

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 is to make sure that the libraries are
3 open. Like this is not -- I am not --

4 (Applause.)

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: -- any sort
6 of library expert. I don't have your
7 background and knowledge of libraries and
8 how they work, but I do have some common
9 sense, and that says to me that the
10 libraries need to be open, we need to
11 make a significant investment of them,
12 and that they have to work. And I think
13 it's great what you're doing with the
14 Central Library and the big celebration
15 and splash that was this weekend. I was
16 planning to get down there with my
17 daughter, but we never actually made it
18 down. But I saw the advertisement last
19 week, and on the same day that I saw that
20 advertisement, I also saw that the
21 Nicetown branch was closed due to a lack
22 of staffing.

23 So it's really very hurtful
24 that we're having this huge celebration
25 for all of the City to see down on the

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Parkway and, at the same time, up in
3 North Philly, Nicetown, sorry, y'all,
4 you're out of luck. The library is
5 closed.

6 So these inadequacies --
7 inequities -- thank you; somebody gave me
8 the word. These inequities that exist
9 have to be dealt with. And I'd just like
10 to hear your response to that. How are
11 we going to deal with these things?

12 MS. REARDON: So with the \$2
13 and a half million, we are going to hire
14 45 new staff members to fill the gaps
15 that we currently have. In addition
16 to --

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So we're
18 going to hire 45 new hires?

19 MS. REARDON: Right, in
20 addition to what we've hired this year.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: In each --

22 MS. REARDON: So it will filter
23 around particularly where we have the
24 lower number of staff members
25 throughout -- average staffing should be

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 around seven per library. So we want to
3 make sure we get everybody up to that
4 minimum through a combination of
5 full-time and part-time staff.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So the
7 average should be seven?

8 MS. REARDON: Mm-hmm.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And what is
10 the average now?

11 MS. REARDON: Probably six,
12 would you say, Joe?

13 MR. BENFORD: Probably around
14 six. But there are some branches that
15 are below that number.

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: You got
17 to talk into the microphone. They can't
18 pick it up.

19 MS. REARDON: So the answer
20 was, the average is about six, but there
21 are some with five and a half.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. So
23 how do we -- so is this number going to
24 guarantee that our libraries are going to
25 be open?

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. REARDON: Yes. With the
3 supplement that we're putting in with the
4 state funds to make this happen, yes.
5 But I want to be very careful that the
6 Saturdays -- that when we add the
7 Saturdays, we're working internally now
8 to say whether that's a full-day Saturday
9 or a four-hour Saturday. That's the
10 question we have around making sure. We
11 will guarantee six-day service, but it's
12 the Saturday that we're working on to
13 ensure how far we can go.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I think
15 it's without question that we have to do
16 a full day on Saturday, and I'll tell
17 you, I was out Saturday night --

18 (Applause.)

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I was out
20 on Saturday night at two events, and the
21 first event we went to was probably
22 around 8 o'clock in the evening that we
23 got there, around the Broad and Hunting
24 Park area, and there were probably 30
25 young people hanging outside of a

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 take-out store. And when someone spoke
3 to them about sort of just like the
4 loitering, the hanging around, and they
5 said, well, we don't have any place else
6 to go. Where else are we going? Where
7 else -- the rec center is closed. The
8 library is closed. Everything is closed.
9 This is where we come.

10 And so if we want to do
11 something about young people and saving
12 their lives and violence in the
13 neighborhood -- because I could just see
14 with everyone hanging out on a warm
15 Saturday night and -- I won't say what
16 the activity was that was going on, but
17 it was not productive, I will tell you
18 that, but with the level of activity that
19 was happening in the neighborhood, I
20 could easily see that something would
21 likely happen after we left as it got
22 later into the evening. And so the idea
23 that -- I don't expect the libraries to
24 stay open all day and all night, but I do
25 think that we have to push ourselves and

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 we have to do more, we have to do better,
3 and we have to stay open later,
4 particularly on Friday and Saturday
5 nights or afternoons. If we can stay
6 open as late as possible, it's going to
7 make a big difference. I think that
8 you'll see a lot of our young people will
9 be using those facilities.

10 MS. REARDON: You have no
11 argument here. I understand.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So what are
13 we going to do to get there? I'm glad
14 you're on board. So you're on board with
15 our request for 25 million, right?

16 (Applause.)

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes? Yes?
18 Say yes. Yes?

19 MS. REARDON: We'll work
20 together on this one.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: We'll work
22 together. So tell me what your thoughts
23 are. What's your plan? How do we get
24 here? How do we get to doing something
25 about the problem?

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. REARDON: Let me just begin
3 by saying I think the Free Library has
4 the best staff in the world. I think
5 that you can't ask for --

6 (Applause.)

7 MS. REARDON: The commitment of
8 the staff and the extra mile that
9 everybody goes, I mean, the City is
10 blessed to have the marvelous staff that
11 we do.

12 It takes a lot to run this
13 Library System, and that's why the
14 conversation around additional hours, how
15 do we allocate it, how do we engage the
16 community. The community engagement
17 piece of this is really important to us
18 and so to your very point.

19 We have community organizers in
20 every cluster now, and they have done a
21 tremendous amount of work in engaging the
22 community. I do think this is -- it
23 takes a village to ensure solid library
24 service, and that's where I'm going to
25 end.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. If
3 we could figure out -- and I agree with
4 you that we have some of the best
5 employees in the Library System. And as
6 someone who was a library kid myself, I
7 certainly remember and recognize the work
8 that's done by the Library staff. And
9 also I didn't know if you wanted to
10 comment in terms of like the amount of
11 time off, because that seems to have
12 become a part of the conversation around
13 funding for libraries somehow, that there
14 is this rate of absence by Library
15 workers that is higher than other
16 departments, that they are taking off
17 time that they shouldn't take off. I
18 don't know exactly what it is, but
19 they're just a --

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE:
21 Councilwoman, if I could ask this be the
22 last -- because we want to circle -- if I
23 could ask you to circle back, to be fair
24 to everybody.

25 MS. REARDON: Can I respond to

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 that?

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Did the
4 bell ring?

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Oh, yeah.
6 About three minutes ago.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I'm sorry.
8 I'm sorry. Can we answer that question?

9 COUNCILWOMAN GREENLEE: Yes.
10 If you could just answer that
11 quick and then we can circle back, I'd
12 appreciate it.

13 MS. REARDON: I do think it's
14 an important question to answer, because
15 my staff -- it is not unusual for the
16 Free Library of Philadelphia to be among
17 the top five departments, and usually we
18 hit in about number five. It is a
19 historic number. This is not new. The
20 Free Library of Philadelphia staff use
21 their time.

22 We went from being one of the
23 older departments in the City to now
24 being one of the younger departments in
25 the City, and with that comes a different

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 use of time. Many of our female staff
3 members had children this year, and
4 unfortunately we have quite a number of
5 staff -- and last year was over 20 -- who
6 are really quite ill. And so, you know,
7 really go home, take care of yourself.

8 So, yes, it's high. I can't
9 imagine it's going to drop much lower,
10 but we're running a rate of about 18
11 percent. But it's vacation and it's sick
12 certified and, you know.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I just want
14 to ask one quick question on that.

15 MS. REARDON: But, I mean,
16 there's a rationale to the time, right?

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Right. But
18 I was just want to be clear that in your
19 estimation, there is not an abuse --

20 MS. REARDON: No.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: -- of the
22 leave policy by Library employees?

23 MS. REARDON: Not at all.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I just
25 wanted to be clear on that.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
4 you. Thank you, Councilwoman.

5 Councilman Domb.

6 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
7 Mr. Chairman.

8 And good morning.

9 MS. REARDON: Good morning.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: First of all,
11 I want to thank you for all the great
12 work the Library is doing.

13 MS. REARDON: Thank you.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: You guys have
15 been a great partner.

16 MS. REARDON: Thank you.

17 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So I have a
18 few questions I wanted to ask and, that
19 is, the Saturday hours, in a typical
20 library in the City, what time would they
21 be open?

22 MS. REARDON: So during the
23 week our libraries open -- our
24 neighborhood libraries open at 10
25 o'clock, and the average is either 10:00

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 to 6:00 or 12:00 to 8:00. Those are sort
3 of the hours, but they're open eight
4 hours a day when they're open.

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: How about on
6 Saturday? What are we looking at?

7 MS. REARDON: So we have a
8 mixture right now. We have 23 that
9 are -- 23, Joe, or 30? Hold on.

10 MR. BENFORD: So we have five
11 branches that only have four hours on
12 Saturday from 1:00 to 5:00. The rest of
13 the neighborhood libraries that are open
14 are open 10:00 to 5:00.

15 COUNCILMAN DOMB: With this
16 increase, what kind of increase in hours
17 are going to occur on Saturday?

18 MR. BENFORD: Well, we're going
19 to get all 49 -- we'll have 53 agencies
20 open on Saturday.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So I'm
22 looking at the budget, and Page 7 it says
23 hours of service for '19, 106,800 and in
24 '20 we're going to 122,000 hours of
25 service, which is like a 15 percent

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 increase in the hours. And those are
3 mostly all on Saturday?

4 MS. REARDON: Councilman, it's
5 actually a mixture of things. So it is
6 about solidifying the service levels
7 during the week, Monday to Friday, and
8 then the additional -- that's where a lot
9 of the 45 positions that we're talking
10 about are going to fit in, in addition to
11 then getting all the libraries open on
12 Saturday, which the heavy use of the
13 budget is actually on the temp, seasonal,
14 and part-time budget, is how we usually
15 cover our Saturdays.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So I'm just
17 looking at this financially. It looks
18 like the hours are increasing overall 15
19 percent and the cost of increasing those
20 hours is about 7 and a half percent.

21 MS. REARDON: So in addition to
22 the \$2 million that the Mayor is adding,
23 there's going to be an additional
24 supplement of state money to getting us
25 up to the 3 -- a little over \$3 million

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 to make this happen.

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So in the
4 General Fund, it shows a \$2.9 million
5 increase.

6 MS. REARDON: So the 900,000,
7 other than the 2 million, is all of the
8 increases, collective bargaining
9 increases, for the staff of 33 and 47.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So our share
11 is probably closer to 4 and a half to 5.

12 MS. REARDON: Right.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And that
14 other piece is coming. That's good.

15 MS. REARDON: Yes.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I have some
17 other general questions, then I'll circle
18 back. But the Capital Budget shows that
19 the Free Library has 11.4 million in
20 capital funding that's been carried
21 forward from as far back as Fiscal 2009.

22 MS. REARDON: Right.

23 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Any reason
24 why we haven't invested those monies?

25 MS. REARDON: So most of that

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 money -- if the project isn't underway --
3 why don't we get Jim up here, please.

4 If the project isn't underway,
5 it's already complete. Because right now
6 we have -- in the last five years, we
7 have put together -- we have fixed -- we
8 have provided support -- 146 projects
9 have been taken care of, anywhere from
10 air conditioning to boilers to roofs and
11 you name it. So we have been using the
12 money. So there should be very little
13 reserve left, except for projects that
14 are just sort of in their final phases
15 and closing out documentation.

16 Jim, do you want to comment on
17 that?

18 (Witness approached witness
19 table.)

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please
21 identify yourself.

22 MR. PECORA: My name is James
23 Pecora. I'm the Vice President for
24 Property Management for the Library.

25 The money that you've

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 identified includes a number of dollars,
3 quite a bit of dollars, that's listed as
4 match from the Library. So it's not --
5 what we have available right now when we
6 take into account the \$1 million for
7 Fiscal '20 is about 2.3 million.

8 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Is that money
9 that we've actually borrowed and we're
10 paying interest on?

11 MR. PECORA: I'm sorry?

12 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Is that money
13 that we borrowed and are paying interest
14 on?

15 MR. PECORA: No.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: No? Okay.

17 My records, by the way, show
18 about \$3 million of that is ours and the
19 rest is other money. Does that sound
20 about right?

21 MR. PECORA: I'll get you an
22 exact summary that will clarify that.
23 What I'm looking at right now is about
24 that, yes.

25 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And when

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 you're doing this work, do you use the
3 cost-benefit analysis required by The
4 Philadelphia Code, Chapter 22, Section
5 2200 that prioritizes investments that
6 advance the Library's goals?

7 MR. PECORA: I don't think I
8 can answer that right now exactly. I'll
9 have to get back to you on that.

10 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And one of
11 the performance goals is to have 25
12 percent of our staff complete required
13 courses. Any idea what these courses
14 cover and what they're about?

15 MS. REARDON: Right. So that's
16 part of our strategic plan and that we
17 want to ensure that of the -- there's
18 basic coursework that we expect for all
19 of our staff to participate in. And so
20 right now we're running about a little
21 bit behind. We probably have about 20
22 percent of the staff -- this was
23 written -- so about 20 percent of the
24 staff have taken the required sort of
25 curriculum that we want to make sure all

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 of it. But it's over a course of four
3 years, so we'll move everybody through
4 during that period of time.

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So what kind
6 of courses would they be?

7 MS. REARDON: So it is a series
8 of communications, customer engagement,
9 some technology courses, some supervisory
10 courses, those sort of --

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So these are
12 courses that are enabling them to do a
13 better job working the library basically?

14 MS. REARDON: That's exactly
15 right.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Customer
17 service oriented.

18 MS. REARDON: Precisely.

19 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Another
20 question. The Free Library's property
21 management -- I guess that would be in
22 your bailiwick -- program is requesting
23 about 4.7 million this year for
24 maintenance, security, and custodial
25 services for 54 facilities. Do we have

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 an idea what our maintenance costs are
3 per square foot, including custodial
4 costs, and how do our property management
5 costs per square foot compare to Public
6 Property's per square foot cost?

7 MR. PECORA: I've definitely
8 done work on that, which I will send
9 along to you, but compared to similar
10 commercial facilities, we're maybe around
11 \$4 a square foot when we should be about
12 8 to 10.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So we're
14 below. Have we compared this with Public
15 Property?

16 MR. PECORA: With the
17 Department of Public Property? No.

18 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Is that
19 something we could do just to see what
20 our --

21 MR. PECORA: Absolutely. Some
22 of my figures are based on the BOMA
23 standards, but I'll do exactly what you
24 suggested.

25 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I'm just

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 wondering -- last question. I'm just
3 wondering if there's an opportunity for
4 us because Public Property is so big that
5 we could take advantage of some of the
6 contracts they've negotiated, some of the
7 efficiencies they have, or maybe you have
8 and they can take advantage, but I think
9 there should be a collaboration between
10 the two to see how we could maybe save
11 some money.

12 MR. PECORA: Absolutely. And
13 we work with Public Property Commissioner
14 and the staff there quite frequently as
15 well as Energy, have a lot of
16 collaboration there. So that's a good
17 suggestion.

18 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you
19 very much.

20 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
22 you, Councilman.

23 Councilwoman Gym, please.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
25 very much, Mr. Chair.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 And good morning.

3 MS. REARDON: Good morning.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So, first of

5 all, almost a decade after a prior

6 administration had tried to close our

7 libraries, it is really an incredible

8 moment for us to be here talking about

9 expanding our services. And I know that

10 it has a lot not only to do with the

11 current Administration and the leadership

12 at the Library, but mostly the people in

13 this room who have made libraries in

14 every neighborhood a significant

15 priority. So I, first of all, want to

16 thank the advocates in this room for the

17 tremendous work you've done to make sure

18 that we --

19 (Applause.)

20 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: -- that we

21 keep moving forward and that we're making

22 bigger and greater investments. And I'm

23 confident that the people in this room

24 will help us get there.

25 So I wanted to ask about

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 ensuring that service is available for
3 our libraries six days a week over the
4 course of the entire year, and I want to
5 understand a little bit about the
6 difference between the school year and
7 the cost over the entire year. And also
8 if you could start by saying why you
9 think it matters to have a year-round --
10 like what's the difference if we only
11 ensure it during the school year versus
12 summer and year round?

13 MS. REARDON: So service during
14 the school year literally is clearly what
15 it takes. We work with the School
16 District as well as our local
17 neighborhood schools to ensure that the
18 work that we're doing ties in with the
19 curriculum of the students. And it's
20 funding that's the difference between the
21 school year and a full year. And so when
22 we do year-round service, it would be an
23 additional -- I need Joe back up here to
24 talk about the numbers, but it is -- it
25 literally will then guarantee that there

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 is no -- the difference between the
3 school year and the full year is that
4 there won't be the summer slide, so that
5 we ensure that our children continue to
6 read and keep up with their literacy
7 efforts throughout the summer so they
8 start back to school ahead of the game
9 when they go back in September. So
10 that's the distinctive difference from an
11 education and literacy standpoint.

12 The numbers, I want to just get
13 you the numbers on -- it's just about
14 another \$1.2, \$1.3 million, and that's
15 just the full-time staff that we would
16 need to ensure the service.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Great. And
18 for me, one of the things -- I mean, I
19 have three children. I raised them in
20 our libraries in the summertime, and it
21 seems like the Library is the academic
22 home for a lot of young people when
23 school is not in session. So you run
24 particular summer programs. I know my
25 children took part in reading challenges.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 They did summer projects in their
3 library. And can you talk a little bit
4 about some of the programs that you would
5 like to see run in the summer if we could
6 get it to a year round?

7 MS. REARDON: So it would be --
8 summer reading would actually take on
9 probably -- I can't speak for Chris, who
10 runs our youth services program, but it
11 would be a much more robust program.
12 There's no doubt about it.

13 Right now we run a summer camp
14 throughout the summer for a week or so
15 with the children, and then right before
16 they go back to -- and the purpose of
17 that is -- and it's more toward the end
18 of the summer so that they start school
19 ready to go.

20 But you know that we could
21 almost think about LEAP as a year-round
22 activity. The LEAP is the after-school
23 enrichment program we carry during the
24 week for -- it's Monday through Thursday
25 and then again on Saturday. And so that

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 would just continue throughout, because
3 the intensity of that program with the
4 tabletop literacy initiatives as well as
5 the thoughtful program we run for our
6 teen leadership assistants would be year
7 round rather than the part-time work,
8 because this is really workforce
9 investment in the young people in our
10 neighborhoods when we hire them.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you.

12 You know, one of the things
13 that has mattered a lot is to make sure
14 that our libraries are open on the
15 weekends. Not every family has the
16 ability to go in during a weekday,
17 especially if the hours are relatively
18 uncertain, and the expansion of Saturday
19 hours for the Library System was a big
20 step in the right direction.

21 So for the libraries who have
22 been able to open on Saturdays, about how
23 many hours have they been able to be open
24 on a typical Saturday?

25 MS. REARDON: So of the 40

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 libraries that are now open on Saturday,
3 35 of them are seven-hour days, from
4 10:00 until 5:00, and then there are five
5 that are 1:00 until 5:00.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And how did
7 you manage to cover that expansion with
8 your existing staff time? Did you have
9 to go into overtime? Did you have to
10 access other budgets that you might have
11 used for other types of things?

12 MS. REARDON: All of the above,
13 yes.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Could you be
15 specific?

16 MS. REARDON: So, yes. It was
17 hiring additional part-time and temporary
18 staff, lots of overtime, lots of overtime
19 being used to get the libraries open, as
20 well as the additional funds from our
21 state grants to make it happen.

22 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. And
23 because those came out of state grants,
24 did that mean that you couldn't fund
25 other programs that you would have

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 otherwise used the money for?

3 MS. REARDON: So it's largely
4 library materials, is the biggest budget
5 that was impacted.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And I think
7 one of the things that I'm starting to
8 learn as I meet with advocates and others
9 is about the state mandate for the
10 percentage of funding that needs to be
11 spent on new materials for the Library.
12 Nothing is more exciting than having new
13 books and materials come in, whether it's
14 videos or the latest fiction or new
15 non-fiction and histories that come in
16 through the Library System. So if there
17 is a state mandate that a certain
18 percentage -- I think it's 12 percent --
19 is spent on material --

20 MS. REARDON: So I appreciate
21 everything you're saying regarding that,
22 but let's make sure -- I think one of the
23 first things that we have to do is
24 understand upon which that 12 percent is
25 established. And so in this -- and it is

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 an issue across the Commonwealth of
3 Pennsylvania. So it is on the totality
4 of dollars that support the Free Library
5 of Philadelphia, including pension and
6 benefits and heat, light, and power and
7 all of these which are contributed
8 services held at the City level and not
9 part of our budget.

10 And so I think one of the first
11 things is the conversation with the
12 Commonwealth to say let's fix where that
13 12 percent is, and then we can have the
14 conversation around the 12 percent. But
15 I do think -- so that number for the Free
16 Library of Philadelphia is \$98 million.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. All
18 right. Thank you. I'll come back again.

19 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
20 you, Councilwoman.

21 Let me sneak one question in
22 here. The Free Library Foundation, what
23 role do they play in funding the actual
24 operations? I know they raise money.

25 MS. REARDON: They raise a lot

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 of money. So the Free Library of
3 Philadelphia Foundation has been
4 responsible for raising the bulk of the
5 funding for our 21st Century Libraries.
6 That was the renovation of the
7 neighborhood libraries, four of those.
8 They funded the lion's share of all of
9 the work that's being done at our Parkway
10 Central Library, which to date is
11 somewhere above \$60 million. It was
12 privately funded. And then of course all
13 of -- so summer reading is funded, part
14 of our LEAP after-school program. We
15 have a program now where we're working
16 with daycare, STARS 1 and 2 daycare
17 centers, to lift them to STARS 3 and 4,
18 and that's a special grant by Vanguard
19 Foundation. We have any number of
20 private supports around, you name it, our
21 author events. So they essentially raise
22 anywhere around \$12 to \$14 million
23 between capital and program.

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.

25 All right. Thank you.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown,
3 please.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Back to
5 the issues of diversity and inclusion.

6 MS. REARDON: Councilwoman, I
7 just want to answer your question about
8 how many libraries.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: The
10 boards, the demographics of the Board?

11 MS. REARDON: No. It's the
12 one -- particularly we have 17 libraries
13 where branches have people of color. So
14 that's about 35 percent of our branches.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.
16 Have you had a chance to get the
17 demographics of your Board?

18 MS. REARDON: Yeah. So of our
19 22 Board members, 12 are female, seven
20 are African American, two are Latinx, two
21 are Asian, ten are white, and two don't
22 identify.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Well,
24 thank you for the improvement with
25 regards to the Board composition. Ten

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 years ago it did not look like that at
3 all.

4 MS. REARDON: That's right.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I want to
6 follow up on Councilwoman Bass's
7 questions regarding Nicetown.

8 You say that the money that the
9 Foundation uses or used or raised
10 recently were used for four libraries in
11 addition to the main library. Who were
12 the four lucky libraries that were
13 beneficiaries of those dollars given what
14 Councilwoman Bass has said about the
15 Nicetown Library?

16 MS. REARDON: So there was the
17 South Philadelphia Library -- there were
18 five. South Philadelphia, but that was
19 largely funded by the Children's Hospital
20 of Philadelphia. It was the Logan
21 Library on Broad and Wagner. It was the
22 Lovett Library in Mount Airy. It was the
23 Tacony library on Torresdale Avenue,
24 Knorr and Torresdale, and it was the
25 Lillian Marrero Library on 6th and

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Lehigh.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So the
4 criteria that you used -- or what is the
5 criteria you used for those libraries
6 that become beneficiaries of hard-earned
7 fundraising dollars?

8 MS. REARDON: Largely to do
9 with the building conditions. These
10 were -- all of them, with the exception
11 of Lovett, were old Carnegie buildings
12 that were just in really significantly
13 deteriorating conditions, and they were
14 also in areas where the neighborhoods
15 needed a bit more of a lift, that's for
16 sure. And so that's how basically it was
17 determined. It was fairly unscientific,
18 other than the fact that the building
19 conditions of these four facilities
20 needed a lot of support.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.
22 You've given me the demographics on your
23 Board of Directors. Please provide for
24 us now the demographics of your executive
25 suite. Who sits in your executive suite?

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. REARDON: So there are five
3 executives, City-funded executives, and
4 there are two female, three male, four
5 white, one -- I'm going to say she
6 identifies as mixed race.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So there's
8 no African American in your executive
9 suite?

10 MS. REARDON: Yes, there is.
11 My chief of staff.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So
13 provide --

14 MS. REARDON: So one is a
15 person of color, four are white.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Of the 45
17 new hires, will they have to come to you
18 by way of civil service?

19 MS. REARDON: Yes.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Civil
21 service? Okay.

22 MS. REARDON: Yes.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: My
24 homework indicates that the Board of
25 Trustees of the Free Library authorized

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 the creation of a Diversity and Inclusion
3 Committee in May 2017.

4 MS. REARDON: Right.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: It's two
6 years later and you're telling us that
7 you are, quote, "in the process of
8 developing a Diversity and Inclusion
9 Advisory Committee." Who currently is on
10 the Committee and how many times has the
11 Committee met?

12 MS. REARDON: So the Committee
13 has never met, and it has not been
14 populated yet. We're slow to this.
15 We're slow to get this off the ground.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And so
17 what is the role of leadership across
18 City government when the Mayor has made
19 it exceedingly clear that he wants to
20 have a government that looks like
21 Philadelphia and we want to have
22 executive suites that look like
23 Philadelphia and it's two years later and
24 we're hearing that the creation of the
25 Diversity and Inclusion Committee is just

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 forming? What's the role of leadership?

3 MS. REARDON: So our role is
4 actually to get it off the ground and get
5 going. And so we've begun the
6 conversation internally. But a lot of it
7 has to do with my ensuring that the
8 executive team of the Free Library is
9 actually well trained, owns the issue,
10 and is responding. But we know that we
11 actually want to make -- we're talking,
12 discussing about how the Committee gets
13 populated. We've met with a team of
14 staff in addition to local -- no; DC 47.
15 But all of this needs to be a
16 conversation as to what the Committee
17 looks like and what are the strengths
18 that we need to ensure the success of the
19 overall D&I work of the Library.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And so
21 when do you expect to have tangible
22 evidence that this matters to the Board
23 and to the --

24 MS. REARDON: So the Board -- I
25 don't know if, Pam, you want to talk

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 about it.

3 But the Board of Trustees has
4 already established its work.

5 JUDGE DEMBE: When this became
6 public this spring --

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: When what
8 became public?

9 JUDGE DEMBE: That there was
10 concern among the employees about being
11 treated fairly and equally.

12 So I put together a committee
13 of Board members - three blacks, two
14 whites, two women, three men. We have --

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Could you
16 submit that in writing to the Chair,
17 please, the names of those individuals?
18 I do recall years ago when Councilman
19 Goode and I stated in a letter that we
20 appreciate having as a part of the
21 testimony the demographics of the Board
22 and the demographics of the executive
23 suite so that we actually have that as a
24 part of the testimony. So if we could
25 resume that practice, that would be huge.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 JUDGE DEMBE: We are having our
3 first meeting at the end of this month.
4 So it is moving.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. On
6 April 5th your union reached out to you
7 to discuss a mutual process wherein a
8 labor-management committee would be
9 developed to address the
10 bias/discrimination issues. Please help
11 us why you declined the offer if we are
12 committed to diversity and inclusion.

13 MS. REARDON: So I didn't
14 decline the offer, because the letter
15 states that there was an agreement, and
16 there was no agreement. There was never
17 a conversation between myself and DC 47.
18 Let me also state that DC 47 does not
19 represent the bulk of my 1,500 employees.

20 And so there's a conversation
21 to be had. I am more than happy to
22 engage the unions on this, but it has to
23 be a collaboration and not a dictate.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Of course.
25 So am I hearing you say then that the

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 committee itself would be inclusive of
3 the labor community, the union community?

4 MS. REARDON: So most of my
5 staff is unionized, so --

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I'm
7 talking --

8 MS. REARDON: By right, you
9 have to include --

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Please
11 don't misunderstand me. I'm talking
12 specifically about the Diversity and
13 Inclusion Committee.

14 MS. REARDON: Yes, I
15 understand. So by nature, the unions
16 will have representation on the
17 Committee.

18 No. I'd much rather a
19 collaboration among the many unions in
20 addition to my many staff that are not
21 represented. So I'm just giving you the
22 view. So when I talk about the global
23 organization, it is much larger than some
24 number, hundred and so members, of DC 47,
25 2187.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. The
3 bell has rung. I'll wait my turn.

4 MS. REARDON: Okay.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,
6 Mr. Chairman.

7 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
8 you, Councilwoman.

9 Councilwoman Bass.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

11 I just want to follow up on
12 Councilwoman Brown's questioning, because
13 I'm a little confused.

14 So what percentage of your
15 staff is represented by DC 47?

16 MS. REARDON: Roughly 250.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Out of?

18 MS. REARDON: Out of 1,500.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

20 MS. REARDON: So when I'm
21 talking about my staff, I'm talking about
22 100 percent of the human beings working
23 in the organization full time, part time,
24 hourly.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 understand. I guess I'm a little
3 perplexed as to why if any organization
4 reaches out, regardless of who they are,
5 DC 47, the City Human Relations
6 Commission, whoever it is, and offers to
7 be helpful around diversity and
8 inclusion, why we would not accept that
9 offer, knowing that we have problems. We
10 have a problem in the Library System.

11 MS. REARDON: So we have -- I
12 didn't turn anybody down. So let's
13 understand, I did not turn anybody down,
14 so --

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So what was
16 the response then?

17 MS. REARDON: My response was
18 that we had not had a conversation around
19 collaboration. And so that was what I
20 said. So if we want to have a
21 conversation around collaboration, let's
22 have a conversation around collaboration,
23 but collaboration is just that, it's a
24 dialogue. It's not a debate. It's not a
25 dictate, and that's how I received the

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 letter.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well, I
4 certainly understand and I can respect
5 that and I think that anyone would
6 respect that. I was under the impression
7 that their offer was rejected. You're
8 saying that's not accurate?

9 MS. REARDON: No, it was not
10 accurate.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: It was not
12 rejected?

13 MS. REARDON: It was not
14 rejected.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: All right.
16 Very good.

17 So the Diversity and Inclusion
18 Committee, I do have some questions about
19 that. I'm still confused, just going
20 back to the Councilwoman, as to why it
21 took two years and they still haven't
22 met, it still hasn't been populated.
23 When you talk about your priorities, if
24 it's a priority, you'll get it done. If
25 it's important to you, you'll get it

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 done. And the fact that it hasn't been
3 done says it's not a priority, it's not
4 important.

5 And, furthermore, to my
6 understanding, there was an issue with a
7 particular senior manager who had some --
8 there was some concern about bias and
9 discrimination, and there was an
10 investigation that was launched, and you
11 responded that although this particular
12 employee's responses were absolutely
13 unacceptable, that there was going to be
14 no Library action that was going to be
15 taken and --

16 MS. REARDON: From a
17 disciplinary standpoint.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I'm sorry?

19 MS. REARDON: From a
20 disciplinary standpoint.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: From a
22 disciplinary. So if we have someone who
23 is on the Library staff, so basically a
24 City of Philadelphia employee, who has
25 made remarks that are inappropriate, I

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 think are your words, inappropriate,
3 unacceptable, intolerable, and there was
4 no disciplinary action that was made
5 about this woman towards an African
6 American woman who was trying to do
7 something around issues of diversity
8 within the library system, can you talk
9 about that?

10 MS. REARDON: So I can't get
11 into the specifics because of the privacy
12 rules that surround this, but --

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Sure, I
14 understand.

15 MS. REARDON: I'm just saying.
16 So we have -- so there was an
17 investigation, in addition to my own
18 review of the situation. There was -- we
19 came away that there was -- yes, there
20 was inappropriate response by the senior
21 staff member, but from a disciplinary
22 standpoint, there was no intent and not a
23 history of discriminatory behavior prior
24 to that. And so were there actions that
25 we took on the management side of it?

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Yes, but as it related to this specific
3 issue, no.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I don't
5 think that's acceptable.

6 MS. REARDON: I understand.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

8 Understanding and action are two
9 different things. I appreciate that you
10 understand, but as a woman of color who
11 has worked in environments that have been
12 less than friendly and people have said
13 things that are highly inappropriate, I
14 could sit here right now and think of
15 things that people have said to me that
16 just sort of upper-level management felt,
17 well, if they said it, it was wrong, but
18 we're not going to do anything about it.
19 And I can't tell you how deep that stain
20 goes and how hurtful that is, and it
21 doesn't go away. And it particularly
22 hurts when you are committed to your job
23 and you feel like your job has really
24 turned their backs on you when you need
25 help, when you need assistance. And I

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 think that that's exactly what we've done
3 to Library employees when we know that
4 something wrong has happened, but we
5 choose not to do anything about it in
6 terms of addressing the employee and
7 offering corrective action, whereas if --
8 it feels like a lot of the time we are
9 swift to discipline when it is someone of
10 color, but when it is someone else, there
11 is not that same level of attention --

12 (Applause.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: -- that is
14 given.

15 There's an issue with respect
16 here. There's an issue with respect.
17 And so I'm not sure that you get it.

18 MS. REARDON: Okay.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
20 That's what you say, okay? All right.
21 Okay. Well, ain't that something?

22 Who is your new diversity and
23 inclusion officer?

24 MS. REARDON: Her name is
25 Donyale Henderson.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Is she
3 here? Is she part of the conversation?

4 MS. REARDON: She had a family
5 emergency.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
7 Because it would be great to hear from
8 her in terms of what she intends to do
9 about diversity and inclusion, and I'm
10 hopeful that she'll have more to say than
11 just "okay" about doing something about
12 the policies at the Library.

13 But I just -- I can't state it
14 enough that there needs to be more. Like
15 "okay" is not acceptable. You need to do
16 more, you need to do better, or we need
17 to get somebody that's going to do more
18 and do better. That's no disrespect on
19 you, but this is a city that's funded
20 with taxpayers of all colors, all shades,
21 and if we don't see that there is
22 something that needs to happen --

23 (Applause.)

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: -- to be
25 respectful of them, then we need somebody

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 who understands what is important to all
3 colors, all communities, all people, all
4 faith. It's not just one individual.

5 (Applause.)

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,
7 Mr. Chairman.

8 MS. REARDON: So, Councilwoman,
9 you have to know that we are deeply
10 committed to this. It is a priority for
11 this organization.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I can't
13 tell it. Based on what you've given me
14 and your response, I can't tell that you
15 are deeply committed to anything related
16 to diversity and inclusion. And show
17 improvement. Like show me what you got.
18 Show me what you're going to do. Don't
19 just talk to me about it. Show me.
20 Before the end of this budget cycle, show
21 me, because I want the libraries to work.
22 Like I said, I'm a library kid. I grew
23 up in the public library, and I know how
24 hard it was in my neighborhood in North
25 Philly. It was hard for me to get to

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 that library, but I love that building.
3 I love what they did for me when I was in
4 that building and the resources that were
5 there.

6 And so to sit here and kind of
7 nonchalantly just kind of, well, okay,
8 like that doesn't sit well with me. And
9 so I'm asking you for more. Like if you
10 want the support of this Council, I think
11 that we deserve more from you than just
12 "okay."

13 (Applause.)

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
15 you, Councilwoman.

16 Councilman Domb, please.

17 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
18 Mr. Chairman.

19 And good morning still. A
20 couple other questions.

21 Who runs the Library's IT?

22 MS. REARDON: His name is John
23 Meier.

24 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And it's not
25 through OIT, is it? It's not through our

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Office of Information Technology?

3 MS. REARDON: No. We have our
4 own separate IT department, yes.

5 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Is there any
6 benefit for us to collaborate with OIT to
7 see if there's some maybe savings there
8 we can utilize?

9 MS. REARDON: Let me have John
10 come up, because he does collaborate
11 tremendously with OIT.

12 COUNCILMAN DOMB: He doesn't
13 have to come up. I'm just suggesting
14 that we do it.

15 MS. REARDON: There's quite a
16 number of projects that we're working on
17 together with OIT, because it's a pretty
18 tight -- they work similar systems.

19 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay.

20 MS. REARDON: And the reason
21 we're separate, Councilman, is because of
22 the E-Rate support that we get from the
23 federal government.

24 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. And so
25 recently, I just wanted to mention, I

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 attended a great event at the Library.
3 It was on the one on the Parkway. I
4 think Campaign for Working Families put
5 it on, and I want to mention it today
6 because it's appropriate, and it was
7 supported by United Way, Department of
8 Revenue, and it was around the Earned
9 Income Tax Credit. And since today is
10 April 15th, it's very important to talk
11 about Earned Income Tax Credit
12 specifically today. But they had over 30
13 volunteers filling out tax returns for
14 free. For free. It was an amazing
15 event. I want to thank you for making
16 that space available, and it was just --
17 it was unbelievable watching people
18 coming in, getting their tax returns
19 filled out, getting the ability to have
20 checks refunded to them. And we continue
21 to leave a hundred million dollars in
22 Philadelphia that could go to 40,000
23 people. So thank you for doing that.

24 MS. REARDON: You're welcome.

25 COUNCILMAN DOMB: For the last

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 three years -- I want to mention
3 something else -- I've supported, I think
4 it's, 27 classes to take the cooking
5 classes at your Free Library.

6 MS. REARDON: Yes.

7 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I'm not sure
8 if people know about these classes, but
9 they're pretty amazing. What, are they
10 for like third and fourth graders, I
11 believe?

12 MS. REARDON: Yes. That's
13 right.

14 COUNCILMAN DOMB: You have a
15 pretty amazing chef or cook, instructor.

16 MS. REARDON: That's right.

17 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Who really
18 gets the kids involved. And I just want
19 to mention that because that's a great
20 program you're doing. We need to expand
21 it to more schools, and if there would be
22 some way of connecting more schools, it
23 would be really good, because I know the
24 kids love the program. They look forward
25 to it. It's just great.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. REARDON: Right.

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Last year
4 when we were here, I challenged the
5 Library to go to the prisons and teach
6 financial literacy, and you met the
7 challenge. I asked for a proposal. You
8 provided it. I supported it. I went in
9 December to the graduation class. I
10 don't remember the teacher, but she did a
11 phenomenal job.

12 MS. REARDON: Right.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And these
14 people had 50 hours of financial
15 literacy, which was amazing. I think
16 it's one of the first in Pennsylvania
17 that's actually going to the prisons and
18 teaching financial literacy.

19 I said to the Commissioner and
20 the Prisons that we would continue to
21 support financial literacy, and any
22 person who was willing to take it, we
23 would support it. I think there's 24
24 people right now taking financial
25 literacy.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. REARDON: That's right.

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: One of my
4 questions is, do you have the capacity to
5 teach more than 24, to teach 50 or 100 or
6 150?

7 MS. REARDON: Do we have the
8 capacity? I think the answer is yes, but
9 let me just turn to Andrew and say,
10 Andrew, yes?

11 He's thrilled to do it.

12 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. And
13 then after we saw that progress, I
14 actually thought of taking into the
15 prisons a coding class. So we have now
16 Sylvester Mobley for the last two months
17 has been teaching 16 people coming out
18 coding, so when they come out this year,
19 they can have jobs in coding.

20 MS. REARDON: Right.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So this
22 year's challenge, because we still need
23 to do more, is to make sure we expand
24 financial literacy to all up there.

25 Number two -- and this is where

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 I need your help -- I want you to teach a
3 course in entrepreneurship for people
4 coming out of the prison. Houston, Texas
5 has something along these lines, but we
6 should be teaching them how to create
7 their own business.

8 Now, having said that, and I'm
9 a big believer in education, but we're
10 missing a second piece in the City. It's
11 great to be educated. It's better to get
12 a great job. Okay? So if we got the
13 best educated person -- I remember one of
14 my cousins got a Ph.D. and they were like
15 delivering newspapers. So, I mean, it's
16 great to have a great education, but we
17 also, in combination, we need a great
18 job.

19 How does the Library -- besides
20 doing this work at the prisons teaching
21 entrepreneurship, what I want to do is
22 see if we can teach financial literacy
23 and entrepreneurship at several different
24 libraries so they become the conduit for
25 job creation across the City.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. REARDON: So we begin this
3 practice at our Business Resource and
4 Innovation Center at the Parkway Central
5 Library, is the sort of home of the work
6 of working with small businesses and
7 entrepreneurs and basically our small
8 business -- our sweet spot with small
9 businesses are companies under 20 people.
10 But we spend a lot of time teaching
11 people how to look at financials,
12 understanding what it takes to build a
13 business, all of the marketing analysis
14 that goes through. So we are already in
15 our Tacony Library working with the
16 Tacony CDC, and we plan to roll it out to
17 a number of other neighborhoods
18 throughout the system. We try to put --
19 we try to spread the wealth around the
20 clusters, if we can, but you want to make
21 sure you're touching the quadrants of the
22 City.

23 So the answer is, yes, we're
24 ready and we've been talking about it,
25 but it's how it is we get -- and train

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 the staff to add this to the program
3 roster.

4 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So I have two
5 requests. As many as maybe 10 or 15 or
6 20 libraries not that are on the Parkway
7 but all over the City.

8 MS. REARDON: Yes.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So
10 Southwest -- every District Council
11 should have one in their district.

12 MS. REARDON: Right.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Or two
14 teaching financial literacy. And more
15 importantly, not just financial literacy,
16 teaching entrepreneurship.

17 MS. REARDON: Yes.

18 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Because I've
19 said this before, but we have 78.8
20 percent of the businesses in the City
21 owned by white people, 10 percent is
22 Asian, 2.4 percent is African American.
23 And we have 41 percent population. So
24 that really -- if the libraries can help
25 us with that, it would be huge.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. REARDON: Yes. Happy to
3 work with you on that.

4 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So would you
5 be able to get me a proposal for that?
6 If you don't ask, you don't G-E-T.

7 MS. REARDON: Yes.

8 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So I'll wait
9 for that. Thank you very much.

10 MS. REARDON: Pleasure.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
12 Mr. Chairman.

13 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
14 you, Councilman.

15 Councilwoman Gym.

16 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
17 very much, Mr. Chairman.

18 Before I go on to some of my
19 questions, I just want to echo the
20 concerns raised by Councilmembers
21 Reynolds Brown and Bass about the
22 importance of dealing with diversity
23 within the Free Library. I don't think
24 there's anybody in this room that won't
25 go to the mat for the libraries, for our

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 communities, and our neighborhoods. As
3 was said earlier, taxpayers fund this.
4 We believe in it. It's a central public
5 institution. But many of us received the
6 survey that was done, and it is important
7 for us to have it be addressed in a
8 significant way and that in particular
9 with our union, DC 47, which represents
10 many of the individuals who are on the
11 lower end of the pay scale, that we want
12 to make sure that their voices are heard
13 as clearly and loudly and that you
14 will -- we can get a commitment from you
15 to proactively reach out to DC 47 to have
16 this open discussion within the Library
17 System as well.

18 MS. REARDON: Yes; both DC 47
19 and 33.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Yes.
21 And we'll continue to follow
22 up, because I think it is an important
23 issue, and I appreciate the comments made
24 by Councilwoman Bass. It's hard to
25 create the leverage and the momentum for

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 public investments if there's doubt and
3 distrust at the core of it.

4 So I wanted to go back about
5 that state mandate for percentage of
6 funding spent on new material. So under
7 the way the system is currently
8 calculated, it would be roughly 98
9 million for the mandate. How much does
10 the Library actually spend on new
11 materials?

12 MS. REARDON: 4.5 million.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And is it
14 the fact that the state does not enforce
15 or is your understanding that -- I know
16 you are indicating that the mandate is
17 probably, because it applies to you,
18 benefits and things external to a
19 traditional operating budget -- or, I
20 mean, pensions and benefits are a part of
21 an operating budget, but because it goes
22 significantly into future obligations.
23 What do you feel is the number that
24 you're looking for in the most ideal
25 scenario?

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MR. BENFORD: Well,
3 Councilwoman, I would go back and look at
4 before the financial crisis in 2008 when
5 we, I believe, had a materials management
6 for books and databases budget of about
7 \$9 million.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So double
9 what you're currently spending?

10 MR. BENFORD: Mm-hmm.

11 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And does the
12 state just not enforce this 12 percent
13 mandate?

14 MR. BENFORD: They have given
15 us waivers. The alternative to the
16 waiver is that we lose our state funding.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And speaking
18 of the state budget, what does the state
19 budget fund within the Library System?
20 What do you use their money primarily
21 for?

22 MR. BENFORD: We actually have
23 several positions that are funded out of
24 that money, the staff at the Library for
25 the Blind and Physically Handicapped, and

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 the bulk of it does go towards
3 collections.

4 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And how much
5 is the state budget? What proportion of
6 the Library's budget?

7 MR. BENFORD: It's about 7.6.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: 7.6 million.
9 Has that money increased or decreased
10 over time?

11 MR. BENFORD: It's been flat.

12 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Flat, okay.
13 Thank you.

14 And one of the things I
15 appreciate, thank you for responding to
16 my request about understanding a little
17 bit about maintenance within the
18 libraries. I noticed that there are only
19 a handful of libraries that are on docket
20 for new major -- I mean, I saw a few that
21 had major renovations in 2017, a handful,
22 but I don't see like a broad -- it does
23 not appear to me that the information you
24 gave back showed a major renovations plan
25 set forth for the Library System. So

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 could you talk a little bit about where
3 you see the facilities assessment leading
4 to in terms of the need for a real
5 investment in infrastructure for the
6 Library?

7 MS. REARDON: So we do have 13
8 libraries in the Rebuild program. So
9 that's a very substantial investment,
10 with Kingessing and McPherson Square
11 Libraries coming up soon. We have the
12 next investment, mostly privately funded,
13 for our Frankford Library and additional
14 work, though not -- some DO money on our
15 Overbrook Park Library, which was deeply
16 damaged through flooding this year. But
17 it's not quite the deep investment that
18 Rebuild and 21st Centuries Libraries have
19 in place.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And how much
21 money is being invested through Rebuild?
22 Like what's the range of money that
23 you're looking at roughly?

24 MS. REARDON: It's hard to say,
25 because -- so right now I believe that

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Kingsessing is scheduled for a \$7 million
3 renovation and McPherson Square, we're
4 looking somewhere in the range of \$12,
5 \$13 million. It's a substantial
6 renovation there.

7 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. The
8 Mayor has proposed an increase in
9 maintenance support, and how many roofs
10 or HVAC systems could you repair with the
11 additional improvements from the
12 Mayor's --

13 MS. REARDON: I'm going to
14 bring up Jim to answer that question. So
15 it's going to be a combination of what's
16 in the Capital Budget there. We've been
17 able to repair quite a number of roofs so
18 far.

19 But you want to answer it?
20 So Jim said there are two roofs
21 that we'll be able to repair with the
22 half a million.

23 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And how many
24 are in need of repair?

25 MS. REARDON: Twelve.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So that does
3 not sound like it's enough.

4 And has there been a cost
5 discussed about what it would take to
6 repair those 12 roofs?

7 MS. REARDON: So let me get Jim
8 up here to answer the question.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Could you
10 get back to us on that?

11 MS. REARDON: Why don't we get
12 back to you. Because Jim has done an
13 assessment of every single library, the
14 conditions in every single library and
15 what the issue is with every single
16 library, and roofs tend to be the
17 biggest, most expensive issue within the
18 libraries.

19 MR. PECORA: Our average cost
20 for the roofs, they can go anywhere from
21 about 350 to -- one of the most recent
22 ones we're working on was about 468. So
23 say in the range of 400 each. So
24 literally a million dollars would take
25 care of two roof jobs. We're looking at

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 like de Rodriguez, for instance, which is
3 not a Rebuild site. We're getting a
4 quote. We worked closely with Public
5 Property, and using their contracts is
6 most efficient. And the Mayor of course
7 helped us out with Fox Chase. Overbrook
8 Park was another issue.

9 So we got some of these
10 covered, but in the past four years,
11 using every available resource that we
12 had, and that's why we depleted our
13 capital, we're around 15. We've replaced
14 around 15 roofs and --

15 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Over what
16 period of time?

17 MR. PECORA: I'm sorry?

18 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Over what
19 period of time?

20 MR. PECORA: Four years. And
21 we're looking at another four or five.
22 I'm hoping to get up to about 18, 19, and
23 that level of activity hasn't happened in
24 decades. So they're all guaranteed
25 30-year roof work, some with the help of

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 the Trustees' funds and then reimbursed
3 through capital. So that's about what
4 we're looking at for that investment.

5 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. All
6 right.

7 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
8 you. Thank you, Councilwoman.

9 Councilman Taubenberger.

10 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Yes.
11 Just really one question, but it is --
12 well, you decide how quickly you can get
13 it back to me.

14 If we were to run every library
15 at the same hours that we run the Central
16 Library, Sunday hours, four hours,
17 extended hours during the week, what is
18 the cost of that?

19 MS. REARDON: I'd have to do a
20 lot of math.

21 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Well,
22 can you get some intern somewhere in that
23 department of yours and do that math?

24 MS. REARDON: So the answer is
25 to run -- so let me make sure I

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 understand the question, is you want to
3 see what it would cost to run the system
4 seven days a week?

5 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:

6 Correct.

7 MS. REARDON: Okay.

8 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Yes.

9 Because like I said, there's a lot of
10 people we might inspire. Many of them
11 are nameless. Many of them are poor
12 right now, but when they come away with
13 the knowledge and an interest in
14 learning, we'll be able to do a great
15 deal to the City and help the City, and I
16 think that is our duty as custodians of
17 the City trust more or less, to look into
18 those numbers and see what it would cost.
19 Who knows? Is it possible? I would hope
20 some of it is possible, but you got to
21 know what the number is before you make
22 the ask.

23 Thank you.

24 Mr. Chairman, thank you.

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 you, Councilman.

3 (Applause.)

4 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Just real

5 quick on it, please. Real quick on a

6 followup on that, I talked about the

7 Foundation money before. You talked

8 about some of the uses. Can those funds

9 be used on personnel costs to help on

10 that?

11 MS. REARDON: So most of the

12 money that comes in is actually

13 restricted to specific projects, and so

14 it depends upon what's in the

15 restriction. So money that comes in for

16 LEAP, we do hire part-time staff, but

17 typically the money that comes in is

18 generally not -- it pays for the

19 Foundation staff that actually raise the

20 money and a few other things, but by and

21 large, the private money doesn't provide

22 for public service, and that has a lot to

23 do with the fact that the City funds and

24 the unions actually provide the public

25 service in the City. So there's -- a

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 conversation would have to -- we'd have
3 to be careful about that, about people
4 doing the same jobs that are privately
5 funded.

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: All
7 right. Now, on the restrictions, is that
8 in writing somewhere? Could you get us
9 what those restrictions are just so we
10 understand which --

11 MS. REARDON: There's
12 nothing -- because we do have staff. If
13 you run a private -- so, for instance,
14 the person that we have hired, the
15 coordinator that we have hired to run the
16 Vanguard program, is literally working --
17 works specifically with daycare centers,
18 but the work is being done in our
19 Kingsessing and one other library. So
20 it's physically in the library, but doing
21 work on a private grant.

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay. I
23 think I follow that. All right. Thank
24 you.

25 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes. As
3 you can tell, the guts of all of my
4 questioning is around the issue of
5 diversity and inclusion. You speak to --
6 you state that of your five exempt
7 employees, one white female, one mixed
8 race female, and three white males. Are
9 there any black men in positions of
10 leadership and responsibility within your
11 organization?

12 MS. REARDON: On the
13 Foundation, yes.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: On the
15 Foundation side?

16 MS. REARDON: Yes.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And can
18 you help us understand why that's not
19 apparent on the City side for folks who
20 live and work -- who live in the City of
21 Philadelphia and pay taxes?

22 MS. REARDON: So these are
23 positions that have been filled for quite
24 some time now.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I'm sorry?

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. REARDON: These are -- the
3 positions that are there, myself and the
4 three white men, we've been in our jobs
5 for a couple of years now and --

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And you
7 state that there's no expected change in
8 these positions over the next four years?

9 MS. REARDON: Precisely, yes.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So
11 currently in the system on the civil
12 service side, am I hearing that the
13 opportunity for black men to rise to
14 positions of leadership and
15 responsibility is --

16 MS. REARDON: So we have
17 cluster leaders. We have people moving
18 up. So the reason we structured the
19 organization with additional
20 administrative librarians was to begin to
21 prepare the organization for succession
22 planning, and there is in my cluster
23 leaders and my regional librarians, there
24 are more moving through the organization
25 much more quickly now that we've

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 established the positions for them to
3 promote into.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. I
5 want to thank you again for responding so
6 promptly to my letter that came to you
7 around February 21. One of the questions
8 was, and I quote, "How does the Free
9 Library assess staff satisfaction with
10 workplace culture, expectations, and
11 standards?" The response was, "There is
12 no official assessment."

13 So how do you gauge staff
14 satisfaction when there's no official
15 assessment? Do you think that that is
16 important, being the leader of an
17 organization of 1,500 employees, and what
18 is your method for receiving feedback
19 from employees to improve overall
20 organizational performance?

21 MS. REARDON: So you're right.
22 This is work that's really done at the
23 cluster level, not at the holistic level,
24 and you're bringing up an important
25 point, that as we go through

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 understanding the work that we're doing
3 with the organization, what's the type of
4 work that we need to -- what are the
5 questionnaires that we need to put out to
6 staff vis-a-vis job satisfaction, because
7 part of the process, part of the work
8 that we want to do on the D&I work is to
9 really look at the job descriptions, the
10 tests, the civil service tests, and what
11 is it that we need to put in place. And
12 if in fact people are concerned about
13 being able to voice their opinion or
14 voice their voice what's going on, then
15 we have to create the structure, the
16 infrastructure within the organization
17 and a safe space for those staff to go to
18 be able to talk.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes, yes,
20 yes, yes, yes, yes. And to say that
21 employees can also file complaints with
22 the U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission,
23 the Pennsylvania Human Relations
24 Commission, and the Philadelphia
25 Commission on Human Relations for me is

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 an out and, quite frankly, an excuse if
3 the organization itself does not have a
4 means by which you can ensure --
5 guarantee is not reasonable, but you can
6 ensure that folks will have a fair
7 assessment of their circumstance for all
8 the reasons that Councilwoman Bass
9 articulated.

10 MS. REARDON: Right. So we
11 have -- the first opportunity for us is
12 really at our all-staff day, which is
13 coming up on April 26th where we'll be
14 issuing a questionnaire, sort of pretty
15 unscientific, but let's understand where
16 the baseline is for the organization and
17 where tactically we have to develop
18 strength and feedback to both the Board
19 of Trustees and the -- to create the
20 benchmarks for us to know upon which we
21 need to climb.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes. In
23 your testimony you state, and I quote, "I
24 readily acknowledge that these are first
25 steps. Creating a bias-free workplace is

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 a significant undertaking and not
3 something that can be achieved in short
4 order."

5 I agree 2,000 percent.

6 "This is not meant as an
7 excuse, but rather as recognition of the
8 enormity of what we're trying to do."

9 So the question becomes -- and
10 the Committee hasn't met yet, so this
11 question may indeed be premature, but has
12 there been discussion about timelines and
13 goals that address creating a bias-free
14 workplace? And let me not answer the
15 question for you. What is your game
16 plan?

17 MS. REARDON: So the game plan
18 is, the work that needs to be -- we're
19 working with Andrea Custis at the Urban
20 League to really begin to double down on
21 the training that the executive team
22 needs to take to own the issue and
23 develop the benchmarks and the timeline
24 before the D&I Committee takes over. So
25 it's important we have to sort of set the

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 stage for the D&I Committee to begin
3 understanding the work that they need to
4 accomplish and so -- but it really does
5 need to begin with the executive team and
6 understanding what they need to own about
7 this process and how they become the
8 people who will actually be the executive
9 sponsors of the employee relation groups
10 that we hope to be able to create around
11 whatever the issue that the staff really
12 need to be able to meet and talk about.
13 And so all of that is all part of the
14 process.

15 I really do believe that once
16 we get the lay of the land with the
17 information that comes to us from our
18 all-staff day, that we're able to begin
19 understanding the giant -- where the gaps
20 are and understanding what are the
21 roadblocks to sort of more or less
22 ventilate, if you will, the executive
23 management, the senior management,
24 executive management of the organization
25 so people do really feel that they have

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 an opportunity to grow through the
3 organization.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Is your
5 diversity and inclusion officer part of
6 your executive team?

7 MS. REARDON: Really good
8 point, because I just met with her about
9 a week ago, and she's making the
10 recommendation she become a member of the
11 executive team, and I welcome that, yes.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So I can
13 have my say, but ultimately you get your
14 way, and if indeed you all are serious
15 and, to quote you, deeply committed, then
16 the diversity and inclusion officer
17 should not be optional. They should be
18 required to be a part of the executive
19 team, because that sends the message to
20 your organization that leadership cares
21 and leadership is authentically concerned
22 about changing the culture over there.

23 MS. REARDON: Right.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: It's very
25 disturbing.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. REARDON: I understand.

3 Yeah, I agree with you.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

5 Vetting the vendors for the training, I'm
6 thrilled to hear that you have engaged
7 the Urban League of Philadelphia, whose
8 mission is about creating fairness,
9 equity and the like. So what is your
10 process or what will be your process for
11 vetting vendors who will conduct the
12 actual training for your employees within
13 your organization?

14 MS. REARDON: So this is the
15 work we hope to do with Andrea. She sort
16 of helps us look at the vendors who are
17 good at this work, who is in this
18 universe, because I do think that there's
19 a lot we don't know about this, and how
20 is it we build the education and
21 intelligence around it as well. But just
22 even among the group of staff that have
23 brought this to the fore, even among
24 those staff, there's capacity for
25 training on the different issues that

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 have come up. So I think that there's
3 capacity within, in addition to bringing
4 in vendors who have a lot of capacity.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
6 saying there's capacity within the
7 organization?

8 MS. REARDON: I do. I think
9 that there are certain staff members that
10 have, prior to their work at the Free
11 Library of Philadelphia, done a lot of
12 work in certain communities and certain
13 issues.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. The
15 bell has rung. I have to honor the
16 clock. Thank you.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
18 Thank you, Councilwoman.

19 The Chair recognizes Councilman
20 Domb.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
22 Mr. President.

23 It might be good afternoon now.
24 Just a question on your in-person visits.
25 The in-person visits went up by about, I

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 guess, 540,000 from '18 to '19, and you
3 opened five new libraries?

4 MS. REARDON: Yes. And the
5 regional -- the Blackwell Regional
6 Library. So six units opened up that
7 have been closed for a long period of
8 time, yes.

9 COUNCILMAN DOMB: You're
10 increasing your hours by 15 percent
11 roughly --

12 MS. REARDON: Right.

13 COUNCILMAN DOMB: -- according
14 to the information. But you're only
15 targeting you're going to go up by about
16 11 percent. Do you think that's a
17 conservative number?

18 MS. REARDON: What was the --

19 COUNCILMAN DOMB: So you're
20 targeting for '19, you save 5.4 million,
21 but you're going to go for '20 when we're
22 open on Saturdays to 6 million.

23 MS. REARDON: Yeah. You know,
24 so the biggest growth -- so, yes, we know
25 that all the buildings are open. We're

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 pretty excited about the population we're
3 seeing come through the door at Parkway
4 Central, but all of the libraries that
5 have been renovated are seeing
6 double-digit usage. But the big increase
7 for us is also electronically and how
8 many people are literally making virtual
9 visits to the library with downloadables.
10 So it is -- we are cautious, deliberately
11 cautious, because at what point in
12 time -- there are a lot of people coming
13 in, and it has a lot to do with the kind
14 of programming that -- for the physical
15 visit, it's the kind of programming.
16 It's less about the borrowing of material
17 than it is about the physical programming
18 and the sort of tactile programming that
19 we're trying to produce to engage
20 audiences.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: The
22 circulation counts, is that where you
23 pick up the Internet visits?

24 MS. REARDON: So there are
25 circulation counts in the downloads, yes.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And then the
3 other question, are you building new
4 libraries and changing the libraries to
5 look in some areas to have accommodating
6 of co-working spaces?

7 MS. REARDON: So all of the
8 libraries that have been renovated so far
9 do include a co-working space, because
10 we've never had study rooms before.
11 Actually if you go to all of our
12 libraries, you'll see very few actually
13 have quiet rooms. And so this is a
14 deliberate attempt for us to create the
15 space for people to come in and actually
16 have a step-away quiet space. It's
17 particularly relevant at Parkway Central
18 with the Business Research and Innovation
19 Center. There are quite a lot of
20 classrooms, rooms for anybody to come in
21 and conduct their business at the
22 library, if you will. So it's nascent,
23 but it's there.

24 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Just one last
25 comment that I made earlier and, that is,

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 that 100 percent on board with the
3 education of the Library services, but
4 would love to see the Library try to help
5 us even more in placement of jobs, job
6 creation, of training of people for
7 employment, because it's a great venue
8 for us. We have 54 facilities, but we
9 can get all these classes into the
10 neighborhoods. Because that's one of our
11 biggest issues to take people out of
12 poverty, getting them a really good job,
13 and the Library could play a very large
14 role in that.

15 MS. REARDON: Right.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you.

17 Thank you for your testimony today.

18 Thank you, Mr. President.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

20 Thank you, Councilman.

21 The Chair recognizes

22 Councilwoman Bass.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

24 Thank you, Mr. President.

25 I just wanted to say a couple

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 of things. So I wanted to follow up on
3 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown.

4 Councilwoman, on your comment,
5 I disagree with you a little bit around
6 that you get your say and that she gets
7 her way. I don't think that applies with
8 taxpayer dollars. So I think the
9 taxpayers are ultimately the one who is
10 supposed to get their way. None of us in
11 this Chamber who are on the taxpayers'
12 dime, if you will, we don't get our way.
13 We get what the taxpayer says should be,
14 and the taxpayers have spoken loudly and
15 clearly that they need more hours, that
16 they need the libraries open, that they
17 need more funding, they need more
18 support.

19 And I wanted to ask you about
20 the 2 and a half million increase and
21 just in reading through a little bit more
22 thoroughly. So is that what the Mayor is
23 proposing or is that what your request to
24 the Administration was?

25 MS. REARDON: So the \$2.5

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 million increase is what the Mayor has
3 proposed for the Free Library of
4 Philadelphia.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So that was
6 not your request?

7 MS. REARDON: So our request
8 was a little larger than that.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. So
10 you did put in a request?

11 MS. REARDON: Mm-hmm.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So what was
13 your request?

14 MS. REARDON: So it was
15 additional days of service. It was a
16 request for \$15 million.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So your
18 request was for 15 million?

19 MS. REARDON: Mm-hmm.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.
21 Great.

22 (Applause.)

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: In previous
24 years, in the last few years, have you
25 put in requests? Because I noticed that

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 the Library funding has been flat for a
3 number of years now; is that correct?

4 MS. REARDON: We always put in
5 the request, but --

6 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: You always
7 put in a request?

8 MS. REARDON: Always, yeah.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. And
10 there has not been any increase in recent
11 years?

12 MS. REARDON: So always there's
13 increases for the collective bargaining
14 increases and there have been increases
15 across for overtime. Across the years,
16 yes, there have been increases.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: But not for
18 materials, for basically beyond the staff
19 but not for the actual functioning of the
20 libraries, the wear and tear of the
21 building, the materials, the computers,
22 all of those sorts of things?

23 MS. REARDON: There's always
24 been a capital budget for us, sure, in
25 that our capital budget -- every year

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 that we get a capital appropriation to be
3 able to take care of the buildings,
4 whether it's boilers or roofs. And then
5 Rebuild has been -- the hopeful work
6 around Rebuild has been important for us
7 as well.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. One
9 of the concerns that I have is -- and,
10 again, your number was 15 million. My
11 number was 25 million, because one of the
12 things I noticed when I went to Nicetown
13 was that Nicetown is more than just a
14 library. There are people there for
15 various reasons, and not all of them are
16 there for books. And so the nature of
17 the library, while the nature of the
18 library has changed at the Central
19 branch, it's also changed in the
20 neighborhoods. So as some neighborhoods
21 have gotten parents who are, let's say,
22 millennials living in Center City,
23 bringing their children to the library on
24 the weekend, enjoying the resources,
25 having an opportunity to take advantage

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 of everything that is offered, you also
3 have uptown, you have a library where
4 people are coming because there's heat
5 and it's cold at home. You have people
6 who are coming who there's air
7 conditioning when it works and it's hot
8 at home. You have people who are coming
9 because there is just unfavorable
10 conditions where they are. So they're
11 really coming to the library because they
12 know this is a place that they can go,
13 nobody is going to bother them, they can
14 sit, they can be left alone. They can
15 read a book or they can pretend to read a
16 book or they can just sit there. But
17 they're coming because the libraries are
18 a safe space.

19 There are a number of people
20 that, in my estimation, are probably in
21 need of some form of social services and
22 mental health services. So I notice that
23 you said the Library has 53 plus
24 branches.

25 MS. REARDON: Yes.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And you
3 have two social workers?

4 MS. REARDON: Right.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: That are
6 located in the main branch?

7 MS. REARDON: Yes.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And so how
9 do we get at some of the other needs for
10 the Library System that exist that are
11 happening outside of the main branch,
12 that are happening in the neighborhood?
13 Like how are we going to figure out,
14 okay, well, this particular library needs
15 something more than what's being offered?
16 How do we get in front of it? How do we
17 help? What are we going to do? What's
18 the game plan?

19 MS. REARDON: So we are working
20 with -- I forget the university, but,
21 yes, we're looking to expand the support
22 to our neighborhood libraries of the
23 social workers, because our communities
24 and our staff need additional support in
25 being able to deal with a lot of the

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 trauma-informed care, if you will. So we
3 have a proposal working with a university
4 where they -- I'm forgetting the name of
5 it. There are going to be peer support,
6 peer counselors, and they'll be placed at
7 the cluster level. And so where there is
8 a call from the neighborhood libraries,
9 we'll be able to go out and respond much
10 more effectively.

11 But the current social workers
12 that we have now do go out to the
13 neighborhood libraries if there's a real
14 crisis going on. I realize it shouldn't
15 take a crisis, but it's work that has
16 been an important piece of support for
17 both our constituents who need services
18 but also the staff who aren't necessarily
19 trained in trauma-informed care, and it's
20 a piece of work that we'll also be doing
21 with all of our staff as part of the
22 training. Building the capacity of the
23 staff is really helping our staff
24 understand what it is to be -- to provide
25 for trauma-informed care.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I
3 understand what you're saying about they
4 go out at a time of crisis, but that is
5 not a proactive approach. And so if we
6 can develop a proactive approach --

7 MS. REARDON: Right.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: -- along
9 with the other folks you said. What was
10 it? Community organizers that are going
11 out?

12 MS. REARDON: Yes.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So how many
14 community organizers do we have?

15 MS. REARDON: We now have nine.
16 I think we have nine.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: How many
18 branches do they each cover?

19 MS. REARDON: So each are
20 working at the cluster level. So there
21 are six libraries per cluster.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So they
23 have six, you say?

24 MS. REARDON: Yeah.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So there's

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 nine clusters, you said?

3 MS. REARDON: Yes.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I'm sorry.

5 I just want to make sure I got everything
6 down.

7 And also just going back to an
8 earlier question about the Free Library
9 Foundation. I know that there are a
10 number of roles that they play in terms
11 of making repairs and fixing things, and
12 there was a question about the roof,
13 because I know that right now -- well,
14 when I came in it was raining outside.
15 I'm assuming it's probably still raining.
16 And I know that right now in Nicetown
17 Library there's a trash can collecting
18 rainwater in what's called the Job
19 Center, and it's a room with some tables
20 and chairs. There's no computers. There
21 no anything. Like I said, it's got a
22 leaky roof. There's no materials. And
23 this is one of the most impoverished
24 sections of the City of Philadelphia.

25 So I'm not sure how many other

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Job Centers exist in the Free Library
3 system, but if they're in the condition
4 of this one, then I would say that we
5 have a real problem on our hands.

6 My office is working directly
7 with NWON, which is the National
8 Workforce Organization. I can't think of
9 the full name of it, but it's headed by
10 Myra Brown, and they do good work in
11 terms of job placement, job training,
12 just sort of career guidance, and she's
13 been working with us to bring the
14 appropriate services into the jobs bank
15 so that we can offer these services to
16 folks in the community. But I'd like to
17 know what role the Library is going to
18 have on a larger scale throughout the
19 City of Philadelphia. How many of these
20 jobs banks do we have and how do they
21 touch people? Tell me they're in better
22 shape than this one is.

23 MS. REARDON: So there aren't
24 many -- so right now we're working with
25 CareerLink, and I think we're in 18, 20

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 libraries where CareerLink is coming in
3 and providing job search support in our
4 libraries. But formalized job centers
5 like at Nicetown, it's unique to
6 Nicetown. We have a lot of training labs
7 around the City where we teach our
8 constituents how to use a computer, how
9 to conduct searches, how to look for a
10 job, but nothing is more -- nothing to
11 the degree that Nicetown -- Nicetown is
12 pretty unique in that regard.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. All
14 right. Thank you.

15 Thank you, Mr. President.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
17 Thank you, Council Lady.

18 The Chair recognizes
19 Councilwoman Gym.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
21 very much, Council President.

22 So I have had a chance to meet
23 with a number of the Library advocates
24 and Friends of the Free Library groups
25 who have come to us and have spoken about

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 the conditions within some of the
3 libraries, and I know we were just
4 talking a little bit about facilities, a
5 little bit about roofing, but some of the
6 stories that we're hearing in the
7 libraries where communities need them to
8 be open the most have been pretty
9 horrific. Kensington's branch, for
10 example, with the mosquito infestation,
11 which is almost impossible to imagine in
12 this day and age. And we are trying to
13 make a big push within City Council,
14 because we're hearing from our
15 communities and our neighborhoods and
16 from amazing advocates that we need that
17 money to go towards real year-round
18 investments but also significant repairs.

19 And so what has been the
20 dialogue with the Mayor's Office in terms
21 of addressing the kinds of repairs,
22 conditions within the Library facilities?
23 Do you have a long-term trajectory?
24 Rather than a year to year kind of dance,
25 is there a more long-term dialogue that

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 we're moving towards so we can assure the
3 folks in Kensington that they walk into
4 their library, they're not going to be
5 surrounded with conditions that we
6 wouldn't subject any of our communities
7 to?

8 MS. REARDON: So we're always
9 in dialogue with everybody in the
10 Administration, and we do present
11 whenever we have our hearing -- whenever
12 we have our presentation on the Capital
13 Budget, we do present some of the global
14 need for the system.

15 We do have a building
16 conditions assessment on every single
17 library. And so the need is not a
18 surprise to anybody. So we have -- so
19 it's not that people don't know. It's
20 about the capacity to be able to -- these
21 buildings are old. We have how many
22 buildings that are a hundred years old,
23 how many buildings are 80 years old? And
24 they have -- there's deep need.

25 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: So do you

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 have a long-term like five-year plan for
3 repair that's been made public both to
4 us, to the Administration so that we can
5 get the planning in gear over a long-term
6 period of time? Like I would like to
7 make sure that our Five Year Plan, for
8 example, has attention to Library
9 facilities, repair over a five-year
10 trajectory.

11 MS. REARDON: We can get that
12 to you. Jim is doing a lot of work in
13 that area.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And, again,
15 I know Councilman Greenlee had asked this
16 question, but I just wanted to clarify
17 the question about Foundation funding.
18 We have a commitment to see, at a
19 minimum, six days a week year-round
20 service. We're saying that the gap is
21 around 1.2 million. We're going to try
22 and close that gap as best as we can on
23 the City end, but is it possible for the
24 Foundation to also support some of that
25 work to ensure that we also can get to

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 year-round service, six days a week in
3 every library branch in every single
4 neighborhood in the City?

5 MS. REARDON: So I don't want
6 to speak for the Foundation, but I do
7 think it is certainly -- Pam is also on
8 the Foundation Board. We would have to
9 present it to both the development staff
10 and the Foundation staff to see --
11 determining their capacity to raise that
12 many millions of dollars, which is
13 generally unrestricted money. And so
14 unrestricted money is really the hardest
15 money to raise, and so that's pretty much
16 where we would have to be in order to
17 cover whether it's Library materials or
18 that sort of thing.

19 JUDGE DEMBE: Again, to follow
20 up on that, most people who donate to the
21 Foundation do it for a purpose, a
22 building campaign, an author's program, a
23 children's program, you name it, but they
24 for the most part -- it's their money.
25 They want to control it.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 And of course the other thing
3 is, if the Foundation hires, those are
4 going to be part-time people, contract
5 workers, because when we hire somebody on
6 the City side, there's the whole benefit
7 package that the City is on the hook for.
8 So that gets complicated also.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Sure. I
10 mean, I agree that I think that the
11 primary use of the Free Library's
12 operating dollars should be used to
13 guarantee services year round, six to
14 seven days a week in every single library
15 branch, and that it should be spent on
16 materials and on the types of things,
17 repairs, and other things that are
18 mandated, and I think that that's a
19 little bit of the tension that we're
20 trying to understand here.

21 So as I said, we are committed
22 to try and meeting -- making sure that
23 this Council makes the push for the
24 libraries to get what they need. We'd
25 also like to make sure that the Library's

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 central mission is met ahead of other
3 programs as well.

4 JUDGE DEMBE: Keep in mind that
5 the Foundation just finished raising huge
6 amounts of money for the renovations of
7 those branches. I don't know if you've
8 been to them. I mean, those were tens of
9 millions of dollars for those things, and
10 because they were old buildings, they ran
11 into all the little shop of horrors that
12 happens whenever you open a wall or dig
13 in a basement. So those buildings would
14 have continued to be patched and
15 Band-Aided and duct-taped, except for
16 these very specific campaigns.

17 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: No. We
18 appreciate the Foundation's support. I
19 don't think that the Library's mission
20 would be complete without the incredible
21 support of donors and of the Foundation's
22 work in building out a broader mission
23 and initiative. We are trying to figure
24 out how to make sure, though, that the
25 people of the City get a promise for that

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 six-day-a-week, year-round service for
3 every library branch, and I think this is
4 a continuing dialogue that we still need
5 to have to make sure that all of us are
6 on that mission and that the City will do
7 its part to help meet it as well.

8 JUDGE DEMBE: I just want to
9 say, we are grateful to hear that kind of
10 commitment, because one of the things we
11 noticed when we had those four branches
12 and Blackwell closed because it was
13 having renovations, that with the
14 noticeable number of branches closed, the
15 children's reading scores go down. It's
16 that direct. So every hour we can work
17 together to keep it open.

18 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Great. All
19 right. Thank you.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
21 Thank you, Council President. Oh, I'm
22 sorry.

23 (Laughter.)

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I
25 got to explain that. I was just at a

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 ribbon-cutting event and the Council
3 President of Darby was at the event and I
4 was just talking to someone saying, yeah,
5 the Council President was there.

6 I don't want anybody saying
7 Clarke getting ready to resign. He's
8 going to step down.

9 All right. But thank you very
10 much, Councilwoman.

11 The Chair recognizes
12 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes, yes,
14 yes.

15 Representing Councilman Jones
16 at this time, in your testimony you
17 mentioned the successful installation in
18 certain libraries of Play-and-Learn
19 spaces where children work on motor
20 skills, language development, early
21 literacy. What is the plan to expand
22 these centers in all Philadelphia
23 branches? And having been an educator
24 and understand that need needs to be
25 connected to strategies and where there's

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 the greatest need, what is the plan?

3 MS. REARDON: So all those

4 Play-and-Learn spaces were privately

5 funded by the William Penn Foundation.

6 So we believe that there's a tremendous

7 amount of success. Certainly the

8 children that have come in and taken

9 advantage of those resources are doing --

10 you see -- it was really acute the change

11 at our Cecil B. Moore Library the number

12 of children having increased in their

13 participation in the library. So, yes,

14 it would be a request back to the William

15 Penn Foundation as well as other private

16 organizations to fund it, but at this

17 stage of the game, it would have to be a

18 Foundation-funded resource.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. And

20 in your response to Councilman Greenlee,

21 you said most of the Foundation dollars

22 go to restrictive areas as dictated by

23 the Philadelphia Foundation. To follow

24 up on Councilwoman Gym, we would be

25 interested in knowing the percentage. So

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 for that small percentage that is not
3 driven by the Foundation dictates, then
4 the prevailing question is, using those
5 dollars to go to six days or targeting
6 those dollars for libraries that are in
7 great need across the system.

8 MS. REARDON: Right. So most
9 of those dollars would actually go to
10 support the qualitative work that our
11 staff need, whether it is program support
12 on a -- it won't be to hire employees
13 because of the union contractual stuff.
14 So we try to keep those lines pretty
15 clear. But all of the work of the
16 Foundation would be in support of that
17 work.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. I
19 have been to the cooking classes at the
20 Library. I've been invited to speak to
21 the participants and the like. And so to
22 follow up on Councilman Domb's
23 recommendation, they are an amazing
24 extension of the Library and should
25 certainly be continued. I want to

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 underscore his ask and recommendation
3 around entrepreneurship training, because
4 everything is linked to poverty, and to
5 the extent that we can show folk how to
6 provide the technical assistance required
7 to start their businesses, that would be
8 huge.

9 My last remaining questions
10 are, there was discussion, following up
11 on Councilwoman Bass, of security
12 officers. Is that what you call them,
13 security officers?

14 MS. REARDON: The same --

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: What do
16 you call them?

17 MS. REARDON: You mean our
18 outreach?

19 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes, the
20 outreach workers. So is the Library at
21 the table of the Mayor's Opioid Task
22 Force?

23 MS. REARDON: Yes.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And how
25 has that been helpful to that committee

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 specifically in Councilwoman Sanchez's
3 area?

4 MS. REARDON: So we have
5 been -- and actually Joe Benford, who has
6 been here a couple of times, has been --
7 is a member of that, and he's been sort
8 of the conduit between what's going on at
9 the Opioid Task Force and the Free
10 Library and particularly how it is with
11 the McPherson particularly and the work
12 that we're doing vis-a-vis the opioid
13 crisis on that campus and the Kensington
14 Library. So what's happening in those
15 neighborhoods, he's the connection
16 between what's happening on that Task
17 Force and the Library.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay.

19 MS. REARDON: But a lot of it
20 is so direct. We're still using Narcan
21 to save the sort of overdosing that's
22 occurring still in the park. Plus we
23 have bathroom attendants to ensure that
24 when you're coming into the bathroom, we
25 actually ask for your library card,

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 because we want to know who is in there
3 if they're in there overly long.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I'm aware.
5 My staff and I have been there and
6 visited that entire world. So it is an
7 elephant that we are really still trying
8 to get our arms around as a city.

9 You said that there are 13
10 libraries in the Rebuild program?

11 MS. REARDON: In this first
12 round.

13 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Oh, in the
14 first round.

15 MS. REARDON: Right.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All right,
17 then. That clarity is helpful.

18 I think I've covered all of my
19 questions. I am going to put on the
20 record -- and I don't know yet how I'm
21 going to do this. I will confer with
22 President Clarke and my colleagues, but
23 given the press around the culture at the
24 Library, there is some way where
25 departments are required to report back

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 to City Council what your progress has
3 been. My sadness is in learning that the
4 Board of Trustees made the recommendation
5 in 2017 and the committee is just
6 forming. So given that fact, there will
7 be a formal request for you to report
8 back to this body what the progress has
9 been across everything of what that type
10 of training looks like.

11 MS. REARDON: Yes.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay,
13 then. Thank you.

14 Thank you, Mr. President.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
16 Thank you, Councilwoman.

17 The Chair recognizes Councilman
18 Taubenberger.

19 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:
20 Council President, thank you very much.

21 And I actually should have
22 asked for a point of information, and I
23 want to just make sure I heard my ears
24 correctly. I'm an agronomist by academic
25 training, Bachelor of Science from Penn

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 State University. It's a soil scientist.
3 The environment and agricultural
4 processes are very important. But you
5 had raised something that I don't -- I
6 want to make sure I had it right, that
7 you have a branch that has a mosquito
8 infestation?

9 MS. REARDON: It did.

10 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Oh,
11 it's over?

12 MS. REARDON: Oh, yes. Yes.
13 There was -- one of our pipes burst and
14 there was a lot of moisture and then it
15 was the infestation, but it has been
16 corrected.

17 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: It
18 has now been resolved?

19 MS. REARDON: Yes.

20 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: And
21 how long did that go on before people
22 said, hey, there's a problem here?

23 MS. REARDON: Three weeks.

24 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Okay.
25 Because mosquitoes are very --

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. REARDON: They're nasty.

3 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: A
4 terrible pathogen to human beings and
5 they should not be tolerated in any way.

6 MS. REARDON: Right.

7 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Okay.
8 I just wanted --

9 MS. REARDON: And the library
10 had closed for a period of time while we
11 went in to take care of the issue and fix
12 the problem. So once it was identified,
13 we were in and we shut it down.

14 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: It
15 was basically because of a broken pipe
16 for a period of time?

17 MS. REARDON: Yes.

18 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: And
19 it took three weeks?

20 MS. REARDON: Yes.

21 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: All
22 right.

23 Council President, thank you
24 very much. That answers my question.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Thank you, Councilman.

3 The Chair recognizes Councilman
4 Johnson.

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,
6 Council President.

7 I just had a couple of
8 questions I wanted to ask. Just for the
9 record, I submitted to the Mayor's Office
10 a budget request supported by my
11 colleagues requesting \$6 million to go to
12 full-time operation of our libraries,
13 particularly on Monday to Saturday.
14 Primarily the reason why I took that
15 position is based upon the critical
16 importance that libraries play inside our
17 neighborhoods.

18 My hub library was Queen
19 Memorial Library as a kid, and that set
20 the foundation for me to be a University
21 of Pennsylvania Ivy League graduate, as
22 well as the first African American to
23 represent the Second Councilmanic
24 District, but that all started with me
25 having the opportunity to go to a public

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 library that set the foundation and also
3 provided me an outlet to enjoy myself as
4 opposed to getting involved in things
5 that are negative. And so it's
6 critically important that beyond the \$2
7 million that the Mayor has budgeted, he
8 go beyond that allocation to make sure
9 we're staffing our libraries a
10 significant portion of the week as well
11 as throughout the summer. So I just want
12 to state that for the record and also
13 thank all my colleagues for --

14 (Applause.)

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: -- signing
16 onto the letter. And hopefully -- I was
17 watching from upstairs -- my colleague
18 Councilwoman Blondell Reynolds Brown, her
19 questions were answered regarding
20 diversity and inclusion as it relates to
21 the overall operation of the Philadelphia
22 Free Library.

23 A couple questions I wanted to
24 ask, and I know I'm under time
25 constraints, so I just want to get

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 straight to the point. In the past,
3 there has been high levels of vacancies
4 for budgeted positions. So I want to get
5 an idea of the progress you have been
6 making to reduce those vacancies and also
7 high rates of leave usage, which has led
8 to a loss of services. So what are we
9 doing to address those two issues? And
10 then last, facilities' emergencies also
11 may come up and then we have to close
12 down our libraries. And I get these
13 tweets from the activists and people
14 living in the neighborhood and say,
15 Councilman, Paschalville Library is
16 closed. This is the reason why it's
17 closed.

18 And so can you answer those
19 three particular questions and give me an
20 idea, what are we doing to address those
21 issues?

22 MS. REARDON: So let's begin
23 with the last one first in that we've
24 been able to take care of a lot of
25 building issues this year. So the rate

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 of closures vis-a-vis building issues has
3 gone from 50 percent. I want to say it's
4 down below 15 percent. So we've come a
5 long way in addressing many of those
6 issues. And so I'm hopeful that -- are
7 the branches opening late? Yes, still,
8 because someone coming in -- showing up
9 late or an illness. But the number of
10 libraries that are closing for a building
11 issue is substantially fewer, and I'm
12 saying -- I'm guessing at the 15 percent,
13 but I can get that number for you.

14 I was asked the question before
15 on the leave usage. So the Free Library
16 of Philadelphia is traditionally one of
17 the top five -- go, Free Library -- on
18 the use of time, and that has a lot to do
19 with the fact that this is prior to the
20 shift in the workforce. It was an older
21 organization and people were using their
22 time before they left. It is now a much
23 younger organization and we've had quite
24 a number of women or paternity leave for
25 families and their children.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I'm all
3 for that.

4 MS. REARDON: And then
5 unfortunately particularly over the past
6 year, we've had unfortunately quite a
7 number of staff -- and it's in the
8 20's -- with very severe illnesses. And
9 so that is why it looks the way it does.
10 But the question was asked whether there
11 was an abuse, and I went through all of
12 the instances of the 1,311 employees that
13 were on that list and I could not see
14 really any instance of abuse.

15 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And staff
16 training time?

17 MS. REARDON: And staff
18 training time, so it adds up -- it's
19 three hours a month. So the total number
20 of open hours is less than 5 percent a
21 year, and the idea is that this is such a
22 big, diverse system, dispersed system,
23 that we really want -- and it was really
24 at the request by the staff to say we
25 really do need to get together, we really

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 do need to understand best practices, we
3 want to know what's going on around the
4 rest of the system. And we bring in
5 throughout the nine clusters, name the
6 offices that are -- I know that we bring
7 in folks from Veteran Affairs, we bring
8 in the LGBTQIA for diversity and
9 inclusion work. There's been a lot of
10 work around One Philly. So these are the
11 times and the opportunities once a month
12 that our staff in the clusters actually
13 get the training. So that's for the
14 staff and the health and welfare of the
15 staff, I think it's a critical bit of
16 work. It's all -- the better -- the
17 stronger your staff are, the better
18 service they're going to be providing to
19 our public.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And --

21 MS. REARDON: And your first
22 question? I'm sorry. Oh, the rate of
23 hire. So we have -- we have been working
24 with the City's Office of Human
25 Resources, and particularly Christine

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Derenick-Lopez, have done a great job
3 sitting down with us and understanding so
4 where are the logjams in our hiring
5 processes. And so it is about how are we
6 moving through to get the list sooner and
7 going through the list and then putting
8 up a test.

9 But the other piece of it is,
10 they're working with us -- the American
11 Library Association will be meeting in
12 Washington, DC this June, and we're
13 already preplanning the hire, because we
14 have quite a number of librarian
15 positions, librarian vacancies. And so
16 the more work that we do up front so that
17 by the time we get to the interview
18 process and then what happens on the back
19 end so that we can actually hire up a lot
20 of these librarians sooner rather than
21 the time it has taken for us to hire
22 them. So it's much better.

23 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay. And
24 last, but not least -- and I will
25 continuously aggressively advocate for

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 funding for our libraries, because it's
3 that critically important for our youth.

4 (Applause.)

5 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Will you
6 move forward with a strategic plan --
7 this goes to my colleague Councilwoman
8 Reynolds Brown's request regarding
9 diversity and inclusion on the Free
10 Library Foundation Board, and these are
11 the things that we talked about prior to
12 even coming here, but will there be a
13 strategic plan in the future that we can
14 look at that they're specifically with
15 diversifying the Board, making sure that
16 we're intentional about making sure the
17 Free Library Foundation and all at the
18 Library here in the City of Philadelphia
19 stands for reflects from a leadership
20 standpoint what the City of Philadelphia
21 looks like? And I just want to get your
22 idea on that.

23 JUDGE DEMBE: I'm not sure
24 which of the boards you meant. The
25 Trustee Board, which is the City side

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 board, is already very diverse. The
3 Foundation Board is less diverse, and to
4 some extent, its efforts to expand are a
5 bit hampered by the fact that people who
6 join that board are expected to make a
7 very significant financial commitment.

8 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I know
9 rich black people.

10 JUDGE DEMBE: Give me their
11 name.

12 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: I do. I
13 mean, I do. I do. Asian too and Puerto
14 Rican.

15 JUDGE DEMBE: I'm not saying
16 they're not there, but because there are
17 fewer of them, there are more demands on
18 them. But if you have some candidates,
19 please.

20 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yeah, I'll
21 get you some recommendations. I'll
22 definitely do that.

23 JUDGE DEMBE: Excellent.

24 MS. REARDON: So but to answer
25 your question, I would say that one of

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 the key front-end pieces of work for the
3 staff, what I'll call, the staff
4 committee, though what its makeup will be
5 long term, would be to establish the plan
6 and the metrics and the benchmarks for
7 success in the organization on diversity
8 and inclusion.

9 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Just keep
10 us updated as you go through that
11 process. But you'll have a champion to
12 make sure that we aggressively advocate
13 on behalf of our children here. Not only
14 just the children. You know, you also
15 have an initiative where people go to
16 libraries looking for employment.

17 These libraries are the hubs in
18 our neighborhoods, similar to how we have
19 our educational institutions, and we have
20 to make sure that they have the support
21 necessary so it could serve as a pipeline
22 for our young people to just follow their
23 dreams.

24 So thank you very much for
25 being here today.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Thank you.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

4 Thank you, Councilman.

5 The Chair recognizes

6 Councilwoman Bass.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: No.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

9 You're good? Okay. Thank you.

10 So there were a number of
11 questions that were asked while I was not
12 here. I understand I probably have an
13 interest in it, particularly around the
14 issue with respect to diversity. What
15 I'm going to ask you all to do is be
16 prepared to come back on either April the
17 30th, which is the first callback date,
18 or May 7th, which is a callback date, to
19 be prepared to give me more detail and
20 time-specific strategy in terms of how
21 you are going to address it at the end of
22 the day.

23 MS. REARDON: Sure.

24 JUDGE DEMBE: Council

25 President, the Trustee Board's Diversity

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 and Inclusion Committee is having its
3 initial meeting on the 30th. So if
4 possible, could we --

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: You
6 want to come back on the 7th? I'm giving
7 you two days, the 30th or May 7th.

8 JUDGE DEMBE: Are you going to
9 need testimony or do you want a written
10 report? Tell me what you --

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
12 However you choose.

13 MS. REARDON: It's more of an
14 action plan, as I understand it.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
16 Yeah. I just need to know what -- I
17 didn't hear the testimony, but I've heard
18 what was said, and it's very troubling to
19 me. So we need to get more specific
20 information with respect to how you plan
21 on addressing that.

22 MS. REARDON: So we'll take the
23 30th. We'll come back on the 30th.

24 JUDGE DEMBE: Okay.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Thank you. Thank you.

3 Councilwoman, did you have --

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I did

5 have --

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

7 Councilwoman Bass.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I'm sorry.

9 I did have one more question, and that's
10 around contracts. So I have a lot of
11 concern about where our contracts are
12 going. We do a lot of contracting with
13 folks who are not based in Philadelphia
14 or in the Philadelphia region, and if
15 we're really going to do something about
16 poverty, then when we issue contracts,
17 then I think it's incumbent upon us to
18 make sure that they are locally based to
19 whatever extent is possible, and I've
20 seen instances over and over again where
21 that is not happening.

22 So I noticed in your
23 professional -- in your summary of
24 contracts, I noticed that the number is
25 actually decreasing. It looks like this

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 year it went up just a tad bit, but it
3 looks like over the years it's been
4 coming down steadily in terms of the
5 amount of outside contracts that we
6 issue. But if you could also provide to
7 us the amount or the number of those
8 contracts that are locally based and
9 those that are not locally based and
10 where they are based, I would like to
11 have that information as well, if you can
12 provide that to Mr. President.

13 MS. REARDON: Sure.

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

16 Thank you, Councilwoman.

17 Okay. Thank you. Thank you
18 very much for your testimony.

19 JUDGE DEMBE: Thank you.

20 MS. REARDON: Thank you.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: See
22 you on the 30th.

23 Next up will be Mural Arts.

24 (Witness approached witness
25 table.)

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Folks, excuse me. Folks, if you are
4 done, if you want to stay, because we got
5 to move on to the next witness.

6 Okay. Good afternoon. Next up
7 is Mural Arts.

8 (Applause.)

9 MS. GOLDEN: Good afternoon.

10 My name is Jane Golden and I am the
11 Executive Director of the City of
12 Philadelphia Mural Arts Program.

13 (Applause.)

14 MS. GOLDEN: Thank you so much
15 for the opportunity to speak with you
16 today. I am so grateful to Council
17 President Clarke, all of City Council,
18 Mayor Kenney, Managing Director Brian
19 Abernathy, Deputy Managing Director
20 Joanna Otero-Cruz, and for the many City
21 people who support, facilitate, and
22 encourage our work.

23 I also want to thank the people
24 outside government who are here today to
25 support Mural Arts - staff members,

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 community partners, artists, and Board
3 members.

4 (Applause.)

5 MS. GOLDEN: Every year I
6 really look forward to the opportunity to
7 testify before City Council for Mural
8 Arts' Class 100 and 200 allocations. And
9 today we are so excited to testify on
10 behalf of our FY20 budget, for which the
11 Mayor has allocated 2,349,602 to the
12 Mural Arts Program.

13 So why do I love this so much?
14 Well, it is the chance for us to reflect
15 on and share with you the scope and
16 impact of the work we do all year long.

17 We began 35 years ago with the
18 love and respect for our city and a
19 genuine curiosity about what makes our
20 city tick. We continue to look for the
21 issues that matter most. We seek out
22 good ideas that are percolating not just
23 here but across the country. We
24 scrutinize the pinch points and
25 challenges that Philadelphians grapple

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 with daily, and we ask ourselves, how can
3 art help?

4 So it comes as no surprise for
5 all of us that love our city that this is
6 a complex one. You can't help but feel
7 the new energy and determination. It's
8 palpable. But at the same time, we know
9 there is another side to this story. As
10 neighborhoods change dramatically and
11 quickly, residents of many neighborhoods
12 are questioning if their lives, as one of
13 our community leaders said in a meeting
14 recently, are being erased.

15 Many individuals and
16 communities cope daily with a range of
17 complex problems, and yet in spite of
18 this, I am an optimist. I am inspired
19 daily by the spirit and tenacity of the
20 citizens across our city. In spite of
21 odds, I see hope. In spite of
22 multi-layered challenges, I feel a
23 collective determination. Every day I
24 encounter love and faith, and because of
25 the work we do, I cannot escape the

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 tremendous hunger our city has for beauty
3 and for art. It is so inspiring. And
4 because of City Council's belief and
5 investment in our work, we are able to
6 uphold our core commitments that allows
7 us to do this work.

8 We're committed to art
9 education for young people so we can
10 serve over 2,000 young people ranging in
11 age from 11 to 18. We create
12 opportunities for deepening community
13 wellness through our Porch Light program
14 that's all about healing and economic
15 recovery for our most vulnerable
16 citizens.

17 We want to deepen and broaden
18 the impact of our work on citizens who
19 are returning from prison. And you have
20 made it possible for Philadelphia to be
21 the envy of cities from all over the
22 world with its vast public art collection
23 filled with images that look like the
24 citizens who live in Philadelphia.
25 Representation matters.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 And here is some of our
3 statistics: In Fiscal '18, we engaged
4 25,000 people in our public programs and
5 more than 15,000 people in our public
6 tours. We completed 83 public art
7 projects, 20 mural restorations, and in
8 FY19, we expect similar levels of
9 engagement, and so far, we have completed
10 four restorations and 40 public art
11 projects are already completed. We've
12 also cleaned 1,040 lots and removed 612
13 graffiti tags, because we like to help
14 our colleagues at CLIP.

15 So here are a few highlights of
16 our programs:

17 Our Guild Program.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. GOLDEN: I love it. I love
20 our Guild Program. Our Guild Program
21 continues to provide justice-involved
22 Philadelphians with a path to meaningful
23 work and reintegration with the
24 communities. Since 2009, this paid
25 pre-apprenticeship program trains

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 participants in useful skills that they
3 put to work beautifying public spaces in
4 our city.

5 In every district of
6 Philadelphia, projects large and small
7 are happening because the Guild is there
8 doing amazing, inspiring work. The
9 program has enrolled over a thousand
10 participants, a thousand, since its
11 beginning, and we are proud to report --
12 and we're really, really proud of this --
13 that the average one-year employment rate
14 for graduates is 82 percent and the
15 recidivism rate is 12 percent -- I could
16 jump up and down here -- compared with
17 the statewide average of 35 percent.

18 Let's have a round of applause
19 for our Guild.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. GOLDEN: It is successful.

22 Let the City of Philadelphia
23 itself, Mural Arts, continue to be
24 recognized nationally for our focus on
25 finding innovative solutions to the issue

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 of mass incarceration through our
3 Restorative Justice program, where we
4 work in prisons and with people coming
5 home. This year Mural Arts was once
6 again selected by the Ford Foundation's
7 Art for Justice Fund to continue
8 supporting formerly incarcerated artists
9 with a range of programs and public art
10 projects.

11 We have a Fellowship program.
12 We're going to be doing a public art
13 exhibition, an exhibition, and we do this
14 work in collaboration with the City's
15 MacArthur Foundation's Safety and Justice
16 Challenge. It helps us use art to shift
17 the narrative around our criminal justice
18 system, and it helps us draw attention to
19 Philadelphia's ground-breaking work in
20 making our city a more just and fair
21 place for all.

22 This year was no different in
23 that it brought us new work that spans a
24 range of themes, from tributes and
25 testaments of fallen heroes to depictions

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 of local leaders, to beautiful landscapes
3 and giant abstracts. Our city is alive
4 with color, with design, and stories.

5 As a group, murals transform
6 the ordinary into something alive and
7 unexpected. They are the thread that
8 weaves the experience of neighbors and
9 viewers together. It's a collection that
10 belongs to Philadelphians in a profound
11 way.

12 So just this year, what are a
13 few things that happened? Well, on Ridge
14 Avenue at 29th and Ridge, buildings were
15 transformed and we did a very moving
16 tribute to Sergeant Robert Wilson, III,
17 who passed away all too soon.

18 A giant tribute mural of
19 Philadelphia native and legendary CBS
20 correspondent Ed Bradley came to life in
21 the Belmont section of Philadelphia, and
22 the students who worked on it were taken
23 to the 60 Minutes studio where they got
24 to meet all the journalists.

25 We worked with Trades for a

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Difference and did this beautiful mural
3 on Germantown that lifts up the human
4 spirit.

5 On the Lucien Blackwell Library
6 at 52nd and Market, there's a new mural
7 that celebrates the connections between
8 African cultures and renaissance
9 paintings, and it was created by Ikiire
10 Jones with tons of kids in our program.
11 And Ikiire Jones designed the costumes
12 that were in the movie Black Panther.
13 How exciting is that? I was so excited.
14 I jumped up and down.

15 On corridors in Southeast and
16 Northeast Philadelphia, new immigrant
17 communities merge language, image, and
18 culture to create beautiful new works of
19 art that are not just beautiful but
20 they're educational. One in four Oxford
21 Circle neighbors is a first-generation
22 resident, and up to 43 percent do not
23 speak English. Weekly classes at our hub
24 space offer critical life skills and
25 health systems navigation and ESL in

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 tandem with creative programming.

3 Artist James Burns did a
4 nine-story mural that's a tribute to
5 veterans who are struggling with PTSD.
6 In North Philadelphia, two great
7 recreation center projects, the Dendy Rec
8 Center that was a loving tribute to Marie
9 Dendy, and at the Waterloo Rec Center
10 there's a new basketball court with a
11 brilliant mural. It makes the heart sing
12 and basketball players LEAP with joy.

13 We're very proud of our mural
14 about Octavius Catto, remembering a
15 forgotten hero, where we worked with
16 artists, historians, and students and
17 activists to pay tribute to someone who
18 was so amazing.

19 In Tacony our Artist Residency
20 Lab continues to grow and thrive, and
21 since 2018, a thousand people have come
22 and participated in our programs. And I
23 have to add that this space is miles from
24 any anchor arts institution.

25 The bottom line is that every

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 neighborhood wants murals and programs in
3 the arts. We have a huge waiting list.
4 We are in a city where citizens can ask
5 for art, and that sets us apart from
6 cities across the country and across the
7 globe, and we are proud of this contract
8 that we build between artists and
9 communities.

10 Our Porch Light program is one
11 that we run in partnership with the
12 City's Department of Behavioral Health
13 and disAbility Services. We love this
14 work where we work with people who are
15 struggling with trauma and mental health
16 issues, addiction, homelessness.

17 But I want to highlight our
18 space at 2774 Kensington Avenue. It's
19 two years old. It's our response to the
20 opioid crisis and an opportunity to work
21 with wonderful partners, Impact Services,
22 Prevention Point, New Kensington CDC.
23 I'm happy to report that while this space
24 is only two years old, it is bustling
25 from 9:00 in the morning to 6:00 at night

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 every day with programs and people. More
3 than 900 people a month are coming to
4 this space, and they find their way there
5 because they feel safe. There's skilled
6 volunteers there. There's Mural Arts
7 staff there. We're offering weaving,
8 drawing, poetry. There are visiting
9 nurses there from Drexel to offer support
10 and guidance. There's resource
11 information about how to get treatment,
12 where to find a bed.

13 Over and over again, we see
14 that people are beginning to reclaim
15 new-found agency and hope and starting to
16 consider recovery. This year I'm happy
17 to say we've gotten a new grant where
18 we'll be expanding our work and providing
19 intensive services to veterans in
20 Kensington struggling with PTSD and
21 addiction.

22 At Einstein Hospital, we work
23 with people who have long-term mental
24 health diagnoses, and we hear from the
25 clinical staff over and over again how

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 art helps open up people who are living
3 in darkness.

4 There is a transcendent power
5 to art, and when you're involved in these
6 programs, when you witness it, you cannot
7 help but feel the light. It is
8 challenging and it is extraordinarily
9 rewarding.

10 And Art Education is really our
11 longest running program. Here we
12 continue to bring project-based learning
13 as well as color and joy into schools and
14 provider agencies and residential
15 placement facilities. Some of those
16 facilities are so bleak. Thanks to our
17 partnership with the Department of Human
18 Services and private funders, we're able
19 to reach more than 2,000 young people
20 with intensive, ongoing, year-round
21 programs that challenge young people,
22 inspire them, let them know that they can
23 have an idea and they can bring it to
24 fruition, that they are our city's next
25 generation of thought leaders.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 We see the glass half full. We
3 see potential and talent everywhere, and
4 we want pathways for our young people to
5 succeed.

6 Just an example is, this fall
7 we were delighted by the work we do
8 sometimes during the school day where we
9 merge math, science, and art. Just go to
10 South Philadelphia High School, stand in
11 front of that school, and you're going to
12 see molecules, you're going to see a
13 mural that's about global climate change.
14 It takes your breath away. Too many
15 schools in Philly look like prisons, and
16 we say change that, and art can do just
17 that.

18 It's exciting. I can just jump
19 and down. But I won't. I'll just keep
20 going.

21 And mural restorations. We
22 have this amazing collection of over
23 4,000 works of art that graces the sides
24 of buildings throughout Philly. And so
25 we lose murals. We lose murals to

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 development sometimes. So what are we
3 going to do? We're going to restore
4 them. We're going to recreate them.
5 We're going to take care of our
6 collection in this city. And every time
7 we do that, we're greeted with relief and
8 gratitude and support for our commitment
9 to the neighborhoods we invest in.

10 We are determined,
11 determined -- I'm going to underline that
12 five times -- to maintain these civic
13 assets that grace the sides of buildings
14 that tell the stories of Philadelphians.

15 In our city where neighborhoods
16 can change so fast, a mural, a work of
17 public art can be the one thing that is
18 left that reminds people of who we are.
19 We need to protect that investment in our
20 citizens' collective history and memory.

21 I know I have told you that we
22 are known nationally and internationally
23 as the City of Murals, but there's
24 evidence of that, 15,000 people coming on
25 the tour program, in this last year 287

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 million press impressions, and intensive
3 consultations with cities across the
4 country who want to know how we're doing
5 it in Philly.

6 When people hear Philadelphia
7 these days, they think of public art.
8 Yes. And we have a lot coming up. I
9 could go on and on, but one thing I want
10 to say is that there's this really
11 exciting project coming up and it's going
12 to continue our ground-breaking work of
13 putting art to work on behalf of
14 community wellness and on behalf of those
15 who are some of our most vulnerable
16 citizens. We're going to launch an
17 innovative same-day pay program with our
18 partners at the Department of Behavioral
19 Health, SEPTA, and the Mental Health
20 Partnerships program. Building on the
21 successful experience of other cities who
22 offer this kind of work, we're going to
23 do it, but put our unique spin to it,
24 because other cities have people cleaning
25 up litter and we're going to have people

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 creating public art.

3 We're going to have a
4 storefront classroom in the concourse.

5 We're going to be creating beautiful
6 murals in the concourse. We're going to
7 make sure that there is access to social
8 services and wrap-around services, and
9 we're going to create low-barrier
10 employment for individuals experiencing
11 economic insecurity. I'm really excited
12 about this, and it starts April 22nd.

13 In closing, it is your
14 investment that makes this work possible.
15 I want to be really clear about that.
16 Your investment allows us to leverage
17 every dollar, and so that we're able to
18 raise money from individuals and
19 foundations and corporations. The City
20 money is our foundation, and by investing
21 in us, you are truly investing in the
22 future of our city.

23 You have allowed us to grow
24 from a small City agency into an
25 internationally respected leader that

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 merges art and social impact, drawing
3 interest from every corner of the globe.

4 Your investment in Mural Arts
5 is an investment in our citizens. It's
6 an investment in aspiration and an
7 investment in inspiration, and it signals
8 an extraordinary belief that there is
9 vast potential for all that is good and
10 resilient and hopeful and that we can
11 appeal to our better angels.

12 That venture is also returned
13 to the City in the form of wages we pay
14 to a diverse pool of largely
15 Philadelphia-based artists who are
16 awesome and wonderful and inspiring, \$1.7
17 million in FY18 alone, helping to
18 maintain our city as a place that grows,
19 attracts, and retains working artists and
20 all they contribute to life in our city.
21 They are change agents.

22 Thank you, all the artists who
23 are here today.

24 (Applause.)

25 MS. GOLDEN: Finally, I want to

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 say that we talk a lot about the
3 challenges we face in this city, but I
4 ask you all, as you think about solutions
5 and ideas and interventions, please
6 remember that we can never discount the
7 role of art and creativity to make a
8 difference in the lives of people in our
9 city. Traditional interventions are
10 going to fail us from time to time. We
11 need to consistently think out of the box
12 and embrace the arts as a strategy for
13 social change.

14 As we always say at Mural Arts,
15 art ignites change. I see it every day.
16 It's what drives us to keep moving
17 forward, and it is truly an honor and
18 privilege to do this job.

19 Thank you from the bottom of my
20 heart.

21 (Applause.)

22 MS. GOLDEN: I'm happy to
23 answer any questions.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN:
25 Congratulations, Jane. Congratulations

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 for all the work that you do every day.
3 Congratulations for the Ford Foundation
4 award. That's the second time, if I'm
5 not mistaken?

6 MS. GOLDEN: Yes.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And, yes,
8 we are the envy of cities across the
9 country. I pride myself on reminding
10 people that Philadelphia has more public
11 art than any other city in the country.
12 And I want to say thank you for three
13 things. One, for recognizing you have an
14 organization that looks like
15 Philadelphia.

16 MS. GOLDEN: Thank you.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: It's not
18 hard.

19 (Applause.)

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And number
21 two, you heard my request 15 years ago
22 when I asked for a list of artists, to
23 discover that we did not have a lot of
24 local artists on that list. So now we
25 have more local artists being given the

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 opportunity to express their craft as
3 well as men and women. And so it should
4 never go unrecognized that you listen to
5 the concerns raised by members and then
6 you find a way to think outside of the
7 box to make it happen. So that needs to
8 be acknowledged.

9 MS. GOLDEN: Thank you.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You're
11 indeed a partner when it comes to helping
12 us have a government that looks like
13 Philadelphia. Okay?

14 MS. GOLDEN: Thank you.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You
16 mentioned a number of constituencies.
17 Councilman Derek Green would be curious
18 to know if you might be doing any work
19 with the autism community.

20 MS. GOLDEN: No, but we really
21 want to. We would love to actually. So
22 if there are ideas. We did a big project
23 some years back that was very successful.
24 We did a mural, we did classes, and we
25 did, created with young people, a

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 beautiful book. So we would be
3 completely open to it.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I'll
5 certainly pass that on to him.

6 Yes, yes, yes. Councilwoman
7 Bass.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I'm sorry.
9 Point of information.

10 Jane probably doesn't realize,
11 but she did do a project in my district
12 around autism at the Wister Playground
13 with Willis --

14 MS. GOLDEN: Oh, my God, we
15 did.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes, we did
17 do a project around --

18 MS. GOLDEN: Thank you.

19 (Applause.)

20 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: -- a
21 playground that was centered for children
22 with autism, and we had a beautiful mural
23 that was painted with particular colors
24 that would be sensitive to those with
25 autism, along with playground equipment

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 that was sensitive to those with autism.

3 MS. GOLDEN: That was a
4 beautiful project. That's right. I
5 know, what happened to the grid in my
6 head? Councilwoman Bass, it was a
7 wonderful project.

8 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: You do so
9 much. You do so much.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: You really
11 do. We are fans. Indeed we are.

12 And so, Councilwoman Bass, any
13 other questions?

14 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Am I up?

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes,
16 you're up.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well, you
18 know what, I just wanted to say a couple
19 of things. The first is that it's not
20 really a surprise that I'm a huge fan of
21 Jane Golden and all of the work that you
22 do. I just think that you all do a
23 tremendous job. I love the work and also
24 the ability to make your dollars stretch,
25 particularly with City money and

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 government money. I'm always thoughtful
3 about how dollars are spent and making
4 sure that there is no waste. And there's
5 some departments that are better at it
6 than others. I think that Mural Arts is
7 the best at making sure that there is no
8 waste in our City dollars and that we --

9 (Applause.)

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: We actually
11 as a city, that we get our money's worth.
12 So I just really want to thank you for
13 that. And I also want to thank you for
14 exposing me to the Restorative Justice
15 program. I know that myself, Councilman
16 Henon actually also joined me up at
17 Graterford, and I know we're due to take
18 another trip soon, although it's not
19 Graterford anymore. It's the new --

20 MS. GOLDEN: Yeah, Phoenix.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: -- Phoenix.
22 Yeah. And so it's funny, I've known what
23 Graterford was all my life, but it's
24 funny, a lot of people don't know what
25 Graterford was, a state correctional

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 facility. And when I went, though --
3 it's one thing about knowing about it,
4 but it's a whole nother thing when you
5 have gone and seen rows and rows and
6 rows, cellblocks upon cellblocks,
7 hundreds and hundreds of men, mostly
8 African American and Hispanic, who are
9 incarcerated, and it is really jarring
10 and requires you to rethink everything,
11 everything, all the work that you do and
12 the importance of that work.

13 And so I really thank you for
14 exposing me to that, and I want to take
15 this as an opportunity to invite any and
16 all of my colleagues for the next trip,
17 because it's so very important that folks
18 go and to see for themselves, don't take
19 my word for it, but you really have to
20 see the work that she's doing and the
21 impact that they are having. And there
22 was a young man who actually did a
23 portrait of myself just from a picture on
24 a palm card, and he sent me the picture.
25 Bobby didn't get one. I'm sorry, Bobby.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Councilman Henon didn't get one.

3 But he sent it to me, and then

4 I saw him recently at the Wall Ball.

5 Russell, I believe his name was.

6 MS. GOLDEN: That's right.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And just

8 doing fabulous, fabulous work here in the

9 City and making sure that that talent

10 does not go to waste, that we are

11 beautifying our communities at the same

12 time.

13 And so I just had a couple of

14 really small questions for you for Mural

15 Arts. And two questions. One is, can

16 you tell us what role you're expecting to

17 play in Rebuild and also how much money

18 can you guesstimate, how much money does

19 Mural Arts save the City of Philadelphia

20 in terms of lowering the recidivism rate

21 through the Restorative Justice program?

22 Because that's the money-saver right

23 there. When you're making sure that

24 folks are not going back through the

25 criminal justice system, that is saving a

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 lot of money to the City of Philadelphia,
3 and we need to make sure that we invest
4 where the savings are. So can you talk
5 about those two things?

6 MS. GOLDEN: Yeah. We think
7 that it's actually an immense savings. I
8 mean, we are -- the Guild Program -- I'm
9 really tempted to have my colleague Dawan
10 Williams come up and say a few words, if
11 you don't mind. But I want to say --

12 (Applause.)

13 (Witness approached witness
14 table.)

15 MS. GOLDEN: But I want to say
16 we feel that it's a very robust and
17 wonderful program led by Dawan Williams.

18 If you could just stay a few
19 minutes --

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Welcome.
21 State your name for the record, and
22 welcome.

23 MR. WILLIAMS: My name is Dawan
24 Williams.

25 Hi, mom, if she's watching on

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 one of the cameras.

3 Thank you, Council, for
4 allowing me to speak.

5 The young brothers in the
6 program, can y'all stand up, everybody in
7 the Mural Arts program. Everybody in the
8 program, all the participants stand up.

9 (Applause.)

10 MR. WILLIAMS: These are the
11 brothers and sisters who benefit from the
12 money that is allocated. These are the
13 brothers and the sisters that I'm with
14 every single day, Councilwoman, that
15 says, Brother Dawan, I want out the
16 street, I want out, I want it over with.
17 They want to do right, and with the money
18 that's allocated to us, we're able to go
19 into the those rec centers, paint those
20 rec centers. We're able to put murals up
21 on the wall. We're able to build benches
22 and raised beds and community gardens in
23 the schools. We're able to -- what else
24 are we able to do, y'all?

25 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Clean

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 lots.

3 MR. WILLIAMS: Everything.

4 Wages, wages, money in they pocket.

5 Okay? When you talking about providing
6 jobs and programs and opportunity, this
7 is who you talking about. This is who
8 you talking about keeping out the
9 streets. These are the people right here
10 that benefit from everything that goes on
11 in this room. Thank y'all all so much,
12 Councilman Henon, Councilwoman Blackwell,
13 Councilwoman Gym.

14 Councilman Domb, I have to give
15 you a special -- sorry, everybody. What
16 you do for the schools is tremendous. To
17 step outside of your official capacity
18 and do something about it, it says
19 everything. It goes to your character.
20 Because anybody can stand to the side and
21 say, oh, that's crazy. Oh, the schools
22 is failing. There's so much violence in
23 the neighborhood, and not do something.
24 But Councilman Domb actually did
25 something. And it's just like what the

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 guys that I work with every day, it's
3 nothing to say, hey, everybody is
4 shooting each other, everybody is
5 robbing, stealing and killing, but that's
6 just crazy. No, we're not doing that.
7 We're being proactive, and I'm leading by
8 example. They see every day a brother,
9 myself.

10 I did ten years, six days, 12
11 hours, 37 minutes, and 13 seconds
12 straight at Graterford Prison, and I was
13 with Russell Craig that day when he
14 schlepped to the auditorium to see you,
15 Ms. Bass, and he almost risked a
16 misconduct for that.

17 So I just want to appreciate
18 everybody in here, Councilwoman Bass,
19 Councilman Johnson, all the work that
20 y'all do outside of the Chambers when
21 you're not even on as an official City
22 Councilperson, the things that you're
23 doing, the boots on the ground, because
24 that's what it takes. That's what it
25 takes.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 And just let the record
3 reflect -- I know I don't have much
4 time -- you give us 25 million or some of
5 those millions of dollars people up here
6 asking for and I'm going to make sure
7 these young brothers, we talking about
8 changing gun violence overnight.

9 Thank y'all.

10 MS. GOLDEN: Thank you.

11 (Applause.)

12 MS. GOLDEN: I want to say we
13 think that we're saving the City
14 \$136,000, but that's probably modest.
15 When you think about how much it costs to
16 have someone at the Phoenix Prison versus
17 what Mural Arts is spending, and we're
18 spending about \$11,000 a participant, and
19 that's parenting classes, financial
20 literacy, it's jobs, it's the wages, it's
21 great projects, all kinds of
22 opportunities around leadership. So
23 there is definitely a cost savings, but
24 by our calculation, it's \$136,874 a year.
25 But I think it's actually more than that.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 To go back to your other
3 question about Rebuild, I actually, quite
4 honestly, would love to work with
5 Rebuild, but there's nothing -- we don't
6 have anything planned. But we keep hope
7 alive, because I think it's a great
8 initiative, and I just think maybe we're
9 just out of sequence, that there are
10 other things happening right now.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So as
12 Steve Harvey would say, stop right there.
13 Can you repeat for both Councilwoman Bass
14 and I what I think we heard.

15 MS. GOLDEN: We're not -- let
16 me just -- we're not involved in Rebuild.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So you're
18 not involved with any of the rebuild of
19 rec centers, libraries?

20 MS. GOLDEN: No. We've made
21 presentations to project users, with the
22 hope that they will work with the Mural
23 Arts Program at some point.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN:
25 Councilwoman Bass.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I think
3 that's unacceptable. I think that there
4 should be a role for Mural Arts in this
5 huge initiative that we have happening in
6 the City. It's a \$500 million program,
7 and there must be a role for Mural Arts
8 in that program. There must be a role
9 for Mural Arts.

10 So we'll be having the
11 Commissioner come up shortly, Parks and
12 Rec Commissioner. And I'm not sure if
13 Rebuild is on the agenda for today, but
14 we can certainly have those
15 conversations. I think it's a must,
16 absolutely.

17 MS. GOLDEN: So it would be
18 exciting. We've worked with Park and Rec
19 for 30 years and have a great
20 relationship with them. And it's a
21 wonderful initiative. I --

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So maybe --
23 I'm sorry. I didn't mean to cut you off,
24 but I was just thinking maybe it's just
25 an oversight. Maybe it's just an

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 oversight. So we'll get it corrected.

3 MS. GOLDEN: Okay. Thank you
4 very much.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

6 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN:
7 Councilwoman Gym.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
9 very much, Madam Chair.

10 And thank you very much, Jane,
11 and to your whole team for being here.
12 You've done tremendous work over the
13 years. You know, Monument Lab meant the
14 world to me and to so many other people.
15 It's been great to get to know so many of
16 the artists who participated in projects
17 all around the City. And you have done
18 such transformative work with communities
19 and people, and I just, first of all,
20 want to express, along with everybody
21 else, just tremendous gratitude for you,
22 your entire team, and everything that
23 you're doing right now.

24 So I wanted to ask whether
25 Mural Arts had made a request to the

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Administration for any budgetary
3 increases for this year.

4 MS. GOLDEN: Yes. We had asked
5 for \$685,000, and we were granted out of
6 that, I believe it's, close to 300,000 or
7 350.

8 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: 245, does
9 that sound right?

10 MS. GOLDEN: Well, it's
11 actually -- it was 350, but then we
12 had -- it's sort of complicated, but it's
13 somewhere between 265 and 350.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And were
15 there specific initiatives within the 685
16 that you had wanted to focus in on?

17 MS. GOLDEN: Yes. The Guild is
18 number one, because I really feel that
19 when you see success, it's really
20 imperative to try to think about scale,
21 and we're seeing success. And the next
22 category is our work -- wanting to invest
23 in our work in Kensington and then our
24 work around restoration. And I want to
25 just highlight community murals, because

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 we're in a city where people are asking
3 for art all across the City, and that's
4 organizations, agencies. So every
5 project we do also has a programmatic
6 component. So people are so interested.
7 It's a waiting list of around 2,000
8 people.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And how has
10 your relationship been with the School
11 District of Philadelphia? And could you
12 talk about it like over a period of time,
13 like at its peak would you say that there
14 was a point where you were doing a lot
15 more work with the School District, and
16 what does it look like today?

17 MS. GOLDEN: Yeah. I would say
18 that at -- I would say when Paul Vallas
19 was there -- I forget those years -- we
20 had a contract with the District to
21 provide 20 schools a year with public art
22 and with 16-week programs, and we also
23 created something called the Diego Rivera
24 Institute for kids in the summer, and
25 that went on for three years. And then

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 when he left, the contract was cancelled.
3 And so we were very determined, so we
4 leveraged funds from DHS. So our public
5 dollars are leveraged with private
6 dollars. And so that's how we're
7 serving -- and DHS is critical to this --
8 the 2,000 young people.

9 So we're in many schools, but
10 we're working school to school instead of
11 working -- we're not really working sort
12 of with the District. I think it's just
13 how we picked up the pieces, because it
14 was a devastating blow back then, but we
15 were like we're not going to be stopped
16 by this and we're going to continue,
17 because we absolutely are driven to
18 provide kids with services. So that's
19 what we did.

20 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Okay. And
21 do you know how much money that roughly
22 was back then?

23 MS. GOLDEN: It was a contract
24 of 350,000 a year.

25 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: For 20

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 schools?

3 MS. GOLDEN: For 20 schools.

4 And that included public art, the

5 programs, and the Diego Rivera Institute.

6 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And right

7 now obviously we're 15 years past that,

8 so it would certainly be more than that,

9 I assume, were you ever to do it again,

10 but it's worth having a dialogue with the

11 District about how that --

12 MS. GOLDEN: Oh, it would be

13 great. We would love it.

14 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: -- could

15 evolve.

16 MS. GOLDEN: Again, it would be

17 wonderful to think about taking our work

18 more to scale, especially the work -- I

19 mean, we do work after school and in the

20 summer, but I think we're onto something,

21 the work we do during the school day, the

22 integration of both humanities in the

23 arts and then math/science in art.

24 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: And you and

25 I have spoken about both of our work in

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 terms of restorative justice programs,
3 and I've been really grateful to see how
4 successful your work has been, including
5 seeing that 76 percent of participants
6 reach gainful employment after six months
7 of being in the programs, that you hire
8 local artists of course, and that we have
9 a chance to really do something important
10 here in the City that's different from
11 going to the lowest effort possible.

12 But could you talk a little bit
13 more about -- one of the things that we
14 were discussing a little bit is that
15 there's so many different reentry
16 programs and that it's important for us
17 to assess how the outcomes of the
18 programs work. So could you talk a
19 little bit more about what you're seeing
20 with the outcomes of your Restorative
21 Justice program, especially with
22 returning citizens?

23 MS. GOLDEN: Yeah. I mean, I
24 think I'm very heartened to see our
25 recidivism rate is so low, and I think

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 that there's something in this equation
3 that I think -- I know our participants
4 can speak about this eloquently, so I
5 hope I do justice to your experience.
6 But I feel it's learning and then going
7 out and transforming civic spaces in the
8 City. So over and over, I hear people in
9 the Guild say to me, you know, I'm
10 involved in this project and people are
11 treating me with respect, with dignity,
12 thanking me. You know, we're like heroes
13 in the neighborhood. And, yes, it means
14 a lot when rec centers that are gray
15 become really beautiful or a wall that
16 has been just an eyesore is suddenly
17 transformed into something that's really
18 striking.

19 I mean, historically public art
20 has been made by a lone practitioner.
21 It's been a pretty exclusive way of
22 working for hundreds of years. And so
23 this is a real paradigm shift that people
24 in this room are reclaiming public space,
25 transforming it, making it beautiful,

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 learning skills, and then getting the
3 support to move on with their life. So I
4 think it's all those things. So I think
5 that's really exciting, and that's what
6 drives us to want to increase the budget
7 so we can serve more people, because it's
8 important.

9 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Well, I'd
10 love to hear from somebody who has been
11 part of your reentry work and restorative
12 justice work. So if you want to bring
13 somebody up who might want to speak to
14 that.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: Sure. Sure.
16 (Witness approached witness
17 table.)

18 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: That's
19 great. We're partly -- I mean, part of
20 this is about hearing from participants
21 in programs so we understand the breadth
22 of it better. As I said, we have a lot
23 of opportunity. The City is reorienting,
24 we hope, its Prisons budget, its City
25 budget away from incarceration back

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 towards rehabilitation, health and
3 healing. We've done a lot of work on it
4 for juveniles in the justice system. I'd
5 love to -- if you have a chance to talk a
6 little bit about young people, especially
7 like young people in residential
8 placement, we want to be very thoughtful
9 about that, but I really do want to hear
10 about as we discuss how well reentry
11 programs work, why you think Mural Arts'
12 reentry program might be -- what
13 distinguishes it from others and what
14 makes it successful.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: What
16 distinguishes the Mural Arts Guild
17 Program from other programs, what makes
18 it successful, what makes it better than
19 others is the fact that you have a person
20 on the forefront who has been directly
21 impacted. You have the young brothers
22 with people -- my partner Rick is here.

23 Raise your hand, Rick.

24 You have individuals running
25 the program who speak the language of the

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 people, meaning although it might sound
3 like a good idea to go up the street to
4 University of Penn or go ahead to Temple
5 University and hire some big-name,
6 fresh-out-of-college reentry coordinator
7 or whatever, but when you have
8 individuals that's from the same streets
9 that they're from, Councilwoman, that's
10 been down the same road that they've been
11 down, it makes your program all the more
12 better.

13 So for myself individually, I'm
14 not afraid of them. Okay? And a lot of
15 what goes on in our city is, the reason
16 why the resources are not being offered
17 is because most people claim to be afraid
18 of them. They won't even say good
19 morning. They won't even say, hey, what
20 church do you go to? They won't even
21 say, hey, what are you doing Saturday?
22 My church is having a bus ride. They
23 won't even do that.

24 So for us, we're going in,
25 we're unafraid. We understand the work.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 We live in these neighborhoods. We lived
3 in these neighborhoods when these
4 neighborhoods were way rougher than they
5 are today, Councilwoman.

6 So respectfully to answer your
7 question, it is because it all goes to
8 like what Councilwoman said earlier, it
9 all goes to your leadership, your
10 leadership. It goes from the top. And I
11 don't mean to toot my own horn, but beep,
12 beep.

13 COUNCILWOMAN GYM: Thank you
14 very much.

15 MR. WILLIAMS: You're welcome.
16 Next question.

17 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you.
18 The Chair recognizes
19 Councilwoman Blackwell.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
21 you very much.

22 I always mention that I've
23 known Jane since the beginning, since she
24 started out with Tim Spencer. I remember
25 when I met her so many years ago, and

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 she's made us so proud over the years.
3 We are proud to be number one. And
4 everybody has mentioned her work with
5 ex-offenders, and not only those who are
6 ex-offenders, those who are still
7 incarcerated. We're grateful for that.

8 She does things like we have
9 Prince Philip in Mantua dealing with
10 murals, believe it or not. She works
11 with Tiberino Museum in Mantua in my area
12 and has allowed them to do work in our
13 city, even on the side of MSB, and just
14 the schools and the summer programs and
15 the after-school programs and works with
16 seniors and camps and rec centers. You
17 name it, Jane is always tuned in to where
18 the community is, where the neighborhoods
19 are, and what's happening at that time,
20 and that takes a skill to be able to keep
21 up with what's happening now.

22 MS. GOLDEN: Thank you.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: I
24 thank you. I thank the young man with
25 you and all of those from your program

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 who are here. And we're proud to support
3 your increase. We want you to have the
4 money you need so that you can continue
5 to make a difference in the quality of
6 life in our city for so many people
7 across the board, and we thank you.

8 MS. GOLDEN: Oh, thank you,
9 Councilwoman. That means a lot.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
11 you.

12 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
14 Madam Councilwoman.

15 The Chair recognizes Councilman
16 Domb.

17 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,
18 Mr. Chairman.

19 And good afternoon. I'll echo
20 my colleagues, that you're all doing a
21 great job, so thank you. And I just had
22 a couple of questions I wanted to ask.

23 This past year, I guess 2018,
24 how many returning citizens in total
25 numbers were involved in Mural Arts?

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. GOLDEN: I'm going to
3 actually -- Grace Cannon, could you come
4 up? I just want to make sure my numbers
5 are right.

6 (Witness approached witness
7 table.)

8 MS. CANNON: Hi. I'm Grace
9 Cannon, Mural Arts, Director of
10 Restorative Justice.

11 We serve typically -- we're not
12 concluded this fiscal year yet. We serve
13 anywhere from 60 participants, 15
14 participants in three youth violence
15 reduction program cohorts and an
16 additional 12 in our Philadelphia
17 Department of Prisons cohort. We usually
18 have about -- total served, meaning
19 engaged in the program, is about 80
20 people during the year. And then with
21 our completion rate, we're serving about
22 60 people that go to completion in a
23 four-month cohort with the Guild, meaning
24 they graduate from the Guild and move on
25 to a job placement.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And then the
3 people that are moving on to job
4 placements, could you give me an idea
5 what types of jobs there are?

6 MS. CANNON: Yes, I can. We
7 are doing a couple of things. We have a
8 host of employers we work with that are
9 typically entry-level positions, the
10 Guild is as well. We consider an
11 entry-level position. They're a Mural
12 Arts employee. We work with Comcast
13 Spectacor, Garces, Vetri Restaurants,
14 Northeast Building Projects, Products
15 Newman Paper Company, Whole Foods, Shop
16 Rite, Baker Industries, Wash Cycle,
17 Reading Terminal Market, to name a few.

18 In addition, we're trying very
19 hard to think about deeper career
20 pathways. We have the ability when we
21 have resources to place our youth
22 partners in the Trades for a Difference
23 program. They seem to understand our
24 population. They work very intensely
25 with them and then do targeted placement

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 with them in building trades and unions,
3 when appropriate.

4 We're working with the
5 Philadelphia Horticultural Society
6 LandCare program. We also have
7 participants that are very successful
8 there and get targeted placement in that
9 industry. We have a wonderful job
10 developer where we're looking for what
11 I'm calling Tier 2 partners to do that
12 very targeted career pathways placement,
13 and we think that will make our work
14 richer, and we feel like we're a great
15 sort of work readiness, work-based
16 learning foundation for that next level
17 partner.

18 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And so do you
19 think the program -- how many more people
20 could you accommodate in the program who
21 are returning citizens?

22 MS. CANNON: How many more? I
23 think that is a twofold question. The
24 more cohorts we add -- we like to keep
25 the cohorts to 20 to 15. We think that's

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 the best size for one Guild coordinator
3 to be working with a group. Once we
4 start adding cohorts at this point, we
5 would need a second Guild coordinator,
6 and we need to think about our space. We
7 are looking with partners that Jane has
8 about additional space for our Guild.

9 MS. GOLDEN: I think if we had
10 the funding and could build some
11 capacity, that we could think about
12 another -- doubling the size, but it
13 would take some capacity, because we like
14 the individualized attention, and so we
15 would adhere to that. But I think it's
16 very possible that we could double in
17 size, and we are -- with this Ford
18 Foundation grant, we have a little bit of
19 funding for a space, and our goal is to
20 create a restorative justice hub so the
21 Guild finally has a home. The Recreation
22 Department has been great and they've
23 been very kind to host us, but we go from
24 place to place and we really need a home
25 base. So that's what we're looking for

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 right now.

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: How do people
4 get into the program? Are they informed
5 while they're up on State Road or after
6 they -- walk me through that process.

7 MS. CANNON: They are coming
8 home -- typically with our young people,
9 we have three cohorts that are 18- to
10 24-year-olds and we use Violence
11 Reduction Partnership Program. Those are
12 referrals directly from Office of
13 Violence Prevention. We work intensely
14 with that office. They know us well.
15 They know from their group who might be
16 very successful with us. That's a really
17 good, rich partnership.

18 With Philadelphia Department of
19 Prisons cohort, we have one of those
20 cohorts a year. We're actually working
21 with Commissioner Carney and the
22 various -- whichever prison we are
23 working with for those referrals.

24 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Are you
25 working with them while they're on State

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Road or once they get out?

3 MS. CANNON: We have
4 historically worked with them on State
5 Road. This particular year, the past
6 year -- and I'll look to Jane -- we
7 didn't have funding to do the work in
8 State Road, so we were more receiving as
9 a reentry program. Would we love to get
10 back to working in State Road and do that
11 transition? Yes. But that funding is a
12 very limited pool, and we were asked
13 there to focus in on reentry.

14 MS. GOLDEN: Yes. And that's
15 been the same for a few years. We used
16 to work intensively there and then we had
17 a much smaller cohort of people coming
18 home. The prison asked us -- the jails
19 asked us to change that, to work more
20 with people coming home. So we're on a
21 mission to try to raise some private
22 money so we can start working at
23 Riverside, because we used to have a
24 great program up there. So it would be
25 our goal eventually to go back and serve

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 people who are behind the walls and also
3 with people coming home. I think both is
4 very important. And I can see with our
5 work at Phoenix, once Graterford, how
6 important that work is and what it means
7 to people. And some people who were at
8 Graterford have actually come home, and
9 they speak eloquently about the impact
10 the program had on their lives.

11 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Because I
12 think one of the goals we need to
13 accomplish is when people come out, that
14 they hit the ground running. And so it's
15 like a pre-entry program. So if we could
16 go into the prisons before they're
17 released and help them get acquainted
18 with whatever jobs that we want them to
19 be acquainted with, whether it's Mural
20 Arts or whatever, it's better to do it
21 pre-entry than after they come out,
22 because once they come out, they're by
23 themselves. We need to give them those
24 tools while they're there so they can
25 come out and be successful.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 So I would support, if you came
3 back to this body, with whatever funding
4 you needed. I mean, look at it this way:
5 We have right now 4,600 people on State
6 Road. I think the budget is still 380
7 million. You could do the math and
8 divide it, but it's over \$82,000 to
9 \$84,000 per. It was 45,000 four years
10 ago. 84,000. There's money there for
11 these types of programs. They have to be
12 reallocated. So I would suggest -- and
13 this is a perfect program for
14 reallocation. I would suggest you come
15 back to us with that.

16 Thank you very much, and thank
17 you for everything you're doing, and
18 everyone who is from Mural Arts is doing
19 a great job.

20 MS. GOLDEN: Thank you so much.

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

23 (Applause.)

24 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
25 Councilman.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 And hello, Jane Golden.

3 MS. GOLDEN: Hello.

4 COUNCILMAN HENON: There isn't
5 anybody in the City of Philadelphia who
6 has the enthusiasm and I think the
7 willingness to revitalize and the
8 commitment to engage and stop recidivism
9 and putting people to work than you in
10 the City of Philadelphia. So I want to
11 congratulate you and your staff for --

12 (Applause.)

13 MS. GOLDEN: I work with
14 wonderful people. Thank you very much.

15 COUNCILMAN HENON: -- for
16 igniting change. Because art is igniting
17 change, and you're doing it with the
18 Mural Arts Program. And I think that
19 your commitment to the City, to the
20 people, and to our community as it grows
21 is top class and it reaches and is in
22 line with the Mayor's pillars of
23 commitment in the City of Philadelphia,
24 and I think that's where the Finance
25 Department and our City budget is looking

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 to support, and I hope they continue to
3 support you to get to the goals and the
4 programs that you need so we can have
5 young gentlemen like this who is
6 definitely, definitely passionate,
7 committed, and is a part of the actual
8 change that's going on in our City of
9 Philadelphia.

10 So you're doing a great job,
11 Dawan. I appreciate it. Thank you.

12 MS. GOLDEN: Thank you.
13 (Applause.)

14 COUNCILMAN HENON: So if you
15 can -- let me start by -- and I want to
16 hear from you. So one of the things that
17 in my district -- and I'm talking about
18 my district specific. Who would have
19 thought that there would be arts in
20 Northeast Philadelphia? We have,
21 together. We have brought arts to
22 Northeast Philadelphia. And I'm going to
23 start by explaining a little bit, but I
24 really would like to -- I'll mention it,
25 but I would like to get your feedback on

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 how that change has happened and to see
3 the steps that if we take and the amount
4 of people that we've touched and some of
5 things that are just like ground-breaking
6 when it comes to arts and culture in
7 Northeast Philadelphia and, in specific,
8 the Mural Arts Program.

9 So a few years ago the Tacony
10 Library was going under a complete
11 renovation, and we're extremely thankful
12 to the City and the Finance Department
13 and the Library for choosing Tacony to be
14 one of its early 21st Century Library
15 models, a two-year project. So a
16 two-year project, I realized that the
17 community was going to be without a
18 library service. So I started asking
19 questions. So we don't have a service.
20 What happens to a lot of the good public
21 servants that we have that are in
22 whatever capacity, librarians and
23 programs, why should a community not have
24 that? Can we think about what services
25 on a smaller scale that we can continue

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 while we transform this historic building
3 into a 21st century library? And it's
4 through our efforts and regular kind of
5 partnership that I had with Mural Arts
6 that we came up with a model that was
7 complicated, but yet it was a model I
8 believe that could be shined upon
9 throughout every district in the City of
10 Philadelphia.

11 So we took a commercial
12 corridor double store vacant property
13 that has been vacant for three years.
14 Now, this is on a commercial corridor.
15 We're already investing resources. We're
16 already trying to attract more walkable
17 and friendly neighborhood folks and an
18 attraction, trying to market our
19 commercial corridors, revitalize them,
20 working with the Commerce Department,
21 have all these SafeCam programs and
22 incentives for people.

23 So we took a double vacant
24 storefront on a commercial corridor and
25 came up with a concept of a shared space

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 with the Library and Mural Arts. And the
3 Mural Arts part of the shared space was
4 an Artist in Residence program, which I
5 came, I went across the City, asked
6 permission from my fellow Council
7 colleagues to come in their district and
8 take a look at what's been going on
9 across the City for best practices, what
10 works, what doesn't work, and how can we
11 utilize that kind of experience in a
12 shared work space with our Free Library
13 in the City of Philadelphia. And I have
14 to tell you, I couldn't be more prouder
15 of the commitment that Mural Arts had,
16 the partnership with our Free Library and
17 making sure that our citizens still had
18 the service and they still -- and they
19 have additional programs in a vacant
20 building that had crime and some
21 uncleanliness that is on that part of our
22 commercial corridor. Totally cleaned it
23 up. I wouldn't say totally, but we even
24 worked towards a park light that we were
25 able to build with our Artist in

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Residence. And I just want to thank you
3 for that. I want to thank you for
4 thinking outside the box with me and my
5 office and the community members.

6 This isn't just a -- we may
7 have thought about it on looking for
8 opportunities, and I always come from the
9 philosophy and live my life on be
10 available for the opportunity. And you
11 all were available for the opportunity,
12 the space was available for the
13 opportunity, the commitment was available
14 for the opportunity, and the opportunity
15 worked. It worked, and we have programs,
16 robust programs, over the last several
17 years on the commercial corridor space in
18 which now the Library is up and running
19 and is an incredible, incredible,
20 incredible library. The librarian, the
21 programs, the people that work there, the
22 community that utilizes its 21st century
23 design, and opportunities for people is
24 just spectacular.

25 But the Artist in Residence has

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 the entire space now, and I just want to
3 say thank you for that. Thank you, Jane
4 Golden. Thank you to your staff. Thank
5 you to all the artists.

6 So could you -- how many people
7 and kids and/or residents and programs
8 that come through the Tacony Lab -- and
9 by the way, for those who don't know what
10 lab is, it was library and arts building.
11 Now it's at the Tacony -- it continues to
12 be the Tacony Lab, but it's solely an
13 arts building. It's an arts building in
14 Tacony on the commercial corridor with
15 programming five days a week, six days a
16 week.

17 MS. GOLDEN: Yeah. Well, I
18 think that the hub spaces we have around
19 the City -- there's one on Lancaster
20 Avenue, one in Tacony, one in deep South
21 Philly, one in the Northeast, and one in
22 Kensington. They're all reflective of
23 the population we serve, and it allows us
24 to embed ourselves in communities over
25 long periods of time.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 The Tacony Lab has -- since we
3 opened, which is not that long ago, we've
4 offered 76 classes. Over a thousand
5 people have come through the doors to
6 participate in classes, and hundreds of
7 people have participated, because the
8 Tacony Lab staff goes out to festivals
9 and events and has art-making activities.

10 So it's the same way we love
11 working with Park and Rec. Any way we
12 could embed ourselves in communities
13 longer is a win for us, because we get to
14 know the neighborhood. In the case with
15 the lab, it's part of a revitalization
16 strategy. And people begin to really
17 count on us, and let's face it, when you
18 think about it, Philadelphia has
19 wonderful cultural institutions in the
20 City, but Philly is a huge city, and so
21 many neighborhoods don't have access to
22 those institutions. I wish I could wave
23 a magic wand or win the lottery or
24 something so we could be on Germantown
25 Avenue, that we could be on 52nd Street,

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 that we could be on Ridge Avenue to be
3 there for long periods of time, because I
4 feel that's what citizens deserve, that
5 kind of programming that's alive and
6 vital. And also with Tacony, now we're
7 employing more local artists and teaching
8 artists.

9 I was at an event last week,
10 and an artist who did a residency there
11 came up and she said, I can't thank you
12 enough, because it's so hard to get work,
13 and there I was able to do my work and I
14 got such great feedback. And she
15 practically started crying. So it's both
16 supporting artists, supporting community,
17 and supporting economic development. For
18 me, it is just a multi-tasker, the hub
19 spaces.

20 And what I've seen in Tacony,
21 the other thing is, that it has turned on
22 a light how people look at art and public
23 art. For us to be standing in Mayfair on
24 Saturday, announcing that we're going to
25 be doing seven new murals, and for me to

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 talk about -- think about it. We could
3 have tours, special tours at restaurants
4 and look at the public art. It was so
5 exciting. It was palpable to see like
6 how much people are clamoring for art.

7 COUNCILMAN HENON: And I
8 couldn't agree with you more. You kind
9 of took the words right out of my mouth.
10 What I was going to say is that you never
11 know who is watching, right, and people
12 in our neighborhoods and our communities
13 are looking for reasons and programs to
14 come out and participate. The more
15 people that participate, the more people
16 that are walking in our communities, the
17 safer they are, the more they look after
18 each other, the more they get to know
19 each other. When you're painting with
20 somebody, it's not just mural arts -- or
21 murals. There's pottery, there's design,
22 there's all different kinds of -- a
23 multitude of exposure to the arts and
24 culture of just the Mural Arts programs.

25 I mean, you can have paint by

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 numbers, and they're always good to be
3 painting with somebody, but when you're
4 in a class and you're in a program and
5 you're learning how to design art on a
6 program for flags that are going to go in
7 your neighborhood and they're displayed
8 proudly, you get to know your neighbor.
9 You get to know who you are, and you're
10 putting your input into what you want to
11 see our neighborhood to be in the next
12 ten years, without forgetting where it
13 was in the last -- in the previous ten
14 years.

15 MS. GOLDEN: That's right. And
16 also the classes are multi-generational.
17 So we have programs for toddlers and we
18 have programs for seniors. We have
19 knitting, sewing, crochet, photography,
20 print-making, drawing, painting, music,
21 you name it. I mean, the mural-making is
22 just one small part of what's offered in
23 the hub spaces around the City.

24 COUNCILMAN HENON: Exactly.
25 And I wanted to make sure that that got

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 onto the record. It's much more than
3 murals. And murals obviously are the
4 ones that get the larger attention
5 because -- and I want to talk about that
6 in a second. But it is -- Mural Arts
7 revitalizes neighborhoods, period. And
8 it does ignite change because you're part
9 of a change, and it's a commitment to
10 making change. And what the art hub in
11 Tacony has displayed and people observing
12 and watching and participating is, it
13 brought multiple communities together.
14 Now in Mayfair, we had, as you had
15 indicated or made a statement on, it's
16 our second Mayfair arts festival in
17 Mayfair. We shut down the street. We
18 had vendors out there. We had -- well,
19 first of all, we had great weather,
20 right? Second of all, we had incredible
21 people that were coming up there. The
22 first year you made the announcement that
23 we are having a mural mile. That's
24 right, a mural mile. We have identified
25 and we have permission on walls in

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Mayfair, a mile of murals. Now, how we
3 fund it all is yet to be, but we are
4 halfway there with the community
5 engagement. So every mural has community
6 engagement.

7 We just painted a mural that
8 you had David Guinn, who is
9 internationally recognized and he's
10 working for Mural Arts, internationally
11 recognized artists.

12 MS. GOLDEN: From Philly.

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: From
14 Philadelphia. Mayfair, Frankford and
15 Cottman, painting by numbers, Mayfair
16 Community Center. Over a hundred people
17 turned out to paint this thing, and even
18 David was surprised of the amount of
19 community engagement and input. And
20 that's what we want to do. That's how we
21 invest back into our neighborhoods.

22 So we announced that we're
23 going to have a mural mile in Mayfair.
24 We have our second arts festival in
25 Mayfair and giving young entrepreneurs

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 like Art History 101 for streetwear. So
3 he recognized early on that there's
4 lacking of the artist community, or maybe
5 they were there and they just had nothing
6 to go to, but together in our
7 partnerships, we gave people something to
8 be proud of and to engage in. And Art
9 History 101, displaying his streetwear, I
10 mean, he is recognized in all those --
11 the Philly teams and the celebrations.

12 We had a fashion show at
13 Frankford and Cottman because of the arts
14 festival and the introduction to arts and
15 culture up in Northeast Philadelphia, and
16 it's because of Mural Arts.

17 So I just want to say thank
18 you --

19 MS. GOLDEN: Thank you. Wow, I
20 appreciate that.

21 COUNCILMAN HENON: -- for that.

22 What kind of feedback have you
23 been getting from the artist community
24 when it comes to Mayfair and the growth
25 and as a model?

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. GOLDEN: Well, I've just
3 had a lot of artists reaching out to us
4 who just feel very grateful about the
5 Tacony Lab and are really interested in
6 teaching classes there. And so I'm
7 really -- we're eager to develop a longer
8 term strategy and how we can expand it,
9 because I do think that there are many
10 artists up there just longing for
11 opportunities to connect.

12 COUNCILMAN HENON: What is your
13 Mural Arts total budget with all grants
14 and --

15 MS. GOLDEN: Our total
16 budget -- so the City provides us with 30
17 percent of the support, and our total
18 budget --

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: Like 2.3
20 million?

21 MS. GOLDEN: -- is about \$10
22 million.

23 COUNCILMAN HENON: \$10 million?

24 MS. GOLDEN: Yeah. That's how
25 much money -- we have to raise a lot of

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 money.

3 COUNCILMAN HENON: So you raise
4 70 percent --

5 MS. GOLDEN: Yes, we raise 70
6 percent.

7 COUNCILMAN HENON: -- of your
8 resources and only 30 percent comes from
9 the City?

10 MS. GOLDEN: A little --
11 between -- maybe 33 percent.

12 COUNCILMAN HENON: But you're
13 all over the City of Philadelphia.

14 MS. GOLDEN: We are in every
15 neighborhood of the City of Philadelphia.
16 Not a community goes unnoticed by Mural
17 Arts. We're everywhere, and it's really
18 exciting.

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: And I
20 totally rely on you as a partner in
21 several neighborhoods.

22 So I'm going to ask every
23 member, District Councilmember, in the
24 City of Philadelphia to continue to push
25 for funding for Mural Arts.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. GOLDEN: Thank you.

3 COUNCILMAN HENON: Everybody

4 wants a mural. But how do we fund it?

5 Is it a priority? Is it not a priority?

6 So I'm going to encourage all of --

7 MS. GOLDEN: Thank you. Thank

8 you. And we're leveraging. We're always

9 matching City dollars and private

10 dollars. We want to stretch a City

11 dollar as far as it can go. We feel very

12 cognizant that we are -- even if you're

13 employed by the Mural Arts advocates at

14 Mural Arts, we all feel like public

15 servants working on behalf of the City,

16 and I'm am very grateful for every dollar

17 we get.

18 COUNCILMAN HENON: It's not

19 even a dollar-for-dollar match. It's a

20 70/30 match. I mean, you are an example

21 of program-based budgeting in the City of

22 Philadelphia.

23 So I appreciate you being here

24 and look forward to continuing with our

25 relationships. And I'm sure if you're

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 back in this body, you're going to
3 continue to get the well-deserved
4 accreditation for igniting change across
5 the City. So thank you.

6 MS. GOLDEN: Thank you so much.

7 (Applause.)

8 COUNCILMAN HENON: Well, as you
9 know, we thank you all for your
10 testimony.

11 And we will now take a
12 ten-minute recess.

13 Thank you.

14 (Short recess.)

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: We're
16 going to resume our hearings. The next
17 department is Office of City Rep. Ms.
18 Hess and company, please.

19 (Witnesses approached witness
20 table.)

21 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please.

22 MS. HESS: Well, good
23 afternoon, Councilman Greenlee, and thank
24 you so much for having us. I am Sheila
25 Hess and I am honored and humbled to

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 serve as City Representative, and I have
3 joining with me today my deputies. I
4 have Margaret Hughes and Elka
5 Battle-Murillo, and we are pleased to
6 provide our testimony on behalf of the
7 Office of City Representative for our
8 Fiscal Year 2019 Operating Budget.

9 So I know you have our
10 testimony already, but just to emphasize
11 at the Office of City Representative, we
12 serve as the premier marketing and
13 promotional agency of the City of
14 Philadelphia. And so our mission is to
15 celebrate and foster Philadelphia's
16 visibility and diversity through the
17 citywide event creations and community
18 engagement, promote, and innovative
19 experiences enjoyed by both residents and
20 visitors alike. So we are pretty much
21 the positive message to increase tourist
22 and visibility throughout our City of
23 Philadelphia, and our office promotes
24 community pride and we produce scores of
25 events each year that reflect the diverse

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 representation and commitment of the City
3 leaders to the community at-large.

4 Thank you for having me go
5 after Jane Golden. What a challenge that
6 was. And we work very closely with Mural
7 Arts and coming out next with Parks and
8 Recreation, and we thank you so much,
9 Councilman Greenlee, in advance for your
10 thoughts and for your feedback today.

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.
12 Thank you. Thank you very much. And I
13 know we're a little behind schedule here.
14 I appreciate you hanging in there.

15 Generally what large-scale
16 events are being planned this year? What
17 do you have on tap for us?

18 MS. HESS: Well, tonight being
19 the Sixers playoff game, just saying, you
20 never know what will be coming up next
21 after that, but tomorrow there's going to
22 be a big announcement. It's not coming
23 up in 2019, but it will be coming up in
24 2026, tomorrow's big announcement with
25 PCVB and the Philadelphia Phillies. We

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 are proud to announce that Philadelphia
3 will be the host of the Baseball All-Star
4 Game in 2026. It's a big year for our
5 City of Philadelphia, with USA250. And
6 so this year our office, the big events
7 are produced through the Managing
8 Director's Office. We promote and we
9 attend those events.

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.
11 Great. I'm just going to relay a couple
12 questions Councilwoman Reynolds Brown
13 had, that she wasn't able to stay.

14 You state that one of the key
15 focuses is to increase and engage
16 participants from all Philadelphia
17 neighborhoods. In the continuing
18 discussion of diversity, how do you
19 ensure that all races, genders, economic
20 statuses are represented at these events?

21 MS. HESS: Well, we have a very
22 diverse group of folks from a planning
23 committee when we work with these
24 different organizations. So in that
25 regard, they are working with their

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 different groups and organizations in the
3 neighborhood and in the community. So
4 the outreach has been extensive, and we
5 work very, very closely with our Office
6 of Immigrant Affairs as well to try to --
7 and also our Consular Corps and with
8 Citizens Diplomacy International as well
9 as with our Commerce Department. So we
10 try to bring a vast variety of folks
11 within our events.

12 And as far as talent and lineup
13 we produce, we try to bring in our local
14 talent, but a nice diverse mix as well
15 for all audiences and all ages, and of
16 course they're free.

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.
18 That's important, yes.

19 MS. HESS: Yes.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: She also
21 wanted to ask about what engagement you
22 have with local universities,
23 particularly as you talk about being a
24 marketing and promotional agency. Do you
25 deal with local universities to try to

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 engage recent graduates?

3 MS. HESS: We do. We have an
4 extremely close relationship with Temple
5 University. They have --

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: That's
7 the best one to have it with, by the way.

8 MS. HESS: It is.

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Guess
10 where I went.

11 MS. HESS: I'm speaking to a
12 Temple grad.

13 They have the School of
14 Tourism, Hospitality, and Management.
15 Our office actually recruits a lot of
16 students for our interns, and we help
17 nurture them and help them bring what
18 their vision is, because we are the
19 fastest growing city for millennials, and
20 they bring a new breadth and depth of
21 things to look for when we're producing
22 our events. But we work very closely.
23 We just had an intern from Drexel's co-op
24 as well, and Temple is our biggest one.

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Great.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Great. And her last question had to do
3 with how the role of the office has
4 changed, if it has, since, say, the
5 Rendell Administration. Has there been a
6 lot of different approaches that you
7 take?

8 MS. HESS: The office has
9 changed since I started in 2016. I know
10 our team in the past has produced the big
11 events, was in charge of the
12 Philadelphia -- actually started the
13 Philadelphia Marathon here and brought
14 that, because that is a great economic
15 driver and it's a great tourist as well,
16 the way that we structure the
17 Philadelphia Marathon.

18 We used to do Welcome America,
19 and now that is a separate -- with the
20 new President and CEO for Welcome
21 America, but our office still works
22 extremely closely with both of those
23 groups, and we produce our own events
24 working in collaboration with Welcome
25 America.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 So there has been some
3 different structure the way things are
4 done now.

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.
6 Great. And just one last thing I see the
7 Council President has here. As far as
8 the net economic benefit of these
9 large-scale events that you coordinate,
10 do you have a figure that you can give
11 us?

12 MS. HESS: I do. So just
13 recently Visit Philadelphia as well as
14 PCVB, they just hosted their report to
15 the community. And so with PCVB, there
16 was now that we have -- we broke records
17 with our hotel accommodations, which we
18 have also nine new hotels coming out this
19 year, which is huge for that, but the
20 record for -- we had more than 43 million
21 people visit Philadelphia in 2017, with a
22 record-breaking 7.1 billion in the region
23 from an economic development standpoint,
24 which is amazing and it's just driving
25 more and more business.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.

3 I'm sorry. I'm getting a message from
4 the Council President. Hold on one
5 second.

6 MS. HESS: There was also with
7 the meetings, convention, and events that
8 PCVB put out, there is 500 million in the
9 economic impact as well.

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay. I
11 appreciate that. See, the good thing is
12 since there's not a lot of questions,
13 everybody knows that you're doing a great
14 job.

15 MS. HESS: Thank you.

16 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And this
17 is certainly -- some of the events that
18 have been going on around the City I
19 think just makes the City look good both
20 to us, I think, as citizens and also to
21 the rest of the country and maybe the
22 rest of the world in certain cases.

23 MS. HESS: We want to promote
24 that we are the first World Heritage City
25 as well. So that's attracting a lot of

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 the global business and a lot of the
3 international folks who are coming to
4 visit Philadelphia on all sectors. So
5 we're really proud of that fact.

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Just in
7 time here. Councilwoman Parker.

8 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
9 you, Mr. Chairman, as I catch my breath.

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I know.
11 We're running behind here, so we're
12 trying to move it.

13 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Okay. I
14 have no questions. I just have a
15 comment. I want to say a special thank
16 you to you, Representative, for your
17 office always being responsive when the
18 Ninth Councilmanic District reaches out
19 to you. Something as minor as residents
20 throughout the City of Philadelphia
21 having family reunions here as a way to
22 showcase the City, it also generates
23 economic revenue for us. And they
24 sometimes just want a little pin that we
25 give out, and every time we call you,

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 which is usually 24 hours before it
3 occurs because that's when they contact
4 us, you've always been responsive, and
5 just wanted to say a special thank you on
6 the record to you and your team.

7 MS. HESS: Thank you so much.
8 That means so much, but we are about
9 customer experience and service, and I
10 hope everyone feels that way. So thank
11 you.

12 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I
13 certainly second that motion for the
14 whole City. I think you do certainly a
15 great job there. Thank you all very
16 much.

17 MS. HESS: We want to
18 congratulate you as well, Councilman,
19 knowing that -- thank you for what you've
20 done for our city and knowing that this
21 is the last year. So we are grateful to
22 have had the opportunity to work with
23 you.

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I
25 appreciate that. Thank you very much.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. HESS: Thank you.

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you
4 all very much.

5 (Applause.)

6 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: So our
7 next department is Philadelphia Parks and
8 Recreation.

9 (Applause.)

10 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And she
11 brought her fan club with her, I can see.

12 (Witnesses approached witness
13 table.)

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE:
15 Commissioner, how are you? And before
16 you start, because I'll forget with my
17 age, making me forget a whole lot of
18 things, and I forgot to say it last time.
19 I see Barry Bessler in the back there,
20 and I just wanted to make a specific
21 mention of him, because he is the guy
22 that we have gone to for years and has
23 always been very helpful, and I think
24 he's close to -- is he close to
25 retirement?

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:

3 Councilman, he insisted that I not
4 mention it, but I'm glad you did.

5 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Well, he
6 can't tell me what to do, so I'm going to
7 mention it. How about that?

8 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: No,
9 he cannot. He shouldn't be able to tell
10 me what to do either, but he does.

11 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Please
12 proceed.

13 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Thank
14 you. Good afternoon, Councilman Greenlee
15 and members of Council. My name is
16 Kathryn Ott Lovell. I'm the Commissioner
17 for the Parks and Recreation Department.
18 With me today are Aparna Palantino,
19 Deputy Commissioner for Capital
20 Infrastructure and Natural Lands, and
21 Marissa Washington, Deputy Commissioner
22 for Administration. It's our pleasure to
23 be here today.

24 I appear before you to present
25 our proposed Operating Budget for Fiscal

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Year 2020, which includes a General Fund
3 obligation of \$67,858,055 and Grants
4 Revenue of \$13,562,824. The FY20 General
5 Fund budget reflects an increase of
6 \$659,342 over FY19 estimated obligations.

7 The Class 100 request of
8 \$52,490,935 sustains the Department's
9 authorized level of 759 General Fund
10 full-time positions. \$10,115,490 is
11 proposed for Class 200, and \$2,740,630 in
12 Class 3/400, and \$2,511,000 in Class 500.

13 The men and women serving
14 Philadelphia Parks and Recreation
15 represent various backgrounds and
16 diversities. Our staff is 42 percent
17 African American, 4 percent Latino, 1
18 percent Asian, and 52 percent Caucasian.
19 It is also 27 percent women and 73
20 percent men.

21 I'd like to take a moment to
22 thank the staff of Philadelphia Parks and
23 Recreation, many of whom are here with us
24 today, for their extraordinary dedication
25 to the Department, our programs and

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 assets, and the constituents we serve
3 each day.

4 In FY20, we will continue
5 implementing the goals outlined in the
6 Department's strategic plan, which will
7 ultimately deliver enriching experiences
8 at playgrounds, rec centers, and parks.
9 We plan to continue to enhance our
10 program quality, offer trainings to
11 recreation staff and service delivery,
12 solidify internal practices, improve
13 asset management, and incentivize staff
14 to create innovative programming that is
15 relevant, inclusive, diverse, and
16 equitable.

17 In a recent effort with the
18 Office of Human Resources, we
19 dramatically improved the Department's
20 recruitment and hiring process for
21 recreation leader trainees, an
22 entry-level position that begins an
23 individual's career pipeline within the
24 Department, and we're hopeful that this
25 new process will help bring in an

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 energized, highly qualified, and
3 committed cohort of new recreation
4 leaders that truly reflect the diversity
5 of our city.

6 We are excited to report on
7 some great achievements over the past
8 fiscal year, all of which we plan to
9 build on and expand in FY20. During the
10 summer months, Parks and Recreation
11 operated 72 pools for more than 740,000
12 visitors. We distributed 1.5 million
13 meals, of which 950,000 were served at
14 389 Play Street sites.

15 Program staff operated 144
16 summer camps serving over 7,200 children
17 and hired 1,000 teens to help provide
18 these and other services.

19 Other summer accomplishments
20 included doubling the number of youth
21 served through our Play Philly program,
22 which is an initiative to promote one
23 hour of structured physical activity into
24 the camp program each day, and the
25 continued growth of our Camp Philly

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 program, which is a partnership with the
3 YMCA to give Philadelphia children a
4 sleep-away camp experience in the Pocono
5 Mountain.

6 Since the beginning of the
7 school year, Parks and Recreation
8 increased the number of after-school
9 programs to 95, a 10 percent increase
10 over the preceding two years. Parks and
11 Recreation also expanded food service by
12 about 10,000 meals during days when the
13 School District is closed.

14 In addition, through our
15 partnership with the Mayor's Office of
16 Education, we are also happy to share
17 that our summer camps will start two
18 weeks early this summer to accommodate
19 the School District's academic calendar.

20 Our Urban Forestry group
21 continued to address the City's current
22 backlog of pruning, removal, and planting
23 requests. In FY19, staff oversaw the
24 pruning of over 6,000 trees, the removal
25 of 1,000 street trees, and the planting

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 of 926 street trees. Our crews also
3 removed an additional 3,600 park trees
4 and pruned over 3,000 park trees.

5 The TreePhilly program
6 completed its 15th Yard Tree Giveaway
7 program season in FY19, bringing the
8 total number of trees given away to over
9 23,000. TreePhilly also secured a \$1.1
10 million grant from TD Bank to continue
11 and grow this initiative.

12 Through our Park Stewardship
13 Unit, 115 registered park friends groups
14 hosted 421 community events in FY19.
15 These included free concerts, health
16 fairs, holiday celebrations, and movie
17 nights. In addition to supporting the
18 park friends network, the Stewardship
19 Unit coordinated Love Your Park week in
20 the spring and the fall Love Your Park
21 Service Day, both which engaged to
22 combine 4,300 volunteers through 200
23 service events.

24 The third year of the
25 Philadelphia International Unity Cup,

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 which is the City's annual World Cup
3 style tournament, saw attendance top
4 14,000 people at 104 games, 1,200 players
5 and 120 coaches from 52 teams
6 representing immigrant communities from
7 many countries in this year's Cup. Also
8 last summer, the Dell Music Center hosted
9 16 events attracting 65,000 guests.

10 Significant projects completed
11 by our Capital Project team in FY19
12 include the renovation of Stenton Park,
13 including a new recreation center,
14 playground, and landscaping; the
15 renovation of Oncalm (ph) Playground; the
16 new playground at Finley Recreation
17 Center; the new ball field at Gorgas
18 Park; a new pool at Bridesburg Recreation
19 Center; and a new trail and boardwalk at
20 the Fairmount Water Works.

21 We completed these projects and
22 many, many more, and we -- sorry. We
23 celebrated these projects and many, many
24 more by hosting over 50 ribbon-cuttings
25 and ground-breakings over the past year.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Our Skilled Trades team
3 completed over 4,600 work orders in FY19.
4 Our Special Capital Projects team worked
5 on 24 projects, creating a savings for
6 the City of \$1.5 million. These projects
7 included roof repairs, bathroom repairs,
8 heating and cooling system repairs and
9 upgrades, painting, park lighting, sewer
10 lines, and the replacement of large
11 heating, ventilation, and air
12 conditioning systems.

13 Lastly, we continue to
14 coordinate very closely with the entire
15 Rebuild team around capital projects and
16 community engagement efforts for Rebuild
17 sites. I want to thank the Parks and
18 Recreation Commission members, many of
19 whom are with us today, and also the
20 members of the Advisory Councils and Park
21 Friends group, without whom we could not
22 do the work we do each day.

23 I also want to thank each of
24 you for your tireless efforts on behalf
25 of your constituents and your care and

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 concern and support for the Parks and
3 Recreation facilities in your district
4 and throughout the City.

5 Should any Councilmember wish
6 to engage in further discussion of any of
7 these matters, my staff and I are
8 available to meet with you at your
9 convenience.

10 Thank you for this opportunity
11 to discuss our department with you today,
12 and I look forward to your questions.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
14 Thank you. And good afternoon. I had a
15 couple of questions the first round.

16 First, how are you? How are
17 you all doing? Are you good? Everything
18 good?

19 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
20 Everything is fine. Thank you.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
22 Okay. This came up before. I don't know
23 at what point we'll have to address it in
24 a significant way.

25 So with the expansion and

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 continuation of Rebuild as it relates to
3 facilities in some instances, I guess in
4 some cases we'll actually need additional
5 staff from the operating side of the
6 budget. The Rebuild project is clearly
7 focused on capital side, some instances
8 expanding facilities, maybe even building
9 some new facility.

10 What's the strategy for
11 increasing our staffing levels at the
12 facilities over the next two, three, four
13 years as we move forward?

14 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Sure.
15 It's certainly something we've given much
16 thought to. What we're in the process of
17 doing as part of our strategic plan is
18 looking at a comprehensive realignment of
19 our existing staff, looking at sites
20 where we can assign staff to work
21 multiple sites, a chance to open some new
22 sites and to deploy people at different
23 places throughout the week. It is a
24 strategy that we haven't attempted before
25 that we're looking forward to attempting

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 in the near term future.

3 We have more recreation centers
4 than any city in the country. We have
5 150. And to give you an example, New
6 York City has 50 recreation centers. So
7 we staff those facilities, but we have
8 additional facilities that are unstaffed;
9 for instance, Winchester Playground in
10 your district.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
12 Right.

13 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: So
14 the City ebbs and flows, and the
15 neighborhoods ebb and flow in terms of
16 needs and program desires. And so I
17 think we have to, as a department, become
18 more in tune with that, working with
19 communities to better understand where
20 those needs are and making sure that the
21 programs we're providing in those
22 facilities are truly relevant to those
23 communities and that those needs are
24 being filled.

25 So I'm very confident that in

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 working with the Administration into the
3 future, that as we present those needs
4 for perhaps expansion of certain centers,
5 that we'll be able to have some good
6 conversations about how to make that
7 happen, in addition to the realignment
8 that we're planning.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All
10 right. And a part of that conversation
11 actually over the last couple years, the
12 issue with respect to civil service
13 qualifications for facilities. As you
14 know, the simple reality is in some
15 instances we actually have volunteers or
16 heads of advisory groups that do more
17 work than the rec leader. I'm just
18 calling it like it is. And they don't
19 get compensated. And there's always been
20 this conversation why can't this person
21 who has been here forever get on staff
22 and be compensated for all the great
23 work. And I know maybe over the last
24 couple years, there's been a conversation
25 about possibly changing some of the civil

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 service regs to accommodate new
3 categories of employees that could
4 actually be people from the community.

5 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: So
6 thank you for asking about that. It's
7 definitely something that we've seen. So
8 our first line of -- our first effort is
9 when we see individuals who are
10 volunteering in our centers and are
11 looking for employment; for example, at
12 Winchester Playground in your district,
13 there's a gentleman there who has been a
14 volunteer working for that facility
15 incredibly hard for probably 15 years,
16 and so we're in the process of bringing
17 him on as a seasonal employee. And so
18 that's our first line. We can offer
19 seasonal positions, and our seasonal
20 positions, about 1,400 of them, are
21 filled by people directly from the
22 community. And I'm thrilled that the
23 Administration is working those wages up
24 to a living wage so that those folks are
25 receiving pay increases, some of them for

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 the first time in 20 years if they've
3 been working with us, and will go up as
4 high as \$15 in the near-term future.

5 But we've also worked really
6 hard and we, as I mentioned in my
7 testimony, recently did a project with
8 the Office of Human Resources where our
9 rec leader trainee test only comes up
10 every two years, right? And so there was
11 an effort, a big effort, on the
12 Department's part to try and broaden that
13 pool of applicants as much we possibly
14 could within the civil service
15 regulations. So the first thing we did
16 was to change the spec for the rec leader
17 trainee position, and what we did is, we
18 broadened the type of degrees. We kept
19 that you do have to have a college
20 degree, but we broadened the type of
21 degree that you need for the position so
22 that we could capture more individuals.
23 And we also -- there was a certain level
24 of experience that you needed, and we
25 broadened that as well, and we saw -- and

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 then what we did is, we also changed the
3 type of test that we offer for that
4 position to hopefully be much more
5 inclusive and fair in terms of bringing
6 in that pipeline of individuals, because
7 those individuals that start as rec
8 leader trainees are the future of the
9 Department. You have to start out as a
10 rec leader trainee to some day make it up
11 to district manager, right? It's a
12 pipeline that you have to make your way
13 up.

14 The other way that we're doing
15 it is through our CAP program, and that
16 is Community Apprenticeship Program that
17 we started about a year and a half ago,
18 and that program is specifically for
19 people who have been in our seasonal pool
20 that are looking for full-time employment
21 but haven't been able to find -- have had
22 trouble accessing the type of job that
23 they're looking for. It's also -- we
24 also partnered with other programs like
25 Power Corps, Mural Arts' Guild Program,

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 and other programs to identify folks that
3 are coming out of adjudication or have
4 just not been able to find the right
5 path. And so we have individuals who
6 have come through that program. Many of
7 them have found full-time employment,
8 some in the City, some outside the City.
9 And then we received an increase in our
10 budget this year to bring nine of those
11 employees on into full-time positions.
12 We've actually been working with the
13 Office of Human Resources to change the
14 spec for those positions, some of those
15 entry-level positions, so that these
16 candidates in the CAP program receive
17 that -- really we're tailoring the
18 positions to those individuals'
19 experience so that they will be almost
20 guaranteed a job, a civil service job,
21 when they come out of that program.

22 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

23 Right.

24 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: And
25 we received our budget increase to be

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 able to do that.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
4 Okay. At what point do you think you
5 will have concluded the specification
6 revamp/configuration?

7 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: We
8 already did that for the rec leader
9 trainee position.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
11 Pardon me?

12 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: We
13 already did that for the rec leader
14 trainee position. We updated the
15 specification.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So
17 can you give us the list of
18 specifications? Because we always have
19 people -- I got a couple of facilities.
20 I'm not going to say the names, but I got
21 one lady who has been over at 25th and
22 Diamond forever, right, never figured out
23 a way --

24 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Ms.
25 Hardy.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: --

3 through provisionals, just go on and on,
4 and that person was clearly like way
5 better than anybody that was on staff.

6 Can you give us the list of
7 specs as relates to the changes and the
8 proposed changes so we can have some
9 answers to people when they don't
10 understand -- when they want to know why
11 can't this person be on staff.

12 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
13 Absolutely.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: You
15 know what I mean?

16 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
17 Absolutely. And we have -- I really
18 appreciate the relationship that we've
19 been able to build with the Office of
20 Human Resources, because we are trying
21 different things to figure out how we can
22 make the civil service requirements work
23 for our department, and it's not always
24 easy. And the individual that you're
25 talking about, she was eligible for a

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 civil service position and she applied,
3 but unfortunately she is at the bottom of
4 the list. And because we only have a
5 certain number of vacancies, we're not
6 going to be able to reach her, and that
7 is hard and that happens too. People
8 get -- they make it all the way to get
9 into the civil service system and then
10 they don't score well. And I don't have
11 all the answers on that, but we certainly
12 want to make --

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

14 Sometimes people don't do well on tests.

15 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: I

16 know. I know.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

18 Sometimes people do much better in
19 neighborhoods, particularly in
20 neighborhoods that they're from, and
21 working with people.

22 So I think we should weight it
23 towards experience and even from a
24 geographical perspective. If that person
25 is from that community, they should be

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 given some additional support as it
3 relates to the evaluation process.

4 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: I
5 couldn't agree with you more. I couldn't
6 agree with you more. And I think with
7 the CAP program, we're able to do that,
8 provided we get those specs cleared by
9 the Civil Service Commission.

10 I think the rule of two is
11 challenging, because if someone -- if we
12 have 15 people -- on the recreation
13 outreach worker list that we're talking
14 about, there's only about 15 people on
15 that list, but we only have two
16 vacancies, and you can't select whoever
17 you want from that list. It's
18 unfortunate.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I
20 think with the renewed interest in rec
21 centers and things of the like, that now
22 is the time to figure out a way to get
23 more people engaged --

24 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
25 Totally agree.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: --

3 that are compensated.

4 The other thing relating to
5 Rec, during the Rebuild process, we had
6 an agreement that there would be like 40,
7 I think the number was 40, additional
8 staff, skilled tradespeople that will be
9 on staff, and I think we ended up saying
10 they would be at the Redevelopment
11 Authority.

12 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Well,
13 the 40 positions were given to us. So
14 let me just pull that up. I have those.

15 So we were given the 40 Rebuild
16 positions. We did not start sort of a
17 full hiring process until after the soda
18 tax legislation was cleared, because that
19 was the funding source for those
20 positions, but I'm happy to report that
21 we are more than halfway through the
22 hiring of those positions. So we have 22
23 of the individuals hired. And we're
24 still struggling with some of those
25 positions, because there are specific

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 areas within the skilled trades that
3 citywide we struggle to compete with the
4 private-sector jobs for some specific
5 positions within skilled trades. But
6 we're more than halfway there with the 22
7 positions, and I'm happy to report that
8 it's a very diverse group of folks,
9 including one woman, which is somewhat
10 unusual for the skilled trades.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

12 Right. Can you give us those numbers of
13 where you are?

14 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Sure.

15 So we have for Rebuild, we have 95
16 percent male, 5 percent female; 32
17 percent African American, 9 percent
18 Latino, and 59 percent Caucasian.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

20 Okay.

21 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: It's

22 about 40 percent people of color.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All

24 right. We're getting there. Okay. And
25 we anticipate being able -- did we

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 utilize the -- I think we were looking at
3 a number of the programs, the
4 apprenticeship programs and School
5 District programs.

6 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: I
7 think that was more through PRA, because
8 ours have to come through the civil
9 service program for our skilled trades
10 positions.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All
12 right. I just want to make sure. People
13 are very concerned about where we were
14 going in terms of staffing levels.

15 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
16 Another exciting update -- if I could
17 give one more update on that that I'm
18 really excited about. Would you mind?
19 Is that three of the positions -- this
20 was a great idea that Aparna and Frank
21 Fabey had. Our biggest issue -- one of
22 our biggest issues in our system in terms
23 of capital is playground safety surface
24 and the expense of playground safety
25 surface, and so the idea is to use some

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 of the Rebuild positions to actually hire
3 an in-house safety surface crew that
4 would be trained to be able to lay safety
5 surface, which will save us an immense
6 amount of money and time to be able to
7 place and repair safety surface. So
8 that's really --

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

10 That's a big issue. It shuts down the
11 swings and everything else if you don't
12 have the appropriate surface.

13 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:

14 Sometimes it's \$50,000 of a capital
15 project is just the safety surface, and
16 so we think we can cut that cost really
17 significantly by buying the product like
18 our skilled trades -- like we do with our
19 capital projects now, buying the product
20 and then having our own staff be able to
21 lay the product and also go out and
22 repair, which is something we're not able
23 to do right now.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All

25 right. Thank you.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: So
3 we'll keep you posted on that.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
5 Thank you.

6 The Chair recognizes
7 Councilwoman Parker.

8 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Thank
9 you, Mr. President.

10 And let me say good afternoon
11 to each of you. I want to start the way
12 I have with each of the other departments
13 before I get to my line of questioning
14 and appropriately saying thank you to
15 some members of your team - Tiffany
16 Thurman, Aparna Palantino, Orlando
17 Rendon, Chris Creelman, Frank Fabey, Ken
18 Shepherd, Jerry -- I'm going to screw
19 your name up -- Balagitiz (ph). I don't
20 know what I just said. Azira Robinson
21 and Lisa Whittle. I want to thank you
22 for all you do to support my staff, my
23 rec center projects, and our
24 community-based organizations.

25 Huge shout-out to all of my rec

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 leaders, assistant rec leaders, and
3 support staff, too many of y'all to name,
4 but I want to specially highlight Ty, Ty
5 Kane at the Lawncrest Recreation Center.
6 He has showed great leadership by
7 stepping up at Lawncrest when the site
8 leadership was in transition, and he hit
9 the ground running over there.

10 Let me just ask a question,
11 because my memory may be failing me.
12 When did the Supreme Court rule on the
13 beverage legislation, the lawsuit? Do we
14 know approximately when they ruled?

15 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: July.
16 July.

17 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: July of
18 20...

19 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: '18.

20 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: So July
21 of 2018. So we're not even a year into
22 it yet. It ruled in '18. And my
23 question to you is, how many sites would
24 you say have -- not that haven't been
25 completed, but where are we in the

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 process with Rebuild? I want to find out
3 since that lawsuit was passed in July
4 2018, how many sites do we have about
5 ready to -- where we've identified who is
6 going to be the project user, where we're
7 working to put together the design team?

8 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: So
9 I'd like to ask our colleague from
10 Rebuild, from the Rebuild team to answer
11 that.

12 (Witnesses approached witness
13 table.)

14 MS. WESTERMAN: Good afternoon,
15 Councilwoman. Nicole Westerman,
16 Executive Director of Rebuild.

17 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: First,
18 Nicole, I'm sorry, let me go back. So I
19 know July '18 was when the court ruled.
20 When were the bonds actually issued?

21 MS. WESTERMAN: They were
22 issued at the end of November.

23 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: So the
24 bonds were issued at the end of November.

25 MS. WESTERMAN: And that

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 resulted in \$86.5 million for the Rebuild
3 program.

4 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: 86.5
5 million.

6 So how many Rebuild sites are
7 in the pipeline?

8 MS. WESTERMAN: So we have 30
9 sites that are moving in one way or
10 another. They're at a range of different
11 points in the process. Some of them have
12 grant agreements that are being executed.
13 Some of them are in design. A few are in
14 construction. We have two major grant
15 agreements for Rebuild projects that have
16 been announced, with several more to be
17 announced in the near future.

18 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Based on
19 the 30 that are in the pipeline right
20 now, do you expect any to be completed in
21 2019 and how many in 2020? And even if
22 you don't have an exact number, if you
23 could give us a ballpark, that would be
24 appropriate.

25 MS. WESTERMAN: We definitely

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 will have some projects completed in
3 2019. In fact, the Parkside field
4 project, which we had a ground-breaking
5 for in December, is 90 percent complete.
6 The practice fields there are completed,
7 except for the uprights. They have to
8 wait for a couple months for the soil to
9 settle. There are a number of other more
10 modest projects that will be completed in
11 2019.

12 Our goal is for 2020 to have at
13 least 25 projects actively moving. And
14 for complete, I would need to get back to
15 you, but we did try to provide an update,
16 put together an update that has estimated
17 completion dates for the 30 projects that
18 are underway now. So I can get back to
19 you shortly on that.

20 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: Okay.
21 Thank you.

22 So for Parks and Recs, let me
23 ask you a question about special projects
24 and the Special Projects team. What
25 needs to happen in order for the team --

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 and I know you guys are under an intense
3 amount of pressure. I thank you for
4 giving me that data, because we always
5 hear about data that negatively impacts
6 the City of Philadelphia. I didn't know
7 that New York only had 50 and we --

8 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: And
9 they charge for them.

10 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: And we
11 have 150 rec centers. So thank you for
12 sharing that.

13 Based on that sheer capacity, I
14 know the expertise of our Special
15 Projects team is under immense pressure,
16 but I want to talk about their timelines
17 and how do we get work done in a timely
18 fashion. And for me, you know I'm
19 thinking about the Hut at Dorothy
20 Emanuel. And the Hut is not the name
21 that the City gave to it or that I gave
22 to it. It's what the community gave to
23 it, and that's for a reason. We finally
24 have a very substantive program that is
25 operating in there that is serving not

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 just residents in Northwest Philadelphia
3 but throughout the City of Philadelphia.
4 That is how powerful and necessary this
5 program has become.

6 So what happens if and when the
7 work begins, if a contractor damages
8 furniture or messes up bathrooms?
9 Sometimes that has happened at a few of
10 my centers. Tell me what is the process.

11 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PALANTINO:
12 Aparna Palantino, Deputy Commissioner,
13 Parks and Recreation.

14 So, Councilwoman, just to
15 clarify, you're speaking if our Special
16 Teams do it or if a contractor comes in
17 to do the work?

18 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: So, one,
19 the timeliness of the Special Projects
20 team and/or when the contractor comes in,
21 if the contractor damages property, what
22 happens? Because you know that's
23 happened at one of my centers.

24 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PALANTINO:
25 Right. So with regard to the Special

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Teams schedule, when we request -- or
3 when you request a project and the
4 funding is made available, we try to
5 provide a schedule. That being said,
6 occasionally, depending on the specific
7 trade, they do occasionally get pulled
8 for emergencies, which due to the age of
9 our centers and the number of centers;
10 for example, at the Hut specifically, if
11 a plumber or HVAC mechanic was working
12 there, and we've had a number of boiler
13 failures recently, they've had to be
14 pulled away to address those so as to
15 prevent another facility from closing.
16 Hopefully through Rebuild and the hiring
17 of additional skilled trades staff, we
18 can better manage that now as more and
19 more positions come on to Rebuild.

20 With regards to if a contractor
21 were to damage a particular site, they
22 are made to repair it at their cost. We
23 don't request additional funds from
24 Council to address things like that. The
25 contractors are on the hook or we will

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 withhold their payment for work.

3 COUNCILWOMAN PARKER: I have
4 questions for the second round. My time
5 is up, but we will talk offline. My team
6 will contact your office, because we did
7 have a contractor that damaged furniture
8 and we had an issue with some of the
9 bathrooms, and it doesn't appear that
10 they think that they are liable for what
11 occurred.

12 Thank you.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

14 Thank you, Councilwoman.

15 The Chair recognizes
16 Councilwoman Bass.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,
18 Mr. President.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
20 You're welcome.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
22 afternoon.

23 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Hi.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: How are
25 you?

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Good.

3 How are you?

4 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I just have
5 a couple of questions.

6 So, number one, I want to thank
7 Parks and Recreation for all of the work
8 that they do in our communities, and we
9 know that our rec centers and all of our
10 facilities really need a lot of help, a
11 lot of work, and that you all have been
12 at the forefront of making it happen for
13 a very long time, along with the Advisory
14 Councils.

15 And I agree with you,
16 Mr. President, that some of those folks
17 are in there. We're missing Parks and
18 Rec staff, but we have some folks who are
19 dedicated volunteers.

20 So if there's a way to make
21 sure that they are included in the fabric
22 of Parks and Recreation in terms of being
23 compensated and other things that would
24 be appropriate to support them and
25 support the work that they're doing, I'm

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 all for it. But that's not to take away
3 from the great work that's done by the
4 Parks and Recreation staff. And I know
5 that as the Committee Chair, look, I'm
6 tough. I'm really trying to make sure
7 that we do what's best for the City of
8 Philadelphia. I think that you are as
9 well, but I think sometimes we have a
10 difference of opinion in terms of how to
11 get there. So I just want to ask you a
12 couple of questions about the contracts.
13 And so I've been asking this of every
14 City department, because it's important
15 to me when we talk about Philadelphia
16 being the biggest poorest city in the
17 nation and we talk about wealth building.
18 When we think about contracts, it's
19 really important that contracts are as
20 close to being locally based as possible.
21 And there's a number of contracts that
22 we've had a conversation about recently
23 that are not locally based. One is based
24 out of Paris, France and one is based out
25 of Chicago, and both of those contracts

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 when we talked about it, and we've been
3 kind of going back and forth on that,
4 both of those contracts, in my
5 estimation, are things that could be done
6 right here in the City of Philadelphia by
7 Philadelphians and based here and, again,
8 creating wealth here in the City or
9 certainly in the region. But having
10 contracts that are going to an outfit
11 based of Chicago, even though they have
12 local employees, or to Paris, France, you
13 know, these are things that I think are
14 no-brainers, in my opinion. And I know
15 you feel otherwise, but I'm hopeful that
16 we would be able to address that in a way
17 that brings those contracts locally here
18 to the City and reaching out to different
19 entities that could provide those
20 specific services I think is crucial.

21 So I've begun to do that and
22 will give you the results of my work and
23 investigation to give you some options to
24 be helpful, not just do it this way, but
25 here's some ideas, here's some thoughts

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 on ways that we could do it.

3 So I didn't know if you wanted
4 to respond to that in terms of contracts
5 overall. And also if you could respond
6 to the amount of contracts, because in
7 looking at your budget summary, it looks
8 like the amount that is being proposed
9 looks way off for Fiscal Year '19 for the
10 first and second quarter. Even if we
11 double it, assuming the third and fourth
12 quarter are the same, those numbers are
13 like way off, it seems to me.

14 So can you address that and
15 also contracts in general?

16 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Sure.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And what
18 percentage of contracts are to either
19 Philadelphians or locally based.

20 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Sure.

21 So first on the -- I think you're
22 speaking about the concession agreements,
23 right?

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Yes.

25 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: So

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 there are contracts that we let out at
3 Parks and Recreation. There are
4 contracts that we -- citywide contracts
5 that we use, and then there are
6 concession opportunities that come up.
7 So I think you're speaking about some of
8 these concession opportunities. One of
9 them is at the Horticulture Center and
10 one of them around the parking that
11 happens for the regattas.

12 And so the Horticulture
13 Center -- and we've talked about this,
14 but the Horticulture Center has been --
15 concession is with -- was with Star
16 Catering. They have rebranded as
17 Constellation Catering. And I was glad
18 to hear you say that although they are
19 based out of Paris, the global company,
20 that the local employees and staff are
21 all residents of the Philadelphia area.
22 It was an open RFP for that concession
23 and they were the only bidder. So we
24 did --

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Let me --

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 go ahead.

3 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: So we
4 did open that up for an open bid through
5 the City's process, and Constellation was
6 the only bidder. We were quite happy
7 about the proposal that they gave and had
8 been very happy with their service thus
9 far at the Horticulture Center.

10 And then the other one around
11 the parking, it's a really challenging
12 issue that we have that I wish we didn't
13 have around parking in the park system,
14 because it's a lose-lose situation. We
15 have to accommodate cars for different
16 events and we have to regulate it,
17 because before we regulate it -- and no
18 one knows this better than the Council
19 President in his district, but if we
20 don't regulate the parking, for instance,
21 when the regattas happen, the 33 regattas
22 that happen along the Schuylkill River,
23 then all heck breaks loose in the
24 community. And so we've had this parking
25 agreement, this concession opportunity,

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 for quite some time now, and we're
3 looking to renew that opportunity.

4 It's not something that I feel
5 that that is something that we can do
6 internally as a department nor is it
7 something that I think is really core to
8 our mission at Parks and Recreation, to
9 manage parking. And so, again, that's on
10 the concession piece.

11 On the other contracting piece,
12 I can have Marissa Washington talk a
13 little bit about our overall contracts
14 for the Department.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WASHINGTON:
16 Good afternoon. Marissa Washington,
17 Deputy Commissioner.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
19 afternoon.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WASHINGTON:
21 Councilwoman, so what we reported on for
22 the 10 percent OEO minority participation
23 is just the dollars that we use for the
24 General Fund, and the number is fairly
25 low through the second quarter, and most

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 of that is because of the timing of
3 conforming the contracts. And I also
4 would like to highlight, if you look at
5 the \$10 million that we are proposed for
6 FY20 in Class 200, at least a third of
7 that goes towards our citywide contracts
8 for turf and tree maintenance and
9 management.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. I
11 want to circle back to that, Marissa, in
12 just one second, but I did want to follow
13 up, Kathryn, on your questions, because
14 there's two things. So the first is that
15 when it came to the parking concession, I
16 did reach out to three or four different
17 service providers that have various
18 contracts, very professional
19 organizations. And so I do have them in
20 the process now of just providing you
21 with some information. So I'm going to
22 gather that information and just provide
23 it to you so that you have an idea in
24 terms of the scope of services that could
25 be provided. And, again, my interest

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 really is just making sure that, as much
3 as possible, that we support local
4 business, that we support people who are
5 living in Philadelphia, paying taxes in
6 Philadelphia, employing people who are
7 also paying taxes in Philadelphia. And I
8 think that too much of the time when you
9 look at contracts that the City of
10 Philadelphia owns, they go elsewhere.
11 And I hear it all the time and I see it
12 all the time. So that's really something
13 that's very important to me.

14 Trying to make sure that we get
15 the parking contract -- again, it's a
16 small thing, and I know that you are up
17 against the clock. So I don't want to be
18 insensitive to that. So we are working
19 to get you something like this week. So
20 as soon as it comes, we'd be happy to get
21 that to you.

22 I also thought about the
23 Constellation Catering, and although I
24 know you said that there was one bidder,
25 only one bidder for the RFP, it appears

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 to me after reviewing the RFP that it was
3 only meant for one bidder. And I'll say
4 that because I think that the way it was
5 written, most catering companies could
6 not have bid for it. There were only
7 one, two, three maybe that could have bid
8 for it. And so it was bid in a way or
9 the RFP was put out in a way that really
10 was not open and welcoming to other folks
11 who could qualify. If you set the bar so
12 high that only a huge conglomerate can
13 apply and can be eligible for it, then it
14 knocks everyone else out. No one else
15 can apply.

16 So that's something that I
17 would like to revisit a conversation
18 about, because when we talk about the
19 Horticultural Center, this is some place
20 that, again, I've used it in the past and
21 other people I know have used it over the
22 years, and it used to be a place that
23 almost anyone of any economic means, for
24 the most part, could rent. By having
25 this exclusive catering outfit, which is

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 pretty pricey, it really does exclude
3 most Philadelphians from being able to
4 rent the Horticultural Center for any
5 sort of events or activities.

6 And so that's what my concern
7 is and also, again, it's not locally
8 based, and there are tons of locally
9 based catering companies, food service
10 companies that would love to have a shot
11 at it, but what we did in the RFP is, we
12 required that you had to put up something
13 like \$25,000 a year, plus a hundred
14 thousand dollars at the front and then
15 another hundred thousand dollars at the
16 back. It knocks a whole bunch of folks
17 out who don't have that kind of capital.
18 But, again, if you're a worldwide
19 conglomerate, then you've got plenty of
20 funds to be able to do that kind of
21 thing.

22 So I just think that that's
23 something that we have to look at.

24 I know my time is up, but I'll
25 come back. But I don't know if you want

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 to answer any of that.

3 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Sure.

4 So I think we're really fortunate in
5 Philadelphia that unlike other park
6 systems around the country, we actually
7 are able to retain our concession
8 revenue. That's unique. For example,
9 New York City, all the concession revenue
10 that comes in for, say, Central Park,
11 until they reach a certain threshold, all
12 that money goes to the General Fund and
13 then the park system gets to keep a
14 certain percentage.

15 In Philadelphia, whoever did
16 this legislation -- and perhaps it was
17 some of you about ten years ago -- we
18 were able to retain, the Parks and
19 Recreation Department was able to retain
20 the concession revenue to put back into
21 the system. And so the Horticulture
22 Center, as an example, we've been able to
23 invest almost half a million dollars back
24 into the Horticulture Center, which has
25 really critical capital needs, also into

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 free programming at the Center to
3 activate the Center and get more people
4 invited to the Center, feel that they
5 want to come to the Center. We've been
6 able to invest those funds that we've
7 raised through the concession back into
8 the facility, and I can't stress enough
9 how valuable I think that is and how
10 critical that is.

11 The same goes for all of the
12 other concessions that we have. We're
13 able to reinvest those funds back into
14 the site. When the Welcome Center
15 restaurant opens at Love Park, we're
16 going to have a revenue source that's
17 going to allow us to maintain Love Park
18 at a level that Center City District
19 maintains its parks, which just is a
20 luxury that we don't always have at Parks
21 and Recreation because of limited
22 resources.

23 So I do think that the
24 Horticulture Center for many years, way
25 before my time, was run by a different

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 caterer and different catering
3 opportunities, and they folded. They
4 folded and the Center fell into disrepair
5 because there was no investment in it,
6 and when Star came in a few years ago,
7 was able to put resources into it, market
8 it, advertise for it, and promote it, it
9 became viable and it became a real
10 destination, and we've been able to put
11 those resources that they raise, that
12 revenue, back into the facility and the
13 grounds, and I just can't stress how
14 really critical that is.

15 I realize that it's not
16 accessible to everybody. There are --
17 what I love about our park system is that
18 there's so many -- it has such diversity
19 in terms of places that can host events
20 depending on what your ability to -- what
21 size of a crowd that you need, what kind
22 of aesthetic that you want, and what
23 you're able to afford. And so I think
24 that if folks are not able to have an
25 event at the Horticulture Center, we work

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 very hard -- and put this on our
3 website -- to offer many other
4 opportunities for them to have events
5 elsewhere in our park system. But it is
6 the trend that you'll find for almost all
7 catering venues in the City, that they
8 all are moving to an exclusive caterer
9 because of the revenue that can be
10 generated and the instability of being
11 able to manage a site without having that
12 one caterer.

13 I'll give you another example.
14 Belmont Mansion. We met with -- and we
15 all know that Audrey Thornton passed away
16 recently, but before her passing, we met
17 with her daughter, Dr. Booker, at length
18 about Belmont Mansion, which is just this
19 incredible asset. I mean, probably one
20 of the most beautiful views of the City
21 of Philadelphia anywhere. And they've
22 been really struggling because they don't
23 have a structured catering program there.
24 They have a volunteer staff. They now
25 have a paid individual that just started,

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 but they've struggled for years about how
3 to maintain that facility, how to
4 activate and program that facility, and
5 we've been in conversations with them
6 about thinking about an exclusive caterer
7 that they could engage to help them,
8 because that is the business model right
9 now that's working for venues, is an
10 exclusive caterer. So that's --

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well, I
12 think as long as we -- I think the City
13 of Philadelphia, we have to recognize
14 that when we go to exclusive catering
15 agreements, that we knock out a large
16 swath of our population from being able
17 to use our facilities, and they're
18 taxpayers too. So I think that we have
19 to ask ourselves, do we feel comfortable
20 with that?

21 And the idea that people can't
22 use the Horticultural Center because it's
23 too expensive, but saying, well, we have
24 other venues, you can go there, it's not
25 the same. It's not the same in terms of

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 the way that person is being treated by
3 the City and saying -- it's very
4 dismissive, oh, well, you can't use this,
5 but we'll find a little
6 something-something for you somewhere
7 else. It doesn't feel right, and as a
8 city, I just know that we can do better.
9 I think that we should aim to do better
10 and we can do better, and there's no
11 reason that we have to go to an exclusive
12 contract, in my opinion, because the bar
13 is so low in terms of what we were asking
14 them to do. So we were asking, if I
15 remember correctly, it was about five or
16 six hundred thousand dollars that we were
17 asking from this caterer. Actually, I
18 think it was less than that. It was
19 under a half a million dollars that we
20 were asking from this exclusive caterer.
21 So the question is, can the City not
22 invest a half a million dollars of its
23 own money for its own facility and make
24 that up through the rentals in some sort
25 of a way so that everyone has an

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 opportunity to use the facility, or are
3 we just going to say, well, if you're
4 limited income-wise, you're not able to
5 use the facility, you just got to go
6 somewhere else. And as we get more and
7 more contracts that are sole source or
8 exclusive, then it becomes less and less
9 likely that you'll be able to use
10 anything in the Fairmount Park system.

11 So I'm just against it. I'm
12 going to be against it no matter what
13 facility it is. I just don't think it's
14 right. And I think that we need to
15 figure out other ways to fund these
16 facilities if we're going to rent them
17 out. We need to make the investment.

18 So thank you, Mr. President.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

20 Thank you, Councilwoman.

21 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Can I
22 respond, Council President? Can I
23 respond again or no?

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

25 Okay.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Just
3 that you can host an event at -- you can
4 have an event at the Horticulture Center
5 without catering. So we do have people
6 that have a wedding ceremony at the
7 Horticulture Center --

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Wait
9 a minute. You can?

10 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: You
11 can -- there's an exclusive caterer, but
12 if you wanted to get married at the
13 Horticulture Center, you can do that, but
14 if you want to have an event with
15 catering, you have to use the caterer,
16 right?

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
18 Yeah, but most people are going to have
19 food.

20 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: We
21 have a lot of people who choose that as a
22 venue for their wedding and then have
23 their reception elsewhere. It's a
24 beautiful venue.

25 And I also want to say that we

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 do have 500 buildings throughout Parks
3 and Recreation and we have hopefully a
4 hundred of them or so that will be
5 impacted by Rebuild, but there's far more
6 that won't be impacted by Rebuild
7 unfortunately, and if we were to have
8 that kind of investment, I would really
9 like to see it go to a recreation center
10 or playground where there is real, real
11 need.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All
13 right.

14 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Thank
15 you.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well, let
17 me just ask. If you want to do an event
18 at the Horticultural Center with no food,
19 let's say if you want to have a wedding
20 there during the summer months, you have
21 to pay for air conditioning, correct?

22 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Well,
23 it's not air conditioned. So if you want
24 to have it air conditioned, you would
25 have to pay for air conditioning. It's a

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 little cooler. There's a 1970's cooling
3 system there that -- it's not ideal,
4 but...

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well, we
6 were told that you have to pay for air
7 conditioning. So what's the cost of the
8 air conditioning just by itself?

9 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: I'm
10 not sure.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I was told
12 that it was \$8,000 to \$10,000.

13 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: I'm
14 not sure.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: So it's not
16 really usable during the summer, is the
17 point I wanted to make.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
19 Yeah. Because you're going to now make
20 me ask you to give me a list of all the
21 events you had where people didn't have
22 food. I mean, I'm sure it's like two,
23 right, if that?

24 All right. Let me move on,
25 because we have a couple others. Thank

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 you, Councilwoman.

3 The Chair recognizes

4 Councilwoman Blackwell.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank

6 you, Mr. President.

7 Good afternoon. I'm sorry I

8 missed our City Rep, but I did thank her.

9 She's so good and works so well with us,

10 with our Africans and people coming in

11 town and our flags. We're still working

12 on one aspect of that, but we thank her

13 and her department.

14 So, Commissioner, we are -- I

15 mentioned it to the Library today, and

16 since we're talking about Rebuild, we

17 would like to, in the next week, do two

18 press conferences, one for Kingsessing

19 and one, even though it's not in this

20 year's budget, for George's Library. So

21 will you help us out and get that in?

22 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Since

23 Kingsessing is my own rec center, I would

24 love to do that, but it's really up to

25 the Rebuild team. And I got a thumbs up,

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Councilwoman. So it sounds like we're a
3 go.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
5 you. Thank you. That's all I need at
6 the moment. Thank you for helping us
7 with Chuckie. And we need to do another
8 meeting on Sayre.

9 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Oh,
10 sure.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Sayre
12 is closed again.

13 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: The
14 pool is. The center is open. The pool
15 is down.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: So
17 every time it's open, as soon as we leave
18 the room that day, the next week it's
19 closed again. So maybe we can all meet
20 and figure out what we can do.

21 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Yeah.
22 The pool is owned -- the whole facility
23 is owned and run by the School District
24 from a maintenance standpoint, and we've
25 struggled. We currently only have one

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 indoor pool that is operating. All of
3 our indoor pools are School District
4 facilities that we program and staff, and
5 it's been a real challenge for us,
6 especially in terms of training and
7 screening lifeguards for the summer. We
8 have to send everybody up to the
9 Northeast. We've been shuttling people
10 up to the Northeast. But we would love
11 to see Sayre up and running.
12 Unfortunately it's the School District,
13 and so we can have an offline
14 conversation about that, Councilwoman.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank
16 you. We'd love to meet with you and them
17 and try to make it better so we don't
18 have to go through this a few times every
19 year. Okay. Thank you.

20 Thank you, Mr. President.

21 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
22 Councilwoman.

23 Commissioner, how are you?

24 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
25 Hello, Councilman.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you
3 for coming in here. I want to thank your
4 entire team, your staff, Deputy
5 Commissioners and District Managers and
6 so forth and everybody that's out there
7 trying to provide a good and great
8 experience when it comes to our Parks and
9 Recreation. If it was that easy to get
10 anything done like Councilwoman
11 Blackwell, I'll just come in here, put my
12 request in, I want ten ground-breaking
13 ceremonies --

14 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: You
15 have them, sir.

16 COUNCILMAN HENON: -- by next
17 week, if that's --

18 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: You
19 have them.

20 COUNCILMAN HENON: We do, I
21 know.

22 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: My
23 car goes automatically up 95 now.

24 COUNCILMAN HENON: That's
25 right. It's called home field advantage

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 when you're coming from the Northeast,
3 right?

4 But thank you. And I do
5 appreciate it, and I just want to state
6 for the record, we as a body made some
7 difficult decisions and some tough votes
8 for additional revenue that goes back
9 into Rebuild and making sure that we help
10 subsidize or add on to the Parks and
11 Rec's Capital Budget.

12 That being said, I can't
13 imagine how much work everybody has been
14 under, trying to get things moving in an
15 already complicated and slow system that
16 we have as City government. What can we
17 do to help assist you, make sure that we
18 get that pleasant experience and that we
19 showcase to the City of Philadelphia why
20 we make these difficult decisions? And
21 I'll give you an example.

22 In my blessed seven and a half
23 years here on City Council, for those who
24 are looking -- hi, mom -- we spent like
25 \$9 million in capital investment into our

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 parks and recreations and libraries over
3 the next two years because of -- or two
4 and a half years because of additional
5 revenue, or through the Rebuild
6 experience, I'm going to have \$18 million
7 roughly. I don't want to be held to that
8 exact number. But it's double the amount
9 of resources that were available. So
10 when neighborhoods desperately need a
11 safe redesigned place that they can go
12 with their families, their grand-kids,
13 their neighbors, we're accomplishing
14 that.

15 How do you feel the goals are
16 at this point when we're pairing what we
17 choose with programming and making sure
18 that our neighbors are included in not
19 just the engagement but the result of
20 tough decisions and a whole lot of the
21 hard work?

22 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: I
23 think it's really hard to manage
24 expectations. I wish we could wave a
25 magic wand and make every rec center and

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 playground perfect in the City. It is
3 hard for me as a Commissioner and as a
4 mom to go out to facilities and not --
5 see them in a state where I don't think
6 they're good enough for my kid, you know.
7 And if they're not good enough for my
8 kid, why are they good enough for any
9 kid. So I think that's hard.

10 I think Rebuild is going to
11 help us do a tremendous reset in terms of
12 bringing many of our facilities to a
13 state where they need and should be.
14 It's not going to do everything, and
15 that's hard, right? It's hard to know
16 that even with half a billion dollars
17 it's not going to do everything. And
18 we've tried to be really clear when we're
19 out in communities with the Rebuild team
20 and talking to community members that the
21 sky is not the limit, right? We want
22 them to be aspirational. We want to
23 think about how sites can truly be
24 relevant to the existing community and
25 the future community and children and

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 generations to come, but that we're not
3 going to be able to do absolutely
4 everything on every wish list. And
5 that's a hard job that we have to do
6 every day, but it's important to manage
7 expectations while also allowing people
8 to dream a little.

9 COUNCILMAN HENON: It is, and I
10 don't say that for not being able to
11 manage expectations or goals. I say that
12 to point out that some of the decisions,
13 not just based on repaving concrete paths
14 and fences, that you're rebuilding
15 communities. Infrastructure isn't just
16 equipment and paint. It's people, and
17 it's people and children through
18 programs. So that's the expectations
19 that I want to talk about, your
20 programming paired with the decisions on
21 what part of our infrastructures we're
22 investing in. Because to me in our
23 conversations and yourself and your staff
24 has been incredibly helpful and
25 understanding when it comes to making

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 sure we're providing safe places with
3 programs.

4 So can you talk about that a
5 little bit in being able to -- for me in
6 my district, I know we're adding
7 programs. I mean, I have a population
8 growth in my district. You go out to
9 Russo Park and you go out to some of
10 these other playgrounds where it needs
11 like a facelift and it needs some
12 additional infrastructure built. We just
13 had a cleanup at -- we had the
14 Philadelphia Day Cleanup, and we were
15 going around and just a simple repaving
16 of a pavement and planting of trees
17 looked fantastic. And people even in
18 communities that need the facelift and
19 parks that need and recreations that need
20 more equipment, people are -- they're
21 playing. They're around there. The
22 weather is changing. Programs are where
23 it's at.

24 So I think that your program
25 managers are doing an incredible job.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 How can we help on the professional level
3 to ensure or to keep this thing moving?
4 Because there's a good plan, is what I'm
5 saying. So I think the expectations -- I
6 think you sell yourself short as a
7 department when it comes to expectations.
8 You're not going to be able to fix
9 everything, but you're going to be able
10 to make improvements for use. And our
11 recreation centers are highly utilized.
12 There's KEYSPTS.

13 So can you talk about some of
14 the programs that's paired with the
15 investment on Rebuild and the use of
16 out-of-time school and programs for our
17 recs? Because I think people really need
18 to know that.

19 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:

20 Absolutely. So a couple things. First
21 is that I appreciate what you're saying.
22 We have amazing recreation leaders, and
23 they are -- they're doing this work in
24 every nook and cranny of the City, right?
25 And it is -- we do our best to support

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 them, but it's really the community that
3 helps to drive the programming in our
4 centers, and the Advisory Councils really
5 help us determine what types of
6 programming is important to communities.
7 And that's the direction that we want to
8 continue to move into the future, is
9 really making sure that our programs are
10 very relevant to those communities, that
11 they're responsive to the needs and the
12 interests of those communities, and
13 that's all part of our strategic plan.
14 It's also part of our strategic plan to
15 have really great standards for
16 programming. You know, what makes a
17 great program, what makes a great
18 after-school program, what makes a great
19 summer camp and how did we make sure that
20 that quality of programming is not
21 dependent on that recreation leader,
22 right? Because it needs to be a quality
23 that's a standard across the board. And
24 then we need to be open to innovation,
25 and I think, Councilman, the program that

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 you helped start, which is the Play
3 Philly program, is a great example of an
4 innovative program that meet the needs of
5 the City around health and wellness and
6 is, to be honest, pretty easy to
7 implement and easy to scale and to build
8 around the system.

9 So I think that's -- so that's
10 my thoughts on that point.

11 In terms of how Rebuild can
12 impact programming, I think Vare
13 Recreation Center. We have -- and you
14 wouldn't know it by walking up and
15 looking at Vare, but we have the most
16 incredible gymnastics program at Vare
17 Recreation Center that you could possibly
18 imagine, about 130 girls performing
19 gymnastics. They're going to state
20 competitions, and they're doing it in a
21 facility that is literally, you know,
22 falling down. It's structurally sound,
23 so it is sound and safe to be in right
24 now, but we had to close Vare for a
25 couple months and make it secure and then

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 reopen it, and thank God it's the first
3 Rebuild site, because these young women,
4 they deserve a world-class gymnastics
5 facility. They deserve not a makeshift
6 gym that doesn't have heat and doesn't
7 have air conditioning and doesn't really
8 fit their mats or their equipment. They
9 deserve a part of Vare that is well
10 suited to their needs. It's serving
11 primarily kids in that community, but
12 kids are coming from other sections of
13 the City as well to participate in that
14 program. And what we've done over the
15 years because our facilities are so
16 old -- the Vare Recreation Center is
17 hundreds of years old -- is, we've
18 retrofitted our programming to fit into
19 these old centers, and I think Rebuild
20 gives us an opportunity to re-envision
21 facilities that can better match our
22 programs as opposed to our programs
23 trying to fit into those facilities. So
24 that's, I think, really exciting.

25 COUNCILMAN HENON: Well, I know

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 that with the improvements in my district
3 with the new design or new kind of
4 spacial layout and interactive playground
5 equipment, that really opens it up for
6 every child in every part of the
7 community, especially with the autism
8 spectrum and that kind of engagement.

9 Can you talk about some of the
10 new interactive equipment that you're
11 having in our playgrounds?

12 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Sure.
13 I'll let Aparna talk about it.

14 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PALANTINO:
15 Actually since 2016, Councilwoman Bass
16 had introduced a bill, in fact, around
17 those goals of inclusive playgrounds, and
18 since then, we've had about 33
19 playgrounds that have been renovated that
20 have taken into consideration all those
21 things, children of different abilities,
22 on the autism spectrum. And we have
23 another 10 to 15 underway already. It's
24 become something that's part of every
25 playground or every facility that we

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 renovate. It's inherent to the design.

3 There's new equipment coming

4 out every day which facilitates more

5 activities for children of different

6 abilities. So we are exploring those.

7 We go to conventions, various

8 conventions, two to three times a year.

9 We engage with different manufacturers to

10 come in and provide trainings to us. So

11 as long as we can maintain it, we're

12 trying to install it.

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: And I know

14 you are, and this is a great opportunity

15 to have good non-profit and private

16 partners trying to adjust to where we are

17 as a city and the needs of our children

18 and families moving forward. Some of our

19 conversations is having an exclusive only

20 playground for children that have special

21 needs and accessible and those who need a

22 little more of an interactive spectrum of

23 equipment and layout.

24 So I look forward to that in

25 Northeast Philly and the outcomes of the

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 programs in general that is with --
3 that's coupled with the investment and
4 the infrastructure is -- I think we
5 should have high expectations, and I know
6 we do, because that's where we're
7 starting. We're starting with positive
8 outcomes, because we make tough
9 decisions. We're reprioritizing, and
10 every reprioritizing is all reinvested
11 back into our communities.

12 So I know, speaking for myself,
13 whatever I could fight for for Parks and
14 Recreation, especially on the
15 professional end, this way you can vet
16 through the services and move things into
17 more of a timely fashion, I am more than
18 willing to be helpful, and I'm sure this
19 Council body is too. So I appreciate
20 what you're doing and look forward to
21 those positive outcomes, like by next
22 week, but that's besides the point.

23 The Chair recognizes
24 Councilwoman Bass.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 So I just had a couple more
3 questions. I just wanted to follow up on
4 that line of questioning from
5 Councilmember Henon regarding cameras.

6 So back in, I think it was,
7 2013, Councilman, that we worked
8 together, our office put together a
9 proposal to put cameras in every rec
10 center and playground facility to make
11 sure that our young people and really
12 anyone who uses our facilities is safe.
13 And I've seen coverage, actually news
14 coverage, of not so good events that have
15 happened at some of our centers, but the
16 clarity of the cameras and the pictures
17 were able to get the police right on it
18 so that folks were apprehended. And I
19 want to thank Councilman Henon. He was
20 one of the first district members to get
21 on board and be in agreement and to
22 support that initiative so we were able
23 to completely blanket our city with
24 cameras at every rec center and
25 playground.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 So can you talk about where
3 that is now? Are all cameras installed
4 everywhere?

5 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Yeah.
6 Well, yeah. We've done 1,287 cameras at
7 109 facilities. So we're getting there.
8 I'll let Aparna speak to specifics about
9 the continuing plan. It's a
10 continuation, but, Councilwoman, you're a
11 hundred percent right. They have become
12 incredibly useful to the Police, and I
13 would say it's weekly, if not daily, that
14 we get a request from Police to view our
15 footage. And we have so many -- I mean,
16 it's a very comprehensive system in that
17 when the Capital team goes out to spec
18 out a site for where the cameras belong,
19 they're covering almost every aspect of
20 the site, which means you're also
21 covering streets beyond the site, and
22 we're just -- we've been, I think, really
23 surprised at the amount of evidence we've
24 been able to provide to Police through
25 those cameras.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 I remember one incident that
3 probably happened about a year and a half
4 to two years ago where an individual
5 committed a shooting literally outside of
6 one of our rec centers. He then -- the
7 staff heard the shooting, so they
8 gathered the kids in the after-school
9 room as our shelter-in-place policy,
10 right? And then unbeknownst to us, the
11 individual came into the building,
12 grabbed a kid's backpack, stuck the gun
13 in the backpack, and walked back out the
14 back door, and we didn't even know that
15 happened, but they were actually able to
16 apprehend the individual and look at all
17 that through the camera footage.

18 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Excellent.

19 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: So
20 that is one anecdote of many that I think
21 wasn't the intent for the camera
22 initiative. I know it was really about
23 safety at recreation centers but has
24 been, I think, a collateral benefit to
25 that program.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 So Aparna can talk more about
3 what the process is.

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PALANTINO:

5 And just to add, we have a few more
6 buildings that are underway, but many of
7 those are either covered through the
8 Rebuild program will be addressed or as
9 we plan for other renovations at those
10 buildings, there will be cameras
11 installed.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay.

13 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PALANTINO:

14 The other thing is, a lot of our
15 neighborhood parks that previously it was
16 challenging for us to be able to install
17 cameras due to technology, we're able now
18 to cover them, because we can install
19 pole-mounted equipment that allows us
20 then to do neighborhood parks that don't
21 have buildings or staff sites.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Excellent.

23 Excellent. So pretty much what's left
24 now in terms of rec centers are projects
25 that we're waiting on Rebuild for?

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PALANTINO:

3 Or that have upcoming renovation
4 projects.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Or have
6 renovations.

7 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PALANTINO:

8 It's become part of every capital
9 improvement that we do of a site. If it
10 has another capital improvement and that
11 doesn't have cameras yet, we try to
12 either reach out to the Councilmember for
13 ITEF funding or if we have any available
14 funding as part of the project, we
15 include cameras.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Very good.
17 Very good.

18 Now, one other question. At
19 the same time that we did the camera
20 bill, the camera initiative, we also did
21 a bill that would require Parks and
22 Recreation to produce a report that would
23 give some sort of information in terms of
24 criminal activity that happened on the
25 site. When Mike DiBerardinis was the

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Commissioner, I've been asking for those
3 reports then. I'm still asking for them
4 now. I've never seen one of these
5 reports produced, but it is the law that
6 we are supposed to -- Council is supposed
7 to be provided with a list so that as
8 District Members, when something happens,
9 we can know where to put the resources
10 at. There's no excuse that we didn't
11 have information that a lot of robberies
12 were happening around X recreation
13 center. When we have the data as
14 District Councilmembers, we're held
15 responsible and we can act appropriately.

16 So that report is really
17 important. I don't believe it's ever
18 been produced. And so we've been a
19 little bit lax on it, so I'm hopeful that
20 we'll be able to have one maybe by the
21 end of this budget cycle.

22 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: I'm
23 happy to say we do have the report and we
24 can provide that to you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: You have a

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 report?

3 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: We
4 have a report. We actually worked with
5 the Philadelphia Police and their data on
6 this.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Wow. All
8 right.

9 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: So
10 actually with our GIS team and their GIS
11 team and were able to overlay the Police
12 data on top of our data. And so we now
13 not only have a report, we also have harm
14 scores for our centers, and that's --

15 COMMISSIONER BASS: Have what?

16 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
17 They're called harm scores. It's Police
18 terminology, I guess, around the
19 likelihood of being harmed based on crime
20 at a facility, and that's also informing
21 our new staffing structure. So even
22 if -- the old staffing structure was, you
23 have -- our staff is trying to talk about
24 this so much, they're tired of it. But
25 if you have a large facility, like a

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Class A facility in this old
3 classification we've been using since the
4 1950's, you get a certain complement of
5 staff based on the size of that facility,
6 and our new philosophy is that instead of
7 staffing facilities, we want to staff
8 neighborhoods. And so even if you have a
9 small facility in a neighborhood, if it's
10 an area of high crime, it has a high harm
11 score, it has high poverty, that we
12 should be staffing that differently, and
13 even though it's a small center, perhaps
14 it needs more staff. So that's informing
15 our staffing structure, that information
16 as well.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. So
18 how is that working in places, let's say,
19 like Heritage Playground, which is in an
20 area --

21 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: What
22 playground? I missed what you said.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Heritage,
24 which is, I believe, 15th and Somerset, I
25 want to say, in that range, in that

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 vicinity. It's in the Eighth Council
3 District. It's in North Philadelphia.
4 It's in an area that I would say probably
5 has a high harm score based on the way
6 you just described it. And so are you
7 familiar with what we're doing there?

8 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Yes.
9 So right now we're just in the process of
10 doing this realignment. It's part of our
11 strategic plan that we're still
12 implementing. So the goal is to look at
13 all of our sites based on this
14 information and realign staff
15 appropriately.

16 Heritage is not a currently
17 staffed site; am I right? So we'd have
18 to look at if we were able to increase
19 staff to put a staff member there or even
20 not a full-time staff member, but to see
21 people deployed at different sites. For
22 a long time, forever, we've had the
23 philosophy that only rec centers get
24 staffed and neighborhood parks do not or
25 playgrounds do not get staffed if they

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 don't have a building, and that's
3 something we're looking at as well, is
4 there a way that we can be realigning our
5 staff and redeploying our staff to say,
6 well, you're not just here to manage a
7 rec center, but you should also be doing
8 some programming in that park or in that
9 playground, right? You can be based here
10 out of the recreation center, but you can
11 be deployed a few times a week at a local
12 recreation center or local park or
13 playground, and that's something that
14 we're looking at. So we'll keep you
15 posted on that progress, but that's
16 definitely the way that our thinking is
17 going, and we're using that crime data to
18 help inform those decisions. It's a very
19 different philosophy, so it's a big
20 change, but we're really excited about
21 it.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Well, I'm
23 very interested in it, so I would like to
24 get more information.

25 Mr. Chairman, I can go on?

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILMAN HENON: Yes.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. Just
4 a couple of other things. So I know that
5 there was a lot of conversation about the
6 Philadelphia Activity Fund, and so I
7 wanted to just go on record to say that
8 the Activity Fund, in my opinion, does a
9 lot of wonderful things and funds a lot
10 of fantastic programs throughout the City
11 of Philadelphia. And it's always easy to
12 go with a negative and to say something
13 negative without actually coming out and
14 seeing some of the programs that are
15 funded. We fund everything from
16 somebody's block party where they might
17 not be able to provide food or snacks or
18 refreshments or activities for the block
19 to, as you are aware at some of our event
20 series, where we touch about a thousand
21 people a week, week in and week out for
22 six weeks straight. And so these are
23 things that are done that I think are
24 just wonderful assets.

25 Everybody is not coming down to

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Penn's Landing. Everybody is not coming
3 downtown for their activities or for Wawa
4 Welcome America or all those kinds of
5 activities. So these are the things that
6 are happening in the neighborhood with
7 people who are often overlooked, but who
8 are working hard to provide activities
9 for our neighbors.

10 So I just really wanted to go
11 on record and to say that and to voice my
12 strong support for the Philadelphia
13 Activities Fund. And while not perfect
14 and probably could use a little tinkering
15 around the edges, this is something that
16 really does serve and gives back to the
17 neighborhoods where otherwise a lot of
18 the programs and activities just would
19 not happen without the Philadelphia
20 Activity Fund. So I want to thank you.
21 I want to thank Marissa. I want to thank
22 Ken. Ken is not here?

23 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Ken
24 is not here.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Ken is not

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 here. I want to thank Ken especially,
3 because he does all of the hard work and
4 puts up with all of us crazy members of
5 Council to make our projects and our
6 events happen in the district. So I just
7 really wanted to say that.

8 Also, one last thing --
9 actually, two last things. Saturday
10 evening -- and I was just saying to the
11 Library Director earlier during the day.
12 Saturday evening I was in the area of
13 Broad and Hunting Park and there was an
14 event I was going to, and at a local
15 take-out joint there was probably about
16 20, 30 kids hanging out, very young. I
17 would say all between the ages of 15 and
18 25, who were just sort of hanging out,
19 you know, not necessarily doing positive
20 activities. We broke up a potential
21 fight between a group of girls.

22 And so one of the folks who was
23 at the event said that he talked to some
24 of the young men, and he said kind of
25 like, why are you out here, what's going

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 on?

3 He said, well, we don't have
4 any place else to go, you know. We don't
5 have any place else to go. The rec
6 centers are closed. The libraries are
7 closed. Like everything is closed. So
8 this is our spot.

9 And so I say what is it that
10 the City of Philadelphia is able or
11 willing to do to make sure that our rec
12 centers are open with programming,
13 particularly during these summer months?

14 Now, I know already that the
15 money is not there right now, but I think
16 that we are in crisis mode right now.
17 We've had a record number of shootings.
18 There's an article in today's Inquirer
19 about Philadelphia having the equivalent
20 of a mass shooting almost every day in
21 this city, and we have become so -- it
22 has become so normalized in the City that
23 we don't even notice it anymore, and we
24 can't continue to normalize this. And so
25 I guess I'm just really making a pitch

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 and an appeal that we find a way, no
3 matter what it takes, during these warm
4 weather months to make sure that as many
5 kids as we possibly can get into these
6 rec centers, that there is programming
7 there, programming that they're going to
8 want to come to in the evenings on the
9 weekends in particular. So that's Friday
10 night and Saturday night, hours until
11 midnight or something like that. I don't
12 know what it takes. I assume what some
13 of the activities might be, sports or
14 whatever young men and women are
15 interested in doing, but whatever it is,
16 I think that we have to do it to get them
17 into a safe space, because otherwise I
18 just hate to think what's going to
19 happen. And I always dread the warm
20 weather months. As much as I love warm
21 weather, I also dread it, because I know
22 what's going to happen. I know that
23 there's going to be shootings. I know
24 that there's going to be fights and all
25 kinds of craziness happening with young

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 people who don't have anything to do.

3 So I would really like to have
4 some sort of a plan for us being open.
5 I'm not saying being open 24 hours a day,
6 even though that would be nice and really
7 would be quite helpful, I think, in this
8 matter, but if we can't do 24 hours a
9 day, we at least have to do -- we have to
10 be open until midnight. We have to be
11 open until midnight. I don't even think
12 it's a question. This is something we
13 have to do.

14 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Well,
15 Councilwoman, we don't agree on
16 everything, but I absolutely agree with
17 you that if we could open rec centers
18 longer, I would love to. I think the
19 evenings are important. I think Sundays
20 are important. Our recreation centers
21 are not open on Sundays, and I think
22 there was a long time when that made
23 sense, 50 years ago, but it's probably --
24 it's a huge request that we receive, and
25 I would -- I'm very interested in having

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 rec centers open more hours.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Can you get
4 back to us on what it would take to make
5 that happen?

6 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Sure.
7 I can look at our staffing structure and
8 try to determine what that would look
9 like.

10 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: That would
11 be good. If we could have some sort of a
12 sense of how many workers it would take,
13 how many hours you think that we could be
14 open, what are you requiring from the
15 community, how many hours. Listen, I can
16 volunteer in my recreation center,
17 Pleasant Playground. How many hours do
18 you need me there on Saturday night? I
19 don't have a whole lot going on on
20 Saturday night, but I'll be there. I
21 mean, you tell me what it needs to be to
22 happen and we'll figure out how to make
23 it happen, because I have to tell you,
24 when I see these kids just sort of
25 hanging around, I wouldn't be surprised

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 if I pull off and then ten minutes later
3 something jumps off, because there wasn't
4 a lot of positive activity that was
5 happening for them, and they were just
6 trying to make the best of being in the
7 City in the summertime or in the warm
8 weather. They're trying to make the best
9 of a nice night out.

10 And so how do we keep them
11 safe? How do we protect our kids?

12 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: I
13 mean, we have -- our rec centers are open
14 more than 40 hours a week. We also,
15 remember, permit 91 school gyms. So
16 that's 15,000 hours of additional time
17 and additional facilities that we're
18 permitting, right, that we're making
19 available to young people, and it's not
20 enough. I mean, we have so much demand
21 on our facilities and spaces. And I
22 think it's a good problem to have. I
23 think it's -- we're a city that's really
24 blessed with these assets, and it's
25 wonderful that people want to use them at

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 the level that they can. So we can
3 certainly get some information to you on
4 that.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Very good.
6 So we'll circle back and follow up with
7 you on that.

8 Thank you.

9 COUNCILMAN HENON: The Chair
10 recognizes Councilman Taubenberger.

11 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:
12 Chairman Henon, thank you so much.

13 Really one question, and it can
14 be an approximation. The budget reflects
15 at some point somewhere how many new
16 trees will be planted in our Fairmount
17 Park, whether it's on the street or in
18 the park itself, and also if it
19 encompasses grants or other plant
20 materials from other sources.

21 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: So
22 what's the question? How many trees? As
23 I pull my notes up.

24 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:
25 Trees, yeah. I'd like to know. I want

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 to breathe air better.

3 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: You
4 mean the agronomist would like more
5 information about trees?

6 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Well,
7 I don't want more information. I think
8 my degree in agronomy has prepared me
9 very well. I'm looking for the number of
10 trees approximately. And I'm not beating
11 you up.

12 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: We
13 are always grateful, Councilman
14 Taubenberger, for your interest in trees.
15 We very much appreciate it.

16 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Very
17 important. Environment is important.

18 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: So
19 let's see. How many trees have been
20 planted? I have a lot of numbers here,
21 so let me --

22 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Or
23 will be planted.

24 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Or
25 will be planted.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: On
3 the street and/or in the park or both.

4 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: So
5 I'm not doing the quick math, but we
6 have, it looks like, about a thousand
7 trees have been planted. And I don't
8 have exactly how many trees will be
9 planted. I know -- sorry. There we go.
10 659 trees we plan to plant, and then that
11 doesn't count the -- so that's the trees
12 that we will be planting either in the
13 street or in parks. That doesn't count
14 the TreePhilly program and the trees that
15 we will be distributing to homeowners to
16 plant in their yards.

17 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:
18 Because they come from separate sources
19 or they come from --

20 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: It's
21 a private funding source, correct.

22 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:
23 That's all I need to know. Okay. That's
24 all I have.

25 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Okay.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Thank
3 you very much for that information.

4 Mr. Chairman, thank you.

5 COUNCILMAN HENON: So happy.

6 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: When
7 you graduated with a bunch of articles
8 for people, they like to know what their
9 business is going to be, and it's good to
10 have.

11 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: We
12 like tree nerds, Al. We like that.

13 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Trees
14 are important.

15 COUNCILMAN HENON:
16 Commissioner, if I may. So I missed --
17 and I apologize -- on the hiring and
18 where we're at in the process of the --

19 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
20 Skilled trades positions?

21 COUNCILMAN HENON: Skilled
22 trades and where we are in that hiring
23 process. So it was in two years -- a
24 budget two years ago?

25 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Yeah.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILMAN HENON: And we put a
3 hold on it because everything was being
4 held up in litigation.

5 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
6 Correct.

7 COUNCILMAN HENON: Where are we
8 now?

9 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: So
10 now we're hiring at a clip and we're at
11 22 of the 40 positions that have been
12 filled.

13 COUNCILMAN HENON: And they're
14 civil service, correct?

15 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
16 Correct. Correct. And we've had a lot
17 of success in some of the areas. We
18 struggle, to be honest, in some of the
19 other skilled trades areas, mainly
20 because of the competition with other
21 groups that are hiring right now, some
22 City agencies that are hiring.

23 COUNCILMAN HENON: There are
24 thousands of jobs available left to be
25 filled in the City of Philadelphia as we

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 speak, thousands of jobs.

3 What does the civil service
4 list look like just process-wise? Like
5 so you have 18 more to fill, and that
6 just fills that requirement, not
7 including --

8 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: So
9 I'm sorry. We have nine in process. So
10 we actually only have about maybe nine
11 more to fill. So we have 22 that are
12 hired. We have nine that are in process.
13 So we probably only have nine more to
14 fill.

15 Each trade has a different
16 list. So if you're looking for
17 electrician, HVAC, carpenter, you go off
18 a different list. We've been actually
19 really pleasantly surprised to see some
20 of the numbers on the list to have some
21 inventory. We've been very aggressive
22 about getting to those names as soon as
23 we can.

24 We've struggled a little bit in
25 some of our group leader positions. So

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 what we're doing with the 40 positions
3 is, we're building a special capital
4 squad of guys and gals that can actually
5 go out and do these capital projects as
6 opposed to our general maintenance team,
7 which has to be pulled, as Aparna was
8 talking about, to work on different -- to
9 move from completing work orders to doing
10 capital projects. So some of the
11 positions that we're looking to hire are,
12 for instance, a group leader for roofing
13 or a group leader for electricians.
14 They're a little challenging to fill
15 because that's a promotional position.
16 But we're very optimistic. Like I said,
17 we're at 22. We have nine in process.
18 We're pretty optimistic that we're going
19 to be able to close the gap on the final
20 few.

21 COUNCILMAN HENON: And that's
22 good to hear. I mean, and that just
23 fulfills the special projects.

24 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
25 Correct. That doesn't count on -- we

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 have other -- you're right. We have
3 other vacancies in the skilled trades.

4 COUNCILMAN HENON: And I know
5 Public Property has the same issue. I
6 know the Water Department has the same
7 issue. So, I mean, for anybody and
8 everybody that's listening, the City of
9 Philadelphia is hiring. Go to phila.gov,
10 look at the different departments, sign
11 up for the test, take it.

12 So I got a question about the
13 test. Is there like a waiting list on
14 the test that you're selecting from or
15 are people not signing up for the test?

16 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
17 That's a better question for OHR,
18 Councilman. I know that as soon as a
19 list becomes available, when we have a
20 vacancy, when we have a position
21 available, we request a list from the
22 Office of Human Resources, a certified
23 list, and as soon as they get us that
24 list, we're hiring. We're pulling off
25 that list to anybody who -- if they're

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 qualified and they want to work with us,
3 we pull them off the list.

4 COUNCILMAN HENON: I mean,
5 early in this hearing I was talking about
6 how can we help you on a professional
7 level. So that's great on the
8 professional services end in your capital
9 team and/or your developmental team and
10 your program team. But to implement a
11 lot of this and to do the upkeep and
12 everything, we need people on the ground
13 that are going to work in the field every
14 single day trying to fix things that need
15 repair. There's a need. So there's a
16 supply and demand, and the need is a high
17 priority right now.

18 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
19 Absolutely. Absolutely.

20 COUNCILMAN HENON: So if there
21 is something that you could get to the
22 Chair or Council President or circulate
23 on some -- like I know there's a portal
24 for new hires from HR, but if you could
25 know -- I mean, if you could pass along

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 so we could circulate it with the
3 community groups that we come in touch
4 with every day. And people are always
5 looking for jobs, and I know we as
6 Councilmembers have that kind of
7 relationship throughout our district
8 where we're always trying to promote.
9 Like when I do social media, aside from
10 your typical trolls that are out there,
11 one of the highest hit rate and views are
12 job opportunities. So if we could help
13 assist with promoting to the City of
14 Philadelphia positions on the skilled and
15 non-skilled trade level. Because, again,
16 it's not just Parks and Rec, but it is
17 critical I think for everything to be
18 working in tandem together with your
19 investment and the project teams, special
20 projects, your regular capital upkeep and
21 repair and maintenance, as well as
22 Rebuild, who is also working with PRA and
23 that department. Everything is all kind
24 of together, working towards the outcomes
25 that we've been talking about. So that

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 would be helpful.

3 Another question I have on
4 attrition, attrition with staff at any
5 supervisory level and people who we're
6 just starting to hire in. So my concern
7 is -- and not with just Parks and Rec.
8 Just in general with all departments.
9 And I'm going to talk about this with
10 every department that comes up. And we
11 had to deal with it through DROP with our
12 Fire Department, for example.

13 There was a gap in between
14 people who have experience who were in
15 supervisory positions or people who were
16 being promoted to supervisory positions,
17 and then there was a slowdown on hiring
18 for budgetary reasons, and now the City
19 is finally in a position where we're
20 going to start hiring again instead of
21 letting people go and not filling the
22 vacancies and that we have this gap
23 disparity in experience.

24 Can we start taking a look at
25 that as we go through this process and

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 understand our needs a little bit better?
3 Because everybody is working so hard to
4 make sure that, one, our core services
5 are being taken care of; two, working
6 with Rebuild and trying to fill the
7 immediate needs, but I'm looking at down
8 the road and making sure that when people
9 who have earned the retirement and they
10 can retire with dignity and respect from
11 their public service, that there are
12 people who are in the pipeline to get
13 some of that institutional knowledge
14 that's working through the field of how
15 things operate with the City.

16 I know that's more of a
17 comment, but the ask is that if you could
18 start taking a look at the workforce
19 pipeline through your operation system.

20 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Sure.
21 Absolutely, yeah.

22 COUNCILMAN HENON: Last on --
23 two things, but one request is, could you
24 provide to the Chair a list of all leases
25 that we have from Parks and Rec? And

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 more specifically, but I'll just do it
3 generally, with the School District.

4 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: With
5 the School District?

6 COUNCILMAN HENON: With the
7 School District specifically. I have --
8 and I'm just making this up. I know it's
9 School District property, but up at
10 Lincoln High School, we have -- and it's
11 leased for Parks and Rec over the School
12 District. It's the only indoor public
13 pool, and there's been a need for stairs.
14 We have a robust senior program that uses
15 it and they have a hard time getting in
16 and out. I know it's School District,
17 again. There are things like that that
18 makes me wonder or makes me start to
19 question what is the School District
20 doing to fill their responsibilities as
21 initially agreed upon with Parks and Rec,
22 because I'm not sure that they're
23 actually fulfilling it.

24 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: The
25 pool situation is tricky, and we'll have

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 to look into that, because I'm not
3 actually sure. I know the School
4 District owns the indoor pools and I know
5 we staff and program them. I'm not sure
6 how that relationship started. We
7 appreciate the relationship, because as I
8 mentioned before, we can use those indoor
9 facilities not just to have swim lessons
10 year round for children and just
11 recreational opportunities for families,
12 but we have to hire 400 lifeguards every
13 summer, and we need to train and screen
14 those lifeguards. And we do that now.
15 We do that starting in January. So we
16 need those indoor pools to be able to do
17 that.

18 As I mentioned, so right now we
19 have three indoor pools and two of them
20 are not working. Now, we don't maintain
21 those pools. I don't believe we have any
22 kind of a lease arrangement. I'm not
23 even sure what we have in writing, to be
24 honest, Councilman.

25 COUNCILMAN HENON: Well, there

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 will certainly be questions when the
3 School District comes.

4 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: But
5 we enjoy being able to use those pools,
6 but we do have two of them that are down.
7 And as a matter of fact, we just worked
8 out an agreement with the YMCA to borrow
9 their pools on Fridays and Saturdays to
10 screen lifeguards, because we're just
11 really struggling. Lincoln is our only
12 working pool right now indoor, and so we
13 are -- there's just too many of our
14 lifeguards or people who are interested
15 in becoming lifeguards who can't make it
16 up to Mayfair, right? So we're actually
17 shuttling them up so that we can screen
18 them and train them.

19 So I'm happy to look into what
20 paperwork we have, if any, around those
21 arrangements with the pools specifically,
22 but --

23 COUNCILMAN HENON: The pools
24 specifically, but the School District
25 generally.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Sure.

3 COUNCILMAN HENON: I just want
4 to see what the expectations are or what
5 the arrangements are for facilities
6 upkeep and programming on the School
7 District side, because I get when there's
8 a budget shortfall, there needs to be
9 tough decisions, but I have a lot of
10 seniors who are on an ongoing basis and
11 chronically in need of and urging my
12 office to do something with the pool
13 steps. So I look forward to having that
14 conversation.

15 And, lastly, speaking of
16 Lincoln, we have -- I have, again, like I
17 was saying earlier, I have a population
18 growth in my district, which is fabulous.
19 It presents other challenges. But we've
20 been able to navigate and working with
21 Parks and Rec, you've been an incredible
22 partner with trying to accommodate every
23 person, culture, organization,
24 constituent as we possibly can to address
25 even some of the temporary needs for

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 long-term goals. But a long-term goal
3 for me and vision is, as the population
4 grows, as Lincoln High School turns into
5 an education type of campus, that we
6 consider that site being a Super Site,
7 which is a huge investment, but I think a
8 Super Site there will really be a great
9 add-on to Northeast Philadelphia and
10 accommodate a tremendous need for people
11 scrambling around for permits, more
12 private and non-profit investments when
13 it comes to the playing fields. They
14 have the Stadium Bowl there at Lincoln
15 that needs a lot of work. But I think
16 having it become a Super Site in the
17 future would really be a tribute to
18 Northeast City of Philadelphia.

19 So I'm just throwing that out
20 there so that conversation can continue
21 as we move forward over the next year.

22 The Chair recognizes
23 Councilwoman Bass.

24 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you,
25 Mr. Chairman.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 I just have one more question
3 for you, and that was about something
4 that came up earlier regarding Mural Arts
5 and Rebuild, and they didn't have a
6 particular role in the work that we're
7 doing. So when they work with Parks and
8 Recreation or through Rebuild, is there a
9 role for them?

10 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: Yeah.
11 I talk to Jane on a weekly basis, and
12 we're working with her on three or four
13 different projects now. One is a Rebuild
14 project. The other two are just
15 recreation centers.

16 I'd say we -- and so that's
17 just the mural projects, and then I
18 raised money for a new program that we
19 started called Murals on the Move, which
20 is --

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Murals
22 what?

23 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL:
24 Murals on the Move. It's a mobile --
25 it's a van, but it's branded really cool

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 and it travels around to rec centers to
3 provide mobile art programming. And so
4 we raised some money to be able to make
5 the Murals on the Move program exist, and
6 it's wonderful. It comes with -- so we
7 provided some seasonal positions for
8 artists, and they drive the van around
9 and they go to different sites every day.
10 And it's neat because it's for the kids
11 in the after-school program. So they
12 just come out to the van and they -- or
13 the van brings the activities in and they
14 give the kids a taste of what that's
15 like. It's a great way for them to also
16 be able to matriculate into some of Mural
17 Arts' other programs if they're really
18 interested. So it's sort of like an
19 exposure program. It's been wonderful.
20 We piloted it for one year. It was
21 really successful. So now we're looking
22 to see how we can continue the program.

23 So we do work with them
24 programmatically as well as with the
25 mural projects. We're talking to them

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 about doing a really large mural at the
3 new Bridesburg pool. We're talking to
4 them about a project at West Mill Creek.
5 And then I'm happy to invite Rebuild
6 folks up to talk a little bit more about
7 some of the conversations the Rebuild
8 team has been having with Mural Arts.

9 But I worked in Mural Arts,
10 full disclosure, for six years, so I have
11 a special place in my heart --

12 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I think
13 that's where we first met.

14 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: --
15 for the work that they do and find that
16 it really complements our work at Parks
17 and Rec really well, so we love working
18 with them.

19 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. I
20 guess what I'm asking, though, is there a
21 specific role for Mural Arts in Rebuild?
22 And so right now I think that Jane Golden
23 is under the impression that there's not,
24 that they have bid to be a part of
25 different projects. But I think it just

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 makes sense to include them in what we're
3 doing.

4 MS. WESTERMAN: Sure. Hi.
5 Nicole Westerman, Executive Director of
6 Rebuild. Good afternoon.

7 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Good
8 afternoon.

9 MS. WESTERMAN: So we are in
10 frequent communication with Mural Arts
11 and with Jane. They are doing such great
12 work across the City every day, and the
13 work that they do in community engagement
14 is a real model for the kinds of
15 community engagement that we want for
16 Rebuild.

17 We're really proud that the
18 project user projects so far have had the
19 kinds of open and fair and transparent
20 processes for getting community
21 engagement and design teams in place that
22 we envisioned for Rebuild and that are
23 memorialized in the Rebuild ordinance.
24 So it is incumbent upon the project users
25 to post those contract opportunities.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 I think you may know also we
3 have a call for interest. We have a
4 directory of diverse non-profits and MBEs
5 and WBEs that are interested in community
6 engagement opportunities as well as
7 design and construction opportunities.
8 Mural Arts is on that directory. So
9 certainly expect them to be coming up in
10 those processes. Very few executed
11 contracts so far, because those grant
12 agreements are just getting -- we've only
13 announced two executed agreements so far.
14 So it's really too early to tell, but
15 they are in the mix and would expect to
16 keep seeing them in the mix.

17 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. So
18 is there a way to have a more defined
19 role for Mural Arts?

20 MS. WESTERMAN: Well, again --

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Within
22 Rebuild.

23 MS. WESTERMAN: -- we have been
24 committed to an open and fair and
25 transparent competitive process for

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 contracts.

3 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I
4 understand that, but I guess what I'm
5 thinking of is that they're a City
6 agency.

7 David, I don't know if you had
8 to weigh in on that, but if -- they're a
9 City agency. So it's kind of like Public
10 Property or any other department that you
11 would naturally be connected to to be
12 able to get Rebuild done. It seems like
13 Mural Arts should be thought of in that
14 way.

15 MR. GOULD: Yeah. Yeah. David
16 Gould, Deputy Director for Rebuild.

17 Yeah. As Kathryn and Nicole
18 both said, I think we all really value
19 the work that Jane has done and that
20 Mural Arts does, and we definitely see
21 value in their participation in Rebuild.

22 I do know that my colleague
23 Kira Strong has been speaking with Mural
24 Arts about setting up a time to discuss a
25 more defined role for them potentially.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 We also know that they have obviously
3 murals on rec centers across
4 Philadelphia, and many of which are
5 Rebuild sites, and we would imagine that
6 it's a high likelihood that some
7 additional sites that do not have murals
8 could come away with murals as a result
9 of a Rebuild project.

10 So that's something -- we don't
11 have it defined right now, but it is
12 definitely on our radar, and we're
13 looking forward to having conversations
14 with Mural Arts to further define that.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. So
16 you're going to have the conversation
17 with Mural Arts in order to define what
18 their role as a City agency could be,
19 should be during the Rebuild process?

20 MR. GOULD: Correct.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Okay. All
22 right. Great. All right. Well, thank
23 you very much.

24 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,
25 Councilwoman.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Wait. I
3 have one more question.

4 COUNCILMAN HENON: Okay.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Just for --
6 I know Kathryn is like, oh, my God. I'm
7 sorry. Like I don't see you all the
8 time, I know. I saved everything up,
9 though.

10 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: I'm
11 going to invite you out for drinks so we
12 can just --

13 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Exactly.
14 Exactly.

15 So, listen, one last question
16 and, that is, in 2016, we introduced and
17 Council passed legislation to make our
18 playgrounds more accessible for older
19 residents and those with disabilities.
20 And can you just give me a very brief
21 update on how that's being implemented?
22 And I'm assuming that's a part of Rebuild
23 as well, that we as a city have taken it
24 really as a mandate to make sure that our
25 playgrounds are welcoming to those with

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 physical disabilities and as well as
3 emotional disabilities and for older
4 residents. So can you talk very briefly
5 about that?

6 COMMISSIONER OTT LOVELL: I'm
7 going to let Aparna talk, but I want to
8 tell you that it's going very well and I
9 actually think that it's received some
10 national attention. We've had other
11 cities who have reached out about that.
12 So, yeah, I think it's been really,
13 really successful. I'll let Aparna give
14 you the details.

15 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PALANTINO:
16 Councilwoman, since you introduced that
17 legislation in 2016, we've been able to
18 implement, as I mentioned earlier, 33
19 playgrounds that we can consider
20 inclusive. That means people with not
21 only physical disabilities but also
22 behavioral abilities of different
23 capacities can participate in activities
24 on the playground. There are different
25 pieces of equipment that are made

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 available to a variety of ages and
3 abilities. Our staff has undergone
4 several trainings. Annually we do one or
5 two, at a minimum, with different
6 manufacturers, different entities that
7 sort of bring to our attention new and
8 innovative concepts around this.

9 So what we try to do is not
10 make it look separate in any way. So
11 when you approach a playground, the idea
12 is that everyone can participate at the
13 same place. There's certain things that
14 are done to accommodate whether how
15 equipment is spaced and the colors of the
16 equipment, things like that. So we're
17 very mindful of those. And actually as a
18 matter of practice going forward, every
19 playground that we build, those
20 principles are applied. It doesn't --
21 size does impact what you can do, of
22 course, but where we can, we do
23 accommodate that, as well as adult
24 fitness equipment to address the needs of
25 aging populations in Philadelphia.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Excellent.

3 Excellent. And if we could just make

4 sure -- one of the things I noticed with

5 a couple playgrounds is as we put in

6 equipment for those who may have a

7 physical disability, let's say if I have

8 two children, one who is in a wheelchair

9 and one who is not, I want to make sure

10 that my child who uses the wheelchair has

11 access to as much fun as possible there

12 at our playground, recreation center. I

13 know that there are swings that can be

14 accommodating and other things, other

15 amenities that can be included that

16 children, regardless of what the

17 disability may be, can take advantage of.

18 So I just really want to keep that in

19 mind.

20 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER PALANTINO:

21 Yes, as do we. Thank you.

22 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you

23 so much. Thank you.

24 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,

25 Councilwoman.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 I believe that is all we have
3 for today. I appreciate you and your
4 team coming in, Commissioner. Thank you
5 for your testimony.

6 This will conclude our Council
7 hearing today. We will stand at recess
8 until and this Committee will stand at
9 recess until 4:30 p.m. today for public
10 testimony.

11 Thank you.

12 (Short recess.)

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
14 afternoon, everyone. I guess we're close
15 to good evening. We're getting ready to
16 start our public testimony as it relates
17 to the FY20 budget. What we're going to
18 ask individuals to do is to stay on
19 topic, where we're asking you to testify
20 on the proposed budget that's before us.
21 Talk about how the City should focus its
22 spending priorities.

23 To ensure that there is an
24 opportunity for everyone here to be heard
25 this evening, we're going to have to

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 establish certain ground rules. We have
3 a significant level of individuals here
4 today. We're actually excited about
5 that, because it shows that people and
6 citizens care about their city. So we
7 will hopefully be in a position to take
8 your testimony in a timely way.

9 If anyone needs a copy of the
10 budget, we will have copies over on the
11 table, if you're interested.

12 When your name is called, we'll
13 ask that you come to the witness table.
14 Just for the record, state your name for
15 the record and then proceed with your
16 testimony.

17 Because we have a limitation on
18 time, we're going to ask you to try as
19 best as possible get to the point so we
20 can assure that we hear what it is you
21 have to say as it relates to the budget
22 testimony.

23 Our first witnesses -- hey,
24 guys, how you doing? Three familiar
25 faces.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Mr. Stitt, please call the
3 names of the first witnesses.

4 THE CLERK: Senator Williams,
5 Mayor Street, and Brett Mandel.

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
7 evening.

8 SENATOR WILLIAMS: Good
9 evening.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
11 Please proceed with your testimony.

12 SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thank you,
13 Mr. President.

14 Council President Clarke,
15 members of Philadelphia City Council, and
16 a patient but interested public, thank
17 you for the opportunity to present
18 testimony on the City's Proposed Budget
19 and Five Year Financial Plan.

20 I am a three-decade member of
21 the Pennsylvania General Assembly, having
22 served five terms as a State
23 Representative and more than five terms
24 as State Senator. With me today are
25 former Mayor, Council President, and

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Councilmember John F. Street and the
3 former City Controller's Office Director
4 of Financial and Policy Analysis, Brett
5 Mandel.

6 A hallmark of best government
7 is the expertise of the people who
8 surround the person you've chosen to
9 lead. The men who accompany me here
10 today have one of the best knowledge of
11 the City budget and government spending
12 practices. The recommendations we make
13 here today reflect many years of
14 thoughtful and visionary planning for our
15 city.

16 I applaud the work that the
17 members of this Council perform reviewing
18 budget documents and proposing questions
19 to the Administration officials. As the
20 proposed spending nears \$5 billion for
21 the Operating Budget alone, it is a
22 tremendous undertaking to review the
23 City's plan to spend our city's scarce
24 resources.

25 But I come before you today to

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 say that the Council and the public need
3 more transparent information about City
4 spending. We need to do better in terms
5 of preparing and presenting systems and
6 data so we can make better informed
7 decisions about our budgetary assumptions
8 and spending priorities.

9 In plain speak, we must make it
10 easy for our residents and taxpayers to
11 know how we are spending their money.

12 Philadelphia's financial
13 systems were once considered
14 forward-thinking, but they were designed
15 for the 1950's. Nearly three-quarters of
16 a century later, the public, this City
17 Council need modern, accountable,
18 transparent government budgetary systems.

19 So to that end, there are a
20 number of recommendations which I will
21 present to us today. There's an informed
22 complete presentation, but to expedite
23 the process, I think it's most
24 appropriate for me to sort of summarize
25 those recommendations for you today.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 First, we recommend we
3 establish an independent local budgetary
4 office, similar to the Congressional
5 Budget Office at the federal level and
6 the Independent Fiscal Office established
7 in 2010 at the state level, to estimate
8 budget revenues to avoid overoptimistic
9 or pessimistic review estimates by the
10 Mayoral Administration and others. We
11 must remove the special interests'
12 opinions and politics from the fiscal
13 planning and well-being of the City's
14 future.

15 Second, we recommend a long
16 overdue change to adopt a line-item
17 budgeting that clearly details proposed
18 expenditures to give City Council and the
19 public true authority over City spending.

20 Third, we recommend the City
21 Charter should be amended to require
22 five-year budgets and financial plans in
23 detail that both citizens and
24 Councilmembers can understand, adopt, and
25 commit to. We need to end what happens

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 when one administration ends and a new
3 one begins. Regardless of politics or
4 personalities, there should be a plan
5 that the public has confidence that will
6 be followed after the end of an
7 administration.

8 We recommend that in the future
9 we require a program-based summary of the
10 City budget and issue a report card on
11 City services to track results and
12 citizen satisfaction. Today the end of
13 the fiscal year occurs with little
14 thought as to the accomplishments of the
15 previous year. But we would be better
16 served by a process that incorporates a
17 consideration of how our spending plans
18 affect the City of Philadelphia.

19 In the future, the Mayor should
20 be required to reconcile the budget every
21 year, just like people at home reconcile
22 their balance at the end of the month,
23 how much did we spend and what did we
24 spend it upon.

25 Another recommendation, we

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 recommend that the Mayor produce a
3 comprehensive year-end report to detail
4 how much of each line item in the budget
5 was actually spent and to articulate the
6 progress our city has made towards
7 achieving outcome goals set forth at the
8 beginning of a yearly budget.

9 Another recommendation, we
10 recommend we utilize sunset provisions in
11 contracts and programs to ensure that the
12 City finds worth in its spending and does
13 not continue initiatives past their
14 effectiveness.

15 We recommend the City follow
16 the lead of other major cities that
17 publish an online comprehensive and
18 realtime line-item budget and contract
19 details, with a goal towards making
20 available all information that the City
21 is required to provide pursuant to a
22 valid right-to-know law request.

23 Finally, the City's most
24 pressing and intractable problem is
25 poverty. In the last three years, there

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 has been no credible economic development
3 plan to create jobs and lift poor
4 Philadelphians out of poverty.

5 The commitment to a Sanctuary
6 City is very important, and the creation
7 of Community Schools is very important,
8 but these policies do not create jobs.
9 As Mayor, we annually transmit to City
10 Council and would publish an economic
11 plan that considers tax policy,
12 infrastructure investment, arts and
13 cultural spending, and the leverage of
14 City-owned utilities and transportation
15 assets to reach targeted employment
16 goals.

17 Today, 21st Philadelphia faces
18 challenges that 1950 Philadelphia would
19 never have anticipated. But the passage
20 of time has also seen the emergence of
21 incredible advances of information
22 technology and communication tools. The
23 financial systems designed for the era of
24 the Philadelphia whiz kids are
25 insufficient for the modern Philadelphia

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Bryce Harper's team. It is time to
3 rethink how we can consider the City
4 budget and the tools we use to
5 communicate about City spending.

6 I appreciate this opportunity
7 to appear before you today and look
8 forward to the chance to work with you
9 all in the future to ensure that we make
10 best use of our city resources and we
11 utilize the best possible budgetary
12 procedures to guide the decisions we make
13 on behalf of our residents.

14 Thank you.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

16 Thank you for your testimony.

17 Mayor. That's it, Mr. Mayor?

18 MAYOR STREET: I join the
19 remarks of Senator Williams.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All
21 right. Thank you. Thank you, Mayor.
22 Appreciate you.

23 Mr. Mandel.

24 MR. MANDEL: I similarly join
25 the remarks of Senator Williams.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Oh,
3 okay. My kind of panel. All right,
4 gentlemen.

5 Any questions of these
6 witnesses by members of the Committee?
7 (No response.)

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
9 There being none, gentlemen, I want to
10 thank you very much, and thank you for
11 your service.

12 SENATOR WILLIAMS: Thanks for
13 having us. Appreciate it.
14 (Applause.)

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
16 Thank you.

17 Mr. Stitt, please call the next
18 three witnesses.

19 Folks, I guess people on this
20 half of the room, I want to apologize for
21 sitting behind this screen. This is the
22 biggest screen I've ever seen. I think
23 they're going in the way of everybody
24 getting the largest flat screen
25 imaginable. So I am not ducking you. I

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 just simply can't see around this huge
3 screen. This is big. Thank you.

4 Mr. Stitt, please call the next
5 three witnesses.

6 THE CLERK: Theresa McCormick,
7 Aurica Hurst, William Mackey.

8 Theresa McCormick, Aurica
9 Hurst, William Mackey.

10 (Witnesses approached witness
11 table.)

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
13 evening. What we're going to do, because
14 we have more than 40 people -- thank you.

15 What we're going to do, because
16 we have a whole lot of people here
17 testifying this evening, we're going to
18 put a limit on your testimony. So,
19 again, please get to the point as best as
20 possible and summarize your testimony.
21 If you have any written testimony, if you
22 give it to us during the course of the
23 hearing, we will make sure that it is in
24 the record. So don't feel like you have
25 to read the entire version of your

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 written testimony if it goes beyond the
3 time limit.

4 We're going to start out with
5 two minutes per person. So would you
6 please, if you just state your name for
7 the record and give your testimony, and
8 then if there are any questions, we'll
9 follow up with those questions. So
10 please self-select in terms of who you
11 want to be first. Please proceed.

12 MS. SMITH: Jordan Smith.

13 Good afternoon, Honorable Mayor
14 Kenney, Council President Darrell Clarke,
15 and any other members of City Council.
16 We are Youth Council for Positive Change
17 Leadership Academy. This program is
18 designed to reduce the youth-on-youth
19 violence academic in our communities.
20 Utilizing an evidence-based approach, we
21 plan to reduce youth violence, increase
22 school engagement, while reducing the use
23 of tobacco and drugs. Young adults will
24 enhance their leadership skills as they
25 create programs that will support

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 positive activities within their
3 neighborhoods.

4 Our overall outcome is to
5 influence young adults to become
6 contributing citizens. Historically data
7 has shown that engaging youth in a
8 leadership role greatly reduced the
9 violence in our neighborhoods. In the
10 1990's the North Central community and
11 North Philadelphia supported a Youth
12 Advisory Council titled "Citywide Youth
13 Agencies" that provided our young people
14 with a voice and services within their
15 neighborhood. The highlights and success
16 of Citywide were clear understanding of
17 youth needs and services that will
18 positively engage kids and provided
19 academic enrichment and youth empowerment
20 programs; youth mentoring programs that
21 would prevent and reduce youth violence
22 and provided educational field trips to
23 enrich our youth's experience beyond
24 their neighborhoods.

25 In partnership with Men for

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Positive Change, Communities That Care,
3 Stop the Frisk, Lessons, Beckett Life
4 Center, and Dream Big have formed a
5 collaborative to create the Youth Council
6 for Positive Change Leadership Academy in
7 the North Central community. Our goal is
8 to empower our youth through
9 participation in and resurrect
10 peer-to-peer mentorship programs, as well
11 as increase the number of young adults
12 participating on the Council. The Youth
13 Council for Positive Change will be a
14 platform to engage our youth in open
15 discussions, which in turn will translate
16 into programs and resources while
17 collecting the necessary data and
18 evidence required to make positive change
19 within our community.

20 The Youth Council for Positive
21 Change respectfully requests the Mayor
22 and City Council to give firm
23 consideration to identifying funding
24 sources to support our efforts, which
25 support the City's overall goals to

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 reduce the dropout rates, increase school
3 attendance and graduation rates, while
4 reducing the violence in our community.

5 We appreciate your support and
6 helping our Philadelphia youth strong
7 citizens and making our neighborhoods
8 safe to grow up.

9 Yours truly, Philadelphia Youth
10 Council. Thank you.

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
12 Thank you. Thank you so much for your
13 testimony.

14 (Applause.)

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Are
16 you testifying?

17 MS. CLARK: Yes.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Just
19 state your name for the record.

20 MR. CLARK: Lawrence Clarke.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
22 Please proceed.

23 MR. CLARK: First, kon'nichiwa,
24 daitoryo en nakama no shimin. In
25 Japanese that means good afternoon, City

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Council President, Councilmembers, and
3 fellow citizens. My name is Lawrence
4 Clarke, the Vice President for Youth
5 Council for Positive Change. We are a
6 youth organization that pushes to
7 advocate issues and concerns that
8 confront young people.

9 Today I stand in the halls of
10 City Council to address a failed
11 education system in the City of
12 Philadelphia. Every year over 1.2
13 million students drop out of high school
14 in the United States alone. That's a
15 student every 26 seconds, or 7,000 a day.
16 About 25 percent of high school freshmen
17 fail to graduate from high school on
18 time. In 2019, studies show that
19 students are learning from outdated
20 textbooks from 10 to 20 years ago that
21 doesn't prepare them for the future.

22 We have poor school conditions
23 that are terrible. Overcrowded
24 classrooms makes learning impossible.
25 The building is over 100 years old, with

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 also growing with mold. Bathroom toilets
3 don't work and the heating systems aren't
4 working poorly.

5 These are the complaints I hear
6 from my peers about the school system. I
7 haven't experienced a day in public
8 school, but hearing this terrifying news
9 frightens me. I am in home school and I
10 am in 10th grade, already advanced in
11 mathematics and learned to speak two
12 languages, Spanish and Japanese. My
13 younger brother has been in gifted and
14 talented class for over five years, and
15 he has majored in computer engineering.

16 Students need these
17 opportunities to succeed in life.

18 If anyone has questions, let me
19 know and I'll be glad to answer them.

20 Thank you.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

22 Thank you for your testimony.

23 (Applause.)

24 THE CLERK: Jacquelyn Brown,
25 Kathleen Melville, Shira Cohen.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 (Applause.)

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

4 Mr. Mackey, your name was called earlier.

5 Did you choose -- you changed your mind?

6 MR. MACKEY: That was my youth
7 group.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Oh,
9 okay.

10 MR. MACKEY: Stepping up
11 citywide, sir.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
13 There you go. Thank you.

14 (Witnesses approached witness
15 table.)

16 THE CLERK: Sharon Bryant.

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Wait
18 a minute. So we have Ms. Brown?

19 Excuse me. I just want to make
20 sure. We're trying to keep track. Ms.
21 Brown? Either one of you?

22 (No response.)

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Ms.
24 Melville?

25 MS. MELVILLE: Yes.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Ms.

3 Melville and Shira.

4 MS. MELVILLE: Shira Cohen.

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

6 Thank you.

7 And we're calling up Sharon

8 Bryant.

9 Folks, hold on a second. A
10 little bit of ground rules. If you have
11 signs, you have to stand in the rear,
12 because you're blocking the view of
13 individuals that are sitting in the
14 audience. So any sign, you have to go in
15 the back.

16 Okay. If we can have a little
17 quiet. We're going to start the
18 testimony. Thank you.

19 Please self-select.

20 MS. MELVILLE: Hello. Hi. My
21 name is Kathleen Melville and I teach
22 10th graders at The Workshop School. I
23 am a rank and file member of the PFT and
24 an organizer with the Caucus --

25 (Applause.)

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. MELVILLE: And I'm an
3 organizer with the Caucus of Working
4 Educators. I'm here today with my fellow
5 educators, parents, and community members
6 to deliver our petition demanding safe
7 learning conditions. It reads:

8 As proud parents, family
9 members, and community members of the
10 School District of Philadelphia, we are
11 outraged that City and District leaders
12 continue to sit by while school buildings
13 poison our children with toxic lead that
14 causes permanent cognitive damage as well
15 as temperatures and pests that trigger
16 asthma. As parents, family members, and
17 community members who care deeply for our
18 students, we demand lead remediation in
19 all schools that have toxic lead, not
20 just the 40 schools the District has
21 selected. In addition, we demand robust
22 pest control and air conditioners in
23 every learning space in order to
24 alleviate asthma, which is a widespread
25 cause of suffering and absenteeism among

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Philly children.

3 (Applause.)

4 MS. MELVILLE: Ending the
5 ten-year tax abatement for the wealthy
6 and requiring big universities and mega
7 non-profits to pay their fair share
8 through PILOTs --

9 (Applause.)

10 MS. MELVILLE: -- will fund the
11 safe learning conditions that Philly
12 students deserve.

13 Over 3,000 educators, parents,
14 and community members, including 2,500
15 rank and file members of the PFT, signed
16 this petition.

17 (Applause.)

18 MS. MELVILLE: It represents
19 over 3,000 face-to-face conversations
20 with people who care about our children,
21 over 3,000 people ready to take action to
22 end the tax abatement and fight for the
23 safe schools that our students deserve.

24 (Applause.)

25 MS. MELVILLE: Now, we know

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 that it can be difficult for members of
3 City Council to understand what it's
4 really like in our classrooms. That's
5 why we would like to invite you to spend
6 a day in one of our classrooms this
7 spring.

8 (Applause.)

9 MS. MELVILLE: And since we
10 know that you are used to offices that
11 have air conditioning, we are providing
12 you with these necklace fans so that you
13 will be ready to join us in one of our
14 many, many classrooms that do not have
15 air conditioning.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
17 Thank you.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. MELVILLE: Let me be clear.
20 The condition of our schools is not just
21 a safety issue. It is a racial justice
22 issue.

23 (Applause.)

24 MS. MELVILLE: The people who
25 benefit from the ten-year tax

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 abatement --

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

4 Ma'am.

5 MS. MELVILLE: -- are mostly

6 white --

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

8 Ma'am.

9 MS. MELVILLE: -- and the

10 people who are hurt by the ten-year tax

11 abatement are Philadelphia students --

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

13 Ma'am, we need you to wrap up.

14 MS. MELVILLE: -- who are

15 mostly black and brown.

16 (Applause.)

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

18 Folks, I understand your passion. I

19 understand your passion, but we're going

20 to ask you to please adhere to the

21 guidelines, because we have a lot of

22 people that want to speak. Thank you.

23 We're going to have rules here.

24 Ma'am, you wish to speak?

25 MS. COHEN: Yes.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Please proceed.

4 MS. COHEN: Good afternoon. My
5 name is Shira Cohen. I teach 6th graders
6 at the Feltonville School of Arts and
7 Sciences in North Philadelphia --

8 (Applause.)

9 MS. COHEN: -- and I'm a proud
10 rank and file union member of the
11 Philadelphia Federation of Teachers and
12 an organizer with the Caucus of Working
13 Educators.

14 Three days before students were
15 to start school this August, I came into
16 my classroom and saw that a piece of the
17 ceiling had fallen in. Dust covered
18 everything. Water destroyed hundreds of
19 dollars worth of materials. I put a
20 trash can on my radiator to catch the
21 leak. The unit blew hot air and dust
22 throughout a room that was supposed to
23 bring new students in under a week.

24 This is just one classroom in
25 tens of thousands across our city. Our

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 students are poisoned by lead in the
3 water and in the paint. We are
4 collapsing in classrooms that reach
5 nearly 100 degrees in the summer, fall,
6 and spring heat.

7 I have talked to educators who
8 kill several mice a day while they're
9 teaching their students. Public school
10 staff are cleaning rodent feces off of
11 the floor every single day.

12 I have talked to workers who
13 teach in their buildings in masks and
14 whose students' asthma worsens every year
15 because of the air that they breathe.

16 We know that the conditions and
17 the City's longtime ignorance of them is
18 an attack on black and brown communities
19 and poor neighborhoods.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. COHEN: This is about
22 dispossession and dehumanization of our
23 people and of public education in
24 Philadelphia.

25 Since last year, we have waged

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 a campaign to end this systemic neglect
3 of the physical toxicity in our school
4 buildings. PFT and community members en
5 masse have signed a petition to the
6 School District and City Council, and in
7 this petition we demand that you make a
8 plan to remediate the lead, mold, and
9 asbestos in all of our schools now.

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. COHEN: Make a plan to
12 treat all rodent infestations in all of
13 our schools now. Make a plan to overhaul
14 our heating and cooling systems in all of
15 our schools now.

16 (Applause.)

17 MS. COHEN: And you need to
18 fund these repairs with an end to the
19 ten-year tax abatement on large property
20 owners in Philadelphia now.

21 Today, the rank and file and
22 our community members have a delivery for
23 you. 3,300 people signed this petition,
24 including 2,500 PFT members, in more than
25 107 buildings. This petition has been

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 entirely through in-person organizing in
3 half of our district schools. We have
4 had thousands of one-on-one conversations
5 and meetings with union members, parents,
6 and students, and additional buildings
7 and community members have begun
8 circulating this petition since its final
9 printing.

10 Our campaign is growing daily.
11 Are you, City Council, going to meet the
12 demands of our communities organizing and
13 every day building more power? You have
14 asked us to be patient and I can confirm
15 for you that we are done waiting. Not
16 only --

17 (Applause.)

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

19 Thank you.

20 MS. COHEN: Not only are PFT
21 members and students and parents clear on
22 the schools that our communities deserve,
23 we are fighting and organizing for them.
24 We are asking you to end this ten-year
25 tax abatement to fund the work to end our

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 toxic school conditions immediately. Fix
3 our schools.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
5 Thank you.

6 (Applause.)

7 (Audience members chanting "fix
8 our schools.")

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: We
10 have somebody else that wants to testify.
11 Let us testify.

12 Please proceed, ma'am. Just
13 state your name for the record.

14 MS. BRYANT: Good afternoon and
15 thank you for this opportunity. My name
16 is Sharon Bryant and I have faithfully
17 served the School District of
18 Philadelphia in many capacities over the
19 last 26 years.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. BRYANT: I've taught many
22 lessons, but have learned the most
23 important one: Health is wealth.

24 An unfortunate culture of
25 negligence and depraved indifference

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 continues to put people's lives in
3 jeopardy by stealing their health. Why
4 are we continuing to give additional
5 funding to those who are already healthy
6 and wealthy at the expense of Philly
7 staff and students who are struggling to
8 teach and learn under hazardous,
9 unhealthy, toxic conditions?

10 I'm going to share some of my
11 personal chronology since arriving at
12 Lewis Cassidy, crowned number one school
13 in disrepair, in order to highlight some
14 effects of these dire public health
15 issues.

16 Pre-Cassidy I'm of superior
17 health, taking no meds, playing tennis
18 two to three times a week, meeting my
19 sisters at LA Fitness for Zumba and
20 cycling classes, directing and performing
21 with my drill team.

22 September 2016, begin teaching
23 4th grade at Cassidy.

24 October '16, building heat is
25 turned on, temperature extreme, ongoing

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 leak and mold problems in the student
3 closet.

4 January 2017, breathing toxic
5 metallic fumes from welding new radiators
6 in during school hours. This rips me off
7 of three health days. Upper respiratory
8 infection and allergic rhinitis.

9 December '17, out of work on
10 workers' comp after suffering a severe
11 neck and back sprain restraining a
12 student in crisis, dealing with bulging
13 discs and nerve damage to date. I lose
14 all my active life. The medication train
15 begins, including a synthetic opioid.

16 April 2018, I'm forced back to
17 work too soon, injuries exacerbated,
18 further exacerbated by my body's response
19 to stirring up and inhaling toxic dust
20 while cleaning what had accumulated.
21 Acute onset asthma, bronchitis, sinusitis,
22 and air trapping. Add another card to my
23 medication train - a daily puff of Breo.

24 December '18, after a second
25 unsuccessful attempt to return to work, I

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 descend into the black hole of the no-pay
3 status.

4 March 2019, I'm separated from
5 service with no pay and no benefits. But
6 it doesn't matter about me because I'm 60
7 and I've been blessed in spite of my
8 health and wealth being pilfered.

9 I'm here to cry out for the
10 children who have --

11 (Applause.)

12 MS. BRYANT: What's being
13 looted from our children? How is their
14 health being pirated, and who among you
15 will stand up for them and say enough is
16 enough?

17 Remember, health is wealth.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

19 Thank you. Thank you for your testimony.

20 (Applause.)

21 (Audience members chanting "fix
22 our schools.")

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Mr.

24 Stitt, call the name of the next

25 witnesses.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 THE CLERK: Shannon Milteer,
3 Janene Hasan, Adam Feldman.

4 Shannon Milteer.

5 (Witnesses approached witness
6 table.)

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: We
8 got one more?

9 THE CLERK: Adam Feldman.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
11 What's the name?

12 THE CLERK: Adam Feldman.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Adam
14 Feldman.

15 So we have Shannon Milteer,
16 Janene Hasan, and Adam. Thank you.
17 Please self-select and proceed.

18 MS. MILTEER: Good evening,
19 City Council and all others in
20 attendance. My name is Shannon Milteer.
21 I currently live in the 39th District
22 covered by Councilwoman Bass. I am
23 District Council 33 Local 1637 Shop
24 Steward and Union Delegate.

25 I have been a police

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 communication dispatcher for eight years
3 this coming May. Within the first five
4 years of my appointment at Police Radio,
5 I was mandated one time and there was
6 actually something going on in the City.
7 The Eagles were in the playoffs. I went
8 to work well prepared to stay over,
9 expecting to be mandated due to callouts.

10 Within the last two to three
11 years, I have been mandated two to three
12 times a month. This causes an issue for
13 myself and other dispatchers who are
14 single mothers or who have families with
15 a set schedule to maintain stability
16 within their homes. It is impossible for
17 me myself to find a caregiver who is
18 willing to put their life on hold every
19 day and not make plans because of the
20 possibility that I may or may not get
21 mandated and need someone to pick up my
22 child.

23 Even with the full funding
24 Mayor Kenney has committed to for Police,
25 civilian police remain severely

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 understaffed. For a fully staffed room,
3 there should be 335 dispatchers total.
4 Currently we are at 237 dispatchers, 17
5 of them assigned to clerical positions,
6 which leaves us short 115 dispatchers.

7 This is also a safety hazard
8 for the City we are employed to serve.
9 On a daily basis, we experience a high
10 call volume, so often times callers in
11 emergency situations experience a delay
12 in their calls being answered or they
13 hang up before their emergency 9-1-1
14 operator is available to answer the call.

15 Now we have an irate caller who
16 wants to know why it took so long for
17 their call to be answered on one end of
18 the phone and an overburdened dispatcher
19 on the other end.

20 Everyone has relied or has had
21 to call 9-1-1 at some point in their
22 lives and may have been that person on
23 the other end of the phone wondering why
24 it is taking so long for their call to be
25 answered. So it is not just an issue for

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 us dispatchers, but for the entire City,
3 and I am here to address this issue
4 because it should not take a tragedy for
5 the light to come on and this to be
6 corrected.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
8 Thank you. Thank you for your testimony.
9 (Applause.)

10 MR. FELDMAN: Thank you,
11 Council President. Thank you,
12 Councilmembers. My name is Adam Feldman
13 and I'm a librarian at the Free Library
14 of Philadelphia.

15 (Applause.)

16 MR. FELDMAN: I probably
17 shouldn't be the first person to be a
18 witness today, but I am one of several
19 from the Library today, so I'm very
20 excited to hear from my colleagues as
21 well. But I came here specifically to
22 tell you about how understaffing affects
23 the Central Library particularly and how
24 badly we need Council's help to build the
25 library system, the education system that

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Philadelphia deserves.

3 In a typical year, 60,000
4 students and young people attend 1,500
5 programs organized by librarians at the
6 Central Library. Adults come in similar
7 numbers for perhaps the most diverse set
8 of free lifelong learning opportunities
9 of any institution in this city or any
10 other American city.

11 Each year I personally welcome
12 2,000 teenagers from 50-plus schools
13 through the research process.

14 Are there any teachers here who
15 have been to one of those?

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. FELDMAN: I'm very proud to
18 be here with my colleagues from the
19 Caucus of WE and from the PFT.

20 Our struggle is their struggle.
21 We're building the same learning
22 conditions for all students in
23 Philadelphia.

24 (Applause.)

25 MR. FELDMAN: And I should say

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 in a city with fewer than seven school
3 librarians, ours is the only institution
4 capable of supporting the success of
5 research projects of the graduating
6 classes of entire high schools.

7 Education is crucial to ending
8 poverty in Philadelphia. Our teenagers
9 deserve the tools necessary to enter
10 college or careers, ready to bring
11 prosperity home to Philadelphia.

12 Council should understand that
13 the staffing problems at the Central
14 Library are hidden. Our main entrance
15 will not close. However, after the
16 ribbing-cutting of new spaces last week,
17 we are closing doors of whole
18 departments. Parkway Central Library is
19 better understood as about a dozen
20 libraries under one roof. It's like a
21 major university. There's a library of
22 art, of literature, of science, of
23 business, religion, history, music, and
24 more. The Science Department has two of
25 six librarians. The children's does as

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 well. The history is at four of six.
3 Government publications is at zero of six
4 librarians. The same is true for
5 newspapers and microfilm. Both the new
6 Teen Center and the new Business Center
7 are understaffed.

8 We're experiencing serious
9 challenges maintaining services, and this
10 budget envisions a loss of five full-time
11 positions on top of the 15 years of
12 losses, amounting to well over 30
13 full-time positions.

14 My colleagues and I look
15 forward to meeting with Councilmembers
16 individually to begin to repair the
17 damage done by the recession.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
19 Thank you.

20 MR. FELDMAN: Thank you.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
22 Thank you so much for your testimony.

23 (Applause.)

24 MS. HASAN: Good evening,
25 everyone. My name is Janene Palumbo

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Hasan. I grew up in Port Richmond. I
3 live in South Philadelphia. I teach at
4 Southwark Elementary School. I love my
5 city. I support public schools, and I've
6 made my home here in Philadelphia.

7 I consider myself upper middle
8 class in this city, and at local
9 networking events or meeting new people
10 of the same socioeconomic status, I
11 always get an incredulous look when I
12 tell them I grew up in Port Richmond.
13 People seem to rarely meet a Philadelphia
14 native, a college graduate in these
15 circles.

16 My socioeconomic peers seem to
17 follow a predictable pattern. They enjoy
18 city life. They get married. They buy a
19 nice tax-abated house. They have kids,
20 and then when their kids get to a
21 schooling age, they flee for the suburbs.
22 Their children get to enjoy suburban
23 school perks such as attending a school
24 building without toxic hazards.

25 Our schools lose out in taxes

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 from these tax abatements, but also on
3 supportive, privileged parents that would
4 otherwise support our public schools
5 through home and school associations or
6 other auxiliary programs.

7 A few months ago I took my
8 18-month-old son to the doctor and found
9 out that he had tested positive for lead
10 exposure. It's not quite at the CDC's
11 level of concern, but it's not zero, and
12 I can only wonder if I exposed him to
13 lead through nursing, pumping, or holding
14 him while wearing my work clothes.

15 I also wonder if I have
16 subjected him -- I also wonder if I want
17 to subject him to be exposed to more lead
18 by sending him to a Philadelphia public
19 school, even though I'm a passionate
20 believer in public schools and the
21 amazing work that my colleagues do.

22 We need to remediate this
23 situation immediately. It's a very real
24 threat to our children and our School
25 District employees' health.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 As the PFT representative for
3 Southwark, this past week I went around
4 my building just to see how pervasive
5 this problem was in my building. Every
6 classroom had peeling paint or cracked
7 paint.

8 I also want to explore some
9 anecdotal experiences I had with people
10 who benefit from the tax abatement
11 program. On my block where I've lived
12 for five years, we've seen several houses
13 torn down and replaced by new
14 development. The people who can afford
15 to live in these homes are well beyond
16 anyone's economic level on our block,
17 including myself. One of the new houses
18 were purchased by nice people, who never
19 live there because they have homes in two
20 other major cities. On snow days, their
21 lack of investment in our community is
22 apparent because they never shoveled
23 their sidewalk.

24 Someone very close to me bought
25 a tax-abated house. Their house

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 appreciated hundreds of thousands of
3 dollars in just a few years, and they are
4 now moving to the suburbs with their
5 children to go to kindergarten, a
6 lead-free, rodent-free, mold-free,
7 asbestos-free, with working air
8 conditioner building.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All
10 right, ma'am.

11 MS. HASAN: Meanwhile,
12 Philadelphians originally from that area
13 have been displaced and priced out of
14 their own neighborhood.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
16 Okay. If you can --

17 MS. HASAN: So I ask this
18 question: Who does the tax abatement
19 actually benefit? It's not the everyday
20 Philadelphians who take the time to
21 invest in our city with their time,
22 energy, and their children.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
24 Ma'am, can you kind of wrap it up,
25 please.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. HASAN: If we truly want to
3 attract investment in our city, we should
4 not be looking to attract developers and
5 residents who end up contributing nothing
6 to our School District. We should be
7 looking to make our School District such
8 a desirable place to send children, that
9 it attracts residents who want to
10 purchase homes, like myself, and invest
11 in their neighborhood, community, and
12 School District.

13 Thank you.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

15 Thank you so much for your testimony.

16 (Applause.)

17 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Next
18 three.

19 THE CLERK: Alexis -- my
20 apologies. I can't pronounce your last
21 name, so I'll spell it. A-H-I-A-G-A-B-E.
22 Mary Marques, Tim Horras.

23 Tim Horras or Mary Marques.

24 (Witnesses approached witness
25 table.)

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
3 evening. Self-select. Please proceed.

4 MS. MARQUES: Thank you. My
5 name is Mary Marques and I am a Library
6 Coordinator for the Free Library of
7 Philadelphia. I am a member of DC 47
8 Local 2187. I am also a member of
9 Reforma, the National Association to
10 Promote Library and Information Services
11 to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking in
12 the United States. Currently this
13 organization serves approximately 28
14 million Latinos first and second
15 generation. I coordinate and support the
16 efforts of staying neighborhood libraries
17 in the district of Council President
18 Clarke, Councilmember Squilla, and Jones.
19 We are passionate about services that we
20 provide for children, teenagers, adult,
21 seniors, and new Philadelphians.

22 Philadelphians who might be
23 learning English as a second, third, or
24 fourth language, like me, a close school
25 to the communicator, I speak English,

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Spanish, Portuguese, and acknowledge
3 French and also recognize that
4 Philadelphians want to access libraries
5 in their first language. That is a
6 service that we must provide and
7 struggling to fulfill.

8 Our biggest strengths of the
9 library of Philadelphia is our engagement
10 in our neighborhoods throughout the City.
11 We want to celebrate that strength by
12 making sure branches in every
13 neighborhood are staffed and have
14 qualified professional selective
15 materials that correspond to our patrons'
16 needs and requests. We need many more
17 staff members who are bilingual,
18 multilingual, and significantly more
19 materials in programs and languages other
20 than English.

21 Philadelphia is a diverse and
22 multi-ethnic city. We cannot close our
23 eyes to that reality, and we cannot
24 develop this service when we are
25 struggling simply to open our doors every

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 day.

3 Full funding is fundamental in
4 the issue of equity and inclusion. As
5 you know, the poverty rate in the City of
6 Philadelphia is a staggering 25.7
7 percent. We believe that public
8 libraries help people lift themselves out
9 of poverty and envision more prosperity
10 for the future for themselves and their
11 children.

12 Libraries equal strong
13 communities.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. MARQUES: We are asking you
16 to invest in your citizens, all of them,
17 and to allocate full funding to the Free
18 Library of Philadelphia.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
20 Thank you.

21 MS. MARQUES: Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
24 Thank you for your testimony.

25 MS. AHIAGABE: Good evening.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
3 evening.

4 MS. AHIAGABE: Thank you,
5 Council President. Thank you,
6 Councilmembers. I am the Administrative
7 Assistant for the Office of Strategic
8 Initiatives at the Free Library of
9 Philadelphia. I am also a member of DC
10 47 Local 2187. But you might know me
11 better for the risks that I have taken to
12 bring issues of bias, racial
13 discrimination, and harassment at the
14 Free Library. I am the person who
15 started this survey, and I'd like to
16 speak a little bit about what Library
17 staff are experiencing.

18 You heard from the Chairwoman
19 of the Library's Board of Trustees, Judge
20 Pamela Dembe, who, when asked about the
21 racial breakdown of the newly organized
22 Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee,
23 replied to that question by saying, there
24 are five blacks, or imply that the reason
25 that the boards are not more diversified

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 is because people of color do not have
3 enough money to make the contributions
4 necessary to be a board member.

5 You heard the Library President
6 who had no real evidence or plan to
7 address the various issues with bias.
8 This speaks to the mindset of the people
9 at the helm of the Library's
10 organization.

11 Because of that, I'd like to
12 ask you to hold true to the statements
13 and the policies that are found in the
14 Mayor's sexual harassment policy, which
15 talks about discrimination and states
16 that all employees have a right to a
17 workplace that is free of discrimination.
18 It further states that managers and
19 supervisors are responsible to maintain a
20 work environment that is free from
21 harassment and that any manager or
22 supervisor who has a failure to
23 affirmatively act or comply with this
24 responsibility may result in discipline.

25 I heard today questions asked

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 about why the President of the Library
3 did not discipline those who were
4 perpetrating this bias and this
5 discrimination. So my question to
6 Council is, who is going to hold the
7 Library administration responsible and
8 discipline them for doing the very same
9 thing?

10 (Applause.)

11 MS. AHIAGABE: While I'm asking
12 for your accountability of the Library's
13 administration, I know that my union is
14 specifically asking for the
15 accountability to rank and file. The
16 training needs are enormous at the
17 Library. DC 47 wants to address these
18 needs together with DC 33 and with
19 management through the regular
20 labor-management processes. It's
21 critical that the voice of staff has real
22 meaningful impact on policy and is able
23 to ensure good training.

24 In closing, I just want to
25 leave you with this thought: When

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 diversity, inclusion, and anti-oppression
3 training have superior effect on staff
4 morale and the public service that we
5 promise our patrons and the citizens of
6 Philadelphia.

7 Thank you.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

9 Thank you for your testimony, ma'am.

10 (Applause.)

11 MR. HORRAS: Hello. My name is
12 Tim Horras. I'm a children's librarian
13 at the Kensington neighborhood library.
14 I'm also an AFSCME DC 47 member. I live
15 and work in Kensington in the Seventh
16 District currently represented by
17 Councilmember Quinones-Sanchez.

18 My colleagues and I in the
19 north cluster of branches serve children,
20 families, and our community facing among
21 the most challenging conditions in all of
22 Philadelphia. As you know from the news
23 stories, our libraries are literally
24 saving lives.

25 When I went to library school,

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 I never thought I'd have to keep Narcan
3 in my desk, much less use it on a patron,
4 but, sadly, overdoses are all too common
5 in our branches.

6 Despite the many problems
7 facing our neighborhood, our community
8 views the library as an anchor of
9 stability. They look to our libraries as
10 safe places for their children to learn
11 and grow up in.

12 At my branch, we partner with
13 local preschools to provide story time
14 for children in pre-K, but this can be
15 difficult when our building is forced to
16 close due to lack of staff or
17 infrastructural issues. My branch was
18 closed on and off for several weeks while
19 maintenance tried to deal with a mosquito
20 infestation, which had taken hold in the
21 basement after regular flooding based on
22 a malfunctioning sump pump.

23 We work with elementary schools
24 to provide research materials and
25 training since so many of them don't have

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 school librarians, but this can be
3 difficult when our materials budget is
4 well below the amount mandated by the
5 state, leading to a particularly acute
6 dearth of children's non-fiction
7 material. While Internet sources are
8 wonderful, how can we prepare our
9 children for further education if we lack
10 books on relevant subject matter for them
11 to take home?

12 Our library serves teenagers,
13 but what are we supposed to tell a young
14 person who comes into our branch excited
15 to read a new book, only to have to turn
16 them away because the system saddles them
17 with punitive fines for materials which
18 were lost when they were children? For
19 many teenagers a good book is a lifeline,
20 and without it, they could easily sink
21 into the murky waters of functional
22 illiteracy.

23 You all said you agree on the
24 importance of the Library's work, and
25 tonight I've come specifically to make a

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 very simple ask of you. Kensington
3 residents, North Philadelphia residents,
4 we all deserve fully funded public
5 libraries and library collections.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. HORRAS: Your constituents
8 deserve it as a basic civil right and a
9 principle of equity with the rest of the
10 Commonwealth.

11 Harrisburg requires that the
12 Free Library spend 12 percent of its
13 total budget on materials to maintain the
14 \$8.6 million subsidy we get from the
15 state. But to hit that target, Council
16 would need to appropriate an additional
17 \$7.1 million for materials alone.

18 Our libraries are facing
19 similar building issues as our
20 underfunded schools, and I'm proud to
21 testify in the same evening as my fellow
22 workers from the Philadelphia Federation
23 of Teachers and the Caucus of Working
24 Educators.

25 (Applause.)

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MR. HORRAS: For generations
3 Philadelphia has looked to our learning
4 institutions to provide a pathway to
5 knowledge and opportunity for all our
6 City residents. If we're to continue in
7 this tradition, we need the Mayor and
8 Council to fully fund the educational
9 system that all Philadelphians deserve.

10 Thank you.

11 (Applause.)

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

13 Thank you.

14 Thank you all for your
15 testimony.

16 (Audience members chanting
17 "fund our libraries.")

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Mr.
19 Stitt, call the next list.

20 THE CLERK: Erin Hoopes, Mieka
21 Moody, Aiko Dorynek.

22 Mieka Moody, Aiko Dorynek.

23 (Witnesses approached witness
24 table.)

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 evening.

3 MS. HOOPES: Good evening.
4 Thank you, Council President. Thank you,
5 Councilmembers. My name is Erin Hoopes.
6 I'm the Branch Manager of the
7 Philadelphia City Institute Library and a
8 DC 47 member.

9 (Applause.)

10 MS. HOOPES: I believe deeply
11 that public libraries are the hearts and
12 homes of our communities. A \$2.5 million
13 increase in the Library's budget in the
14 next fiscal year is not enough. We need
15 you to invest more aggressively in our
16 Library System for our neighbors to be
17 able to access the kind of world-class
18 services they deserve.

19 A \$15.8 million increase in our
20 budget would allow us to restore our core
21 services of open doors at neighborhood
22 libraries, quality materials and programs
23 selected and lead by professional staff,
24 and in-depth research assistants at the
25 Parkway Central and neighborhood regional

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 libraries. For the dream of 60 service
3 in our libraries year round, we believe
4 we would need a \$26 million increase, 7
5 million for materials and 19 million for
6 staffing.

7 Over the last several years,
8 the number of budgeted staff positions
9 for the Library has not even come close
10 to matching the number of filled
11 positions. As a front-line staff member,
12 I feel that discrepancy, but I do not
13 understand it.

14 I call on each of you to take a
15 close look at why our budgeted positions
16 are not being filled. We need your help
17 not just to allocate enough funding to
18 staff our libraries, but to hold our
19 Human Resources Departments accountable
20 for filling open positions.

21 Council President Clarke, my
22 library is in your district. On
23 countless occasions, I have opened my
24 library without the minimum number of
25 staff members needed for safe operations

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 because babies and toddlers and their
3 caregivers were lined up in front of our
4 doors waiting for story time, because
5 adults were waiting for computers, books,
6 and other library materials. I did this,
7 hoping we wouldn't have an emergency that
8 I might not be able to safely manage
9 because I didn't have enough staff. That
10 is an unfair and dangerous position for
11 librarians to be in.

12 We need your support and
13 commitment to every citizen that safe,
14 well-stocked libraries with quality
15 materials are a priority in Philadelphia.

16 Thank you.

17 (Applause.)

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

19 Thank you. Thank you for your testimony.

20 MS. MOODY: Hello. Thank you,
21 Council President. Thank you,
22 Councilmembers, for this opportunity. My
23 name is Mieka Moody. I am currently the
24 Branch Manager of the Lillian Marrero
25 Library located at 6th and Lehigh Avenue.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 (Applause.)

3 MS. MOODY: I'm in Council
4 President's district, and I'm a member of
5 DC 47 Local 2186.

6 I started working in the Free
7 Library of Philadelphia as a part-time
8 Library Assistant in July of 1999 as a
9 single mother of three, and I fortunately
10 got the opportunity to attend the
11 University of Pittsburgh through the Grow
12 our Own Grant and became Library
13 Supervisor 2017.

14 Council should pay particular
15 attention to how the Library tackles the
16 problem of funding the continuing
17 education of its workforce so more of my
18 colleagues who work beside me, LAs, who
19 do amazing work, can have the opportunity
20 as well on the library track.

21 Being that Philadelphia above
22 the top ten populous cities is the
23 poorest, there's something sad about that
24 statement for that fact.

25 So a little bit about my

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 journey. I was raised in South Philly.
3 I currently live in North Philly and I
4 work in North Philly, and I'm very proud
5 of that. So I think -- I know education
6 is very important. I have two already
7 young women, my daughters, who graduated
8 from Temple. One is currently at
9 Swarthmore.

10 So me being a single mother, I
11 know the struggle, and when I see the
12 patrons come in, they look like me, have
13 my experience, I believe -- feel some
14 type of way. I feel like a connection
15 with them. I know a connection.

16 So long story short, most of
17 the adult patrons that come into our
18 library need computer skills. We have an
19 amazing DRS, which is a Digital Resource
20 Specialist, who sometimes I have to
21 remind her to take lunch, who is
22 dedicated to providing services,
23 something as basic as using a mouse,
24 because a lot of our patrons don't even
25 know how to do that. And when she is

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 out, our lab is closed. So we get a lot
3 of pushback from patrons like we need
4 these services. I need to put this
5 Dunkin Donut resume in like ASAP. So, I
6 mean, just with that, we would need
7 another Digital Resource Specialist.

8 And also I want to also add
9 that we have a number, a huge number, of
10 young people that come from the local
11 neighborhood schools, maybe anywhere 50
12 to 60 kids, honest to God, after school
13 who need these resources, and with the
14 small minuscule program budget that we
15 have, I cannot do what I would love to
16 do. I want to bring yoga. I want to
17 bring gardening programs. I want to do
18 self-care, self-love, which kids in my
19 neighborhood need.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. MOODY: They need these
22 things to flourish.

23 So I really encourage you all,
24 City Council, City Council President, to
25 understand that we citizens of

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Philadelphia are important, we matter,
3 and you need to do the right thing. You
4 work for us, not vice versa. And I
5 encourage you to do the right thing.

6 (Applause.)

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

8 Thank you. Hold on a second.

9 Councilwoman Bass, I think you
10 have a question.

11 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: I just want
12 to make a comment, Mr. President. I do
13 apologize. I'm going to have to leave
14 Chambers, but I did want to make a
15 statement first and, that is, that
16 earlier today we did have a conversation
17 with the Library Director, and I have to
18 say that I was absolutely appalled by the
19 comments that came from the Director, our
20 highest paid City official, that she
21 seemed to be just so absolutely
22 lackadaisical when it came to the funding
23 of our Library System, ensuring that all
24 of our neighborhood libraries were
25 appropriately addressed by the budget

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 needs and the funding needs and the lack
3 of diversity and the lack of a Diversity
4 and Inclusion Committee, which was
5 supposed to be funded over two years ago
6 and has not been done and still has not
7 gotten started, and she seemed to be in
8 no -- have no sense of urgency to make
9 that happen.

10 And so that's certainly not
11 going to be the last word on libraries
12 and libraries funding, if I have anything
13 to do with it, and I believe that we as a
14 body of Council certainly do have
15 something to do with it.

16 So this conversation will
17 continue, and I thank you for your
18 advocacy and for being here today. It's
19 very important.

20 Thank you.

21 MS. MOODY: Thank you. And I
22 live in your district as well. So my
23 first time seeing you. So thank you for
24 that.

25 COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Thank you.

4 (Applause.)

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
6 evening.

7 MR. DORR-DORYNEK: Good
8 evening, Councilman and City Council. My
9 name is Aiko Razzaq Dorr-Dorynek. I have
10 lived in Old City Philadelphia since
11 1996. Before that, growing up I lived in
12 the Wynnefield and Overbrook Park section
13 of West Philadelphia. I am here
14 representing Philadelphia Coalition for
15 Affordable Communities.

16 (Applause.)

17 MR. DORR-DORYNEK: I'm a
18 disabled resident and I proudly serve as
19 Secretary of the Board of Directors of
20 Liberty Resources, the Center for
21 Independent Living in Philadelphia,
22 Housing Committee member for Women's
23 Community Revitalization Project, and a
24 member of the Board of Directors for
25 Liberty Housing Community Development.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 I'm also a member of Philly ADAPT, and a
3 MoveOn Resist and Win Leader.

4 The Housing Trust Fund was
5 dreamed and brought into existence by
6 several amazing organizations, two of
7 which I have the honor of being a part
8 of.

9 I'm skipping ahead for time.

10 So Philadelphia unfortunately
11 is one of the poorest cities in the
12 country that has the most -- let me read
13 what I have here. I'll start from here.

14 All of us working -- all of the
15 communities working together have worked
16 tirelessly to get this funding passed
17 throughout the last six years. Working
18 together, we were able to bring different
19 aspects and the needs of low-income
20 people, households, and speak with one
21 powerful voice. We need funding for
22 affordable and accessible housing.

23 (Applause.)

24 MR. DORR-DORYNEK: Sadly, fast
25 forward to today, in 2019, because of

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 insufficient funding, the housing crisis
3 in Philadelphia has worsened. More units
4 of subsidized affordable housing are
5 coming offline. Our city has now become
6 number one city for poverty. Sixteen
7 percent of our citizens' population,
8 people with disabilities, the highest
9 among largest cities in the country,
10 according to the U.S. Census, and that is
11 untenable.

12 In 1989, at the age of 18, I
13 broke my neck playing football. After
14 hospitalization, I faced the daunting
15 task of finding housing. The housing
16 that my mother and I lived in had 16
17 steps to get into the front door. The
18 lack of accessible entrance forced me
19 into incarceration in a nursing home.
20 That was -- there was no other accessible
21 and affordable housing in my neighborhood
22 of my choice or any other neighborhood in
23 the City that was able to be found in a
24 timely manner.

25 I was incarcerated in Wayne

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Nursing Rehab Center for 11 months and
3 then incarcerated in what I would call a
4 maximum security prison in Inglis House
5 for over two and a half years. Finally,
6 after three and a half years, plus more
7 than a year of searching, I found
8 affordable and accessible housing in a
9 neighborhood -- the neighborhood that I
10 felt most comfortable in to discover my
11 new life, my new life in moving through
12 the world using a wheelchair. During my
13 search, I lived in a place and in a
14 manner not of my choosing.

15 Today there are thousands of
16 Philadelphians going through this same
17 dilemma. We demand the Philadelphia
18 Coalition of Affordable Communities -- we
19 within the Philadelphia Coalition of
20 Affordable Communities strive to build
21 affordable and accessible housing for
22 all.

23 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
24 you, sir. Thank you.
25 (Applause.)

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 THE CLERK: Robert Rivera,
3 Tamia Lawrence, Linda Colwell-Smith.

4 (Witness approached witness
5 table.)

6 THE CLERK: Robert Rivera.

7 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Is Robert
8 Rivera here?

9 (No response.)

10 THE CLERK: German Parodi.

11 German Parodi.

12 (Witness approached witness
13 table.)

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Hold on.
15 Tamia Lawrence. Is that you?

16 MS. LAWRENCE: Yes.

17 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay.
18 Linda Colwell-Smith? Is that you? Come
19 on up.

20 (Witness approached witness
21 table.)

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: All
23 right. Please, whoever would like to go
24 first. Whoever would like to go.

25 MS. COLWELL-SMITH: I'll go

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 first.

3 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Go ahead,
4 please. Identify yourself and proceed.

5 MS. COLWELL-SMITH: Thank you,
6 Council President and Councilmembers. My
7 name is Linda Colwell-Smith. I'm the
8 President of the Friends of Torresdale
9 Library and a member of the TAC Committee
10 of the Board of the Friends of the Free
11 Library. I'm here today first to say
12 that I attended Council's hearing this
13 morning where the head of the Free
14 Library presented her budget request, and
15 I must say I was heartened and encouraged
16 by the positive response we received from
17 the Councilmembers in attendance. But
18 there were a couple comments that were
19 made that concerned me and I would like
20 to clear up one item.

21 First off, I'd like to stress
22 that we stand with our hard-working
23 staff. We appreciate every single one of
24 them. And we support their cry for a
25 safe and welcoming workplace for all

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 employees in the Free Library system.
3 However, using staff and Council's
4 concern as a reason not to fully fund the
5 Library is unfair to the community and to
6 the staff members. What we need is
7 additional funding and then we need to
8 work together to make sure that the
9 resources are being used to support
10 neighborhood libraries and that a variety
11 of staff needs are being addressed. It's
12 not an either/or situation. We need the
13 money and we need full funding.

14 I'll give an example. At the
15 Torresdale branch right now, what most
16 friends groups, including mine, is doing
17 is preparing for the summer reading
18 season. That starts when school lets
19 out. I expect four to five hundred kids
20 in my neighborhood to be at our library
21 at least once a week to participate in
22 the summer reading program and the other
23 activities we have planned.

24 My group raises money year
25 round, and we look for alternative

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 sources to pay for these programs. We
3 work closely with the staff. We
4 cooperate together to make sure every
5 child has an outstanding experience,
6 because in my part of Northeast
7 Philadelphia, literally if you don't join
8 one of the summer camps or if you don't
9 have a daycare to go to, you have nothing
10 to do. So you can come to the library,
11 and we see to it that they have literacy
12 activities that they all enjoy, and we
13 also manage to feed them too.

14 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: All
15 right. Ma'am, I need you to finish up.
16 Okay? Please.

17 MS. COLWELL-SMITH: Yes. All I
18 can say is, we need the library open. We
19 need it fully staffed. We need full
20 funding. And thank you very much for
21 your support.

22 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank
23 you.

24 (Applause.)

25 MR. PARODI: Councilmembers, my

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 name is German Parodi. I am the Board
3 President of Disabled in Action of
4 Pennsylvania. We are a member of the
5 Philadelphia Coalition for Affordable
6 Communities.

7 (Applause.)

8 MR. PARODI: Disabled in Action
9 is a grassroots organization run by
10 people with disabilities, established
11 over 45 years ago, that advocates for the
12 rights of people with disabilities in
13 Philadelphia and throughout our
14 Commonwealth.

15 I've spoken here before. We
16 have been working on making the Housing
17 Trust Fund one that meets our City's
18 needs for over 20 years. Our city is a
19 city where half of its residents are
20 renters, where 16 percent of the people
21 are disabled, and many are on fixed
22 incomes. We're talking about 700 to a
23 thousand dollars a month.

24 We need Council today to commit
25 to eliminating the sub-fund in the

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Housing Trust Fund.

3 (Applause.)

4 MR. PARODI: The Housing Trust
5 Fund as a whole is meant to serve the
6 whole population. However, this sub-fund
7 only serves people that earn up to
8 \$105,000 a year. Instead, please ensure
9 low-income households' needs will be met.
10 We know that without this guarantee in
11 writing, we have nothing to hold future
12 Councilmembers or Mayors accountable to.

13 Our coalition and member
14 organizations have fought for a
15 permanent, dedicated source of money in
16 the Housing Trust Fund. This year you're
17 planning to put in 19 million. That is
18 not enough. We need you to increase this
19 year's money going into the Housing Trust
20 Fund from the General Fund to be 35
21 million.

22 (Applause.)

23 MR. PARODI: We know other
24 cities, DC, for example, invest over
25 \$100,000 [sic] every year.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Philadelphia needs to invest
3 every year, starting this year, at least
4 35 million. End the sub-fund in the
5 Housing Trust Fund. Put in 35 million
6 every year, starting this year. We need
7 every Councilmember to commit to this
8 today.

9 Thank you.

10 (Applause.)

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

12 Thank you for your testimony.

13 Good evening. Please proceed,
14 ma'am.

15 MS. LAWRENCE: Hello. I'm
16 Tamia Lawrence. I am a senior in high
17 school and I am a Teen Leadership
18 Assistant at the Free Library.

19 (Applause.)

20 MS. LAWRENCE: Imagine what it
21 takes to be a librarian. Imagine what it
22 really takes. Library school doesn't
23 teach you how to treat for someone who is
24 overdosing nor does it teach you how to
25 respond to a child who is being abused at

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 home, but nonetheless librarians every
3 day take on these roles. Despite having
4 their budgets be sliced in half year
5 after year and despite the many times
6 they are mistreated and disrespected,
7 they persist.

8 The role of a librarian is not
9 about sorting books by the Dewey Decimal
10 System. It is about creating the last
11 amount of safe spaces and it is about
12 saving lives.

13 I was only an 8th grader when I
14 first came to the library. I came for a
15 Twain Book Club and there I met the
16 person who would be my biggest
17 inspiration, Ms. Erin.

18 (Applause.)

19 MS. LAWRENCE: Ms. Erin, right
20 over there, Ms. Erin is the best mentor
21 that I could ask for. She encourages me
22 and she challenges me, and of course Ms.
23 Erin is not obliged to do any of the
24 things that she has done for me, but she
25 did. And like most librarians, she goes

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 above and beyond her job description to
3 save and inspire the lives of others.

4 She, like most librarians,
5 understand the deeper importance of her
6 job, and every day she creates a space
7 for children, teens, and adults to
8 advance literacy, guide learning, and
9 inspire curiosity.

10 This is why we are here to
11 demand that Mayor Kenney and City Council
12 fully fund our libraries so we can get
13 back to doing what we do best, which is
14 saving lives.

15 (Applause.)

16 MS. LAWRENCE: And as a
17 reminder, I am 18 years old and I am
18 eligible to vote in the upcoming
19 election.

20 (Applause.)

21 MS. LAWRENCE: And no member of
22 City Council nor Mayor Kenney can rely on
23 my vote if libraries are not fully
24 funded, if schools are not fixed, and if
25 the tax abatements are not ceased.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 (Standing ovation.)

3 THE CLERK: Max Ray-Riek,
4 Phyllis Martino, Erika Almiron.

5 (Witnesses approached witness
6 table.)

7 MS. ALMIRON: Good evening.

8 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
9 evening.

10 MS. ALMIRON: Thank you for
11 having me.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
13 Thank you for being here.

14 MS. ALMIRON: My name is Erika
15 Almiron.

16 (Applause.)

17 MS. ALMIRON: I have been doing
18 work with communities for the last 20
19 years. The last 15 of that have been in
20 education, working both at the
21 Philadelphia Student Union and at Juntos.
22 So I've been in a lot of the schools, and
23 so listening to the teachers testify
24 about the conditions, I can attest that I
25 see those every time I walk in, from

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 Overbrook to South Philly to Bodine,
3 every school.

4 So that's why I'm here. I'm
5 here to say that it is time that we end
6 the ten-year tax abatement.

7 (Applause.)

8 MS. ALMIRON: The ten-year tax
9 abatement does not serve the people of
10 Philadelphia. We have to stop giving
11 handouts to some of the luxury real
12 estate developers that are in this city.
13 Instead we must call on those that are
14 benefitting from the tax abatement, the
15 wealthy and the politically connected, to
16 join the rest of Philadelphia in paying
17 their fair share.

18 I'm calling for an end to the
19 ten-year tax abatement because instead of
20 lining the pockets of supposedly condo
21 kings and wanna-be real estate moguls,
22 that money should be go to our children's
23 schools.

24 (Applause.)

25 MS. ALMIRON: Supporters of the

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 ten-year tax abatement point to the crane
3 building the next Center City high-rise
4 condo, while ignoring the leaking and
5 crumbling ceilings of our neighborhoods'
6 public schools. Condos shouldn't be
7 built on the backs of teachers' and
8 students' sacrifice. Instead we should
9 be investing in teachers and students who
10 will build a city from the ground up.

11 (Applause.)

12 MS. ALMIRON: The ten-year tax
13 abatement is fueling gentrification at
14 neck-breaking speeds, and we are
15 rewarding the wealthy enough to buy brand
16 new homes while pushing workers, poor
17 people, people of color, immigrants
18 further and further to the fringe of the
19 society and in the City.

20 So we must end this ten-year
21 tax abatement and invest also in
22 affordable and accessible housing.

23 (Applause.)

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

25 Thank you.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 MS. ALMIRON: I believe we can
3 make Philadelphia a city for all of us,
4 and in order to do that, we have to
5 prioritize the people who built and
6 maintain the City. We must reorient our
7 values from that that gives tax breaks to
8 the owners of skyscrapers and instead
9 give them to the people who support and
10 clean them.

11 Thank you.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
13 Thank you.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. MARTINO: Hi. My name is
16 Phyllis Martino. I currently serve as
17 President of the Friends of Lovett
18 Library in Mount Airy, and I am here to
19 thank Council for their very supportive
20 statements about funding for the Library.
21 It's clear that you understand how
22 important they are.

23 When we look at the facts, in
24 2008, there was an 18 percent budget cut,
25 and the libraries never recovered from

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 it. So for a decade, there's almost \$70
3 million of accumulated disinvestment in
4 the Library System. It's affected the
5 collection. It's affected the staffing,
6 at every level.

7 So when the Mayor suggests a \$2
8 and a half million budget increase, which
9 is 16 and a half percent of what the
10 Library asked for, it's clear it's not
11 enough. I think it's clear to Council,
12 and we appreciate your understanding
13 that.

14 So we are asking that you do
15 reconsider the \$15.8 million increase
16 that was asked for as a beginning to
17 recover from a decade of serious
18 disinvestment.

19 The current budget is
20 dispiriting to staff at every level in
21 the Library and it generates mixture of
22 both concern and outrage among patrons
23 like me who look at toilets being cleaned
24 by librarians because the place is
25 inadequately staffed.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 So I think -- we're hoping
3 you're going to do the right thing and
4 dramatically increase the budget increase
5 that the Mayor proposed. And if the
6 Library staff management needs assistance
7 to manage sending that more money, get
8 them a consultant.

9 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

10 Thank you. Thank you for your testimony.

11 MS. MARTINO: Thank you.

12 (Applause.)

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
14 evening.

15 MR. RAY-RIEK: Good evening.

16 My name is Max Ray-Riek. I'm testifying
17 on behalf of Act Up. I ask that the Act
18 Up members in the house stand up.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. RAY-RIEK: So I am not the
21 right person to be testifying for Act Up
22 right now. The people who should be
23 testifying for Act Up right now aren't
24 here, predominantly because they are in
25 the hospital or they're sick. The reason

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 members of Act Up are sick is not -- even
3 though we're a group founded around HIV,
4 it's not because of HIV. It's because of
5 our housing.

6 Housing is killing people in
7 Act Up right now. People with
8 compromised immune systems, people with
9 high blood pressure, people with diabetes
10 are being killed because of the lack of
11 adequate affordable housing in
12 Philadelphia.

13 Thanks to Helen Gym's question
14 at last week's hearing, we learned that
15 there are 70,000 families in Philadelphia
16 who are one crisis away from eviction and
17 homelessness, and those are just the
18 families who are making less than 30
19 percent of the area median income, less
20 than \$26,000 a year. And those families'
21 lack of housing is killing them, and
22 that's why Act Up is out here pushing for
23 housing.

24 So we have two demands of City
25 Council. The first is that we know that

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 the highest burden of rent is these
3 families making less than \$26,000 a year,
4 and yet our new funding for affordable
5 housing is all prioritizing workforce
6 housing, families making more than 50
7 percent. When asked at the hearing,
8 DHCD, all of their solutions were for
9 families making 50 percent of AMI or
10 over, which is not acceptable when we
11 know that the biggest crisis is among
12 poor families.

13 So will you immediately --
14 (Applause.)

15 MR. RAY-RIEK: -- repeal and
16 refuse any budgets and any affordable
17 Housing Trust Fund that targets more of
18 the money to families making above 30
19 percent. Require at least half the money
20 goes to families making below 30 percent
21 of AMI.

22 (Applause.)

23 MR. RAY-RIEK: The other thing
24 we learned at that hearing is that this
25 is not a problem the City can solve

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 alone. We need HUD's support. As
3 Councilwoman Gym articulated, the City
4 needs to be on the front lines of
5 demanding that money from our state and
6 federal government. So next time Act Up
7 takes a bus to DC, will you be on that
8 bus with us?

9 (Applause.)

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

11 Thank you. Thank you.

12 Next.

13 THE CLERK: Helen Wilkes,
14 Marilyn Dyston, Lance Haver.

15 (Witnesses approached witness
16 table.)

17 MS. WILKES: Thank you,
18 Mr. President and City Councilmembers.
19 Helen Wilkes, educator.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

21 Thank you.

22 (Applause.)

23 MS. WILKES: Educator in the
24 City of Philadelphia.

25 I bring the following concerns

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 on behalf of the boys and girls from
3 Cassidy Elementary School. I will read
4 their student letters on matters of
5 public health concern.

6 When I'm in the basement, my
7 nose starts bleeding when I'm eating.

8 There's a picture.

9 I feel very sick and nauseous
10 and I keep coughing.

11 My stomach hurts. My eyes
12 start hurting, and I throw up. And I
13 throw up a lot.

14 I feel sick. I feel like I'm
15 choking. My belly hurts. I have a
16 headache, and my neck hurts.

17 My nose is always running. I
18 cough. I hurt. I can't breathe.

19 When we're in the basement, I
20 keep coughing.

21 I'm sick. My eyes hurt, my
22 stomach. I am upset. This is no good.
23 I feel bad today. I'm unhappy, really
24 unhappy.

25 Why are such young citizens

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 writing these words? Why are they
3 writing on matters of public health
4 concerns? Well, for the past seven years
5 at Cassidy Elementary School, we've had
6 an oil leak. Yes, an oil leak. Oil,
7 O-I-L. Oil. Which vaporizes into
8 volatile organic compounds.

9 In addition, there is standing
10 water in the basement, which means mold.

11 Now, let's think about the oil
12 leak and the volatile organic compounds.
13 According to the Environmental Protection
14 Agency, volatile organic compounds cause
15 the following short-term exposure
16 effects: headaches; nausea; dizziness;
17 fatigue; eye, ears, nose, throat
18 irritation. Prolonged exposure can cause
19 serious health problems, including liver
20 and kidney damage, increased blood
21 pressure and other blood problems, as
22 well as neurological concerns.

23 For the past seven years, the
24 students were and remain exposed to
25 volatile organic compounds.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 (Audience members yelling
3 "shame.")

4 MS. WILKES: City
5 Councilmembers, if you are unconcerned
6 about the humanity of the 19151 zip code,
7 then I ask you to think about the
8 economic future of Philadelphia. The
9 boys and the girls from Cassidy are the
10 economic tax future of Philadelphia.
11 Also, they are the future voters of
12 Philadelphia.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
14 Thank you.

15 MS. WILKES: The boys and girls
16 ask that you think about them, as well as
17 your future Social Security benefits and
18 your future Medicaid benefits.

19 Thank you.

20 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:
21 Thank you, ma'am.

22 (Applause.)

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
24 evening.

25 MS. DYSTON: Hello.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: How
3 are you?

4 MS. DYSTON: I'm Marilyn
5 Dyston. I'm a patron and volunteer at
6 the Wadsworth Library in Northwest
7 Philadelphia. I am there at least 90
8 minutes a week. I'm going to tell you
9 what Wadsworth Library looks like.

10 It's only open weekdays, and on
11 the weekdays before 3 o'clock, you'll
12 find a few adults using the computers.
13 At 1 o'clock on the first Friday, State
14 Representative Chris Rabb is there, and
15 the library is packed with people for his
16 presentations.

17 Several times a week you'll
18 find very young people there from local
19 daycare centers with books and doing
20 activities. At other times you'll see
21 volunteer people there for tutoring and
22 business meetings.

23 After school you'll sometimes
24 find as many as 50 young people occupying
25 every table. They're there in between

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 school and waiting for their parents to
3 get home. Basically they're the old,
4 what we would -- what my generation would
5 call, latchkey kids. They're doing their
6 homework with the LEAP program. They're
7 using computers. They're playing
8 unplugged games, most of which have been
9 donated by the neighborhood people.
10 They're having fun. Or on Tuesday
11 afternoons, they're with me and my
12 friend, Fran Culhane, and we're teaching
13 them how to knit and crochet. The
14 materials have been donated by my
15 friends. We're decorating the entrance
16 to the library with crocheted flowers,
17 and then in the fall, we're going to yarn
18 bomb the bike rack outside the --
19 outside.

20 Frequently there's special
21 programs in the basement, and I'll add
22 that the furniture has been there
23 forever. They're folding chairs, and
24 there's no light coming into the
25 basement.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Each summer my committee and
3 the Free Library provides reading
4 programs and games and special events.
5 All of this, and Wadsworth has no
6 children's librarian.

7 It has a drainage problem,
8 which threatens flooding every time it
9 rains and maybe this weekend, and the
10 building has had no improvements in the
11 past 35 years. We still have standard
12 wooden chairs like the ones over there,
13 and our tables are unreliable.

14 We need a children's librarian.
15 We need to be opened more hours. This
16 afternoon I was in the Springfield
17 Library, which is open from 9:00 to 9:00
18 every day. It's open on Saturdays and on
19 Sundays from noon to 5:00, where ours is
20 a little bit shorter.

21 You need to give the Free
22 Library more money to give us better
23 service in our neighborhood.

24 Thank you.

25 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Thank you, ma'am. Thank you for your
3 testimony.

4 (Applause.)

5 MR. HAVER: It's nice to see
6 you, Council President.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: How
8 you doing?

9 MR. HAVER: I'm all right. I'm
10 the Policy Director of the --

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: A
12 little different look there.

13 MR. HAVER: Perfect. I'm an
14 old person getting ready to complain.

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: It's
16 all good.

17 MR. HAVER: I'm going to
18 summarize. I have testimony here that
19 will have the background information.

20 The first thing I want to urge
21 is that when the Procurement people come
22 before you, ask what we buy, where is it
23 made. Is it made with prison labor, is
24 it made with slave labor, or is it made
25 here in Philadelphia by Philadelphians.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 We should change to a net bidding system
3 so we reward businesses for staying in
4 the City and we ask them to make things
5 here with Philadelphians.

6 (Applause.)

7 MR. HAVER: The second point I
8 want to make is about the Water
9 Department. The Water Department
10 continues to grow its slush fund, which
11 it calls its Rate Stabilization Fund.
12 That fund is so large now -- I've
13 included from the Five Year Plan -- that
14 they will not publish how much money is
15 in it. It's currently over \$250 million,
16 which represents overpayments by the
17 City's water consumers. They're so
18 ashamed of how large that number is, they
19 won't publish it. In addition, that
20 money is kept in U.S. Bank, which is a
21 bank that's foreclosing on Germantown
22 High School, that has no branches in the
23 City, that offers no mortgages for
24 moderate- or low-income Philadelphians.

25 Third, I want to talk about

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 SEPTA. As you know, we're 80 percent of
3 the system, 80 percent of the local
4 funding, but we're only 13 percent of the
5 SEPTA Board. During the last Board
6 meeting where they elected the Board
7 leadership, the Chair and the Vice Chair,
8 we didn't even send our representatives
9 there to vote. Not only did we not run
10 for Vice Chair, we didn't even bother to
11 vote for anyone. So the suburban
12 interests are controlling our money, our
13 riders, and our system. And we see this
14 with the Key Card, which does not work
15 for the unbanked, does not work for
16 people who don't read or speak English
17 well, and certainly doesn't work for
18 people who live in our neighborhoods.

19 (Applause.)

20 MR. HAVER: SEPTA is flaunting
21 the City of Philadelphia's law, which
22 requires that they take cash for whatever
23 is sold. So we're not going to let the
24 coffee shop across the street tell people
25 who don't have credit cards they can't

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 shop there, but we're going to let SEPTA
3 tell people who don't have credit cards
4 that they can't buy transfers. That
5 means for someone like me, who has a
6 credit card, it's \$2 to get on and a
7 dollar to ride the transfer, \$3. If you
8 don't have a credit card, it's 2.50 to
9 get on and another 2.50 for a transfer,
10 \$5. The tax for being poor is 60
11 percent.

12 (Applause.)

13 MR. HAVER: The last point I'm
14 going to make is about Uber and Lyft. It
15 was a great fight that Council put on to
16 help the airport workers. It was
17 spectacular what you did, but the Uber
18 and Lyft drivers are at the airport just
19 as much as the people inside. They
20 deserve the same fight. If Uber and Lyft
21 won't let the drivers organize, won't let
22 the drivers make a living wage, we
23 shouldn't let them use our airport. If
24 you're willing to stand for the people
25 inside the airport, please stand for

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 those of us outside of the airport who
3 are still trying to make a living.

4 I have other issues, but you've
5 been kind enough with your time. It's
6 nice to see everyone.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

8 Thank you.

9 MR. HAVER: And as an aside, I
10 know many of you don't know me, but I
11 just want to point out, I spent a lot of
12 time now organizing in Harrisburg. There
13 is nothing like this in Harrisburg. You
14 cannot show up and testify at Harrisburg.
15 There is nothing like being able to show
16 up as a regular citizen and have your
17 say. Whether they agree with you or not
18 is a separate issue, but in Harrisburg
19 there's going to be a hearing on bailing
20 out the nuclear power. I'm going to have
21 to be outside picketing, because I don't
22 have a right to show up and testify.

23 Thank you.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

25 Thank you, Mr. Haver.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 (Applause.)

3 THE CLERK: Dino Louis Rossi,
4 Faye Anderson, Sharif Coupa.

5 (Witness approached witness
6 table.)

7 THE CLERK: Khalil Washington.

8 (No response.)

9 THE CLERK: Michael Zaire
10 Paris.

11 (No response.)

12 THE CLERK: Quinton Clark,
13 Lawrence Clark, Michael Clark.

14 (No response.)

15 THE CLERK: M. Lundy, M. Landy.

16 (No response.)

17 THE CLERK: Kris Soffa.

18 (Witness approached witness
19 table.)

20 THE CLERK: Fernando Suarez.

21 (No response.)

22 THE CLERK: Willie Floyd.

23 (No response.)

24 THE CLERK: Manzoor Chughtai.

25 (Witness approached witness

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 table.)

3 MS. ANDERSON: Good evening.

4 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
5 evening.

6 MS. ANDERSON: Good evening.

7 My name is Faye Anderson. I am Director
8 of All That Philly Jazz, a place-based
9 public history project that is
10 documenting and contextualizing
11 Philadelphia's golden age of jazz. All
12 That Philly Jazz is a member of the
13 Philadelphia Coalition for Affordable
14 Communities.

15 As a community preservationist,
16 I fight to save places that tell the
17 story of 400 years of African American
18 history and culture. If anyone is
19 wondering about my T-shirt, it's an image
20 of what was left after the legendary Blue
21 Horizon Historical Marker disappeared.

22 Gentrification has led to
23 disappearing blackness. Less than 24
24 hours after Mayor Kenney's historic
25 Preservation Task Force released its

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 final recommendations, L&I issued a
3 demolition permit for the Wharton Center,
4 a historic building that was a community
5 anchor in the Fifth District. The Center
6 was in operation during Philadelphia's
7 jazz heyday. Its recreational activities
8 included jazz concerts with legends and
9 legends-in-the-making like saxophonist
10 and National Endowment for the Arts Jazz
11 Master Benny Golson.

12 A Kenney spokesman said, quote,
13 "The index recommended by the Task Force
14 would enable consideration of
15 historically significant buildings prior
16 to issuance of a demolition permit," end
17 quote. An index requires a budget and
18 staffing. In his proposed Fiscal 2020
19 Operating Budget, Mayor Kenney has not
20 asked for funding to conduct a citywide
21 survey of historic resources. Without a
22 budget increase for the Historical
23 Commission, Mayor Kenney's promise to
24 take action to strengthen historic
25 preservation rings hollow.

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 The City's demolition crisis
3 will continue unabated. It's still demo
4 now, survey later.

5 Truth be told, the Historical
6 Commission needs more than money. It
7 needs melanin. While Philadelphia is
8 majority-minority, the Commission staff
9 is 100 percent white. The lack of
10 diversity means the African American
11 story is viewed through the lens of an
12 all-white staff.

13 On Friday I commented in
14 support of nomination of the house in
15 which Henry Minton lived. While
16 acknowledging the nomination satisfied
17 the criteria for designation, the staff
18 recommended against adding the property
19 because it was not recognizable due to
20 alterations to the front facade. A
21 building whose walls hold stories of
22 William Still, Father of the Underground
23 Railroad, and Frederick Douglass was
24 denied historic designation because it is
25 not, quote, recognizable to the all-white

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 staff. An inexpensive street banner
3 would make the building instantly
4 recognizable.

5 While the monochromatic staff
6 doesn't care about black history, they do
7 care about ensuring an insider gets what
8 he wants, and what he wants is to be able
9 to tell his client they can demolish a
10 building whose owner gave John Brown a
11 place to stay shortly before his raid on
12 Harper's Ferry.

13 Thank you.

14 (Applause.)

15 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

16 Thank you for your testimony.

17 MS. SOFFA: Good evening.

18 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
19 evening.

20 MS. SOFFA: Council President
21 and members of City Council, I am very
22 grateful to you for hanging in there. I
23 was here this morning, and I see the work
24 you do and the people who come before you
25 and the taxpayers and people that you

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 serve. So thank you for your service.

3 My name is Kris Soffa. I'm a
4 member of the Parks and Recreation
5 Commission, and I've been here listening
6 to earnest pleas for help in lots of
7 different places. So thanks for your
8 help with Parks and Rec's budget. That's
9 what I was going to talk about, but I'm
10 changing my topic to, it's obvious, first
11 we need a couple million dollars, then we
12 can fix the schools, fix the libraries,
13 and fix the rec centers.

14 (Applause.)

15 MS. SOFFA: Thank you. Our
16 recreation centers are also places where
17 families congregate and where children
18 are safe. So, for example, we just found
19 out that the School District is closing
20 two weeks early, so Parks and Rec
21 realized that ahead of time and started
22 training lifeguards, getting people,
23 getting the food, getting the setup,
24 setting up camp, and providing services
25 for the City, just like the libraries do

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 and just like the schools do. And I
3 moved here in 1976 to teach at
4 Philadelphia Center for the Blind and
5 I've been living here ever since, and I
6 see the problem that we have.

7 So you can do all these things,
8 right, fix the schools, fix the
9 recreation centers, fund the libraries
10 with Rebuild. So that's what I'm urging
11 you to do.

12 So thank you very much.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

14 Thank you for your testimony.

15 (Applause.)

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good
17 evening.

18 MR. CHUGTAI: Good evening,
19 Council President Clarke and member of
20 the Council City. My name is Manzoor
21 Chughtai. I own the 7-Eleven, four stores
22 in City of Philadelphia.

23 When I came to this country, I
24 was only 17 years old. I did high school
25 here, then I went to college. I started

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 my business in 1987. That was my first
3 store, which is located in City of
4 Philadelphia, 7720 Ogontz Avenue. I
5 started hard-working, working 18, 20
6 hours a day sometimes, 60 hours, with my
7 family, saving the payroll. And I
8 established to get three more stores in
9 my family. So I have about three stores
10 in City of Philadelphia, two stores
11 outside in suburban. One is in Bucks
12 County and one is in Norristown.

13 My regular customers no longer
14 shopping in my store, and my overall
15 sales has declined since the tax went
16 into effect. In fact, due to the fact of
17 the tax, I have already closed one of my
18 store that I franchised that store back
19 in 1987, after 32 years. It was located
20 on the border of Cheltenham and Ogontz.
21 There's a Shop Rite and Wawa Food Market
22 came across the street, and I couldn't
23 keep up with the stores. I was not able
24 to hire more staff and not to pay them
25 salary because of the beverage tax. My

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 sales dropped down.

3 And I'm the President of the
4 7-Eleven Association. We have about 200
5 stores in State of Pennsylvania, and plus
6 we have a private chain, Sunoco,
7 mop-and-pop, and I have about 200 members
8 that join our association. They pay
9 monthly dues and we have meetings. We
10 discuss all the issue that we have in the
11 City and outside the suburban.

12 My two stores are doing very
13 good in the suburban. And the City of
14 Philadelphia, I cannot make a living in
15 those stores. Instead of hiring two
16 people, I'm hiring one person right now
17 these days.

18 I close the business, one of
19 them. I lost it. I lost business, and
20 my employees lost a job. When they lose
21 their job, close the business, City of
22 Philadelphia lost a lot of taxes on it,
23 which is BIRT tax, business privilege
24 tax, sales tax that customer pay on the
25 cigarettes, cigars, or anything they

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 purchase in the store, soda tax. So we
3 lost all the sales tax on the businesses
4 and about -- we were going to open up
5 maybe 40 to 50 stores in Philadelphia as
6 a 7-Eleven. Now they stop completely.
7 We close 11 stores so far as of last year
8 by December and many more to come to
9 close, because we cannot live in the City
10 because sugar tax is killing our
11 business.

12 And I heard a lot of good
13 stories. There's another way to generate
14 your income. Like look at they build a
15 brand new house, they don't have to pay
16 ten years taxes, real estate tax. They
17 should be taxed. I agreed on it. Or
18 increase the real estate tax on all the
19 property of Philadelphia. I really hope
20 he does that. Or there's not maybe
21 increase the sales tax on it, the item we
22 sell. There's many other way we can
23 increase the tax and help the City of
24 Philadelphia schools and the libraries.

25 I agreed on the education. We

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.
2 need to spend the money. We need to
3 educate our kids. If they're not
4 educated, I heard a lot of percentage
5 that drop -- students being dropped from
6 the high school due to the -- they don't
7 get enough knowledge, they don't get
8 enough education. And I agreed on those
9 stories. I respect them. Also, I will
10 take to ask to repeal the tax, soda/sugar
11 tax on it.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

13 Okay.

14 MR. CHUGTAI: And that's all I
15 have say. Thank you very much.

16 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

17 Thank you, sir. Thank you for your
18 testimony.

19 Thank you all.

20 (Applause.)

21 THE CLERK: Jonathan Leibowitz.

22 (No response.)

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: That
24 concludes our list. Thank you. Thank
25 you all very much. Enlightening.

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 468

1 4/15/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 This Committee will stand in
3 recess until Tuesday, April 16th, 2019 at
4 10:00 a.m., at which time we will
5 reconvene in Room 400.

6 Thank you all very much.

7 (Committee of the Whole
8 adjourned at 6:45 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the
proceedings, evidence and objections are
contained fully and accurately in the
stenographic notes taken by me upon the
foregoing matter, and that this is a true and
correct transcript of same.

MICHELE L. MURPHY
RPR-Notary Public

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Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 1

A	259:21	198:17	119:5	82:7 159:14	303:10	249:21	405:20
A-H-I-A-G...	260:4 261:2	262:13,17	360:14	382:21	318:5	253:23	420:17
404:21	262:19	306:3	accommoda...	432:3,8	391:22	276:14,24	adults 373:23
a.m 1:7 468:4	263:6 264:7	308:20	240:17	459:24	421:8	280:16	374:5
abatement	266:25	330:16	accompany	actions 80:24	450:21	281:14	375:11
382:5,22	268:4,6,20	341:19,19	364:9	activate	add-on 349:9	348:24	397:6 418:5
384:2,11	268:22	344:21	accomplish	290:3 293:4	addiction	359:24	436:7
387:19	280:16	422:18,21	113:4	active 391:14	172:16	377:10	449:12
388:25	288:3,20	abstracts	214:13	actively	173:21	396:3 409:7	advance 54:6
402:10	289:7,18,19	169:3	accomplishi...	273:13	adding 50:22	410:17	235:9 436:8
403:18	289:22	abuse 47:19	304:13	activists	211:4 307:6	addressed	advanced
438:6,9,14	290:6,13	152:11,14	accomplish...	17:23	460:18	23:20 95:7	378:10
438:19	291:7,10,23	abused	248:19	150:13	addition	318:8	advances
439:2,13,21	291:24	434:25	367:14	171:17	23:21 39:15	422:25	369:21
abatements	292:11	academic	account 53:6	activities	39:20 50:10	430:11	advantage
401:2	293:16	60:21	accountabil...	223:9 288:5	50:21 68:11	addressing	57:5,8
436:25	295:4,9	145:24	410:12,15	313:5	72:14 75:20	7:5 82:6	124:25
Abernathy	306:3,10	249:19	accountable	325:18	80:17 116:3	132:21	140:9
162:19	307:5 308:8	373:19	365:17	326:3,5,8	209:18	151:5	302:25
abilities	308:9	374:19	417:19	326:13,18	249:14	159:21	360:17
312:21	315:17,22	Academy	433:12	327:20	250:17	adds 152:18	advertise
313:6	316:24	373:17	accreditation	329:13	256:7	adequate	291:8
358:22	317:15	375:6	233:4	351:13	381:21	443:11	advertisem...
359:3	318:16,17	accept 77:8	accumulated	358:23	447:9	adhere	38:18,20
ability 62:16	320:20	acceptable	391:20	374:2	453:19	211:15	advisory 71:9
87:19	321:11	81:5 83:15	441:3	430:23	additional	384:20	252:20
184:24	323:18	444:10	accurate 78:8	431:12	5:8 16:20	adjourned	256:16
209:20	325:17	access 5:7	78:10	449:20	44:14 50:8	468:8	278:13
291:20	328:10	37:8 63:10	accurately	459:7	50:23 59:23	adjudication	309:4
able 16:12	339:19	178:7	469:5	activity 42:16	63:17,20	260:3	374:12
62:22,23	346:16	223:21	achieved 7:25	42:18 61:22	99:13	adjust 313:16	advocacy
94:5 100:17	347:5	360:11	112:3	102:23	100:11	administrat...	423:18
100:21	348:20	406:4	achievements	248:23	108:19	14:5 58:6	advocate
104:14	351:4,16	416:17	248:7	319:24	122:15	58:11	154:25
110:13,18	355:12	accessible	achieving	325:6,8	126:24	121:24	157:12
113:10,12	358:17	291:16	368:7	326:20	208:16	133:10	377:7
113:18	410:22	313:21	acknowledge	332:4	211:8	134:4 196:2	advocates
124:3	416:17	357:18	7:21 111:24	actual 65:23	220:19	239:5	58:16 64:8
126:25	418:8	425:22	406:2	115:12	250:3 254:4	245:22	131:23
127:9	425:18	426:18,20	acknowledg...	123:19	255:8 264:2	256:2	132:16
133:20	426:23	427:8,21	182:8	217:7	265:7	257:23	232:13
150:24	456:15	439:22	acknowledg...	acute 140:10	276:17,23	364:19	432:11
165:5	461:8	accessing	460:16	391:21	303:8 304:4	366:10	aesthetic
174:18	464:23	259:22	acquainted	413:5	307:12	367:2,7	291:22
178:17	absence	accommoda...	214:17,19	Adam 393:3	332:16,17	410:7,13	Affairs 153:7
189:18,20	45:14	210:20	act 320:15	393:9,12,13	356:7 388:6	administrat...	237:6
189:21,23	absenteeism	249:18	409:23	393:16	390:4	108:20	affect 367:18
189:24	381:25	257:2	442:17,17	396:12	414:16	408:6	affirmatively
206:20	absolutely	283:15	442:21,23	ADAPT	430:7	admit 22:24	409:23
220:25	22:21 31:12	348:22	443:2,7,22	425:2	address 21:10	adopt 2:15,19	affluent
224:13	56:21 57:12	349:10	445:6	add 8:19 41:6	74:9 112:13	366:16,24	36:18
236:13	79:12	359:14,23	action 79:14	93:2 171:23	150:9,20	adopting 2:21	afford 291:23
245:9 256:5	194:16	accommoda...	80:4 81:8	210:24	158:21	adult 359:23	402:14

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 2

affordable	afternoons	136:10	385:21	438:8,25	435:11	205:6	107:19
424:15	43:5 450:11	225:8 264:5	386:15	439:12	amounting	271:10	402:22
425:22	age 132:12	264:6,25	391:22	440:2	399:12	289:2	appeal
426:4,21	165:11	278:15	403:7	alterations	amounts	378:19	179:11
427:8,18,20	244:17	330:15,16	airport	460:20	137:6	395:14	329:2
427:21	276:8	413:23	455:16,18	alternative	analysis 54:3	answered	appear 98:23
432:5	400:21	456:17	455:23,25	97:15	92:13 364:4	149:19	245:24
439:22	426:12	agreed	456:2	430:25	anchor	395:12,17	277:9 370:7
443:11	458:11	345:21	Airy 36:11	amazing	171:24	395:25	appears
444:4,16	agencies	466:17,25	68:22	87:14 88:9	412:8 459:5	answers	286:25
458:13	49:19	467:8	440:18	88:15 89:15	and/or 222:7	147:24	applaud 6:23
afraid 204:14	174:14	agreement	Al 1:15	132:16	275:20	262:9	364:16
204:17	197:4	3:11 14:6	336:12	141:23	335:3 341:9	263:11	applause 35:7
African 67:20	337:22	17:22 74:15	Alexis 404:19	167:8	469:23	anti-oppres...	35:14 36:8
70:8 80:5	374:13	74:16 265:6	alike 234:20	171:18	Anderson	411:2	38:4 41:18
93:22	agency 15:6	283:25	alive 169:3,6	175:22	457:4 458:3	anticipate	43:16 44:6
148:22	173:15	315:21	193:7 224:5	240:24	458:6,7	266:25	58:19 82:12
170:8 186:8	178:24	347:8	all-staff	308:22	Andrea	anticipated	83:23 84:5
246:17	234:13	agreements	111:12	401:21	112:19	369:19	85:13 105:3
266:17	237:24	272:12,15	113:18	419:19	115:15	anybody	122:22
458:17	355:6,9	281:22	All-Star	420:19	Andrew 90:9	33:19 77:12	149:14
460:10	356:18	293:15	236:3	425:6	90:10	77:13 94:24	155:4 162:8
Africans	447:14	354:12,13	all-white	amended	anecdotal	119:20	162:13
299:10	agenda 37:20	agricultural	460:12,25	366:21	402:9	133:18	163:4
AFSCME	194:13	146:3	ALLAN 1:11	amenities	anecdote	139:6	166:18
411:14	agents 179:21	agronomist	allergic 391:8	360:15	317:20	190:20	167:18,20
after-school	ages 237:15	145:24	alleviate	America	angels 179:11	216:5 262:5	179:24
61:22 66:14	327:17	334:4	381:24	239:18,21	announce	340:7,25	180:21
206:15	359:2	agronomy	allocate 44:15	239:25	236:2	anymore	181:19
249:8	aggressive	334:8	407:17	326:4	announced	185:19	183:19
309:18	338:21	ahead 60:8	417:17	American	228:22	328:23	185:9
317:8	aggressively	137:2 204:4	allocated 5:9	67:20 70:8	272:16,17	anyone's	188:12
351:11	154:25	283:2 425:9	163:11	80:6 93:22	354:13	402:16	189:9
afternoon 4:6	157:12	429:3	189:12,18	148:22	announcem...	Aparna	192:11
15:19	416:15	462:21	allocation	154:10	227:22	245:18	215:23
116:23	aging 359:25	AHIAGABE	149:8	186:8	235:22,24	267:20	216:12
162:6,9	ago 46:6 68:2	407:25	allocations	246:17	announcing	269:16	217:13
207:19	73:18 114:9	408:4	163:8	266:17	224:24	275:12	233:7 244:5
233:23	163:17	410:11	allow 290:17	397:10	annual 251:2	312:13	244:9
245:14	181:21	Aiko 415:21	416:20	458:17	annually	316:8 318:2	371:14
253:14	205:25	415:22	allowed	460:10	359:4 369:9	339:7 358:7	376:14
269:10	215:10	424:9	178:23	AMI 444:9	answer 29:7	358:13	378:23
271:14	218:9 223:3	aim 294:9	206:12	444:21	30:10 40:19	apart 172:5	379:2
277:22	259:17	ain't 82:21	allowing	amount 44:21	46:8,10,14	apologies	380:25
284:16,19	289:17	air 52:10	189:4 306:7	45:10 140:7	54:8 67:7	404:20	382:3,9,17
299:7 353:6	291:6 317:4	125:6	allows 165:6	161:5,7	90:8 92:23	apologize	382:24
353:8	330:23	252:11	178:16	218:3	100:14,19	25:21	383:8,18,23
361:14	336:24	297:21,23	222:23	228:18	101:8	336:17	384:16
373:13	377:20	297:24,25	318:19	268:6 274:3	103:24	371:20	385:8
376:25	401:7 423:5	298:6,8	Almiron	281:6,8	112:14	422:13	386:20
385:4	432:11	311:7 334:2	437:4,7,10	304:8	150:18	appalled	387:10,16
389:14	agree 45:3	381:22	437:14,15	316:23	156:24	422:18	388:17
451:16	112:5 115:3	383:11,15	437:17	413:4	180:23	apparent	389:6,20

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 3

392:11,20	46:12 64:20	428:4,12,20	337:17,19	229:4,23	231:17,25	294:17,20	associations
396:9,15	73:20 81:9	437:5	argument	artists 163:2	232:13,14	320:2,3	401:5
397:16,24	95:23 98:15	445:15	43:11	168:8	235:7 350:4	352:20	assume 199:9
399:23	137:18	457:5,18,25	arms 144:8	171:16	352:8,9,21	361:19	329:12
404:16	191:17	approaches	arrangement	172:8	353:10	388:24	assuming
407:14,22	217:11	239:6	346:22	179:15,19	354:8,19	407:15	129:15
410:10	229:20	appropriate	arrangeme...	179:22	355:13,20	410:11,14	281:11
411:10	232:23	87:6 130:14	347:21	181:22,24	355:24	441:14	357:22
414:6,25	235:14	210:3	348:5	181:25	356:14,17	aspect 299:12	assumptions
415:11	241:11	268:12	arrival 19:15	195:16	369:12	316:19	365:7
416:9	243:25	272:24	arrived 18:19	200:8 222:5	385:6	aspects	assure 6:25
418:17	262:18	278:24	arrives 26:3	224:7,8,16	459:10	425:19	133:2
419:2	303:5	365:24	arriving	228:11	Arts' 163:8	aspiration	362:20
421:20	308:21	414:16	390:11	230:3,10	203:11	179:6	asthma
422:6 424:4	314:19	appropriat...	art 164:3	351:8	259:25	aspirational	381:16,24
424:16	334:15	269:14	165:3,8,22	arts 4:4	351:17	305:22	386:14
425:23	346:7 361:3	320:15	166:6,10	161:23	ASAP 421:5	Assembly	391:21
427:25	370:6,22	323:15	168:7,9,12	162:7,12,25	asbestos	363:21	at-large
431:24	371:13	422:25	168:16	163:12	387:9	assess 109:9	235:3
432:7 433:3	376:5	appropriati...	170:19	167:23	asbestos-free	200:17	attack 386:18
433:22	429:23	124:2	172:5 174:2	168:5	403:7	assessment	attempt
434:10,19	441:12	approval	174:5,10	171:24	ashamed	99:3 101:13	119:14
435:18	appreciated	2:24	175:9,16,23	172:3 173:6	453:18	109:12,15	391:25
436:15,20	403:2	approved	176:17	179:4	Asian 67:21	111:7	attempted
437:16	appreciating	3:12	177:7,13	180:12,14	93:22	133:16	254:24
438:7,24	9:16	approximat...	178:2 179:2	185:6	156:13	asset 247:13	attempting
439:11,23	appreciation	270:14	180:7,15	187:15,19	246:18	292:19	254:25
440:14	4:24	334:10	181:11	189:7	aside 342:9	assets 176:13	attend 236:9
442:12,19	apprehend	405:13	197:3,21	192:17	456:9	247:2	397:4
444:14,22	317:16	approximat...	199:4,23	193:23	asked 35:9	325:24	419:10
445:9,22	apprehended	333:14	201:19	194:4,7,9	89:7 134:15	332:24	attendance
448:22	315:18	April 1:7 74:6	216:16	195:25	145:22	369:15	251:3 376:3
452:4 453:6	apprentices...	87:10	224:22,23	199:23	151:14	assign 254:20	393:20
454:19	259:16	111:13	225:4,6	203:16	152:10	assigned	429:17
455:12	267:4	158:16	226:5	207:25	158:11	395:5	attendants
457:2	approach	178:12	227:10	208:9	181:22	assist 303:17	143:23
461:14	128:5,6	391:16	229:2,8	209:12	196:4	342:13	attended 87:2
462:14	359:11	468:3	351:3	214:20	213:12,18	assistance	429:12
463:15	373:20	area 22:21	398:22	215:18	213:19	6:11 81:25	attending
467:20	approached	41:24	art-making	216:18	220:5	142:6 442:6	400:23
applicants	12:13 52:18	134:13	223:9	217:19,21	388:14	assistant	attention 2:6
258:13	161:24	143:3	article 21:11	218:6,8	408:20	11:12,24	82:11 134:8
applied 263:2	188:13	206:11	328:18	219:5 220:2	409:25	12:9,23	168:18
359:20	202:16	282:21	articles 336:7	220:3,15	441:10,16	13:9 270:2	211:14
applies 96:17	208:6	322:10,20	articulate	222:10,13	444:7	408:7 419:8	227:4
121:7	233:19	323:4	368:5	222:13	459:20	434:18	358:10
apply 287:13	244:12	327:12	articulated	225:20,23	asking 32:20	assistants	359:7
287:15	271:12	403:12	111:9 445:3	225:24	32:25 85:9	13:2,3,7	419:15
469:21	372:10	443:19	artist 171:3	227:6,16	192:6 197:2	62:6 416:24	attest 437:24
appointment	379:14	areas 21:22	171:19	228:10,24	218:18	association	attract
394:4	393:5	69:14 119:5	220:4,25	229:13,14	257:6	154:11	219:16
appreciate	404:24	140:22	221:25	229:16	279:13	405:9 465:4	404:3,4
15:12 17:12	415:23	266:2	224:10	230:13	294:13,14	465:8	attracting

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 4

241:25	102:11	129:7	269:19	414:8	183:7,8,16	beating	179:8
251:9	221:10,11	140:14	balance	420:23	183:20	334:10	believe 31:18
attraction	221:12,13	144:25	367:22	basically	184:6,8,12	beautiful	88:11 95:4
219:18	253:8 276:4	145:8	ball 10:3	55:13 69:16	184:14,17	169:2 170:2	97:5 99:25
attracts	304:9	154:18	187:4	79:23 92:7	185:10,21	170:18,19	113:15
179:19	319:13	158:16	251:17	123:18	187:7	178:5 183:2	140:6 187:5
404:9	332:19	159:6,23	ballpark	147:15	191:15,18	183:22	196:6
attrition	337:24	182:23	272:23	450:3	193:13,25	184:4	206:10
343:4,4	340:19,21	187:24	baloney	basis 348:10	194:2,22	201:15,25	219:8
auction 10:3	359:2	193:2	30:12 31:19	350:11	195:5	292:20	320:17
audience	368:20	198:14,22	Band-Aided	395:9	277:16,17	296:24	322:24
380:14	395:14	202:25	137:15	basketball	277:21,24	beautifying	346:21
389:7	Avenue 33:10	213:10,25	bank 130:14	171:10,12	278:4	167:3	361:2 407:7
392:21	68:23	215:3,15	250:10	Bass 1:10	281:17,24	187:11	416:10
415:16	169:14	228:21	453:20,21	34:8,9,13	282:25	beauty 165:2	417:3
448:2	172:18	233:2	banks 130:20	34:16,20	284:18	Beckett 375:3	420:13
audiences	222:20	244:19	banner 461:2	35:8,15	285:10	becoming	423:13
118:20	223:25	271:18	bar 287:11	36:9 38:5	293:11	347:15	440:2
237:15	224:2	273:14,18	294:12	39:17,21	297:16	bed 173:12	believer 91:9
auditorium	418:25	280:3	bargaining	40:6,9,22	298:5,11,15	beds 189:22	401:20
191:14	464:4	285:11	51:8 123:13	41:14,19	312:15	beep 205:11	bell 25:24
Audrey	average	288:16,25	Barry 244:19	43:12,17,21	314:24,25	205:12	46:4 76:3
292:15	39:25 40:7	289:20,23	base 211:25	45:2 46:3,7	317:18	began 163:17	116:15
August	40:10,20	290:7,13	Baseball	47:13,17,21	318:12,22	beginning	belly 446:15
385:15	48:25	291:12	236:3	47:24 68:14	319:5,16	167:11	Belmont
Aurica 372:7	101:19	303:8	based 35:10	76:9,10,17	320:25	173:14	169:21
372:8	167:13,17	314:11	56:22 84:13	76:19,25	321:7,15	205:23	292:14,18
authentically	avoid 366:8	315:6	148:15	77:15 78:3	322:17,23	249:6 368:8	belong
114:21	award 181:4	317:13,14	160:13,18	78:11,15	324:22	441:16	316:18
author 66:21	aware 144:4	326:16	161:8,9,10	79:18,21	325:3	begins 247:22	belongs
author's	325:19	331:4 333:6	272:18	80:13 81:4	326:25	275:7 367:3	169:10
135:22	awesome	380:15	274:13	81:7 82:13	331:3,10	391:15	benches
authority 3:9	179:16	391:11,16	279:20,23	82:19 83:2	333:5	begun 72:5	189:21
3:9,15	Azira 269:20	436:13	279:23,24	83:6,24	349:23,24	280:21	benchmarks
265:11		464:18	280:7,11	84:6,12	350:21	388:7	111:20
366:19	B	background	281:19	94:21 95:24	352:12,19	behalf 157:13	112:23
authorized	B 5:23 140:11	38:7 452:19	282:19	111:8	353:7	163:10	157:6
3:11 70:25	babies 418:2	backgrounds	288:8,9	120:22,23	354:17,21	177:13,14	beneficiaries
246:9	Bachelor	246:15	306:13	122:5,9,12	355:3	232:15	68:13 69:6
autism	145:25	backlog	321:19	122:17,20	356:15,21	234:6	benefit 86:6
182:19	back 8:16	249:22	322:5 323:5	122:23	357:2,5,13	252:24	136:6
183:12,22	10:24 22:25	backpack	323:13	123:6,9,17	360:2,22	370:13	189:11
183:25	26:2 29:8	317:12,13	324:9	124:8 126:2	393:22	442:17	190:10
184:2 312:7	29:14 31:10	backs 81:24	412:21	126:5,8	422:9,11	446:2	240:8
312:22	45:23 46:11	439:7	baseline	128:2,8,13	423:25	behavior	317:24
automatical...	51:18,21	bad 446:23	111:16	128:17,22	Bass's 68:6	80:23	383:25
302:23	54:9 59:23	badly 396:24	basement	128:25	bathroom	behavioral	402:10
auxiliary	60:8,9	bailing	137:13	129:4	143:23,24	172:12	403:19
401:6	61:16 65:18	456:19	412:21	131:13	252:7 378:2	177:18	benefits 65:6
available	67:4 78:20	bailiwick	446:6,19	142:11	bathrooms	358:22	96:18,20
13:24 29:11	96:4 97:3	55:22	447:10	158:6,7	275:8 277:9	beings 76:22	392:5
53:5 59:2	98:24	Baker 209:16	450:21,25	160:4,7,8	Battle-Mur...	147:4	448:17,18
87:16	101:10,12	Balagitiz	basic 54:18	161:14	234:5	belief 165:4	benefitting
	103:13						

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 5

Benford	398:19	117:24	83:1 84:1	189:1 190:1	295:1 296:1	398:1 399:1	156:5 161:2
12:19,20	408:11	120:11	85:1 86:1	191:1 192:1	297:1 298:1	400:1 401:1	200:12,14
13:15,25	451:22	238:24	87:1 88:1	193:1 194:1	299:1 300:1	402:1 403:1	200:19
14:4 15:4	beverage	267:21,22	89:1 90:1	195:1 196:1	301:1 302:1	404:1 405:1	203:6
40:13 49:10	270:13	279:16	91:1 92:1	197:1 198:1	303:1 304:1	406:1 407:1	211:18
49:18 97:2	464:25	371:22	93:1 94:1	199:1 200:1	305:1 306:1	408:1 409:1	217:23
97:10,14,22	beyond	406:8	95:1 96:1	201:1 202:1	307:1 308:1	410:1 411:1	284:13
98:7,11	123:18	435:16	97:1 98:1	203:1 204:1	309:1 310:1	412:1 413:1	307:5
143:5	149:6,8	444:11	99:1 100:1	205:1 206:1	311:1 312:1	414:1 415:1	320:19
Benny 459:11	316:21	bike 450:18	101:1 102:1	207:1 208:1	312:16	416:1 417:1	338:24
Bessler	373:2	bilingual	103:1 104:1	209:1 210:1	313:1 314:1	418:1 419:1	344:2 352:6
244:19	374:23	406:17	105:1 106:1	211:1 212:1	315:1 316:1	420:1 421:1	380:10
best 7:13	402:15	bill 2:1,10,14	107:1 108:1	213:1 214:1	317:1 318:1	422:1 423:1	408:16
37:22 44:4	436:2	2:18,20 3:1	109:1 110:1	215:1 216:1	319:1,20,21	424:1 425:1	419:25
45:4 91:13	bias 6:21 7:5	3:13 4:1 5:1	111:1 112:1	217:1 218:1	320:1 321:1	426:1 427:1	451:20
134:22	21:22 22:4	6:1 7:1 8:1	113:1 114:1	219:1 220:1	322:1 323:1	428:1 429:1	black 25:17
153:2 185:7	79:8 408:12	9:1 10:1	115:1 116:1	221:1 222:1	324:1 325:1	430:1 431:1	107:9
211:2 220:9	409:7 410:4	11:1 12:1	117:1 118:1	223:1 224:1	326:1 327:1	432:1 433:1	108:13
238:7 279:7	bias-free 7:23	13:1 14:1	119:1 120:1	225:1 226:1	328:1 329:1	434:1 435:1	156:9
308:25	111:25	15:1 16:1	121:1 122:1	227:1 228:1	330:1 331:1	436:1 437:1	170:12
332:6,8	112:13	17:1 18:1	123:1 124:1	229:1 230:1	332:1 333:1	438:1 439:1	384:15
362:19	bias/discrimi...	19:1 20:1	125:1 126:1	231:1 232:1	334:1 335:1	440:1 441:1	386:18
364:6,10	74:10	21:1 22:1	127:1 128:1	233:1 234:1	336:1 337:1	442:1 443:1	392:2 461:6
370:10,11	bid 283:4	23:1 24:1	129:1 130:1	235:1 236:1	338:1 339:1	444:1 445:1	blackness
372:19	287:6,7,8	25:1 26:1	131:1 132:1	237:1 238:1	340:1 341:1	446:1 447:1	458:23
435:20	352:24	27:1 28:1	133:1 134:1	239:1 240:1	342:1 343:1	448:1 449:1	blacks 73:13
436:13	bidder	29:1 30:1	135:1 136:1	241:1 242:1	344:1 345:1	450:1 451:1	408:24
better 24:15	282:23	31:1 32:1	137:1 138:1	243:1 244:1	346:1 347:1	452:1 453:1	Blackwell
37:14 43:2	283:6	33:1 34:1	139:1 140:1	245:1 246:1	348:1 349:1	454:1 455:1	1:11 31:20
55:13 83:16	286:24,25	35:1 36:1	141:1 142:1	247:1 248:1	350:1 351:1	456:1 457:1	31:21,25
83:18 91:11	287:3	37:1 38:1	143:1 144:1	249:1 250:1	352:1 353:1	458:1 459:1	32:7,18,23
130:21	bidding 453:2	39:1 40:1	145:1 146:1	251:1 252:1	354:1 355:1	460:1 461:1	33:6,16,21
153:16,17	big 9:11,23	41:1 42:1	147:1 148:1	253:1 254:1	356:1 357:1	462:1 463:1	34:3 117:5
154:22	38:14 43:7	43:1 44:1	149:1 150:1	255:1 256:1	358:1 359:1	464:1 465:1	138:12
179:11	57:4 62:19	45:1 46:1	151:1 152:1	257:1 258:1	360:1 361:1	466:1 467:1	170:5
185:5	91:9 118:6	47:1 48:1	153:1 154:1	259:1 260:1	362:1 363:1	468:1	190:12
202:22	132:13	49:1 50:1	155:1 156:1	261:1 262:1	364:1 365:1	billion 240:22	205:19,20
203:18	152:22	51:1 52:1	157:1 158:1	263:1 264:1	366:1 367:1	305:16	206:23
204:12	182:22	53:1 54:1	159:1 160:1	265:1 266:1	368:1 369:1	364:20	207:10
214:20	235:22,24	55:1 56:1	161:1 162:1	267:1 268:1	370:1 371:1	bills 1:17 2:13	299:4,5
255:19	236:4,6	57:1 58:1	163:1 164:1	269:1 270:1	372:1 373:1	3:20	300:4,11,16
262:5	239:10	59:1 60:1	165:1 166:1	271:1 272:1	374:1 375:1	birdhouses	301:15
263:18	258:11	61:1 62:1	167:1 168:1	273:1 274:1	376:1 377:1	36:21	302:11
276:18	268:10	63:1 64:1	169:1 170:1	275:1 276:1	378:1 379:1	BIRT 465:23	blame 13:19
283:18	324:19	65:1 66:1	171:1 172:1	277:1 278:1	380:1 381:1	bit 16:16,21	blanket
294:8,9,10	372:3 375:4	67:1 68:1	173:1 174:1	279:1 280:1	382:1 383:1	53:3 54:21	315:23
301:17	382:6	69:1 70:1	175:1 176:1	281:1 282:1	384:1 385:1	59:5 61:3	bleak 174:16
311:21	big-name	71:1 72:1	177:1 178:1	283:1 284:1	386:1 387:1	69:15 98:17	bleeding
334:2	204:5	73:1 74:1	179:1 180:1	285:1 286:1	388:1 389:1	99:2 121:5	446:7
340:17	bigger 24:15	75:1 76:1	181:1 182:1	287:1 288:1	390:1 391:1	121:21	blessed 44:10
344:2 365:4	58:22	77:1 78:1	183:1 184:1	289:1 290:1	392:1 393:1	132:4,5	303:22
365:6	biggest 64:4	79:1 80:1	185:1 186:1	291:1 292:1	394:1 395:1	136:19	332:24
367:15	101:17	81:1 82:1	187:1 188:1	293:1 294:1	396:1 397:1	153:15	392:7

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 6

blew 385:21	Bodine 438:2	boys 446:2	breathing	327:20	115:4 116:5	123:24,25	366:17
Blind 24:23	body 7:15	448:9,15	391:4	426:13	116:14	133:13	budgets
97:25 463:4	145:8 215:3	Bradley	Breo 391:23	broken	121:3	148:10	63:10
block 325:16	233:2 303:6	169:20	Brett 363:5	147:15	130:10	163:10	366:22
325:18	314:19	branch 25:3	364:4	bronchitis	139:12,13	202:6,24,25	435:4
402:11,16	423:14	25:9 26:19	Brian 162:18	391:21	140:19	215:6	444:16
blocking	body's 391:18	29:12 35:25	Bridesburg	brother	141:18	216:25	build 92:12
380:12	boiler 276:12	38:21	251:18	189:15	142:15,19	230:13,16	115:20
Blondell 1:14	boilers 52:10	124:19	352:3	191:8	142:24	230:18	172:8
121:3	124:4	126:6,11	brief 357:20	378:13	143:18	234:8	189:21
149:18	BOMA 56:22	132:9 135:3	briefing 4:14	brothers	144:4,13,16	245:25	211:10
blood 443:9	bomb 450:18	136:15	briefly 358:4	189:5,11,13	145:12	246:5 254:6	220:25
447:20,21	bonds 271:20	138:3 146:7	brilliant	192:7	149:18	260:10,25	248:9
blow 198:14	271:24	412:12,17	171:11	203:21	180:24	281:7	262:19
Blue 458:20	book 36:24	413:14	bring 9:17	brought	181:7,17,20	299:20	310:7
bluntly 30:18	36:24	416:6	100:14	115:23	182:10,15	303:11	359:19
board 4:20	125:15,16	418:24	130:13	168:23	183:4	320:21	396:24
4:20,21	183:2	430:15	153:4,6,7	217:21	184:10,15	333:14	427:20
6:25 8:24	413:15,19	branches	174:12,23	227:13	188:20	336:24	439:10
18:21 19:16	435:15	9:19 13:23	202:12	239:13	189:25	348:8	466:14
19:20 20:12	Booker	24:18 40:14	237:10,13	244:11	193:11,17	361:17,20	building 6:17
20:14 21:7	292:17	49:11 67:13	238:17,20	425:5	193:24	362:10,21	69:9,18
43:14,14	books 37:3,8	67:14	247:25	brown 1:14	195:6	363:18	85:2,4
67:10,17,19	64:13 97:6	125:24	260:10	17:13,14,18	236:12	364:11,18	119:3
67:25 69:23	124:16	128:18	359:7	17:21 18:17	378:24	364:21	123:21
70:24 72:22	413:10	137:7	385:23	19:10,14	379:18,21	366:5,8	127:22
72:24 73:3	418:5 435:9	138:11,14	398:10	20:8,17	384:15	367:10,20	133:15
73:13,21	449:19	139:23	408:12	21:2,4	386:18	368:4,8,18	135:22
111:18	boots 191:23	151:7	421:16,17	22:13 23:7	461:10	370:4	137:22
120:2 135:8	border	406:12	425:18	23:11,17	Brown's	399:10	150:25
145:4	464:20	411:19	445:25	24:6,10,17	76:12 155:8	413:3	151:2,10
155:10,15	borrow 347:8	412:5	bringing	24:25 25:8	Bryant	414:13	177:20
155:25	borrowed	453:22	109:24	25:12,16,18	379:16	416:13,20	209:14
156:2,3,6	53:9,13	brand 24:8	116:3	25:24 67:2	380:8	421:14	210:2 219:2
163:2 207:7	Borrowers'	439:15	124:23	67:4,9,15	389:14,16	422:25	220:20
309:23	10:3	466:15	250:7	67:23 68:5	389:21	429:14	222:10,13
315:21	borrowing	branded	257:16	69:3,21	392:12	440:24	222:13
408:19	118:16	350:25	259:5	70:7,12,16	Bryce 370:2	441:8,19	254:8
409:4	boss 30:9	breadth	305:12	70:20,23	Bucks 464:11	442:4	279:17
424:19,24	bother	202:21	brings 280:17	71:5,16	budget 2:19	459:17,19	317:11
429:10	125:13	238:20	351:13	72:20 73:7	2:21 5:2	459:22	324:2 339:3
432:2 454:5	454:10	breakdown	broad 41:23	73:15 74:5	11:4 15:15	462:8	377:25
454:5,6	bottom 36:4	19:18,21	68:21 98:22	74:24 75:6	15:20 16:10	budgetary	388:13
Board's	171:25	408:21	327:13	75:10 76:2	16:18 21:10	196:2	390:24
158:25	180:19	breaks	broaden	76:5 94:21	32:3,10	343:18	397:21
boards 19:2	263:3	283:23	165:17	106:25	35:3 49:22	365:7,18	400:24
19:11 67:10	bought	440:7	258:12	107:2,14,17	50:13,14	366:3	402:4,5
155:24	402:24	breath	broadened	107:25	51:18 64:4	370:11	403:8
408:25	Bowl 349:14	175:14	258:18,20	108:6,10	65:9 84:20	budgeted	412:15
boardwalk	box 180:11	242:9	258:25	109:4	96:19,21	149:7 150:4	414:19
251:19	182:7 221:4	breathe 334:2	broader	110:19	97:6,18,19	417:8,15	439:3
Bobby 1:13	boxes 36:20	386:15	137:22	111:22	98:5,6	budgeting	451:10
186:25,25	37:5	446:18	broke 240:16	114:4,12,24	100:16	232:21	459:4

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 7

460:21	busy 30:5	319:19,20	capital 2:15	247:23	266:18	288:4	328:6,12
461:3,10	buy 400:18	cameras	2:19 3:21	CareerLink	Caucus	289:22,24	329:6
buildings	439:15	189:2 315:5	3:23,24	6:7 130:25	380:24	290:2,3,4,5	330:17,20
16:11 27:24	452:22	315:9,16,24	51:18,20	131:2	381:3	290:14,18	331:2
69:11	455:4	316:3,6,18	66:23	careers	385:12	290:24	332:13
117:25	buying	316:25	100:16	398:10	397:19	291:4,25	350:15
124:3	268:17,19	318:10,17	102:13	careful 41:5	414:23	293:22	351:2 356:3
133:21,22	buzzer 30:10	319:11,15	103:3	106:3	cause 381:25	296:4,7,13	449:19
133:23		camp 61:13	123:24,25	caregiver	447:14,18	297:9,18	462:13,16
137:10,13	C	248:24,25	124:2	394:17	causes 381:14	299:23	463:9
169:14	calculated	249:4	133:12	caregivers	394:12	300:14	central 9:12
175:24	96:8	309:19	245:19	418:3	cautious	304:25	24:22 26:21
176:13	calculation	462:24	251:11	cares 114:20	118:10,11	310:13,17	27:3,22
297:2 318:6	192:24	campaign	252:4,15	Carnegie	CBS 169:19	311:16	28:2 38:14
318:10,21	calendar	87:4 135:22	254:7	28:23 69:11	CDC 92:16	315:10,24	66:10 92:4
381:12	249:19	387:2	267:23	Carney	172:22	320:13	95:4 103:15
386:13	call 127:8	388:10	268:14,19	212:21	CDC's	322:13	118:4
387:4,25	142:12,16	campaigns	288:17	carpenter	401:10	324:7,10,12	119:17
388:6	157:3	137:16	289:25	338:17	ceased 436:25	331:16	124:18
459:15	242:25	camps 206:16	303:11,25	carried 51:20	Cecil 5:23	360:12	137:2
built 307:12	354:3 363:2	248:16	316:17	carry 61:23	140:11	375:4 399:6	289:10
439:7 440:5	371:17	249:17	319:8,10	cars 283:15	ceiling 385:17	399:6	374:10
bulging	372:4	431:8	339:3,5,10	case 223:14	ceilings 439:5	424:20	375:7
391:12	392:24	campus	341:8	cases 241:22	celebrate	427:2 439:3	396:23
bulk 66:4	395:10,14	143:13	342:20	254:4	234:15	459:3,5	397:6
74:19 98:2	395:17,21	349:5	capture	cash 454:22	406:11	463:4	398:13,18
bunch 288:16	395:24	cancelled	258:22	Cassidy	celebrated	centered	416:25
336:7	415:19	198:2	car 302:23	390:12,23	251:23	183:21	Centuries
burden 444:2	417:14	candidates	card 31:14	446:3 447:5	celebrates	centers 28:22	99:18
Burns 171:3	427:3	156:18	143:25	448:9	170:7	66:17	century 66:5
burst 146:13	438:13	260:16	186:24	catch 30:16	celebration	106:17	218:14
bus 204:22	450:5	Cannon	367:10	242:9	38:14,24	130:2 131:4	219:3
445:7,8	callback	208:3,8,9	391:22	385:20	celebrations	139:22	221:22
business 91:7	158:17,18	209:6	454:14	categories	229:11	189:19,20	365:16
92:3,8,13	called 2:8	210:22	455:6,8	257:3	250:16	193:19	CEO 239:20
119:18,21	129:18	212:7 213:3	cards 454:25	category	cellblocks	201:14	ceremonies
240:25	197:23	CAP 259:15	455:3	196:22	186:6,6	206:16	302:13
242:2 286:4	302:25	260:16	care 9:8 47:7	caterer 291:2	Census	247:8 255:3	ceremony
293:8 336:9	321:17	264:7	52:9 101:25	292:8,12	426:10	255:6 256:4	296:6
398:23	350:19	capable 398:4	124:3 127:2	293:6,10	center 9:15	257:10	certain 64:17
399:6	362:12	capacities	127:19,25	294:17,20	42:7 92:4	264:21	116:9,12,12
449:22	379:4	358:23	147:11	296:11,15	119:19	274:11	139:18
464:2	caller 395:15	389:18	150:24	catering	124:22	275:10,23	241:22
465:18,19	callers 395:10	capacity 90:4	176:5	282:16,17	129:19	276:9,9	256:4
465:21,23	calling 20:20	90:8 115:24	252:25	286:23	171:7,8,9	278:9	258:23
466:11	210:11	116:3,4,6	344:5 362:6	287:5,25	228:16	308:11	263:5
businesses	256:18	127:22	375:2	288:9 291:2	251:8,13,17	309:4	289:11,14
92:6,9	380:7	133:20	381:17	292:7,23	251:19	311:19	322:4
93:20 142:7	438:18	135:11	382:20	293:14	269:23	315:15	359:13
453:3 466:3	callouts 394:9	190:17	461:6,7	296:5,15	270:5 282:9	317:6,23	362:2
Bustleton 6:9	calls 395:12	211:11,13	career 130:12	Catto 171:14	282:13,14	318:24	certainly
bustling	453:11	218:22	209:19	Caucasian	283:9	321:14	18:18 45:7
172:24	camera	274:13	210:12	246:18	287:19	323:23	78:4 135:7
	317:17,21						

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 8

140:7	207:12,18	176:16	394:22	304:17	426:9	135:4 136:6	234:13,22
141:25	215:22	179:21	431:5	379:5	433:24	136:7	235:2 236:5
183:5	242:9	180:13,15	434:25	choosing	citizen 367:12	137:25	238:19
194:14	324:25	213:19	childcare	218:13	418:13	138:6 144:8	241:18,19
199:8	333:12	216:16,17	5:25	427:14	456:16	145:2	241:24
241:17	336:4	217:8 218:2	children 18:7	chosen 364:8	citizens 9:7	155:18,20	242:20,22
243:13,14	349:25	227:8,9,10	30:21 31:4	Chris 61:9	9:16 10:24	155:25	243:14,20
254:15	chairs 129:20	233:4	47:3 60:5	269:17	164:20	162:11,17	248:5 252:6
263:11	450:23	258:16	60:19,25	449:14	165:16,18	162:20	253:4 255:4
280:9 333:3	451:12	260:13	61:15	Christine	165:24	163:7,18,20	255:6,14
347:2 354:9	Chairwoman	324:20	124:23	153:25	172:4	164:5,20	260:8,8
423:10,14	408:18	366:16	139:19	chronically	177:16	165:2,4	274:6,21
454:17	challenge	373:16	140:8,12	348:11	179:5	167:4,22	275:3 279:7
CERTIFIC...	12:3 89:7	375:2,6,13	151:25	chronology	200:22	168:20	279:14,16
469:2	90:22	375:18,21	157:13,14	390:11	207:24	169:3 172:4	280:6,8,18
certification	168:16	377:5 453:2	183:21	Chuckie	210:21	176:6,15,23	286:9 289:9
469:20	174:21	changed	248:16	300:7	220:17	178:19,22	290:18
certified	235:5 301:5	124:18,19	249:3	Chughtai	224:4 237:8	178:24	292:7,20
47:12	challenged	239:4,9	305:25	457:24	241:20	179:13,18	293:12
340:22	89:4	259:2 379:5	306:17	463:18,21	362:6	179:20	294:3,8,21
CERTIFY	challenges	changes 3:5	312:21	467:14	366:23	180:3,9	299:8
469:3	60:25	262:7,8	313:5,17,20	church	374:6 376:7	181:11	303:16,19
certifying	163:25	changing	346:10	204:20,22	377:3	184:25	303:23
469:24	164:22	114:22	360:8,16	cigarettes	407:16	185:8,11	305:2
chain 465:6	180:3	119:4 192:8	381:13	465:25	411:5	187:9,19	308:24
Chair 4:20,20	348:19	256:25	382:2,20	cigars 465:25	421:25	188:2	310:5
57:20,25	369:18	307:22	392:10,13	CINDY 1:10	446:25	191:21	311:13
73:16	399:9	462:10	400:22	circle 25:25	citizens'	192:13	313:17
116:19	435:22	chanting	401:24	26:2 45:22	176:20	194:6	315:23
120:21	challenging	389:7	403:5,22	45:23 46:11	426:7	195:17	325:10
131:18	11:9 174:8	392:21	404:8	51:17	city 1:2,6	197:2,3	328:10,21
139:11	264:11	415:16	405:20	170:21	2:25 3:3,14	200:10	328:22
145:17	283:11	Chapter 54:4	407:11	285:11	4:3,4,16	201:8	332:7,23
148:3 158:5	318:16	character	411:19	333:6	11:18 12:12	202:23,24	337:22,25
195:9	339:14	190:19	412:10,14	circles 400:15	13:6 26:14	204:15	340:8
205:18	411:21	charge 7:8	413:9,18	circulate	37:19 38:25	206:13	342:13
207:15	Chamber	239:11	436:7	341:22	44:9 46:23	207:6 216:5	343:18
269:6	121:11	274:9	462:17	342:2	46:25 48:20	216:10,19	344:15
277:15	Chambers	Charter	children's	circulating	65:8 71:18	216:23,25	349:18
279:5 299:3	191:20	366:21	5:20 68:19	388:8	77:5 79:24	217:8	353:12
314:23	422:14	Chase 102:7	135:23	circulation	83:19 91:10	218:12	355:5,9
333:9	champion	checks 87:20	138:15	118:22,25	91:25 92:22	219:9 220:5	356:18
341:22	157:11	chef 88:15	398:25	circumstance	93:7,20	220:9,13	357:23
344:24	chance 67:16	Cheltenham	411:12	18:11 111:7	104:15,15	222:19	361:21
349:22	131:22	464:20	413:6	cities 165:21	104:17	223:20,20	362:6
454:7,7,10	163:14	Chestnut	438:22	172:6 177:3	105:23,25	226:23	363:15
Chairman	200:9 203:5	36:11	451:6,14	177:21,24	107:19,20	230:16	364:3,11,15
26:4,10	254:21	Chicago	choice 426:22	181:8	124:22	231:9,13,15	365:3,16
31:8 34:5	370:8	279:25	choking	358:11	129:24	231:24	366:18,19
48:2,7 76:6	change 108:7	280:11	446:15	368:16	130:19	232:9,10,15	366:20
84:7 85:18	140:10	chief 70:11	choose 82:5	402:20	131:7	232:21	367:10,11
94:12,17	164:10	child 312:6	159:12	419:22	132:13	233:5,17	367:18
104:24	175:13,16	360:10	296:21	425:11	134:23	234:2,7,11	368:6,12,15

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 9

368:20	366:13	138:20,24	399:18,21	classroom	457:3,7,9	closing 52:15	213:17
369:6,9	368:23	139:7	403:9,15,23	178:4	457:12,15	151:10	248:3
370:3,5,10	375:25	144:22	404:14,17	385:16,24	457:17,20	178:13	cohorts
373:15	386:17	145:15	405:2,18	402:6	457:22,24	276:15	208:15
375:22	432:17	147:25	407:19,23	classrooms	467:21	398:17	210:24,25
376:25	453:17	158:3,8	408:2 411:8	119:20	client 461:9	410:24	211:4 212:9
377:10,11	460:2	159:5,11,15	415:12,18	377:24	climate	462:19	212:20
381:11	City-funded	159:25	415:25	383:4,6,14	175:13	closures 5:17	cold 125:5
383:3	70:3	160:6	417:21	386:4	climb 111:21	151:2	collaborate
385:25	City-owned	161:15,21	418:18	clean 14:7	clinical	clothes	86:6,10
387:6	369:14	162:2,17	422:7 424:2	189:25	173:25	401:14	collaboration
388:11	citywide	253:13,21	424:5	440:10	clip 166:14	club 244:11	6:15 57:9
393:19	234:17	255:11	434:11	cleaned	337:10	435:15	57:16 74:23
394:6 395:8	266:3 282:4	256:9	437:8,12	166:12	clock 116:16	cluster 15:6	75:19 77:19
396:2 397:9	285:7	260:22	439:24	220:22	286:17	44:20	77:21,22,23
397:10	374:12,16	261:3,10,16	440:12	441:23	close 18:3	108:17,22	168:14
398:2 400:5	379:11	262:2,14	442:9,13	cleaning	35:12 58:6	109:23	239:24
400:8,18	459:20	263:13,17	445:10,20	177:24	134:22	127:7	collaborative
403:21	civic 176:12	264:19	448:13,20	386:10	150:11	128:20,21	375:5
404:3	201:7	265:2	448:23	391:20	196:6 238:4	411:19	collapsing
406:10,22	civil 7:11	266:11,19	449:2	cleanup	244:24,24	clusters 21:15	386:4
407:5 415:6	70:18,20	266:23	451:25	307:13,14	279:20	22:5 92:20	collateral
416:7	108:11	267:11	452:7,11,15	clear 47:18	310:24	129:2 153:5	317:24
421:24,24	110:10	268:9,24	456:7,24	47:25 71:19	339:19	153:12	colleague
422:20	256:12,25	269:4	458:4	141:15	361:14	co-op 238:23	26:2 149:17
424:8,10	258:14	277:13,19	461:15,18	178:15	398:15	co-working	155:7 188:9
426:5,6,23	260:20	295:19,24	463:13,16	305:18	402:24	119:6,9	271:9
432:18,19	262:22	296:8,17	463:19	374:16	405:24	coaches 251:5	355:22
436:11,22	263:2,9	297:12	467:12,16	383:19	406:22	coalition	colleagues
438:12	264:9 267:8	298:18	467:23	388:21	412:16	424:14	144:22
439:3,10,19	337:14	361:13	class 89:9	429:20	417:9,15	427:18,19	148:11
440:3,6	338:3 414:8	363:6,10,14	90:15 163:8	440:21	465:18,21	432:5	149:13
443:24	civilian	370:15,20	216:21	441:10,11	466:7,9	433:13	166:14
444:25	394:25	371:2,8,15	226:4 246:7	cleared 264:8	closed 38:21	458:13	186:16
445:3,18,24	claim 23:5,6	372:12	246:11,12	265:18	39:5 42:7,8	code 54:4	207:20
448:4 453:4	204:17	373:14	246:12	clearly 59:14	42:8 117:7	448:6	220:7
453:23	claims 8:22	376:11,15	285:6 322:2	95:13	138:12,14	coding 90:15	396:20
454:21	24:5	376:18,20	378:14	121:15	147:10	90:18,19	397:18
461:21	clamoring	376:21	400:8	254:6 262:4	150:16,17	coffee 454:24	399:14
462:25	225:6	377:4	classes 6:10	366:17	249:13	cognitive	401:21
463:20,22	clarify 53:22	378:21	88:4,5,8	clerical 13:3	300:12,19	381:14	411:18
464:3,10	134:16	379:3,8,12	120:9	13:7 395:5	328:6,7,7	cognizant	419:18
465:11,13	275:15	379:17,23	141:19	CLERK 2:14	412:18	232:12	collecting
465:21	clarity 144:17	380:2,5	170:23	4:10 363:4	421:2	Cohen 378:25	129:17
466:9,23	315:16	383:16	182:24	372:6	464:17	380:4	375:17
city's 153:24	Clark 376:17	384:3,7,12	192:19	378:24	closely 102:4	384:25	collection
168:14	376:20,23	384:17	223:4,6	379:16	235:6 237:5	385:4,5,9	26:25 27:2
172:12	457:12,13	385:2	226:16	393:2,9,12	238:22	386:21	28:18
174:24	457:13	388:18	230:6	404:19	239:22	387:11,17	165:22
249:21	Clarke 1:10	389:4,9	390:20	415:20	252:14	388:20	169:9
251:2 283:5	116:17	392:18,23	398:6	428:2,6,10	431:3	cohort 208:17	175:22
363:18	120:19	393:7,10,13	classification	437:3	closer 51:11	208:23	176:6 441:5
364:23,23	131:16	396:7	322:3	445:13	closet 391:3	212:19	collections

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 10

27:23 98:3	214:22,25	427:10	219:19,24	302:14,18	221:13	405:25	221:5,22
414:5	215:14	coming 2:4	220:22	302:22	227:9 235:2	communities	224:16
collective	220:7 221:8	33:11 51:14	221:17	304:22	369:5	84:3 95:2	228:4,5,16
51:8 123:13	222:8 223:5	87:18 90:17	222:14	305:3	418:13	116:12	228:19
164:23	225:14	91:4 99:11	Commission	308:19	commitments	126:23	229:4,23
176:20	260:6,21	111:13	77:6 110:22	312:12,14	165:6	132:7,15	231:16
college	267:8	118:12	110:24,25	316:5	committed	133:6	234:17,24
258:19	276:19	125:4,6,8	252:18	317:19	74:12 81:22	164:16	235:3 237:3
398:10	282:6	125:11,17	264:9	318:4,13	84:10,15	166:24	240:15
400:14	288:25	131:2	459:23	319:2,7	114:15	170:17	250:14
463:25	290:5	143:24	460:6,8	320:2,22	136:21	172:9	252:16
color 25:6	302:11	151:8	462:5	321:3,9,15	165:8 217:7	187:11	257:4,22
67:13 70:15	306:2	155:12	Commissio...	321:16	248:3 317:5	195:18	259:16
81:10 82:10	313:10	161:4 168:4	57:13 89:19	322:21	354:24	222:24	263:25
169:4	329:8	173:3	194:11,12	323:8	394:24	223:12	274:22
174:13	335:18,19	176:24	212:21	326:23	committee	225:12,16	283:24
266:22	342:3	177:8,11	244:15	330:14	1:3 2:9 3:19	227:13	305:20,24
409:2	351:12	212:7	245:2,8,13	331:6	7:9 8:25	251:6	305:25
439:17	356:8	213:17,20	245:16,19	332:12	20:4,12	255:19,23	309:2
colors 83:20	362:13	214:3	245:21	333:21	29:9 71:3,9	278:8	311:11
84:3 183:23	364:25	227:21	253:19	334:3,12,18	71:10,11,12	305:19	312:7
359:15	396:5 397:6	235:7,20,22	254:14	334:24	71:25 72:12	306:15	331:15
Colwell-Sm...	413:25	235:23	255:13	335:4,20,25	72:16 73:12	307:18	342:3
428:3,18,25	417:9	240:18	257:5	336:11,16	74:8 75:2	309:6,10,12	353:13,15
429:5,7	420:12,17	242:3 260:3	260:24	336:19,25	75:13,17	314:11	353:20
431:17	421:10	299:10	261:7,12,24	337:5,9,15	78:18	373:19	354:5 369:7
combination	428:18	302:3 303:2	262:12,16	338:8	112:10,24	375:2	374:10
40:4 91:17	431:10	311:12	263:15	339:24	113:2	386:18	375:7,19
100:15	452:21	313:3	264:4,24	340:16	142:25	388:12,22	376:4 381:5
combine	461:24	325:13,25	265:12	341:18	145:5 157:4	407:13	381:9,17
250:22	466:8	326:2 354:9	266:14,21	344:20	159:2	416:12	382:14
Comcast	comes 46:25	361:4 394:3	267:6,15	345:4,24	236:23	424:15	387:4,22
209:12	105:12,15	426:5	268:13	347:4 348:2	279:5 361:8	425:15	388:7
come 9:13	105:17	450:24	269:2	350:10,23	371:6 423:4	427:18,20	402:21
29:8 36:23	113:17	comment	270:15,19	352:14	424:22	432:6	404:11
42:9 64:13	164:4	45:10 52:16	271:8 274:8	357:10	429:9 451:2	437:18	411:20
64:15 65:18	182:11	119:25	275:11,12	358:6,15	468:2,7	458:14	412:7
70:17 86:10	218:6	121:4	275:24	360:20	common 38:8	community	424:23,25
86:13 90:18	229:24	242:15	277:23	361:4	412:4	37:3 44:16	430:5
104:12	231:8 258:9	344:17	278:2	Commissio...	Commonwe...	44:16,19,22	458:15
116:2 118:3	275:16,20	422:12	281:16,20	302:5	29:3 65:2	75:3,3	459:4
119:15,20	286:20	commented	281:25	commit	65:12	128:10,14	community...
131:25	289:10	460:13	283:3	366:25	414:10	130:16	269:24
140:8	302:8	comments	284:15,17	432:24	432:14	163:2	comp 391:10
150:11	306:25	4:22 95:23	284:20	434:7	communicate	164:13	companies
151:4	308:7	422:19	289:3	commitment	370:5	165:12	92:9 287:5
158:16	343:10	429:18	295:21	7:4 44:7	communica...	177:14	288:9,10
159:6,23	347:3	Commerce	296:2,10,20	95:14	353:10	182:19	company
171:21	349:13	219:20	297:14,22	134:18	369:22	189:22	209:15
188:10	351:6	237:9	298:9,13	138:10	394:2	196:25	233:18
194:11	413:14	commercial	299:14,22	156:7 176:8	communica...	206:18	282:19
208:3 214:8	comfortable	56:10	300:9,13,21	216:8,19,23	33:14 55:8	216:20	compare 56:5
214:13,21	293:19	219:11,14	301:23,24	220:15	communica...	218:17,23	compared

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 11

167:16	409:23	281:22	Condos 439:6	117:17	254:2	294:12	conventions
compensated	component	282:6,8,15	conduct	consider 3:20	316:10	353:25	313:7,8
256:19,22	197:6	282:22	115:11	173:16	continue 3:18	368:18	conversation
265:3	composition	283:25	119:21	209:10	13:22 60:5	contracting	44:14 45:12
278:23	67:25	284:10	131:9	349:6	62:2 87:20	160:12	65:11,14
compete	compounds	285:15	459:20	358:19	89:20 95:21	284:11	72:6,16
266:3	447:8,12,14	289:7,9,20	conduit 91:24	370:3 400:7	163:20	contractor	74:17,20
competition	447:25	290:7	143:8	consideration	167:23	275:7,16,20	77:18,21,22
337:20	comprehen...	concessions	confer 144:21	312:20	168:7	275:21	83:3 106:2
competitions	254:18	290:12	conferences	367:17	174:12	276:20	256:10,20
310:20	316:16	conclude	32:14,20	375:23	177:12	277:7	256:24
competitive	368:3,17	361:6	33:12	459:14	198:16	contractors	279:22
354:25	compromised	concluded	299:18	considered	207:4 217:2	276:25	287:17
complain	443:8	208:12	confidence	365:13	218:25	contracts	301:14
452:14	computer	261:5	367:5	considers	231:24	57:6 102:5	325:5
complaints	131:8	concludes	confident	369:11	233:3 247:4	160:10,11	348:14
110:21	378:15	467:24	58:23	consistently	247:9	160:16,24	349:20
378:5	420:18	concourse	255:25	180:11	250:10	161:5,8	356:16
complement	computers	178:4,6	confirm	Constellation	252:13	279:12,18	422:16
322:4	37:9 123:21	concrete	388:14	282:17	309:8	279:19,21	423:16
complements	129:20	306:13	conforming	283:5	328:24	279:25	conversations
352:16	418:5	condition	285:3	286:23	349:20	280:4,10,17	194:15
complete 52:5	449:12	130:3	confront	constituenci...	351:22	281:4,6,15	256:6 293:5
54:12	450:7	383:20	377:8	182:16	368:13	281:18	306:23
137:20	concept 36:25	conditioned	confused	constituent	381:12	282:2,4,4	313:19
218:10	219:25	297:23,24	76:13 78:19	348:24	415:6	284:13	352:7
273:5,14	concepts	conditioner	conglomerate	constituents	423:17	285:3,7,18	356:13
365:22	359:8	403:8	287:12	127:17	460:3	286:9 295:7	382:19
completed	concern	conditioners	288:19	131:8 247:2	continued	354:11	388:4
166:6,9,11	73:10 79:8	381:22	congratulate	252:25	137:14	355:2	cook 88:15
250:6	160:11	conditioning	216:11	414:7	141:25	368:11	cooking 88:4
251:10,21	253:2 288:6	52:10 125:7	243:18	constitute	248:25	contractual	141:19
252:3	343:6	252:12	Congratula...	3:21	249:21	141:13	cool 350:25
270:25	401:11	297:21,25	180:25,25	constraints	continues	contribute	cooler 298:2
272:20	430:4	298:7,8	181:3	149:25	166:21	179:20	cooling 252:8
273:2,6,10	441:22	311:7	congregate	construction	171:20	contributed	298:2
completely	446:5	383:11,15	462:17	272:14	222:11	65:7	387:14
183:3	concerned	conditions	Congressio...	354:7	390:2	contributing	cooperate
315:23	110:12	69:9,13,19	366:4	Consular	453:10	374:6 404:5	431:4
466:6	114:21	101:14	connect	237:7	continuing	contributions	Cooperation
completing	267:13	125:10	230:11	consultant	14:3 138:4	409:3	3:9,11
339:9	429:19	132:2,22	connected	442:8	232:24	control	coordinate
completion	concerns 7:2	133:5,16	139:25	consultations	236:17	135:25	240:9
208:21,22	7:15 18:20	377:22	355:11	177:3	316:9 390:4	381:22	252:14
273:17	22:17 23:3	381:7	438:15	consumers	419:16	469:23	405:15
complex	94:20 124:9	382:11	connecting	453:17	continuously	Controller's	coordinated
164:6,17	182:5 377:7	386:16	88:22	contact 243:3	154:25	364:3	250:19
complicated	445:25	389:2 390:9	connection	277:6	contract	controlling	coordinator
136:8	447:4,22	397:22	143:15	contained	14:18 136:4	454:12	106:15
196:12	concerns	411:21	420:14,15	469:5	172:7	convenience	204:6 211:2
219:7	250:15	437:24	connections	contextuali...	197:20	253:9	211:5 405:6
303:15	459:8	condo 438:20	170:7	458:10	198:2,23	convention	cope 164:16
comply	concession	439:4	conservative	continuation	286:15	241:7	copies 362:10

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 12

copy 362:9	costs 56:2,4,5	283:18	414:15	17:5,8,11	147:3,7,14	302:2,16,20	399:15
core 96:3	105:9	295:19,22	415:8,12,18	17:16 26:5	147:18,21	302:24	408:6 416:5
165:6 284:7	192:15	295:24	415:25	26:7,9,17	148:2,3,5	306:9	418:22
344:4	costumes	296:8,17	416:4	27:5,11,25	149:15	309:25	429:6,17
416:20	170:11	297:12	417:21	28:5,12,16	150:15	311:25	431:25
corner 179:3	Cottman	298:18	418:18,21	29:4,15	152:2,15	313:13	433:12
corporations	228:15	303:23	419:3,14	30:14,24	153:20	315:7,19	445:18
178:19	229:13	314:19	421:24,24	31:7,13,16	154:23	325:2 333:9	448:5
Corps 237:7	cough 446:18	320:6 323:2	422:7	31:17,17	155:5 156:8	333:10,11	Councilper...
259:25	coughing	327:5	423:14	34:6,11	156:12,20	333:24	191:22
correct 28:19	446:10,20	341:22	424:2,5,8	40:16 45:20	157:9 158:4	334:6,13,16	Councils
104:6 123:3	Council 1:2	357:17	429:6	46:5 48:3,5	182:17	334:22	252:20
297:21	1:10 2:25	361:6,13	432:24	48:6,10,14	185:15	335:2,17,22	278:14
335:21	3:12 4:17	363:6,10,14	434:11	48:17 49:5	187:2	336:2,5,6	309:4
337:6,14,16	85:10 93:10	363:15,25	436:11,22	49:15,21	190:12,14	336:13,15	Councilwo...
337:16	116:17	364:17	437:8,12	50:4,16	190:24	336:21	1:10,11,13
339:25	120:19	365:2,17	439:24	51:3,10,13	191:19	337:2,7,13	1:14 17:13
356:20	131:16,17	366:18	440:12,19	51:16,23	205:17	337:23	17:14,18,21
469:8	131:21	369:10	441:11	52:20 53:8	207:13,15	339:21	18:5,17
corrected	132:13	370:15,20	442:9,13	53:12,16,25	207:17	340:4,18	19:10,14
146:16	136:23	371:2,8,15	443:25	54:10 55:5	209:2	341:4,20	20:8,17
195:2 396:6	138:20,21	372:12	445:10,20	55:11,16,19	210:18	344:22	21:2,4
correctional	138:24	373:14,15	448:13,20	56:13,18,25	212:3,24	345:6	22:13,21
185:25	139:2,5	373:16	448:23	57:18,21,22	214:11	346:24,25	23:7,11,17
corrective	145:2,15,20	374:12	449:2	65:19 66:24	215:21,24	347:23	24:6,10,17
82:7	147:23,25	375:5,12,13	451:25	73:18 76:7	215:25	348:3	24:25 25:8
correctly	148:6 158:3	375:20,22	452:6,7,11	85:14,16,17	216:4,15	356:24	25:12,16,21
145:24	158:8,24	376:10,11	452:15	85:24 86:5	217:14	357:4	25:24 26:6
294:15	159:5,11,15	376:15,18	455:15	86:12,19,21	225:7	360:24	31:20,21,25
correspond	159:25	376:21	456:7,24	86:24 87:25	226:24	424:8	32:7,18,23
406:15	160:6	377:2,5,10	458:4	88:7,14,17	228:13	427:23	33:6,16,21
correspond...	161:15,21	378:21	461:15,18	89:3,13	229:21	428:7,14,17	34:3,7,8,9
169:20	162:2,16,17	379:3,8,12	461:20,21	90:3,12,21	230:12,19	428:22	34:13,16,20
corridor	163:7 189:3	379:17,23	463:13,16	93:4,9,13	230:23	429:3	35:8,15
219:12,14	220:6 240:7	380:2,5	463:19,20	93:18 94:4	231:3,7,12	431:14,22	36:9 38:5
219:24	241:4	383:3,16	467:12,16	94:8,11,13	231:19	Councilma...	39:17,21
220:22	245:15	384:3,7,12	467:23	94:14 103:7	232:3,18	148:23	40:6,9,22
221:17	253:13,21	384:17	Council's	103:9,10,21	233:8,15,21	242:18	41:14,19
222:14	255:11	385:2 387:6	165:4	104:5,8,25	233:23	Councilme...	43:12,17,21
corridors	256:9	388:11,18	396:24	105:2,4	235:9,11	11:3 231:23	45:2,21
170:15	260:22	389:4,9	429:12	106:6,22	236:10	253:5 315:5	46:3,7,9
219:19	261:3,10,16	392:18,23	430:3	116:19,21	237:17,20	319:12	47:13,17,21
cost 50:19	262:2,14	393:7,10,13	Councilman	117:9,13,19	238:6,9,25	364:2	47:24 48:4
56:6 59:7	263:13,17	393:19,23	1:11,12,12	118:21	240:5 241:2	405:18	57:23,24
101:4,19	264:19	396:7,11	1:13,14,15	119:2,24	241:10,16	411:17	58:4,20
103:18	265:2	398:12	2:2 3:16	120:16,20	242:6,10	434:7	60:17 62:11
104:3,18	266:11,19	399:18,21	4:11,16 8:8	134:15	243:12,18	Councilme...	63:6,14,22
192:23	266:23	403:9,15,23	8:12 10:14	139:15	243:24	8:11 94:20	64:6 65:17
268:16	267:11	404:14,17	10:17 11:23	140:20	244:3,6,10	320:14	65:20 67:2
276:22	268:9,24	405:2,17	12:17 13:13	141:22	244:14	342:6	67:4,6,9,15
298:7	269:4	407:19,23	13:17 14:2	145:17,19	245:3,5,11	366:24	67:23 68:5
cost-benefit	276:24	408:2,5	15:2,11	146:10,17	245:14	377:2	68:6,14
54:3	277:13,19	410:6 411:8	16:3,14	146:20,24	301:21,25	396:12	69:3,21

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 13

70:7,12,16	134:14	272:4,18	127:6	102:6 136:2	369:3,8	criteria 69:4	curious 18:9
70:20,23	136:9	273:20	count 223:17	200:8	373:25	69:5 460:17	182:17
71:5,16	137:17	274:10	335:11,13	237:16	375:5	critical	current 58:11
72:20 73:7	138:18	275:14,18	339:25	359:22	created 170:9	148:15	127:11
73:15 74:5	139:10,12	277:3,14,16	countless	372:22	182:25	153:15	249:21
74:24 75:6	139:13	277:17,21	417:23	435:22	197:23	170:24	441:19
75:10 76:2	140:19,24	277:24	countries	courses 54:13	creates 436:6	198:7	currently
76:5,8,9,10	141:18	278:4	251:7	54:13 55:6	creating 7:22	289:25	39:15 71:9
76:12,17,19	142:11,15	281:17,24	country	55:9,10,12	111:25	290:10	96:7 97:9
76:25 77:15	142:19,24	282:25	163:23	coursework	112:13	291:14	108:11
78:3,11,15	143:2,18	284:18,21	172:6 177:4	54:18	115:8 178:2	342:17	300:25
78:20 79:18	144:4,13,16	285:10	181:9,11	court 171:10	178:5 252:5	410:21	323:16
79:21 80:13	145:12,16	293:11	241:21	270:12	280:8	critically	393:21
81:4,7	149:18	295:20	255:4 289:6	271:19	435:10	149:6 155:3	395:4
82:13,19	155:7 158:6	297:16	425:12	cousins 91:14	creation 7:9	crochet	405:12
83:2,6,24	158:7 160:3	298:5,11,15	426:9	cover 36:16	71:2,24	226:19	411:16
84:6,8,12	160:4,7,8	299:2,4,5	463:23	50:15 54:14	91:25 120:6	450:13	418:23
85:15 94:15	161:14,16	300:2,4,11	counts 118:22	63:7 128:18	369:6	crocheted	420:3,8
94:16 95:20	180:24	300:16	118:25	135:17	creations	450:16	440:16
95:24 96:13	181:7,17,20	301:14,15	County	318:18	234:17	crowd 291:21	453:15
97:3,8,11	182:10,15	301:22	464:12	coverage	creative	crowned	curriculum
97:17 98:4	183:4,6,8	302:10	Coupa 457:4	14:16,25	171:2	390:12	54:25 59:19
98:8,12	183:16,20	312:15	couple 8:19	315:13,14	creativity	crucial 23:25	Custis 112:19
99:20 100:7	184:6,8,10	314:24,25	11:2 26:11	covered	180:7	280:20	custodial
100:23	184:12,14	316:10	32:13 85:20	102:10	credible	398:7	55:24 56:3
101:2,9	184:15,17	317:18	108:5	144:18	369:2	crumbling	custodians
102:15,18	185:10,21	318:12,22	120:25	318:7	credit 87:9,11	439:5	104:16
103:5,8	187:7	319:5,16	143:6 148:7	385:17	454:25	cry 392:9	customer 9:6
106:25	188:20	320:25	149:23	393:22	455:3,6,8	429:24	12:20 55:8
107:2,14,17	189:14,25	321:7	184:18	covering 3:3	Creek 352:4	crying 224:15	55:16 243:9
107:25	190:12,13	322:17,23	187:13	316:19,21	Creelman	Culhane	465:24
108:6,10	191:18	324:22	207:22	cracked	269:17	450:12	customers
109:4	193:11,13	325:3	209:7	402:6	crew 268:3	cultural	5:20 464:13
110:19	193:17,24	326:25	236:11	craft 182:2	crews 250:2	223:19	cut 194:23
111:8,22	193:25	330:15	253:15	Craig 191:13	crime 220:20	369:13	268:16
114:4,12,24	194:2,22	331:3,10	256:11,24	crane 439:2	321:19	culture	440:24
115:4 116:5	195:5,6,7,8	333:5	261:19	cranny	322:10	109:10	cute 36:21
116:14,18	196:8,14	349:23,24	273:8 278:5	308:24	324:17	114:22	37:4
120:22,23	197:9	350:21	279:12	craziness	criminal	144:23	cycle 84:20
121:3,4	198:20,25	352:12,19	298:25	329:25	168:17	170:18	209:16
122:5,9,12	199:6,14,24	353:7	308:20	crazy 190:21	187:25	218:6	320:21
122:17,20	202:9,18	354:17,21	310:25	191:6 327:4	319:24	225:24	cycling
122:23	204:9 205:5	355:3	315:2 325:4	create 91:6	crisis 97:4	229:15	390:20
123:6,9,17	205:8,13,19	356:15,21	360:5	95:25	127:14,15	348:23	
124:8 126:2	205:20	356:25	429:18	110:15	128:4	389:24	D
126:5,8	206:23	357:2,5,13	462:11	111:19	143:13	458:18	D&I 72:19
128:2,8,13	207:9,10,14	358:16	coupled	113:10	172:20	cultures	110:8
128:17,22	236:12	360:2,22,25	314:3	119:14	328:16	170:8	112:24
128:25	242:7,8,13	393:22	course 12:7	165:11	391:12	Cup 250:25	113:2
129:4	269:7,8	422:9,11	16:23 27:13	170:18	426:2	251:2,7	daily 164:2
131:13,19	270:17,20	423:25	33:17 55:2	178:9	443:16	curiosity	164:16,19
131:20	271:15,17	445:3	59:4 66:12	211:20	444:11	163:19	316:13
133:25	271:23	counselors	74:24 91:3	247:14	460:2	436:9	388:10
							391:23

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 14

395:9	158:22	DC 72:14	decreased	Delegate	69:22,24	144:25	descriptions
daitoryo	164:23	74:17,18	98:9	393:24	73:21,22	185:5	7:11 110:9
376:24	173:2 175:8	75:24 76:15	decreasing	deli 30:4,5,7	demolish	269:12	deserve 85:11
damage	180:15	77:5 95:9	160:25	deliberate	461:9	340:10	224:4 311:4
276:21	181:2	95:15,18	dedicated	119:14	demolition	343:8	311:5,9
381:14	189:14	154:12	5:16 278:19	deliberately	459:3,16	398:18	382:12,23
391:13	191:2,8,13	405:7 408:9	420:22	118:10	460:2	417:19	388:22
399:17	199:21	410:17,18	433:15	delighted	Dendy 171:7	depend 29:19	398:9 414:4
447:20	247:3	411:14	dedication	175:7	171:9	dependent	414:8 415:9
damaged	248:24	416:8 419:5	246:24	deliver 247:7	denied	309:21	416:18
99:16 277:7	250:21	433:24	deep 81:19	381:6	460:24	depending	455:20
damages	252:22	445:7	99:17	delivering	department	276:6	deserves
275:7,21	259:10	de 102:2	133:24	91:15	10:6 11:5	291:20	17:24 397:2
dance 132:24	300:18	deal 39:11	222:20	delivery	12:11,11,16	depends	design 169:4
dangerous	306:6	104:15	deepen	247:11	24:15 56:17	105:14	221:23
418:10	307:14	126:25	165:17	387:22	86:4 87:7	depictions	225:21
Darby 139:3	313:4	237:25	deepening	Dell 251:8	103:23	168:25	226:5 271:7
darkness	327:11	343:11	165:12	demand 6:6	172:12	depleted	272:13
174:3	328:20	412:19	deeper	332:20	174:17	102:12	312:3 313:2
Darrell 1:10	330:5,9	dealing 94:22	209:19	341:16	177:18	deploy	353:21
373:14	341:14	206:9	436:5	381:18,21	208:17	254:22	354:7
data 274:4,5	342:4 351:9	391:12	deeply 84:9	387:7	211:22	deployed	designation
320:13	353:12	deals 18:10	84:15 99:15	427:17	212:18	323:21	460:17,24
321:5,12,12	377:15	dealt 39:9	114:15	436:11	216:25	324:11	designed
324:17	378:7 383:6	dearth 413:6	381:17	demanding	218:12	depraved	170:11
365:6 374:6	386:8,11	debate 77:24	416:10	381:6 445:5	219:20	389:25	365:14
375:17	388:13	decade 58:5	define 7:13	demands	233:17	depth 238:20	369:23
databases	394:19	441:2,17	356:14,17	156:17	237:9 244:7	deputies	373:18
97:6	407:2 435:3	decades	defined	388:12	245:17	234:3	desirable
date 66:10	436:6	102:24	354:18	443:24	246:25	Deputy 12:20	404:8
158:17,18	451:18	December	355:25	Dembe 4:22	247:24	162:19	desires
391:13	464:6	89:9 273:5	356:11	8:7,10,14	247:24	245:19,21	255:16
dates 29:5	daycare	391:9,24	definitely	10:15 17:20	253:11	275:11,12	desk 412:3
273:17	66:16,16	466:8	13:5 56:7	19:23 20:10	255:17	275:24	desperately
daughter	106:17	decide 15:7	156:22	20:25,25	259:9	284:15,17	304:10
38:17	431:9	103:12	192:23	25:14 33:4	262:23	284:20	despite 412:6
292:17	449:19	Decimal	217:6,6	34:15 73:5	279:14	302:4	435:3,5
daughters	days 5:5,13	435:9	257:7	73:9 74:2	284:6,14	312:14	destination
420:7	32:5 59:3	decisions	272:25	135:19	289:19	318:4,13	291:10
daunting	63:3 104:4	303:7,20	324:16	137:4 138:8	299:13	319:2,7	destroyed
426:14	122:15	304:20	355:20	155:23	308:7 340:6	355:16	385:18
David 228:8	134:19	306:12,20	356:12	156:10,15	342:23	358:15	detail 11:4
228:18	135:2	314:9	degree	156:23	343:10,12	360:20	15:21 19:16
355:7,15	136:14	324:18	131:11	158:24	355:10	398:24	158:19
Dawan 188:9	141:5 159:7	348:9 365:7	258:20,21	159:8,24	398:24	453:9,9	366:23
188:17,23	177:7	370:12	334:8	161:19	Departmenten...	182:17	368:3
189:15	191:10	decline 74:14	degrees	408:20	246:8 247:6	Derenick-L...	detailed
217:11	222:15,15	declined	258:18	demo 460:3	247:19	154:2	21:13 27:14
day 38:19	249:12	74:11	386:5	demographic	258:12	392:2	29:7
41:16 42:24	385:14	464:15	dehumaniz...	19:7,17,21	departments	described	details 358:14
49:4 111:12	391:7	decorating	386:22	demograph...	4:3 11:18	15:22 323:6	366:17
113:18	402:20	450:15	delay 2:4	21:7 25:3	45:16 46:17	description	368:19
132:12	465:17	decrease 11:7	395:11	67:10,17	46:23,24	436:2	deteriorating

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 15

69:13	DiBerardinis	20:13 303:7	426:8	discussions	197:20	179:14	59:18 83:11
determinati...	319:25	303:20	432:10,12	375:15	198:12	234:25	87:23 88:20
164:7,23	dictate 74:23	383:2	disability	disinvestme...	199:11	236:22	91:20 106:4
determine	77:25	412:15	172:13	441:3,18	217:17,18	237:14	106:20
309:5 331:8	dictated	413:3	360:7,17	dismissive	219:9 220:7	247:15	110:2
determined	140:22	dig 137:12	disabled	294:4	231:23	266:8 354:4	127:20
28:22 69:17	dictates 141:3	Digital	424:18	disparity	242:18	397:7	134:12
176:10,11	Diego 197:23	420:19	432:3,8,21	343:23	249:13	406:21	140:9
198:3	199:5	421:7	disagree	dispatcher	253:3	diversified	143:12
determining	difference	dignity	121:5	394:2	255:10	408:25	150:9,20
135:11	43:7 59:6	201:11	disappeared	395:18	257:12	diversifying	167:8
devastating	59:10,20	344:10	458:21	dispatchers	259:11	155:15	168:12
198:14	60:2,10	dilemma	disappearing	394:13	267:5	diversities	177:4
develop 22:7	170:2 180:8	427:17	458:23	395:3,4,6	283:19	246:16	182:18
111:17	207:5	dime 121:12	disciplinary	396:2	290:18	diversity 7:7	186:20
112:23	209:22	Dino 457:3	79:17,20,22	dispersed	300:23	8:23 20:5	187:8 191:6
128:6 230:7	279:10	Diplomacy	80:4,21	152:22	301:3,12	20:11 21:20	191:23
406:24	different 27:6	237:8	discipline	displaced	302:5 307:6	22:7 23:22	195:23
developed	46:25 81:9	dire 390:14	82:9 409:24	403:13	307:8 312:2	67:5 71:2,8	197:14
74:9	91:23	direct 138:16	410:3,8	displayed	315:20	71:25 74:12	204:21
developer	115:25	143:20	disclosure	226:7	320:8,14	75:12 77:7	207:20
210:10	168:22	469:23	352:10	227:11	323:3 327:6	78:17 80:7	209:7
developers	200:10,15	directing	discount	displaying	342:7 345:3	82:22 83:9	215:17,18
404:4	225:22	390:20	180:6	229:9	345:5,7,9	84:16 94:22	216:17
438:12	236:24	direction	discover	dispossession	345:12,16	107:5 114:5	217:10
developing	237:2 239:6	62:20 309:7	181:23	386:22	345:19	114:16	224:25
7:18 71:8	240:3	directly 130:6	427:10	disrepair	346:4 347:3	149:20	241:13
development	254:22	203:20	discrepancy	291:4	347:24	153:8 155:9	253:17
6:5 21:16	262:21	212:12	417:12	390:13	348:7,18	157:7	254:17
135:9	272:10	257:21	discriminat...	disrespect	381:10,11	158:14,25	259:14
139:20	280:18	Director 4:18	6:21 8:23	83:18	381:20	234:16	278:25
176:2	283:15	12:20	79:9 408:13	disrespected	387:6 388:3	236:18	307:25
224:17	285:16	162:11,18	409:15,17	435:6	389:17	248:4	308:23
240:23	290:25	162:19	410:5	disrespectful	393:21,23	291:18	310:20
369:2	291:2	208:9	discriminat...	21:5	401:25	408:22	314:20
402:14	312:21	271:16	80:23	disspiriting	404:6,7,12	411:2 423:3	323:7,10
424:25	313:5,9	327:11	discs 391:13	441:20	405:17	423:3	324:7
developmen...	323:21	353:5	discuss 27:13	distinctive	411:16	460:10	327:19
341:9	324:19	355:16	74:7 203:10	60:10	417:22	divide 19:8	329:15
Dewey 435:9	338:15,18	364:3	253:11	distinguishes	419:4	215:8	335:5 339:2
DHCD 444:8	339:8	422:17,19	355:24	203:13,16	423:22	dizziness	339:9
DHS 198:4,7	340:10	452:10	465:10	distributed	459:5	447:16	345:20
diabetes	350:13	458:7	discussed	248:12	462:19	docket 98:19	350:7 352:2
443:9	351:9	Director's	36:3 101:5	distributing	District's	doctor 401:8	353:3,11
diagnoses	352:25	236:8	discussing	335:15	249:19	documentat...	362:24
173:24	358:22,24	Directors	72:12	district 18:6	distrust 96:3	52:15	410:8
dialogue	359:5,6	18:21 69:23	200:14	33:23 35:19	disturbing	documenting	430:16
77:24	425:18	424:19,24	discussion	36:10 59:16	6:22 114:25	458:10	436:13
132:20,25	452:12	directory	95:16	93:10,11	diverse 19:2	documents	437:17
133:9 138:4	462:7	354:4,8	112:12	148:24	19:11,15	364:18	449:19
199:10	differently	disabilities	142:10	167:5	20:7,14	doing 9:18	450:5 452:8
Diamond	322:12	357:19	236:18	183:11	152:22	38:13 43:24	465:12
261:22	difficult	358:2,3,21	253:6	197:11,15	156:2,3	48:12 54:2	dollar 178:17

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 16

455:7	117:9,13,19	downloada...	drugs 373:23	easily 42:20	educator	339:13	7:4 22:16
dollar-for-d...	118:21	118:9	ducking	413:20	139:23	electronically	23:19 45:5
232:19	119:2,24	downloads	371:25	easy 262:24	445:19,23	118:7	47:22 73:10
dollars 5:11	120:16	118:25	duct-taped	302:9 310:6	educators	elementary	74:19 82:3
16:9 27:16	190:14,24	downtown	137:15	310:7	381:4,5	400:4	107:7
37:16 53:2	207:16,17	326:3	due 38:21	325:11	382:13	412:23	109:17,19
53:3 65:4	209:2	dozen 9:10	185:17	365:10	385:13	446:3 447:5	110:21
68:13 69:7	210:18	398:19	276:8	eating 446:7	386:7	elephant	115:12
87:21	212:3,24	Dr 292:17	318:17	ebb 255:15	414:24	144:7	141:12
101:24	214:11	drainage	394:9	ebbs 255:14	effect 411:3	eligible	152:12
121:8	215:21	451:7	412:16	echo 94:19	464:16	262:25	257:3
135:12	Domb's	dramatically	460:19	207:19	effective 22:9	287:13	260:11
136:12	141:22	164:10	464:16	economic	effectively	436:18	280:12
137:9	donate	247:19	467:6	165:14	127:10	eliminate	282:20
140:21	135:20	442:4	dues 465:9	178:11	effectiveness	37:23	409:16
141:5,6,9	donated	draw 168:18	Dunkin 421:5	224:17	368:14	eliminating	430:2
184:24	450:9,14	drawing	dust 385:17	236:19	effects 390:14	37:22	465:20
185:3,8	donors	173:8 179:2	385:21	239:14	447:16	432:25	employees'
192:5 198:5	137:21	226:20	391:19	240:8,23	efficiencies	Elka 234:4	401:25
198:6 232:9	Donut 421:5	dread 329:19	duty 30:6	241:9	57:7	eloquently	employers
232:10	Donyale	329:21	104:16	242:23	efficient	201:4 214:9	209:8
284:23	23:24 82:25	dream 306:8	Dyston	287:23	102:6	Emanuel	employing
288:14,15	door 118:3	375:4 417:2	445:14	369:2,10	effort 200:11	274:20	224:7 286:6
289:23	317:14	dreamed	448:25	402:16	247:17	embed	employment
294:16,19	426:17	425:5	449:4,5	448:8,10	257:8	222:24	120:7
294:22	doors 5:18	dreams		Ed 169:20	258:11,11	223:12	157:16
305:16	36:23 223:5	157:23	E	edges 326:15	efforts 60:7	embrace	167:13
385:19	398:17	Drexel 173:9	e-mail 31:15	educate 467:3	156:4 219:4	180:12	178:10
403:3	406:25	Drexel's	E-Rate 86:22	educated	252:16,24	emergence	200:6
432:23	416:21	238:23	eager 230:7	37:25 91:11	375:24	369:20	257:11
462:11	418:4	drill 390:21	Eagles 394:7	91:13 467:4	405:16	emergencies	259:20
Domb 1:11	Dorothy	drinks 357:11	earlier 95:3	education	eight 49:3	150:10	260:7
48:5,6,10	274:19	drive 309:3	119:25	21:24 60:11	394:2	276:8	369:15
48:14,17	Dorr-Dory...	351:8	129:8 205:8	91:9,16	Eighth 323:2	emergency	empower
49:5,15,21	424:7,9,17	driven 141:3	327:11	115:20	Einstein	5:16 83:5	375:8
50:16 51:3	425:24	198:17	348:17	120:3 165:9	173:22	395:11,13	empowerm...
51:10,13,16	Dorynek	driver 239:15	350:4	174:10	either 10:10	418:7	374:19
51:23 53:8	415:21,22	drivers	358:18	249:16	48:25	emotional	en 376:24
53:12,16,25	double 97:8	455:18,21	379:4	349:5	158:16	358:3	387:4
54:10 55:5	112:20	455:22	422:16	377:11	245:10	emphasize	enable 459:14
55:11,16,19	211:16	drives 180:16	early 22:6	386:23	281:18	234:10	enabling
56:13,18,25	219:12,23	202:6	139:20	396:25	318:7	employed	55:12
57:18 85:16	281:11	driving	218:14	398:7 413:9	319:12	232:13	encompasses
85:17,24	304:8	240:24	229:3	419:17	335:12	395:8	333:19
86:5,12,19	double-digit	drop 20:16	249:18	420:5	379:21	employee	encounter
86:24 87:25	118:6	47:9 343:11	341:5	437:20	either/or	7:16 23:2,3	164:24
88:7,14,17	doubling	377:13	354:14	466:25	430:12	24:2 79:24	encourage
89:3,13	211:12	467:5	462:20	467:8	elected 454:6	82:6 113:9	162:22
90:3,12,21	248:20	dropout	earn 433:7	educational	election	209:12	232:6
93:4,9,13	doubt 22:22	376:2	earned 87:8	157:19	436:19	257:17	421:23
93:18 94:4	61:12 96:2	dropped	87:11 344:9	170:20	electrician	employee's	422:5
94:8,11	Douglass	465:2 467:5	earnest 462:6	374:22	338:17	79:12	encouraged
116:20,21	460:23	DRS 420:19	ears 145:23	415:8	electricians	employees	429:15
			447:17				

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 17

encourages	247:9	entire 7:14	313:3,23	estimates	251:9	226:24	201:21
435:21	373:24	59:4,7	318:19	366:9	283:16	335:8	287:25
ended 265:9	enjoy 30:2	144:6	358:25	estimation	288:5	357:13,14	292:8 293:6
Endowment	149:3 347:5	195:22	359:15,16	47:19	291:19	examine 7:10	293:10,14
459:10	400:17,22	222:2	359:24	125:20	292:4	example	294:11,20
ends 33:23	431:12	252:14	360:6	280:5	298:21	35:25	295:8
367:2	enjoyed 30:8	302:4	equitable	evaluation	315:14	132:10	296:11
endure 18:8	234:19	372:25	247:16	264:3	327:6 400:9	134:8 175:6	313:19
energized	enjoying	396:2 398:6	equity 21:20	evening 41:22	451:4	191:8	excuse 8:3
248:2	124:24	entirely 388:2	22:8 115:9	42:22	eventually	232:20	111:2 112:7
energy 57:15	Enlightening	entities	407:4 414:9	327:10,12	13:3 213:25	255:5	162:3
164:7	467:25	280:19	equivalent	361:15,25	everybody	257:11	320:10
403:22	enormity 8:4	359:6	328:19	363:7,9	17:22 40:3	276:10	379:19
enforce 96:14	112:8	entrance	era 369:23	372:13,17	44:9 45:24	289:8,22	executed
97:12	enormous	398:14	erased 164:14	393:18	55:3 133:9	292:13	272:12
engage 44:15	410:16	426:18	Erika 437:4	399:24	189:6,7	303:21	354:10,13
74:22	enrich 374:23	450:15	437:14	405:3	190:15	310:3	executive 9:2
118:19	enriching	entreprene...	Erin 415:20	407:25	191:3,4,18	343:12	69:24,25
216:8 229:8	247:7	92:7 228:25	416:5	408:3	195:20	430:14	70:8 71:22
236:15	enrichment	entreprene...	435:17,19	414:21	206:4 232:3	433:24	72:8 73:22
238:2 253:6	61:23	91:3,21,23	435:20,23	416:2,3	241:13	462:18	112:21
293:7 313:9	374:19	93:16 142:3	escape 164:25	424:6,8	291:16	exams 7:12	113:5,8,22
374:18	enrolled	entry-level	ESL 170:25	434:13	301:8 302:6	exceedingly	113:24
375:14	167:9	209:9,11	especially	437:7,9	303:13	71:19	114:6,11,18
engaged	ensure 5:5	247:22	62:17	442:14,15	325:25	Excellent	162:11
115:6 166:3	16:11 22:10	260:15	199:18	448:24	326:2 340:8	156:23	271:16
208:19	23:12 41:13	environment	200:21	458:3,5,6	344:3	317:18	353:5
250:21	44:23 54:17	146:3	203:6 301:6	461:17,19	371:23	318:22,23	executives
264:23	59:11,17	334:17	312:7	463:17,18	everybody's	360:2,3	70:3,3
engagement	60:5,16	409:20	314:14	evenings	2:5	exception	exempt 107:6
12:21 44:16	72:18 111:4	Environme...	327:2	329:8	everyday	69:10	exhibition
55:8 166:9	111:6	447:13	essentially	330:19	403:19	excited 33:22	168:13,13
228:5,6,19	134:25	environments	66:21	event 41:21	eviction	118:2 163:9	exist 39:8
234:18	143:23	81:11	establish	87:2,15	443:16	170:13	126:10
237:21	236:19	envision	157:5 362:2	139:2,3	evidence	178:11	130:2 351:5
252:16	308:3	407:9	366:3	224:9	72:22	248:6	existence
304:19	361:23	envisioned	established	234:17	176:24	267:18	425:5
312:8	368:11	353:22	64:25 73:4	291:25	316:23	324:20	existing 63:8
353:13,15	370:9	envisions	109:2 366:6	296:3,4,14	375:18	362:4	254:19
353:21	410:23	399:10	432:10	297:17	409:6 469:4	396:20	305:24
354:6	433:8	envy 165:21	464:8	325:19	evidence-ba...	413:14	expand 88:20
373:22	ensuring	181:8	establishing	327:14,23	373:20	exciting	90:23
406:9	16:25 17:3	equal 110:22	23:22	events 41:20	evolve 199:15	64:12	126:21
engaging	23:5,18	407:12	establishme...	66:21 223:9	ex-offenders	170:13	139:21
44:21 374:7	59:2 72:7	equally 73:11	7:16	234:25	206:5,6	175:18	156:4 230:8
engineering	422:23	equation	estate 36:16	235:16	exacerbated	177:11	248:9
378:15	461:7	201:2	438:12,21	236:6,9,20	391:17,18	194:18	expanded
English	entail 28:6	equipment	466:16,18	237:11	exact 53:22	202:5 225:5	249:11
170:23	enter 398:9	183:25	estimate	238:22	272:22	231:18	expanding
405:23,25	enthusiasm	306:16	366:7	239:11,23	304:8	267:16	58:9 173:18
406:20	216:6	307:20	estimated	240:9 241:7	exactly 45:18	311:24	254:8
454:16	enthusiastic...	311:8 312:5	246:6	241:17	54:8 55:14	exclude 288:2	expansion
enhance	10:5	312:10	273:16	250:14,23	56:23 82:2	exclusive	62:18 63:7

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 18

253:25	399:8	446:11,21	257:14	295:10	353:18	446:23	388:23
256:4	408:17	eyesore	276:15	333:16	354:11,13	feels 15:8	figh ts 329:24
expect 42:23	expert 38:6	201:16	290:8	fairness 23:7	466:7	82:8 243:10	figure 45:3
54:18 72:21	expertise	F	291:12	23:8,9	fashion	Feldman	126:13
166:8	274:14	F 364:2	293:3,4	115:8	229:12	393:3,9,12	137:23
272:20	364:7	Fabey 267:21	294:23	fairs 250:16	274:18	393:14	240:10
354:9,15	explain	269:17	295:2,5,13	faith 84:4	314:17	396:10,12	262:21
430:19	138:25	fabric 278:21	300:22	164:24	fast 176:16	396:16	264:22
expectations	explaining	fabulous	310:21	faithfully	425:24	397:17,25	295:15
109:10	217:23	187:8,8	311:5	389:16	fastest 238:19	399:20	300:20
304:24	explore 402:8	348:18	312:25	fall 175:6	Father	fell 291:4	331:22
306:7,11,18	exploring	facade 460:20	315:10	250:20	460:22	fellow 220:6	figured
308:5,7	313:6	face 180:3	321:20,25	386:5	fatigue	377:3 381:4	261:22
314:5 348:4	exposed	223:17	322:2,5,9	450:17	447:17	414:21	figures 56:22
expected	401:12,17	face-to-face	facing 411:20	fallen 168:25	Faye 457:4	Fellowship	file 110:21
108:7 156:6	447:24	382:19	412:7	385:17	458:7	168:11	380:23
expecting	exposing	faced 426:14	414:18	falling 310:22	February	felt 81:16	382:15
187:16	185:14	facelift	fact 69:18	familiar	109:7	427:10	385:10
394:9	186:14	307:11,18	79:2 96:14	323:7	feces 386:10	Feltonville	387:21
expedite	exposure	faces 362:25	105:23	362:24	federal 86:23	36:14 385:6	410:15
365:22	225:23	369:17	110:12	families 87:4	366:5 445:6	female 47:2	fill 11:9,21
expenditures	351:19	facilitate	145:6	151:25	Federation	67:19 70:4	12:16 39:14
366:18	401:10	162:21	151:19	304:12	385:11	107:7,8	338:5,11,14
expense	447:15,18	facilitates	156:5	313:18	414:22	266:16	339:14
267:24	express 182:2	313:4	203:19	346:11	feed 431:13	fences 306:14	344:6
390:6	195:20	facilities 5:25	242:5 273:3	394:14	feedback	Fernando	345:20
expensive	extended	43:9 55:25	312:16	411:20	109:18	457:20	filled 11:19
101:17	103:17	56:10 69:19	347:7	443:15,18	111:18	Ferry 461:12	24:3 87:19
293:23	extending	99:3 120:8	419:24	444:3,6,9	217:25	festival	107:23
experience	4:23	132:4,22	464:16,16	444:12,18	224:14	227:16	165:23
9:7 169:8	extension	134:9	facts 440:23	444:20	229:22	228:24	255:24
177:21	141:24	174:15,16	fail 180:10	462:17	235:10	229:14	257:21
201:5	extensive	253:3 254:3	377:17	families'	feel 15:10	festivals	337:12,25
220:11	237:4	254:8,12	failed 377:10	443:20	23:19 81:23	223:8	417:10,16
243:9 249:4	extent 142:5	255:7,8,22	failing 190:22	family 62:15	96:23	fewer 151:11	filling 87:13
258:24	156:4	256:13	270:11	83:4 242:21	113:25	156:17	343:21
260:19	160:19	261:19	failure	381:8,16	164:6,22	398:2	417:20
263:23	external	278:10	409:22	464:7,9	173:5 174:7	fiction 64:14	fills 338:6
302:8	96:18	293:17	failures	fan 184:20	188:16	field 251:17	filter 39:22
303:18	extra 44:8	295:16	276:13	244:11	196:18	273:3	final 52:14
304:6	extraordina...	301:4 305:4	fair 45:23	fans 184:11	201:6	302:25	339:19
343:14,23	174:8	305:12	111:6	383:12	210:14	341:13	388:8 459:2
374:23	extraordina...	311:15,21	168:20	fantastic	224:4 230:4	344:14	finally 9:10
395:9,11	179:8	311:23	259:5	307:17	232:11,14	374:22	179:25
420:13	246:24	315:12	353:19	325:10	280:15	fields 273:6	211:21
431:5	extreme	316:7 322:7	354:24	far 30:2	284:4 290:4	349:13	274:23
experienced	390:25	332:17,21	382:7	41:13 51:21	293:19	Fifth 459:5	343:19
378:7	extremely	346:9 348:5	438:17	100:18	294:7	fight 314:13	368:23
experiences	218:11	facilities'	fairly 23:20	119:8 166:9	304:15	327:21	427:5
234:19	238:4	150:10	69:17 73:11	232:11	372:24	382:22	Finance
247:7 402:9	239:22	facility 14:20	284:24	237:12	417:12	455:15,20	13:12
experiencing	eye 447:17	16:13 186:2	Fairmount	240:7 283:9	420:13,14	458:16	216:24
178:10	eyes 406:23	254:9	251:20	297:5	446:9,14,14	fighting	218:12

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 19

financial 3:2	153:21	fitness 359:24	flow 255:15	315:3 333:6	256:21	3:23	170:20
89:6,14,18	158:17	390:19	flowers	368:15	261:22	forward-thi...	215:9
89:21,24	184:19	five 3:2 40:21	450:16	373:9	323:22	365:14	254:12
90:24 91:22	195:19	46:17,18	flows 255:14	400:17	450:23	foster 234:15	285:16
93:14,15	227:19,22	49:10 52:6	Floyd 457:22	followed	forget 126:20	fought 433:14	350:12
97:4 156:7	241:24	63:4 68:18	focus 167:24	367:6	197:19	found 260:7	399:2
192:19	253:15,16	70:2 102:21	196:16	following 4:3	244:16,17	401:8	430:19
363:19	257:8,8,18	107:6 117:3	213:13	142:10	forgetting	409:13	463:21
364:4	258:2,15	134:7	361:21	445:25	127:4	426:23	four-hour
365:12	271:17	151:17	focused 6:15	447:15	226:12	427:7	41:9
366:22	281:10,21	176:12	37:21 254:7	followthrou...	forgot 9:8	462:18	four-month
369:23	285:14	222:15	focuses	22:18 23:8	244:18	foundation	208:23
financially	308:20	294:15	236:15	23:10	forgotten	65:22 66:3	fourth 88:10
50:17	311:2	363:19,22	folded 291:3	followup	171:15	66:19 68:9	281:11
financials	315:20	363:23	291:4	22:18 23:19	form 125:21	105:7,19	405:24
92:11	352:13	378:14	folding	105:6	179:13	107:13,15	Fox 102:7
find 6:22	362:23	394:3	450:23	food 249:11	formal 145:7	129:9	Fran 450:12
14:25 20:2	363:3 366:2	399:10	folk 142:5	288:9	formalized	134:17,24	France
173:4,12	373:11	402:12	folks 24:4	296:19	131:4	135:6,8,10	279:24
182:6	376:23	408:24	107:19	297:18	formed 375:4	135:21	280:12
259:21	394:3	430:19	111:6 128:9	298:22	former	136:3 137:5	franchised
260:4 271:2	396:17	453:13	130:16	325:17	363:25	140:5,15,21	464:18
292:6 294:5	405:14	five-year	133:3 153:7	462:23	364:3	140:23	Frank 267:20
329:2	406:5	134:2,9	160:13	464:21	formerly	141:3,16	269:17
352:15	422:15	366:22	162:3,3	Foods 209:15	168:8	148:20	Frankford
394:17	423:23	fix 65:12	186:17	foot 56:3,5,6	forming 72:2	149:2	99:13
449:12,18	428:24	147:11	187:24	56:11	145:6	155:10,17	228:14
449:24	429:2,11,21	308:8	219:17	footage	forth 98:25	156:3	229:13
finding	435:14	341:14	236:22	316:15	280:3 302:6	178:20	frankly 111:2
167:25	443:25	389:2,7	237:10	317:17	368:7	181:3	Frederick
426:15	449:13	392:21	242:3	football	fortunate	210:16	460:23
finds 368:12	452:20	462:12,12	257:24	426:13	289:4	211:18	free 4:4,18
fine 253:20	462:10	462:13	260:2 266:8	Force 142:22	fortunately	Foundation's	5:2 7:14 8:6
fines 413:17	464:2	463:8,8	278:16,18	143:9,17	419:9	137:18,21	11:17 12:21
fingers 25:22	first-genera...	fixed 52:7	287:10	458:25	forward 6:24	168:6,15	27:19 28:21
finish 431:15	170:21	432:21	288:16	459:13	9:3 32:9	Foundation...	35:2 44:3
finished 9:11	fiscal 2:16,19	436:24	291:24	forced 391:16	51:21 58:21	140:18	46:16,20
137:5	2:21 3:3,6	fixing 129:11	315:18	412:15	88:24 155:6	foundations	51:19 55:20
Finley 251:16	3:22,24,25	flags 226:6	327:22	426:18	163:6	178:19	65:4,15,22
Fire 343:12	22:5,10	299:11	352:6	Ford 168:6	180:17	founded	66:2 70:25
firm 375:22	51:21 53:7	flat 98:11,12	371:19	181:3	232:24	443:3	72:8 87:14
first 4:8 7:22	166:3	123:2	380:9	211:17	253:12	four 28:11,13	87:14 88:5
8:21 9:11	208:12	371:24	384:18	fore 115:23	254:13,25	28:22 49:11	94:23 109:8
18:19,21,22	234:8	flaunting	follow 27:15	foreclosing	313:18,24	55:2 66:7	116:10
34:24 41:21	245:25	454:20	33:25 68:6	453:21	314:20	68:10,12	122:3 129:8
48:10 58:4	248:8 281:9	flee 400:21	76:11 95:21	forefront	348:13	69:19 70:4	130:2
58:15 64:23	366:6,12	flooding	106:23	203:20	349:21	70:15	131:24
65:10 74:3	367:13	99:16	121:2	278:12	356:13	102:10,20	136:11
89:16	416:14	412:21	135:19	foregoing	359:18	102:21	143:9
111:11,24	459:18	451:8	140:23	469:7,20	370:8	103:16	149:22
144:11,14	fishing 20:16	floor 386:11	141:22	Forestry	399:15	108:8	151:15,17
148:22	fit 50:10	flourish	157:22	249:20	425:25	138:11	155:9,17
150:23	311:8,18,23	421:22	285:12	forever	forward-loo...	166:10	220:12,16

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 20

237:16	426:17	246:5,9	407:3,17	FY18 179:17	363:21	266:24	250:6
250:15	445:4	284:24	417:17	FY19 166:8	433:20	316:7	given 68:13
290:2	460:20	289:12	419:16	246:6	generally	338:22	69:22 82:14
396:13	front-end	295:15	422:22	249:23	12:25	345:15	84:13 97:14
397:8 405:6	157:2	325:6,8,15	423:2,12	250:7,14	105:18	353:20	144:23
407:17	front-line	326:13,20	425:16,21	251:11	135:13	354:12	145:6
408:8,14	417:11	382:10	426:2 430:7	252:3	235:15	361:15	181:25
409:17,20	fruition	387:18	430:13	FY20 15:22	345:3	371:24	250:8
414:12	174:24	388:25	431:20	163:10	347:25	452:14	254:15
419:6	fueling	415:8,17	440:20	246:4 247:4	generate	462:22,23	264:2
429:10,13	439:13	425:4 430:4	444:4 454:4	248:9 285:6	466:13	462:23	265:13,15
430:2	fulfill 406:7	432:17	459:20	361:17	generated	giant 113:19	gives 311:20
434:18	fulfilling	433:2,5,16	fundraising	G	292:10	169:3,18	326:16
451:3,21	345:23	433:20,20	69:7	G-E-T 94:6	generates	gifted 378:13	440:7
French 406:3	fulfills 339:23	434:5	funds 5:11	gainful 200:6	242:22	girls 310:18	giving 37:2
frequent	full 13:4	436:12	41:4 63:20	gals 339:4	441:21	327:21	75:21 159:6
353:10	41:16 59:21	444:17	103:2 105:8	game 60:8	generation	446:2 448:9	228:25
frequently	60:3 76:23	453:10,11	105:23	112:15,17	174:25	448:15	274:4
57:14	130:9 175:2	453:12	198:4	126:18	405:15	GIS 321:10	438:10
450:20	265:17	463:9	276:23	140:17	450:4	321:10	glad 10:19
fresh-out-of...	352:10	fundamental	288:20	235:19	generations	give 4:14	43:13 245:4
204:6	394:23	407:3	290:6,13	236:4	306:2 415:2	27:16 28:3	282:17
freshmen	407:3,17	funded 66:8	325:9	games 251:4	gentleman	150:19	378:19
377:16	430:13	66:12,13	funny 185:22	450:8 451:4	257:13	156:10	glass 175:2
Friday 9:14	431:19	68:19 83:19	185:24	gap 134:20	gentlemen	158:19	global 75:22
28:8 43:4	full-day 41:8	97:23 99:12	furniture	134:22	217:5 371:4	190:14	133:13
50:7 329:9	full-time 40:5	106:5 140:5	275:8 277:7	339:19	371:9	192:4 209:4	175:13
449:13	60:15	325:15	450:22	343:13,22	gentrification	214:23	242:2
460:13	148:12	414:4 423:5	further 253:6	gaps 39:14	439:13	240:10	282:19
Fridays 347:9	246:10	436:24	356:14	113:19	458:22	242:25	globe 172:7
friend 450:12	259:20	funders	391:18	Garces	genuine	249:3 255:5	179:3
friendly	260:7,11	174:18	409:18	209:13	163:19	261:17	go 13:11 16:6
81:12	323:20	funding	413:9	gardening	geographical	262:6	16:10 22:9
219:17	399:10,13	17:24 35:2	439:18,18	421:17	263:24	266:12	24:15 41:13
friends 35:8	fully 395:2	45:13 51:20	furthermore	gardens	George's	267:17	42:6 47:7
131:24	414:4 415:8	59:20 64:10	79:5	189:22	32:11 33:9	272:23	60:9 61:16
250:13,18	430:4	65:23 66:5	future 96:22	gather	299:20	280:22,23	61:19 62:16
252:21	431:19	96:6 97:16	155:13	285:22	German 30:6	292:13	63:9 81:21
429:8,10	436:12,23	121:17	178:22	gathered	428:10,11	298:20	87:22 89:5
430:16	469:5	123:2	255:2 256:3	317:8	432:2	303:21	94:18,25
440:17	fumes 391:5	134:17	258:4 259:8	gauge 109:13	Germantown	319:23	96:4 97:3
450:15	fun 360:11	155:2	272:17	gear 134:5	36:12 170:3	351:14	98:2 101:20
frightens	450:10	211:10,19	305:25	Geez 33:2	223:24	357:20	109:25
378:9	functional	213:7,11	309:8	genders	453:21	358:13	110:17
fringe 439:18	413:21	215:3	349:17	236:19	getting 22:25	366:18	117:15,21
Frisk 375:3	functioning	231:25	366:14	general 51:4	50:11,24	372:22	119:11
front 36:22	123:19	265:19	367:8,19	51:17 246:2	87:18,19	373:7	125:12
36:22	fund 51:4	276:4	370:9	246:4,9	102:3	375:22	127:9,12
126:16	63:24 95:3	319:13,14	377:21	281:15	120:12	390:4	128:4
154:16	97:19	335:21	407:10	284:24	139:7 149:4	430:14	132:17
175:11	140:16	375:23	433:11	289:12	202:2	440:9	138:15
288:14	168:7 228:3	390:5	448:8,10,11	314:2 339:6	229:23	451:21,22	140:22
418:3	232:4 246:2	394:23	448:17,18	343:8	241:3	Giveaway	141:5,9

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 21

146:21	349:2	110:14	280:10	179:25	120:12	442:13,15	398:5
148:11,25	368:19	117:15,21	285:21	180:22	130:10	446:22	graduation
149:8	375:7	125:13	290:16,17	181:6,16	158:9 162:6	448:23	89:9 376:3
151:17	goals 54:6,11	126:13,17	295:3,12,16	182:9,14,20	162:9	452:16	graffiti
157:10,15	112:13	127:5,14	296:18	183:14,18	163:22	458:3,4,6	166:13
175:9 177:9	214:12	128:10	298:19	184:3,21	179:9 204:3	461:17,18	grand-kids
182:4	217:3 247:5	129:7	304:6	185:20	204:18	463:16,18	304:12
186:18	304:15	130:17	305:10,14	187:6 188:6	207:19	465:13	grant 66:18
187:10	306:11	133:4	305:17	188:15	212:17	466:12	106:21
189:18	312:17	134:21	306:3	192:10,12	218:20	Goode 73:19	173:17
193:2 204:3	349:2 368:7	136:4 139:8	307:15	193:15,20	226:2	Gorgas	211:18
204:4,20	369:16	143:8	308:8,9	194:17	233:22	251:17	250:10
208:22	375:25	144:19,21	310:19	195:3 196:4	241:11,19	gotten 124:21	272:12,14
211:23	God 183:14	153:3,18	324:17	196:10,17	245:14	173:17	354:11
213:25	311:2 357:6	154:7	327:14,25	197:17	253:14,17	423:7	419:12
214:16	421:12	158:15,21	329:7,18,22	198:23	253:18	Gould 355:15	granted
226:6 229:6	goes 4:13	159:8	329:23,24	199:3,12,16	256:5	355:16	196:5
232:11	44:9 81:20	160:12,15	331:19	200:23	269:10	356:20	grants 63:21
235:4 258:3	92:14 96:21	168:12	336:9	206:22	271:14	government	63:23
262:3	155:7	175:11,12	339:18	207:8 208:2	277:21	71:18,20	230:13
268:21	190:10,19	175:20	341:13	211:9	278:2	86:23	246:3
271:18	204:15	176:3,3,4,5	343:9,20	213:14	284:16,18	162:24	333:19
283:2	205:7,9,10	176:11	356:16	215:20	299:7,9	182:12	grapple
286:10	223:8	177:11,16	357:11	216:2,3,13	302:7 305:6	185:2	163:25
293:14,24	231:16	177:22,25	358:7,8	217:12	305:7,8	303:16	grassroots
294:11	285:7	178:3,5,6,9	359:18	222:4,17	308:4	364:6,11	432:9
295:5 297:9	289:12	180:10	361:17,25	226:15	313:15	365:18	grateful
300:3	290:11	187:24	362:18	228:12	315:14	399:3 445:6	138:9
301:18	302:23	192:6	371:23	229:19	319:16,17	grabbed	162:16
304:11	303:8	198:15,16	372:13,15	230:2,15,21	331:11	317:12	200:3 206:7
305:4 307:8	316:17	200:11	372:17	230:24	332:22	grace 176:13	230:4
307:9 313:7	373:2	201:6	373:4	231:5,10,14	333:5 336:9	208:3,8	232:16
324:25	435:25	204:24	380:17	232:2,7	339:22	graces 175:23	243:21
325:7,12	444:20	208:2 217:8	384:19,23	233:6 235:5	353:6,7	grad 238:12	334:13
326:10	going 2:3	217:22	388:11	352:22	361:13,15	grade 13:9	461:22
328:4,5	9:18 10:10	218:10,17	390:10	458:11	363:6,8	378:10	Graterford
335:9	14:24 15:25	220:8	394:6 410:6	Golson	372:12	390:23	185:17,19
338:17	16:24 25:19	224:24	422:13	459:11	373:13	grader	185:23,25
339:5 340:9	30:3 35:24	225:10	423:11	good 2:7 4:11	376:25	435:13	191:12
343:21,25	36:6 37:13	226:6	427:16	4:15 8:10	385:4	graders 88:10	214:5,8
351:9	39:11,13,18	228:23	433:19	8:11 10:7	389:14	380:22	gratitude
379:13	40:23,24	231:22	442:3 449:8	17:14,15,16	393:18	385:5	176:8
380:14	42:6,16	232:6 233:2	450:17	17:18,20	399:24	graduate	195:21
403:5	43:6,13	233:16	452:17	31:23,24	405:2	148:21	gray 201:14
428:23,24	44:24 47:9	235:21	454:23	34:9,11,13	407:25	208:24	great 30:20
428:25	49:17,18,24	236:11	455:2,14	34:15,18	408:2	377:17	31:3,18
429:3 431:9	50:10,23	241:18	456:19,20	48:8,9	410:23	400:14	34:2 38:13
438:22	70:5 72:5	245:6	462:9 466:4	51:14 57:16	413:19	graduated	48:11,15
goal 5:3	78:19 79:13	261:20	golden 162:9	58:2,3	415:25	336:7 420:7	60:17 83:7
211:19	79:14 81:18	263:6	162:10,14	78:16 85:19	416:3 424:5	graduates	87:2 88:19
213:25	83:17 84:18	267:14	163:5	88:23 114:7	424:7	167:14	88:25 91:11
273:12	89:17	269:18	166:19	115:17	434:13	238:2	91:12,16,16
323:12	100:13,15	271:6 280:3	167:21	116:23	437:7,8	graduating	91:17

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 22

104:14	13:17 14:2	ground-bre...	59:25 111:5	guts 107:3	100:22	327:6	99:24
120:7	15:2,11	251:25	136:13	guy 244:21	121:20	329:19,22	181:18
122:21	16:3,14	grounds	433:10	guys 48:14	175:2	331:5,22,23	209:19
138:18	17:5,8,11	291:13	guaranteed	191:2 274:2	259:17	423:9	224:12
141:7 154:2	17:16 26:5	group 20:7	102:24	339:4	289:23	happened	257:15
171:6	31:16 34:6	35:9 115:22	260:20	362:24	294:19,22	82:4 102:23	258:6 263:7
192:21	34:11 40:16	169:5 211:3	guard 11:12	gym 1:13	303:22	169:13	292:2
193:7	45:20 46:5	212:15	12:9 13:20	57:23,24	304:4	184:5 218:2	304:21,23
194:19	46:9 48:3	236:22	13:24 14:10	58:4,20	305:16	275:9,23	305:3,9,15
195:15	52:20 57:21	249:20	14:12,15,18	60:17 62:11	317:3	315:15	305:15
199:13	65:19 66:24	252:21	14:21,25	63:6,14,22	371:20	317:3,15	306:5 326:8
202:19	76:7 85:14	266:8	15:9	64:6 65:17	388:3 427:5	319:24	327:3 344:3
207:21	94:13 103:7	327:21	guards 14:20	94:15,16	427:6	happening	345:15
210:14	104:25	338:25	29:11	95:20 96:13	432:19	42:19	hard-earned
211:22	105:4 106:6	339:12,13	guess 29:5	97:8,11,17	435:4 441:8	126:11,12	69:6
213:24	106:22	379:7	55:21 77:2	98:4,8,12	441:9	143:14,16	hard-work...
215:19	134:15	430:24	117:2	99:20 100:7	444:19	160:21	429:22
217:10	140:20	443:3	207:23	100:23	halfway	167:7	464:5
224:14	233:15,21	groups 7:17	238:9 254:3	101:2,9	228:4	193:10	hardest
227:19	233:23	113:9	321:18	102:15,18	265:21	194:5	135:14
236:11	235:9,11	131:24	328:25	103:5	266:6	206:19,21	Hardy
238:25	236:10	237:2	352:20	131:19,20	Hall 1:6	320:12	261:25
239:2,14,15	237:17,20	239:23	355:4	133:25	hallmark	326:6	harm 321:13
240:6	238:6,9,25	250:13	361:14	134:14	364:6	329:25	321:17
241:13	240:5 241:2	256:16	371:19	136:9	halls 377:9	332:5	322:10
243:15	241:10,16	337:21	guessing	137:17	hampered	happens	323:5
248:7	242:6,10	342:3	151:12	138:18	156:5	22:16 23:5	harmed
256:22	243:12,24	430:16	guesstimate	140:24	hand 203:23	137:12	321:19
267:20	244:3,6,10	grow 114:2	187:18	190:13	handful	154:18	Harper's
270:6 279:3	244:14	171:20	guests 18:8	195:7,8	98:19,21	218:20	370:2
302:7	245:5,11,14	178:23	251:9	196:8,14	Handicapped	263:7 275:6	461:12
309:15,17	427:23	250:11	guidance	197:9	24:23 97:25	275:22	Harrisburg
309:17,18	428:7,14,17	376:8	130:12	198:20,25	handle 24:4	282:11	414:11
310:3	428:22	412:11	173:10	199:6,14,24	handouts	320:8	456:12,13
313:14	429:3	419:11	guide 370:12	202:9,18	438:11	366:25	456:14,18
341:7 349:8	431:14,22	453:10	436:8	205:13	hands 130:5	happy 74:21	Harvey
351:15	greeted 176:7	growing	guidelines	311:6 445:3	hang 395:13	94:2 172:23	193:12
353:11	grew 84:22	29:25	384:21	Gym's 443:13	hanging	173:16	Hasan 393:3
356:22	400:2,12	238:19	Guild 166:17	gymnastics	41:25 42:4	180:22	393:16
455:15	grid 184:5	378:2	166:20,20	310:16,19	42:14	249:16	399:24
greater 58:22	ground 71:15	388:10	167:7,19	311:4	235:14	265:20	400:2
greatest	72:4 191:23	424:11	188:8	gyms 332:15	327:16,18	266:7 283:6	403:11,17
140:2	214:14	grows 179:18	196:17		331:25	283:8	404:2
greatly 31:5	270:9	216:20	201:9	H	461:22	286:20	hate 329:18
374:8	341:12	349:4	203:16	Haddington	happen 30:21	320:23	Haver 445:14
Green 1:12	362:2	growth	208:23,24	6:19	41:4 42:21	336:5	452:5,9,13
182:17	380:10	117:24	209:10	hair 33:2,3	51:2 63:21	347:19	452:17
Greenlee 1:12	439:10	229:24	211:2,5,8	half 4:25 5:8	83:22 182:7	352:5	453:7
2:2 3:16	ground-bre...	248:25	211:21	5:14 16:9	256:7	harassment	454:20
4:11,16 8:8	168:19	307:8	259:25	18:15,18	273:25	408:13	455:13
8:12 10:14	177:12	348:18	Guinn 228:8	30:11 34:25	278:12	409:14,21	456:9,25
10:17 11:23	218:5 273:4	guarantee	gun 192:8	36:5 37:16	283:21,22	hard 84:24	hazard 395:7
12:17 13:13	302:12	40:24 41:11	317:12	39:13 40:21	326:19	84:25 95:24	hazardous
				50:20 51:11			

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 23

390:8	181:21	418:20	168:16,18	201:12	426:8 444:2	171:16	211:21,24
hazards	193:14	434:15	174:2 309:3	Hess 233:18	highlight	historic 46:19	212:8
400:24	317:7	448:25	Henderson	233:22,25	11:4 172:17	219:2	213:18,20
head 184:6	361:24	helm 409:9	23:24 82:25	235:18	196:25	458:24	214:3,8
429:13	408:18	help 31:5	Henon 1:13	236:21	270:4 285:4	459:4,21,24	302:25
headache	409:5,25	33:11 58:24	185:16	237:19	390:13	460:24	367:21
446:16	466:12	74:10 81:25	187:2	238:3,8,11	highlighted	Historical	378:9
headaches	467:4	91:2 93:24	190:12	239:8	10:21	458:21	398:11
447:16	hearing 2:3,7	102:25	205:17	240:12	highlights	459:22	400:6 401:5
headed 23:23	2:9 3:19	104:15	207:13	241:6,15,23	166:15	460:5	413:11
130:9	15:18 71:24	105:9	215:24	243:7,17	374:15	historically	426:19
heads 256:16	74:25	107:18	216:4,15	244:2	highly 12:7	201:19	435:2 450:3
healing	108:12	120:4	217:14	hey 146:22	81:13 248:2	213:4 374:6	homelessness
165:14	132:6,14	126:17	225:7	191:3	308:11	459:15	172:16
203:3	133:11	138:7 164:3	226:24	204:19,21	Hill 36:11	histories	443:17
health 125:22	202:20	164:6	228:13	362:23	hire 12:25	64:15	homeowners
153:14	341:5 361:7	166:13	229:21	heyday 459:7	13:2 14:19	history 80:23	335:15
170:25	372:23	174:7	230:12,19	hi 12:19	39:13,18	176:20	homes 394:16
172:12,15	378:8	214:17	230:23	188:25	62:10	229:2,9	402:15,19
173:24	429:12	238:16,17	231:3,7,12	208:8	105:16	398:23	404:10
177:19,19	443:14	247:25	231:19	277:23	136:5	399:2 458:9	416:12
203:2	444:7,24	248:17	232:3,18	303:24	141:12	458:18	439:16
250:15	456:19	278:10	233:8	353:4	153:23	461:6	homework
310:5	hearings	293:7	301:21	380:20	154:13,19	hit 9:23 46:18	70:24 450:6
389:23	233:16	299:21	302:2,16,20	440:15	154:21	214:14	homophobia
390:3,14,17	heart 171:11	303:9,17	302:24	hidden	200:7 204:5	270:8	7:5
391:7 392:8	180:20	305:11	306:9	398:14	268:2	342:11	honest 310:6
392:14,17	352:11	308:2 309:5	311:25	high 47:8	339:11	414:15	337:18
401:25	heartened	324:18	313:13	150:3,7	343:6	HIV 443:3,4	346:24
446:5 447:3	200:24	341:6	315:5,19	175:10	346:12	hold 19:21	421:12
447:19	429:15	342:12	325:2 333:9	258:4	464:24	49:9 241:4	honestly
healthy 390:5	hearts 416:11	396:24	333:12	287:12	hired 39:20	337:3 380:9	193:4
hear 4:2 7:15	heat 65:6	407:8	336:5,15,21	314:5	106:14,15	394:18	honor 8:9
8:15 20:9	125:4 311:6	417:16	337:2,7,13	322:10,10	248:17	409:12	116:15
39:10 83:7	386:6	455:16	337:23	322:11	265:23	410:6	180:17
115:6 138:9	390:24	462:6,8	339:21	323:5	338:12	412:20	425:7
159:17	heating 252:8	466:23	340:4 341:4	341:16	hires 39:18	417:18	Honorable
173:24	252:11	helped 9:17	341:20	345:10	70:17 136:3	422:8	373:13
177:6 201:8	378:3	102:7 310:2	344:22	349:4 356:6	341:24	428:14	honored
202:10	387:14	helpful 77:7	345:6	377:13,16	hiring 7:10	433:11	233:25
203:9	heavy 50:12	142:25	346:25	377:17	63:17 154:4	460:21	hook 136:7
217:16	heck 283:23	144:17	347:23	395:9 398:6	247:20	holding	276:25
274:5	held 65:8	244:23	348:3	434:16	265:17,22	401:13	Hoopes
282:18	304:7	280:24	356:24	443:9	276:16	hole 392:2	415:20
286:11	320:14	306:24	357:4	453:22	336:17,22	holiday	416:3,5,10
339:22	337:4	314:18	360:24	463:24	337:10,21	250:16	hope 8:16
362:20	Helen 1:13	330:7 343:2	Henry 460:15	467:6	337:22	holistic	104:19
378:5	443:13	helping 23:19	Heritage	high-rise	340:9,24	109:23	113:10
396:20	445:13,19	127:23	241:24	439:3	343:17,20	hollow 459:25	115:15
heard 6:20	hello 216:2,3	179:17	322:19,23	higher 45:15	465:15,16	home 47:7	164:21
95:12	301:25	182:11	323:16	highest	Hispanic	60:22 92:5	173:15
145:23	380:20	300:6 376:6	hero 171:15	342:11	186:8	125:5,8	193:6,22
159:17	411:11	helps 115:16	heroes 168:25	422:20	historians	168:5	201:5

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 24

217:2	296:3	402:12,17	417:19	267:20,25	immediately	17:25 29:16	312:2
243:10	hosted 240:14	housing	humanities	285:23	389:2	29:24 44:17	451:10
466:19	250:14	424:22,25	199:22	293:21	401:23	46:14 78:25	in-depth
hopeful 83:10	251:8	425:4,22	humanity	359:11	444:13	79:4 84:2	416:24
124:5 151:6	hosting	426:2,4,15	448:6	ideal 96:24	immense	87:10 95:6	in-house
179:10	251:24	426:15,21	humbled	298:3	188:7 268:5	95:22	268:3
247:24	hot 125:7	427:8,21	233:25	ideas 163:22	274:15	109:16,24	in-person
280:15	385:21	432:16	hump 35:22	180:5	immigrant	112:25	116:24,25
320:19	hotel 240:17	433:2,4,16	hundred	182:22	170:16	124:6	388:2
hopefully	hotels 240:18	433:19	75:24 87:21	280:25	237:6 251:6	127:16	inadequacies
149:16	hour 138:16	434:5	133:22	identified	immigrants	146:4 149:6	39:6
259:4	248:23	439:22	228:16	53:2 147:12	30:7 439:17	155:3	inadequately
276:16	hourly 76:24	443:5,6,11	288:13,15	227:24	immune	186:17	441:25
297:3 362:7	hours 5:4	443:21,23	294:16	271:5	443:8	200:9,16	inappropri...
hoping	14:22 26:12	444:5,6,17	297:4	identifies	impact	202:8 214:4	79:25 80:2
102:22	26:21,24	Houston 91:4	316:11	70:6	163:16	214:6	80:20 81:13
418:7 442:2	27:10,12	HR 341:24	430:19	identify 12:18	165:18	237:18	incarcerated
Horizon	28:4,6,11	hub 148:18	hundreds	52:21 67:22	172:21	279:14,19	168:8 186:9
458:21	28:13 29:5	170:23	186:7,7	260:2 429:4	179:2	286:13	206:7
horn 205:11	29:10 44:14	211:20	201:22	identifying	186:21	306:6 309:6	426:25
Horras	48:19 49:3	222:18	223:6	375:23	214:9 241:9	320:17	427:3
404:22,23	49:4,11,16	224:18	311:17	ignite 227:8	310:12	330:19,20	incarceration
411:11,12	49:23,24	226:23	385:18	ignites 180:15	359:21	334:17,17	168:2
414:7 415:2	50:2,18,20	227:10	403:2	igniting	410:22	336:14	202:25
horrific 132:9	62:17,19,23	hubs 157:17	hunger 165:2	216:16,16	impacted	369:6,7	426:19
horrors	89:14	HUD's 445:2	Hunting	233:4	64:5 203:21	389:23	incentives
137:11	103:15,16	huge 38:24	41:23	ignorance	297:5,6	420:6 422:2	219:22
Horticultural	103:16,17	73:25 93:25	327:13	386:17	impactful	423:19	incentivize
210:5	117:10	137:5 142:8	Hurst 372:7,9	ignoring	7:19	440:22	247:13
287:19	121:15	172:3	hurt 384:10	439:4	impacts	importantly	incident
288:4	152:19,20	184:20	446:18,21	III 169:16	274:5	7:12 93:15	317:2
293:22	191:11	194:5	hurtful 38:23	Ikire 170:9	imperative	impossible	include 75:9
297:18	243:2	223:20	81:20	170:11	196:20	132:11	119:9
Horticulture	329:10	240:19	hurting	ill 47:6	implement	377:24	251:12
282:9,12,14	330:5,8	269:25	446:12	illiteracy	310:7	394:16	319:15
283:9	331:2,13,15	287:12	hurts 81:22	413:22	341:10	impoverished	353:2
289:21,24	331:17	330:24	446:11,15	illness 151:9	358:18	129:23	included
290:24	332:14,16	349:7 372:2	446:16	illnesses	implemented	impression	35:20 199:4
291:25	391:6	421:9	Hut 274:19	152:8	357:21	78:6 352:23	248:20
296:4,7,13	451:15	Hughes 234:4	274:20	image 170:17	implementi...	impressions	250:15
hospital	458:24	human 11:14	276:10	458:19	247:5	177:2	252:7
68:19	464:6,6	24:13 76:22	HVAC	images	323:12	improve	278:21
173:22	house 400:19	77:5 110:23	100:10	165:23	implicit 21:21	109:19	304:18
442:25	402:25,25	110:25	276:11	imaginable	22:3	247:12	360:15
Hospitality	427:4	147:4	338:17	371:25	imply 408:24	improved	453:13
238:14	442:18	153:24		imagine 47:9	importance	22:22	459:8
hospitalizat...	460:14	170:3	I	132:11	94:22	247:19	includes 7:8
426:14	466:15	174:17	idea 42:22	303:13	148:16	improvement	53:2 246:2
host 21:16	households	247:18	54:13 56:2	310:18	186:12	67:24 84:17	including 6:9
209:8	425:20	258:8	150:5,20	356:5	413:24	319:9,10	35:17 56:3
211:23	households'	260:13	152:21	434:20,21	436:5	improveme...	65:5 200:4
236:3	433:9	262:20	155:22	immediate	important	100:11	251:13
291:19	houses	340:22	174:23	344:7	5:21 10:23	308:10	266:9 338:7
			204:3 209:4				

382:14	246:5 249:9	indicated	412:20	initial 159:3	292:10	212:13	international...
387:24	260:9,25	227:15	infestations	initially	install 313:12	intensity 62:3	176:22
391:15	323:18	indicates	387:12	345:21	318:16,18	intensive	178:25
402:17	373:21	70:24	influence	initiative	installation	173:19	228:9,10
430:16	375:11	indicating	374:5	137:23	139:17	174:20	Internet
447:19	376:2	96:16	inform	157:15	installed	177:2	118:23
inclusion 7:7	416:13,19	indifference	324:18	193:8 194:5	316:3	intensively	413:7
20:5,12	417:4	389:25	information	194:21	318:11	213:16	interns
21:21 22:8	433:18	individual	25:20 86:2	248:22	instance	intent 80:22	238:16
23:23 67:5	441:8,15	84:4 262:24	98:23	250:11	102:2	317:21	interventions
71:2,8,25	442:4,4	292:25	113:17	315:22	106:13	intentional	180:5,9
74:12 75:13	459:22	317:4,11,16	117:14	317:22	152:14	155:16	interview
77:8 78:17	466:18,21	individual's	145:22	319:20	255:9	interactive	154:17
82:23 83:9	466:23	247:23	159:20	initiatives	283:20	312:4,10	intolerable
84:16 107:5	increased	individualiz...	161:11	62:4 196:15	339:12	313:22	6:23 80:3
114:5,16	98:9 140:12	211:14	173:11	368:13	instances	interest 53:10	intractable
149:20	249:8	individually	183:9	408:8	22:16,18	53:13	368:24
153:9 155:9	447:20	204:13	285:21,22	injuries	152:12	104:13	introduced
157:8 159:2	increases	399:16	319:23	391:17	160:20	158:13	312:16
407:4	15:16 37:13	individuals	320:11	innovation	254:3,7	179:3	357:16
408:22	51:8,9	73:17 95:10	322:15	92:4 119:18	256:15	264:20	358:16
411:2 423:4	123:13,14	164:15	323:14	309:24	instantly	285:25	introduction
inclusive 2:17	123:14,16	178:10,18	324:24	innovative	461:3	334:14	229:14
75:2 247:15	196:3	203:24	333:3 334:5	167:25	Institute	354:3	inventory
259:5	257:25	204:8 257:9	334:7 336:3	177:17	197:24	interested	338:21
312:17	increasing	258:22	365:3	234:18	199:5 416:7	16:24	invest 176:9
358:20	50:18,19	259:6,7	368:20	247:14	institution	140:25	188:3
income 87:9	117:10	260:5	369:21	310:4 359:8	95:5 171:24	197:6 230:5	196:22
87:11	254:11	265:23	405:10	input 226:10	397:9 398:3	324:23	228:21
443:19	incredible 9:6	361:18	452:19	228:19	institutional	329:15	289:23
466:14	58:7 137:20	362:3	informed	Inquirer	344:13	330:25	290:6
income-wise	221:19,19	380:13	212:4 365:6	328:18	institutions	347:14	294:22
295:4	221:20	individuals'	365:21	insecurity	157:19	351:18	403:21
incomes	227:20	260:18	informing	178:11	223:19,22	354:5	404:10
432:22	292:19	indoor 301:2	321:20	insensitive	415:4	362:11	407:16
incorporates	307:25	301:3	322:14	286:18	instructor	363:16	416:15
367:16	310:16	345:12	infrastruct...	inside 148:16	88:15	interests	433:24
incorporati...	348:21	346:4,8,16	412:17	455:19,25	insufficient	309:12	434:2
3:5	369:21	346:19	infrastruct...	insider 461:7	369:25	454:12	439:21
incorrect	incredibly	347:12	99:5 110:16	insisted 245:3	426:2	interests'	invested
20:24	257:15	Industries	245:20	inspiration	integrally	366:11	51:24 99:21
increase 5:2	306:24	209:16	306:15	179:7	7:17	Intergover...	investigation
15:14,22,24	316:12	industry	307:12	435:17	integration	3:8,10	79:10 80:17
35:2 49:16	incredulous	210:9	314:4	inspire	199:22	intern 103:22	280:23
49:16 50:2	400:11	inequities	369:12	104:10	integrity	238:23	investing
51:5 100:8	incumbent	39:7,8	infrastruct...	174:22	16:25 23:4	internal 7:7	178:20,21
118:6	160:17	inexpensive	306:21	436:3,9	23:6	247:12	219:15
121:20	353:24	461:2	infusing 5:24	inspired	intelligence	internally	306:22
122:2	independent	infection	Inglis 427:4	164:18	115:21	41:7 72:6	439:9
123:10	366:3,6	391:8	inhaling	inspiring	intends 83:8	284:6	investment
202:6 207:3	424:21	infestation	391:19	165:3 167:8	intense 274:2	international	38:11 62:9
234:21	index 459:13	132:10	inherent	179:16	intensely	237:8 242:3	99:5,9,12
236:15	459:17	146:8,15	313:2	instability	209:24	250:25	99:17 103:4

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 26

165:5	167:25	205:23	306:5	169:24	K 1:12	173:20	138:9
176:19	256:12	206:17	307:25	journey	Kane 270:5	196:23	177:22
178:14,16	267:21	211:7 213:6	342:12	420:2	Kathleen	222:22	211:23
179:4,5,6,7	268:10	216:2 222:3	436:2,6	joy 171:12	378:25	411:13,15	219:4
291:5	277:8	235:5	465:20,21	174:13	380:21	414:2	220:11
295:17	283:12	350:11	jobs 13:5	Judge 4:21	Kathryn	Kensington's	224:5 225:8
297:8	340:5,7	352:22	90:19	8:7,10,14	245:16	132:9	229:22
303:25	367:10	353:11	101:25	10:15,19	285:13	KENYATTA	280:3
308:15	383:21,22	355:19	106:4 108:4	17:20 19:23	355:17	1:14	288:17,20
314:3	394:12	Janene 393:3	120:5	20:10,25	357:6	kept 258:18	291:21
342:19	395:25	393:16	130:14,20	25:14 32:25	keep 17:9	453:20	297:8 312:3
349:7	396:3 407:4	399:25	190:6	33:4 34:15	37:19,20	key 157:2	312:8
369:12	456:18	JANNIE 1:11	192:20	73:5,9 74:2	58:21 60:6	236:14	327:24
402:21	465:10	January 3:13	209:5	135:19	137:4	454:14	342:6,23
404:3	issued 271:20	346:15	214:18	137:4 138:8	138:17	KEYSPOTS	346:22
investments	271:22,24	391:4	266:4	155:23	141:14	308:12	355:9 371:3
54:5 58:22	459:2	Japanese	337:24	156:10,15	157:9	Khalil 457:7	403:24
96:2 132:18	issues 7:6	376:25	338:2 342:5	156:23	175:19	kid 45:6	416:17
349:12	21:19 23:20	378:12	369:3,8	158:24	180:16	84:22	456:5
invite 186:15	67:5 74:10	jarring 186:9	Joe 12:5,19	159:8,24	193:6	148:19	kindergarten
352:5	80:7 115:25	jazz 458:8,11	40:12 49:9	161:19	206:20	305:6,8,9	403:5
357:11	116:13	458:12	59:23 143:5	408:19	210:24	kid's 317:12	kinds 132:21
383:5	120:11	459:7,8,10	John 85:22	July 22:9	269:3	kidney	192:21
invited	150:9,21,25	jeopardy	86:9 364:2	270:15,16	289:13	447:20	225:22
141:20	151:2,6	390:3	461:10	270:17,20	308:3	kids 30:2	326:4
290:4	163:21	Jerry 269:18	Johnson 1:14	271:3,19	324:14	88:18,24	329:25
involved 7:18	172:16	Jim 52:3,16	148:4,5	419:8	332:10	170:10	353:14,19
88:18 149:4	267:22	100:14,20	149:15	jump 13:12	354:16	197:24	kings 438:21
174:5	377:7	101:7,12	152:2,15	13:15 34:23	360:18	198:18	Kingessing
193:16,18	390:15	134:12	153:20	167:16	379:20	222:7	6:2 32:21
201:10	408:12	Joanna	154:23	175:18	412:2	311:11,12	99:10 100:2
207:25	409:7	162:20	155:5 156:8	jumped	446:10,20	317:8	106:19
irate 395:15	412:17	job 7:11	156:12,20	170:14	464:23	327:16	299:18,23
irritation	414:19	55:13 81:22	157:9	jumps 332:3	keeping	329:5	Kira 355:23
447:18	456:4	81:23 89:11	191:19	June 154:12	11:19 12:16	331:24	knit 450:13
Islamophobia	issuing	91:12,18,25	join 156:6	Juntos	190:8	332:11	knitting
7:6	111:14	110:6,9	370:18,24	437:21	Ken 269:17	351:10,14	226:19
issuance	ITEF 319:13	120:5,12	383:13	justice 168:3	326:22,22	369:24	knock 293:15
459:16	item 368:4	129:18	431:7	168:7,15,17	326:23,25	374:18	knocks
issue 6:24	429:20	130:2,11,11	438:16	185:14	327:2	400:19,20	287:14
20:5 65:2	466:21	131:3,4,10	465:8	187:21,25	Kenney 4:24	421:12,18	288:16
72:9 79:6	Ivy 148:21	154:2	joined 4:19	200:2,21	162:18	430:19	Knorr 68:24
81:3 82:15		180:18	185:16	201:5	373:14	450:5 467:3	know 4:13,13
82:16 95:23	J	184:23	joining 234:3	202:12	394:24	kill 386:8	6:20 11:3
101:15,17	Jacquelyn	207:21	joint 327:15	203:4	436:11,22	killed 443:10	12:6 13:21
102:8 107:4	378:24	208:25	Jonathan	208:10	459:12,19	killing 191:5	13:22 18:9
112:22	jails 213:18	209:3 210:9	467:21	211:20	Kenney's	443:6,21	19:4 24:4
113:11	James 52:22	215:19	Jones 139:15	383:21	458:24	466:10	29:18 32:11
147:11	171:3	217:10	170:10,11	justice-invo...	459:23	kind 9:7	33:10,24
151:11	Jane 162:10	241:14	405:18	166:21	Kensington	49:16 55:5	36:20 45:9
158:14	180:25	243:15	Jordan	juveniles	133:3	85:6,7	45:18 47:6
160:16	183:10	259:22	373:12	203:4	143:13	118:13,15	47:12 53:23
161:6	184:21	260:20,20	journalists		172:18,22	132:24	58:9 60:24
	195:10			K			

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 27

61:20 62:12	275:22	454:2	222:19	151:7,9	261:8,13	444:24	467:21
65:24 72:10	278:9 279:4	456:10,10	Lance 445:14	latest 64:14	309:21	learning	length 292:17
72:25 82:3	280:13,14	knowing 77:9	land 113:16	Latino	338:25	104:14	lens 460:11
84:9,23	281:3	140:25	LandCare	246:17	339:12,13	145:3	lessons 346:9
88:8,23	286:16,24	186:3	210:6	266:18	425:3	174:12	375:3
96:15	287:21	243:19,20	Landing	Latinos	leaders	201:6 202:2	389:22
104:21	288:24,25	knowledge	326:2	405:11,14	108:17,23	210:16	let's 18:21
111:20	292:15	38:7 104:13	Lands 245:20	Latinx 67:20	164:13	226:5	21:8 64:22
115:19	294:8	344:13	landscapes	Laughter	169:2	377:19,24	65:12 77:12
117:23,24	302:21	364:10	169:2	138:23	174:25	381:7,23	77:21
125:12	305:6,15	415:5 467:7	landscaping	launch	235:3 248:4	382:11	111:15
129:9,13,16	307:6	known	251:14	177:16	270:2,2	397:8,21	124:21
130:17	308:18	176:22	Landy	launched	308:22	405:23	150:22
132:3	309:16	185:22	457:15	79:10	381:11	415:3 436:8	167:18
133:19	310:14,21	205:23	Lane 36:14	law 320:5	leadership	lease 346:22	223:17
134:15	311:25	knows 104:19	language	368:22	6:3 19:18	leased 345:11	297:19
137:7 144:2	313:13	241:13	139:20	454:21	20:19 58:11	leases 344:24	322:18
144:20	314:5,12	283:18	170:17	Lawncrest	62:6 71:17	leave 47:22	334:19
149:24	317:14,22	kon'nichiwa	203:25	270:5,7	72:2 107:10	87:21 150:7	360:7
153:3,6	320:9 325:4	376:23	405:24	Lawrence	108:14	151:15,24	447:11
156:8	327:19	Kris 457:17	406:5	376:20	114:20,21	300:17	letter 18:3
157:14	328:4,14	462:3	languages	377:3 428:3	155:19	410:25	21:8,13,14
159:16	329:12,21		378:12	428:15,16	192:22	422:13	73:19 74:14
164:8	329:22,23	L	406:19	434:15,16	205:9,10	leaves 395:6	78:2 109:6
174:22	333:25	L 1:10,11	large 105:21	434:20	270:6,8	led 25:4,5,5	149:16
176:21	335:9,23	469:14	120:13	435:19	373:17,24	25:17 150:7	letters 446:4
177:4	336:8 340:4	L&I 459:2	167:6	436:16,21	374:8 375:6	188:17	letting 343:21
182:18	340:6,18	LA 390:19	252:10	457:13	434:17	458:22	level 11:25
184:5,18	341:23,25	lab 171:20	293:15	lawsuit	454:7	left 24:14	13:8 22:17
185:15,17	342:5	195:13	321:25	270:13	leading 6:14	42:21 52:13	37:17 42:18
185:24	344:16	222:8,10,12	352:2	271:3	99:3 191:7	125:14	65:8 82:11
192:3	345:8,16	223:2,8,15	387:19	lax 320:19	413:5	151:22	102:23
195:13,15	346:3,4	230:5 421:2	453:12,18	lay 113:16	League	176:18	109:23,23
198:21	354:2 355:7	labor 75:3	large-scale	268:4,21	112:20	198:2	127:7
201:3,9,12	355:22	452:23,24	235:15	laying 25:21	115:7	318:23	128:20
212:14,15	356:2 357:6	labor-mana...	240:9	layout 312:4	148:21	337:24	210:16
222:9	357:8	74:8 410:20	largely 64:3	313:23	leak 385:21	458:20	246:9
223:14	360:13	labs 131:6	68:19 69:8	lead 364:9	391:2 447:6	leg 13:5	258:23
225:11,18	365:11	lack 8:22	179:14	368:16	447:6,12	legendary	290:18
226:8,9	378:19	38:21	larger 75:23	381:13,18	leaking 439:4	169:19	308:2 333:2
233:9 234:9	382:25	402:21	122:8	381:19	leaky 129:22	458:20	341:7
235:13,20	383:10	412:16	130:18	386:2 387:8	LEAP 61:21	legends 459:8	342:15
239:9	386:16	413:9 423:2	227:4	401:9,13,17	61:22 66:14	legends-in-t...	343:5 362:3
242:10	395:16	423:3	largest 26:24	416:23	105:16	459:9	366:5,7
253:22	407:5	426:18	28:18	lead-free	171:12	legislation	401:11
256:14,23	408:10	443:10,21	371:24	403:6	450:6	265:18	402:16
262:10,15	410:13	460:9	426:9	leader 15:7	learn 64:8	270:13	441:6,20
263:16,16	411:22	lackadaisical	LAs 419:18	109:16	390:8	289:16	levels 50:6
269:20	420:5,11,15	422:22	lastly 252:13	178:25	412:10	357:17	150:3 166:8
270:14	420:25	lacking 229:4	348:15	247:21	learned	358:17	254:11
271:19	433:10,23	lady 131:17	latchkey	256:17	378:11	Lehigh 69:2	267:14
274:2,6,14	443:25	261:21	450:5	258:9,16	389:22	418:25	leverage
274:18	444:11	Lancaster	late 43:6	259:8,10	443:14	Leibowitz	95:25
		33:10					

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 28

178:16	84:21 91:24	11:12,17,24	116:11	412:8	lift 66:17	Lisa 269:21	337:4
369:13	93:6,24	12:9,21,22	117:6 118:9	413:12	69:15 369:3	list 152:13	litter 177:25
leveraged	94:25 98:18	13:2,8	119:22	414:5,12	407:8	154:6,7	little 8:12
198:4,5	98:19 99:8	14:10,12,13	120:3,4,13	416:7,16	lifts 170:3	172:3	16:16,21
leveraging	99:11,18	14:16,20	122:3 123:2	417:9,22,24	light 65:6	181:22,24	36:20,21
232:8	101:18	15:3,5	124:14,17	418:6,25	165:13	197:7	37:5 50:25
Lewis 390:12	117:3 118:4	17:23,24	124:18,23	419:7,8,12	172:10	261:17	52:12 54:20
LGBTQIA	119:4,4,8	18:5,9,14	125:3,11,23	419:15,20	174:7	262:6 263:4	59:5 61:3
153:8	119:12	24:22,22	126:10,14	420:18	220:24	264:13,15	76:13 77:2
liable 277:10	121:16	26:18,21	129:8,17	422:17,23	224:22	264:17	98:16 99:2
Liberty	123:20	27:3,20,22	130:2,17	429:9,11,14	396:5	298:20	121:5,21
424:20,25	125:17	27:23 28:2	131:23,24	430:2,5,20	450:24	306:4 320:7	122:8 132:4
librarian	126:22	28:21,24,25	132:22	431:10,18	lighting 252:9	338:4,16,18	132:5
9:24 28:23	127:8,13	29:24 30:3	133:4,17	434:18,22	likelihood	338:20	136:19
154:14,15	128:21	30:9 32:11	134:8 135:3	435:14	321:19	340:13,19	137:11
221:20	131:2,4	33:9 35:4	135:17	440:18,20	356:6	340:21,23	200:12,14
396:13	132:3,7	36:20 37:5	136:14	441:4,10,21	Lillian 68:25	340:24,25	200:19
411:12	136:24	38:6,14	138:3	442:6 449:6	418:24	341:3	203:6
434:21	139:18	39:4 40:2	140:11,13	449:9,15	limit 305:21	344:24	211:18
435:8 451:6	141:6	42:8 44:3	141:20,24	450:16	372:18	415:19	217:23
451:14	144:10	44:13,23	142:20	451:3,17,22	373:3	467:24	231:10
librarians	148:12,16	45:5,6,8,14	143:10,14	Library's 5:2	limitation	listed 53:3	235:13
108:20,23	149:9	46:16,20	143:17,25	6:3 35:2	362:17	listen 23:13	242:24
154:20	150:12	47:22 48:12	144:24	54:6 55:20	limited	37:12 182:4	284:13
218:22	151:10	48:20 51:19	147:9	85:21 98:6	213:12	331:15	294:5 298:2
397:5 398:3	155:2	52:24 53:4	148:18,19	136:11,25	290:21	357:15	306:8 307:5
398:25	157:16,17	55:13 58:12	149:2,22	137:19	295:4	listening	313:22
399:4 413:2	193:19	60:21 61:3	150:15	408:19	Lincoln	340:8	320:19
418:11	304:2 328:6	62:19 64:4	151:15,17	409:9	345:10	437:23	326:14
435:2,25	398:20	64:11,16	154:11	410:12	347:11	462:5	338:24
436:4	405:16	65:4,16,22	155:10,17	413:24	348:16	literacy 5:20	339:14
441:24	406:4 407:8	66:2,10	155:18	416:13	349:4,14	5:24 60:6	344:2 352:6
libraries 5:4	407:12	68:11,15,17	170:5	life 37:11	Linda 428:3	60:11 62:4	367:13
5:13,24 6:9	411:23	68:21,22,23	218:10,13	169:20	428:18	89:6,15,18	380:10,16
14:7 17:3	412:9 414:5	68:25 70:25	218:14,18	170:24	429:7	89:21,25	408:16
18:2 24:20	414:18	72:8,19	219:3 220:2	179:20	line 20:16	90:24 91:22	419:25
24:21,22	415:17	77:10 79:14	220:12,16	185:23	171:25	93:14,15	451:20
27:7 29:19	416:11,22	79:23 80:8	221:18,20	202:3 207:6	216:22	139:21	452:12
32:4 35:11	417:2,3,18	82:3 83:12	222:10	221:9 375:3	257:8,18	192:20	live 107:20,20
35:18 37:7	418:14	84:22,23	299:15,20	378:17	269:13	431:11	165:24
37:19 38:2	422:24	85:2 87:2	327:11	391:14	315:4 368:4	436:8	205:2 221:9
38:7,10	423:11,12	88:5 89:5	396:13,19	394:18	line-item	literally	393:21
40:24 42:23	430:10	91:19 92:5	396:23,25	400:18	366:16	59:14,25	400:3
45:13 48:23	436:12,23	92:15 94:23	397:6	427:11,11	368:18	101:24	402:15,19
48:24 49:13	440:25	95:16 96:10	398:14,18	lifeguards	lined 418:3	106:16	411:14
50:11 58:7	462:12,25	97:19,24	398:21	301:7	lines 91:5	118:8	420:3
58:13 59:3	463:9	98:25 99:6	405:5,6,10	346:12,14	141:14	310:21	423:22
60:20 62:14	466:24	99:13,15	406:9	347:10,14	252:10	317:5	454:18
62:21 63:2	library 4:4,18	101:13,14	407:18	347:15	445:4	411:23	466:9
63:19 66:5	5:11,19	101:16	408:8,14,16	462:22	lineup 237:12	431:7	lived 205:2
66:7 67:8	6:13,19,22	103:14,16	409:5 410:2	lifeline	lining 438:20	literature	402:11
67:12 68:10	7:4,9,14 8:6	106:19,20	410:7,17	413:19	linked 142:4	37:4 398:22	424:10,11
68:12 69:5	9:3,12	109:9	411:13,25	lifelong 397:8	lion's 66:8	litigation	426:16

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 29

427:13	36:13 68:20	232:24	257:11	103:20	446:13	269:2	200:25
460:15	logjams	238:21	259:20,23	104:9	456:11	270:15,19	284:25
livelihood	154:4	241:19	267:2 281:7	105:22	465:22	271:8 274:8	294:13
29:25	loitering 42:4	253:12	284:3	115:19	466:12	277:23	low-barrier
liver 447:19	lone 201:20	279:5 285:4	303:24	116:4,11	467:4	278:2	178:9
lives 42:12	long 18:13	286:9	310:15	118:12,13	lots 63:18,18	281:16,20	low-income
164:12	22:23 32:25	288:23	324:3,14	119:19	166:12	281:25	425:19
180:8	117:7 144:3	313:24	334:9	126:25	190:2 462:6	283:3 289:3	433:9
214:10	146:21	314:20	338:16	131:6	lottery	295:21	453:24
390:2	151:5 157:5	317:16	339:11	134:12	223:23	296:2,10,20	lower 39:24
395:22	163:16	323:12,18	342:5 344:7	143:19	loudly 95:13	297:14,22	47:9 95:11
411:24	222:25	331:7,8	351:21	146:14	121:14	298:9,13	lowering
435:12	223:3 224:3	338:4	356:13	150:24	Louis 457:3	299:22	187:20
436:3,14	278:13	340:10	404:4,7	151:18	love 37:3 85:2	300:9,13,21	lowest 200:11
living 124:22	293:12	343:24	looks 50:17	153:9	85:3 88:24	301:24	Lucien 170:5
150:14	313:11	344:18	71:20 72:17	154:19	120:4	302:14,18	luck 39:4
174:2	323:22	346:2	145:10	160:10,12	163:13,18	302:22	lucky 68:12
257:24	330:22	347:19	152:9	177:8 180:2	164:5,24	304:22	lunch 420:21
286:5	366:15	348:13	155:21	181:23	166:19,19	308:19	Lundy
424:21	395:16,24	359:10	160:25	185:24	172:13	312:12	457:15
455:22	420:16	370:7	161:3	188:2	182:21	316:5	luxury
456:3 463:5	long-term	399:14	181:14	197:14	184:23	317:19	290:20
465:14	132:23,25	400:11	182:12	201:14	193:4	320:22	438:11
local 59:16	134:2,5	412:9	281:7,9	202:22	199:13	321:3,9,16	Lyft 455:14
72:14 169:2	173:23	417:15	335:6 449:9	203:3	202:10	322:21	455:18,20
181:24,25	349:2,2	420:12	loose 283:23	204:14	203:5 213:9	323:8	M
200:8 224:7	longer 223:13	430:25	looted 392:13	207:9	223:10	326:23	M 457:15,15
237:13,22	230:7	440:23	lose 97:16	218:20	250:19,20	330:14	ma'am 384:4
237:25	330:18	441:23	175:25,25	230:3,25	288:10	331:6	384:8,13,24
280:12	464:13	452:12	391:13	238:15	290:15,17	332:12	389:12
282:20	longest	466:14	400:25	239:6	291:17	333:21	403:10,24
286:3	174:11	looked	465:20	241:12,25	299:24	334:3,12,18	411:9
324:11,12	longing	307:17	lose-lose	242:2	301:10,16	334:24	431:15
327:14	230:10	415:3	283:14	244:17	329:20	335:4,20,25	434:14
366:3	longtime	looking 6:12	loss 150:8	278:10,11	330:18	336:11,19	448:21
393:23	386:17	19:24,25	399:10	296:21	352:17	336:25	452:2
400:8 405:8	look 33:13	20:3,3 32:9	losses 399:12	304:20	400:4	337:5,9,15	MacArthur
408:10	36:21 68:2	49:6,22	lost 29:10	318:14	421:15	338:8	168:15
412:13	71:22 88:24	50:17 53:23	413:18	320:11	Lovell 245:2	339:24	Mackey
419:5	92:11 97:3	96:24 99:23	465:19,19	325:5,9,9	245:8,13,16	340:16	372:7,9
421:10	104:17	100:4	465:20,22	326:17	253:19	341:18	379:4,6,10
449:18	110:9	101:25	466:3	331:19	254:14	344:20	Madam
454:3	115:16	102:21	lot 11:15	332:4	255:13	345:4,24	18:14 195:9
locally 160:18	119:5 131:9	103:4	18:19 29:16	334:20	257:5	347:4 348:2	207:14
161:8,9	155:14	126:21	29:19 30:18	337:16	260:24	350:10,23	magic 223:23
279:20,23	163:6,20	157:16	31:2,4 35:5	341:11	261:7,12,24	352:14	304:25
280:17	165:23	210:10	36:3,15	348:9	262:12,16	357:10	main 26:19
281:19	175:15	211:7,25	43:8 44:12	349:15	263:15	358:6	68:11 126:6
288:7,8	197:16	216:25	50:8 57:15	372:16	264:4,24	Lovett 68:22	126:11
located 126:6	213:6 215:4	221:7	58:10 60:22	384:21	265:12	69:11	398:14
418:25	220:8	225:13	62:13 65:25	420:24	266:14,21	440:17	maintain
464:3,19	224:22	254:18,19	69:20 72:6	421:2	267:6,15	loving 171:8	11:21
Logan 6:2	225:4,17	254:25	82:8 92:10	437:22	268:13	low 12:24	176:12

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 30

179:18	286:2 303:9	236:7	marketing	414:13,17	367:19	262:15	169:24
290:17	304:17	mandate	92:13	416:22	368:2 369:9	292:19	253:8
293:3	306:25	26:22 27:4	234:12	417:5 418:6	370:17,17	298:22	300:19
313:11	309:9	27:16 64:9	237:24	418:15	370:18,21	307:7	301:16
346:20	328:25	64:17 96:5	Marques	450:14	373:13	316:15	310:4
394:15	332:18	96:9,16	404:22,23	math 103:20	375:21	331:21	388:11
409:19	344:8 345:8	97:13	405:4,5	103:23	394:24	332:13,20	400:13
414:13	368:19	357:24	407:15,21	175:9 215:7	415:7	334:4	meeting 6:15
440:6	376:7	mandated	Marrero	335:5	436:11,22	339:22	74:3 136:22
maintaining	406:12	136:18	68:25	math/science	441:7 442:5	340:7 341:4	154:11
399:9	432:16	394:5,9,11	418:24	199:23	458:24	341:25	159:3
maintains	443:18	394:21	married	mathematics	459:19,23	421:6	164:13
290:19	444:3,6,9	413:4	296:12	378:11	Mayor's	meaning	300:8
maintenance	444:18,20	mandates	400:18	matriculate	21:10 34:24	204:2	390:18
5:15 16:10	male 70:4	28:17	Martino	351:16	100:12	208:18,23	399:15
27:23 55:24	266:16	Mandel	437:4	mats 311:8	132:20	meaningful	400:9 454:6
56:2 98:17	males 107:8	363:5 364:5	440:15,16	matter	142:21	7:19 166:22	meetings
100:9 285:8	malfuncio...	370:23,24	442:11	163:21	148:9	410:22	241:7 388:5
300:24	412:22	manifest 5:21	marvelous	295:12	216:22	means 16:7	449:22
339:6	man 186:22	manner	44:10	329:3 330:8	249:15	111:4	465:9
342:21	206:24	426:24	Mary 404:22	347:7	409:14	201:13	meets 432:17
412:19	manage 63:7	427:14	404:23	359:18	Mayoral	207:9 214:6	mega 382:6
major 98:20	276:18	Mansion	405:5	392:6	366:10	243:8	Meier 85:23
98:21,24	284:9	292:14,18	masks 386:13	413:10	Mayors	287:23	melanin
272:14	292:11	Mantua	mass 168:2	422:2 469:7	433:12	316:20	460:7
368:16	304:23	206:9,11	328:20	mattered	MBEs 354:4	358:20	Melville
398:21	306:6,11	manufactur...	masse 387:5	62:13	McCormick	376:25	378:25
402:20	324:6 418:8	313:9 359:6	Master	matters 59:9	372:6,8	447:10	379:24,25
majored	431:13	Manzoor	459:11	72:22	McPherson	455:5	380:3,4,20
378:15	442:7	457:24	mat 94:25	165:25	99:10 100:3	460:10	380:21
majority-m...	management	463:20	match 53:4	253:7 446:4	143:11	469:22	381:2 382:4
460:8	52:24 55:21	Marathon	232:19,20	447:3	meals 248:13	meant 8:2	382:10,18
makeshift	56:4 80:25	239:13,17	311:21	Max 437:3	249:12	14:9 30:18	382:25
311:5	81:16 97:5	March 21:9	matching	442:16	mean 44:9	112:6	383:9,19,24
makeup	113:23,23	21:11 392:4	232:9	maximum 5:6	47:15 60:18	155:24	384:5,9,14
157:4	113:24	Margaret	417:10	427:4	63:24 91:15	195:13	member
making 9:6	238:14	234:4	material	Mayfair	96:20 98:20	287:3 433:5	80:21
22:24 41:10	247:13	Marie 171:8	64:19 96:6	224:23	136:10	measures	114:10
58:21 87:15	285:9	Marilyn	118:16	227:14,16	137:8	3:22	143:7
114:9 118:8	410:19	445:14	413:7	227:17	142:17	mechanic	231:23
129:11	442:6	449:4	materials	228:2,14,15	156:13	276:11	323:19,20
136:22	manager 15:5	Marissa	37:9 64:4	228:23,25	188:8	media 342:9	363:20
150:6	79:7 259:11	245:21	64:11,13	229:24	194:23	median	380:23
155:15,16	409:21	284:12,16	96:11 97:5	347:16	199:19	443:19	385:10
168:20	416:6	285:11	123:18,21	Mayor 3:7,13	200:23	Medicaid	405:7,8
185:3,7	418:24	326:21	129:22	4:24 50:22	201:19	448:18	408:9 409:4
187:9,23	managers	Marker	135:17	71:18 100:8	202:19	medication	411:14
201:25	25:3,10	458:21	136:16	102:6	205:11	391:14,23	416:8
220:17	302:5	market 170:6	333:20	121:22	215:4	meds 390:17	417:11
227:10	307:25	209:17	385:19	122:2 149:7	225:25	meet 30:17	419:4
244:17	409:18	219:18	406:15,19	162:18	226:21	64:8 113:12	424:22,24
255:20	Managing	291:7	412:24	163:11	229:10	131:22	425:2 429:9
278:12	162:18,19	464:21	413:3,17	363:5,25	232:20	138:7	432:4

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 31

433:13	327:24	mice 386:8	192:4 194:6	minutes 46:6	369:25	207:4	421:21
436:21	329:14	Michael	215:7	169:23	modest	213:22	423:21
458:12	364:9	457:9,13	230:20,22	188:19	192:14	215:10	Moore 5:23
462:4	374:25	MICHELE	230:23	191:11	273:10	230:25	140:11
463:19	mental	469:14	240:20	332:2 373:5	moguls	231:2 268:6	mop-and-pop
members 2:3	125:22	microfilm	241:8	449:8	438:21	289:12	465:7
4:16 19:17	172:15	399:5	248:12	misconduct	moisture	294:23	morale 411:4
19:20 20:13	173:23	microphone	250:10	191:16	146:14	328:15	morning 2:7
20:15 39:14	177:19	8:13 40:17	252:6 272:2	mispronou...	mold 378:2	350:18	4:12,15,19
39:24 47:3	mention	middle 400:7	272:5 285:5	20:21	387:8 391:2	351:4	8:10,11,18
67:19 73:13	13:20 86:25	midnight	289:23	missed 299:8	447:10	365:11	17:15,15,17
75:24 116:9	87:5 88:2	329:11	294:19,22	322:22	mold-free	409:3	17:19,20
162:25	88:19	330:10,11	303:25	336:16	403:6	430:13,24	31:23,24
163:3 182:5	205:22	Mieka 415:20	304:6	missing 91:10	molecules	433:15,19	34:10,12,14
221:5	217:24	415:22	377:13	278:17	175:12	438:22	34:15,18
245:15	244:21	418:23	405:14	mission 115:8	mom 188:25	442:7	48:8,9 58:2
252:18,20	245:4,7	Mike 319:25	414:14,17	137:2,19,22	303:24	444:18,19	58:3 85:19
269:15	mentioned	mile 44:8	416:12,19	138:6	305:4	445:5	172:25
305:20	10:19 15:13	227:23,24	417:4,5,5	213:21	moment	451:22	204:19
315:20	139:17	228:2,23	433:17,21	234:14	27:14 58:8	453:14,20	429:13
320:8 327:4	182:16	miles 171:23	434:4,5	284:8	246:21	454:12	461:23
363:15	206:4 258:6	Mill 352:4	441:3,8,15	mistaken	300:6	460:6 467:2	mortgages
364:17	299:15	millennials	453:15	181:5	momentum	money's	453:23
371:6	346:8,18	124:22	462:11	mistreated	95:25	185:11	mosquito
373:15	358:18	238:19	millions	435:6	Monday 1:7	money-saver	132:10
381:5,9,9	mentor	million 4:25	135:12	misunderst...	28:7 50:7	187:22	146:7
381:16,17	435:20	5:9,10,11	137:9 192:5	75:11	61:24	monies 51:24	412:19
382:14,15	mentoring	5:15 15:14	Milteer 393:2	mix 237:14	148:13	monochro...	mosquitoes
383:2 387:4	374:20	15:21 16:2	393:4,15,18	354:15,16	money 10:4	461:5	146:25
387:22,24	mentorship	16:5,9	393:20	mixed 70:6	13:18 16:18	month 22:11	mother 419:9
388:5,7,21	375:10	27:19 32:21	mind 137:4	107:7	16:20 50:24	74:3 152:19	420:10
389:7	merge 170:17	34:25 35:10	188:11	mixture 19:6	52:2,12,25	153:11	426:16
392:21	175:9	35:12 36:5	267:18	49:8 50:5	53:8,12,19	173:3	mothers
406:17	merges 179:2	37:16 39:13	360:19	441:21	57:11 64:2	367:22	394:14
415:16	message	43:15 50:22	379:5	Mm-hmm	65:24 66:2	394:12	motion
417:25	114:19	50:25 51:4	mindful	40:8 97:10	68:8 97:20	432:23	243:13
430:6	234:21	51:7,19	359:17	122:11,19	97:24 98:9	monthly	motor 139:19
442:18	241:3	53:6,7,18	mindset	mobile	99:14,21,22	21:16 465:9	Mount 36:11
443:2 448:2	messes 275:8	55:23 60:14	409:8	350:24	105:7,12,15	months 24:9	68:22
461:21	met 71:11,13	65:16 66:11	mine 430:16	351:3	105:17,20	90:16 200:6	440:18
465:7	72:13 78:22	66:22 87:21	minimum	Mobley 90:16	105:21	248:10	Mountain
Memorial	89:6 112:10	96:9,12	40:4 134:19	mode 328:16	132:17	273:8	249:5
148:19	114:8 137:2	97:7 98:8	359:5	model 219:6	135:13,14	297:20	mouse 420:23
memorialized	205:25	100:2,5,22	417:24	219:7	135:15,24	310:25	mouth 225:9
353:23	292:14,16	101:24	minor 242:19	229:25	137:6	328:13	move 9:3
memory	352:13	117:20,22	minority	293:8	178:18,20	329:4,20	13:13 21:8
176:20	433:9	121:20	284:22	353:14	184:25	401:7 427:2	55:3 155:6
270:11	435:15	122:2,16,18	Minton	models	185:2	Monument	162:5 202:3
men 19:6	metallic	124:10,11	460:15	218:15	187:17,18	195:13	208:24
73:14 107:9	391:5	134:21	minuscule	moderate-	188:2	Moody	242:12
108:4,13	method	148:11	421:14	453:24	189:12,17	415:21,22	254:13
182:3 186:7	109:18	149:7 177:2	minute 296:9	modern	190:4	418:20,23	298:24
246:13,20	metrics 157:6	179:17	379:18	365:17	198:21	419:3	309:8

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 32

314:16	163:7,12	175:25,25	389:13,15	446:9	133:24	421:13,19	432:18
339:9	166:7	176:23	392:24	navigate	136:24	421:21	433:9 434:2
349:21	167:23	178:6	393:11,20	348:20	138:4	422:3	442:6 445:4
350:19,24	168:5	189:20	396:12	navigation	139:24	425:21	460:6,7
351:5	169:18	196:25	399:25	170:25	140:2 141:7	430:6,7,12	negative
moved 463:3	170:2,6	206:10	404:21	navigators	141:11	430:13	149:5
movement	171:4,11,13	224:25	405:5	6:8	152:25	431:15,18	325:12,13
11:16	173:6	225:21	411:11	near 255:2	153:2 159:9	431:19,19	negatively
MoveOn	175:13,21	227:3,3	416:5	272:17	159:16,19	432:24	274:5
425:3	176:16	228:2	418:23	near-term	176:19	433:18	neglect 387:2
movie 170:12	179:4	350:19,21	424:9 429:7	258:4	180:11	434:6 445:2	negligence
250:16	180:14	350:24	432:2	nearly 37:17	188:3 207:4	451:14,15	389:25
moving 58:21	182:24	351:5 356:3	437:14	365:15	211:5,6,24	451:21	negotiated
74:4 108:17	183:22	356:7,8	440:15	386:5	214:12,23	462:11	57:6
108:24	185:6	murky	442:16	nears 364:20	217:4 254:4	467:2,2	neighbor
133:2 154:6	187:14,19	413:21	458:7 462:3	neat 351:10	258:21	needed 35:17	226:8
169:15	189:7	MURPHY	463:20	necessarily	273:14	69:15,20	neighborho...
180:16	192:17	469:14	named 7:7	127:18	278:10	215:4	5:12 6:2,8
209:3 272:9	193:22	Museum	nameless	327:19	291:21	258:24	6:17 14:6
273:13	194:4,7,9	206:11	29:17	necessary	295:14,17	417:25	14:12,16
292:8	195:25	music 226:20	104:11	157:21	297:11	needs 6:16	15:5 24:20
303:14	203:11,16	251:8	names 73:17	275:4	300:5,7	22:22 35:5	24:21 42:13
308:3	207:25	398:23	261:20	375:17	304:10	36:3,5	42:19 48:24
313:18	208:9	mutual 74:7	338:22	398:9 409:4	305:13	37:18 64:10	49:13 58:14
403:4	209:11	Myra 130:10	363:3	neck 391:11	307:18,19	72:15 83:14	59:17 66:7
427:11	214:19		Narcan	426:13	307:19	83:22	84:24
MSB 206:13	215:18	N	143:20	446:16	308:17	112:18,22	126:12,22
multi-ethnic	216:18	nakama	412:2	neck-break...	309:24	126:9,14	127:8,13
406:22	218:8 219:5	376:24	narrative	439:14	313:21	139:24	135:4
multi-gener...	220:2,3,15	name 20:20	168:17	necklace	331:18	182:7	150:14
226:16	225:20,24	20:21,23	nascent	383:12	335:23	255:16,20	172:2
multi-layered	227:6,23,24	23:24 52:11	119:22	need 24:3	341:12,14	255:23	190:23
164:22	228:5,7,10	52:22 66:20	nasty 147:2	33:12 35:6	341:15,16	256:3	201:13
multi-partn...	228:23	82:24 85:22	nation 279:17	35:23 36:6	345:13	273:25	219:17
6:14	229:16	127:4 130:9	national	38:10,10	346:13,16	289:25	223:14
multi-tasker	230:13	135:23	130:7	59:23 60:16	348:11	307:10,11	226:7,11
224:18	231:16,25	153:5	358:10	72:18 81:24	349:10	309:11,22	231:15
multi-year	232:4,13,14	156:11	405:9	81:25 83:15	365:2,4,17	310:4	237:3
6:14	235:6	162:10	459:10	83:16,16,25	366:25	311:10	318:15,20
multilingual	259:25	187:5	nationally	88:20 90:22	378:16	313:17,21	322:9
406:18	350:4,17	188:21,23	167:24	91:2,17	384:13	322:14	323:24
multiple	351:16,25	206:17	176:22	99:4 100:24	387:17	331:21	326:6
227:13	352:2,8,9	209:17	native 169:19	110:4,5,11	394:21	344:2,7	374:15
254:21	352:21	226:21	400:14	111:21	396:24	348:8,25	403:14
multitude	353:10	245:15	Natural	113:3,5,6	401:22	349:15	404:11
225:23	354:8,19	269:19	245:20	113:12	406:16	359:24	405:16
municipal	355:13,20	270:3	naturally	121:15,16	414:16	362:9	406:13
11:12 12:8	355:23	274:20	355:11	121:17,17	415:7	374:17	411:13
13:20 14:10	356:14,17	362:12,14	nature 75:15	125:21	416:14	406:16	412:7
14:21	mural-mak...	373:6	124:16,17	126:24	417:4,16	410:16,18	416:21,25
mural 4:4	226:21	376:19	nausea	127:17	418:12	423:2,2	421:11,19
161:23	murals 169:5	377:3 379:4	447:16	132:7,16	420:18	425:19	422:24
162:7,12,25	172:2	380:21	nauseous	133:14,17	421:3,4,6	430:11	426:21,22
		385:5					

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 33

427:9,9	never 20:2	400:9	338:13	nose 446:7,17	263:5 265:7	227:11	221:5
430:10,20	29:18 38:17	402:13,17	339:17	447:17	267:3	obvious	233:17
450:9	71:13 74:16	405:21	nine-story	notes 22:15	272:22	462:10	234:7,11,23
451:23	119:10	413:15	171:4	333:23	273:9 276:9	obviously	236:6,8
neighborho...	180:6 182:4	427:11,11	Ninth 242:18	469:6	276:12	10:22 16:16	237:5
15:9 36:19	225:10	439:16	no-brainers	nother 186:4	278:6	199:7 227:3	238:15
37:6,10	235:20	444:4	280:14	notice 125:22	279:21	356:2	239:3,8,21
62:10 69:14	261:22	466:15	no-pay 392:2	328:23	284:24	occasionally	242:17
92:17 95:2	320:4	new-found	nomination	noticeable	304:8	276:6,7	247:18
120:10	369:19	173:15	460:14,16	138:14	328:17	occasions	249:15
124:20,20	402:18,22	newly 408:21	non-fiction	noticed 36:10	334:9	14:24	258:8
132:15	412:2	Newman	64:15 413:6	36:18 98:18	365:20	417:23	260:13
143:15	440:25	209:15	non-profit	122:25	375:11	occupying	262:19
148:17	new 5:22 9:15	news 315:13	313:15	124:12	390:12	449:24	277:6 315:8
157:18	22:10 24:8	378:8	349:12	138:11	417:8,10,24	occur 49:17	340:22
164:10,11	32:21 39:14	411:22	non-profits	160:22,24	421:9,9	occurred	348:12
176:9,15	39:18 46:19	newspapers	354:4 382:7	360:4	426:6	277:11	364:3 366:4
205:2,3,4	64:11,12,14	91:15 399:5	non-skilled	November	453:18	occurring	366:5,6
206:18	70:17 82:22	nice 237:14	342:15	271:22,24	numbers 31:2	143:22	408:7
223:21	96:6,10	330:6 332:9	nonchalantly	nuclear	59:24 60:12	occurs 243:3	officer 7:8
225:12	98:20 117:3	400:19	85:7	456:20	60:13	367:13	82:23 114:5
227:7	119:3 164:7	402:18	nook 308:24	number 11:7	104:18	Octavius	114:16
228:21	168:23	452:5 456:6	noon 451:19	18:2 21:19	207:25	171:14	officers
231:21	170:6,16,18	Nicetown	normalize	35:11 39:24	208:4 226:2	October	142:12,13
236:17	171:10	6:10 35:24	328:24	40:15,23	228:15	390:24	offices 153:6
255:15	172:22	36:12 38:21	normalized	46:18,19	266:12	odds 164:21	383:10
263:19,20	173:17	39:3 68:7	328:22	47:4 53:2	281:12	OEO 284:22	official
304:10	185:19	68:15	Norristown	65:15 66:19	334:20	offer 74:11,14	109:12,14
322:8	224:25	124:12,13	464:12	75:24 86:16	338:20	77:9 78:7	190:17
326:17	238:20	129:16	north 36:15	90:25 92:17	397:7	130:15	191:21
374:3,9,24	239:20	131:5,6,11	39:3 84:24	96:23	nurses 173:9	170:24	422:20
376:7	240:18	131:11	171:6 323:3	100:17	nursing	173:9	officials
386:19	247:25	Nicetown's	374:10,11	104:21	401:13	177:22	364:19
406:10	248:3	36:4	375:7 385:7	117:17	426:19	247:10	offline 277:5
454:18	251:13,16	Nicole 271:15	411:19	123:3	427:2	257:18	301:13
neighborho...	251:17,18	271:18	414:3 420:3	124:10,11	nurture	259:3 292:3	426:5
439:5	251:19	353:5	420:4	125:19	238:17	offered 6:18	Ogontz 464:4
neighbors	254:9,21	355:17	Northeast 6:9	129:10	NWON 130:7	13:6 125:2	464:20
169:8	255:5 257:2	night 41:17	26:18	131:23		126:15	oh 46:5
170:21	274:7 289:9	41:20 42:15	170:16	138:14	O	204:16	138:21
304:13,18	312:3,3,10	42:24	209:14	140:11	o'clock 41:22	223:4	144:13
326:9	313:3	172:25	217:20,22	151:9,13,24	48:25	226:22	146:10,12
416:16	321:21	329:10,10	218:7	152:7,19	449:11,13	offering 82:7	153:22
nerds 336:12	322:6	331:18,20	222:21	154:14	O-I-L 447:7	173:7	183:14
nerve 391:13	333:15	332:9	229:15	158:10	Oak 36:13	offers 5:19	190:21,21
net 240:8	341:24	nights 43:5	301:9,10	160:24	objections	77:6 453:23	199:12
453:2	350:18	250:17	303:2	161:7	469:4	office 11:14	207:8 294:4
network	352:3 359:7	nine 128:15	313:25	181:20	obligation	23:22 24:7	300:9 357:6
250:18	367:2	128:16	349:9,18	182:16	246:3	86:2 130:6	371:2 379:8
networking	385:23	129:2 153:5	431:6	196:18	obligations	132:20	OHR 340:17
400:9	391:5	240:18	Northwest	206:3	96:22 246:6	148:9	oil 447:6,6,6,7
neurological	398:16	260:10	275:2 449:6	248:20	obliged	153:24	447:11
447:22	399:5,6	338:9,10,12	Nos 2:10	249:8 250:8	435:23	212:12,14	OIT 85:25
					observing		

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 34

86:6,11,17	301:19	227:4	451:17,18	192:22	options	433:14	301:24
okay 10:14	318:12	451:12	466:4	221:8,23	280:23	organize	302:14,18
15:11 17:11	322:17	ongoing	opened 16:11	230:11	order 2:8	455:21	302:22
28:16 32:7	325:3	174:20	117:3,6	282:6,8	7:25 112:4	organized	304:22
33:16 34:3	335:23,25	348:10	223:3	291:3 292:4	135:16	397:5	308:19
40:22 45:2	352:19	390:25	417:23	342:12	273:25	408:21	312:12
53:16 63:22	354:17	online 368:17	451:15	346:11	356:17	organizer	316:5
65:17 66:24	356:15,21	onset 391:21	opening 9:14	353:25	381:23	380:24	317:19
67:15 69:21	357:4 371:3	open 5:3,12	151:7	354:6,7	390:13	381:3	320:22
70:21 74:5	379:9	5:18 13:23	opens 290:15	378:17	440:4	385:12	321:3,9,16
76:2,4,19	380:16	14:11 15:8	312:5	397:8	orders 252:3	organizers	322:21
82:18,19,20	403:16	16:8,12	operate	opportunity	339:9	44:19	323:8
82:21 83:6	428:17	17:4 26:18	344:15	57:3 108:13	ordinance	128:10,14	326:23
83:11,15	431:16	26:21,23	operated	110:22	2:15,18,20	organizing	330:14
85:7,12	467:13	27:7 28:2	248:11,15	111:11	3:12 353:23	388:2,12,23	331:6
86:19,24	old 24:6	32:4 37:8	operating	114:2	ordinary	456:12	332:12
90:12 91:12	69:11	38:3,10	2:21 3:21	124:25	169:6	oriented	333:21
98:12 100:7	133:21,22	40:25 42:24	96:19,21	148:25	organic 447:8	55:17	334:3,12,18
103:5 104:7	133:23	43:3,6	136:12	162:15	447:12,14	originally	334:24
106:22	137:10	48:21,23,24	234:8	163:6	447:25	403:12	335:4,20,25
109:4 115:4	172:19,24	49:3,4,13	245:25	172:20	organization	Orlando	336:11,19
116:14	311:16,17	49:14,20	254:5	182:2	7:14 18:10	269:16	336:25
122:9,20	311:19	50:11 62:14	274:25	186:15	18:24 75:23	Otero-Cruz	337:5,9,15
123:9 124:8	321:22	62:22,23	301:2	190:6	76:23 77:3	162:20	338:8
126:14	322:2	63:2,19	364:21	202:23	84:11	Ott 245:2,8	339:24
131:13	377:25	95:16	459:19	221:10,11	107:11	245:13,16	340:16
140:19	424:10	117:22,25	operation	221:13,14	108:19,21	253:19	341:18
141:18	436:17	121:16	26:13 27:17	221:14	108:24	254:14	344:20
143:18	450:3	132:8	148:12	243:22	109:17	255:13	345:4,24
145:12	452:14	137:12	149:21	253:10	110:3,16	257:5	347:4 348:2
146:24	463:24	138:17	344:19	283:25	111:3,16	260:24	350:10,23
147:7	older 46:23	152:20	459:6	284:3 295:2	113:24	261:7,12,24	352:14
154:23	151:20	174:2 183:3	operations	311:20	114:3,20	262:12,16	357:10
158:9	357:18	254:21	27:21 65:24	313:14	115:13	263:15	358:6
159:24	358:3	282:22	417:25	361:24	116:7 130:8	264:4,24	out-of-time
161:17	Olney 36:13	283:4,4	operator	363:17	151:21,23	265:12	308:16
162:6	Oncalm	287:10	395:14	370:6	157:7	266:14,21	outcome
182:13	251:15	300:14,17	opinion 37:15	389:15	181:14	267:6,15	368:7 374:4
190:5 195:3	once 5:18	309:24	110:13	415:5	348:23	268:13	outcomes
198:20	12:24	328:12	279:10	418:22	377:6	269:2	200:17,20
204:14	113:15	330:4,5,10	280:14	419:10,19	405:13	270:15,19	313:25
235:11	147:12	330:11,17	294:12	opposed	409:10	271:8 274:8	314:8,21
236:10	153:11	330:21	325:8	149:4	432:9	277:23	342:24
237:17	168:5 211:3	331:2,14	opinions	311:22	organizatio...	278:2	outdated
240:5 241:2	213:2 214:5	332:13	366:12	339:6	109:20	281:16,20	377:19
241:10	214:22	353:19	opioid 142:21	opposite	organizations	281:25	outfit 280:10
242:13	365:13	354:24	143:9,12	33:23	140:16	283:3 289:3	287:25
253:22	430:21	375:14	172:20	optimist	197:4	295:21	outlet 149:3
261:4	one-on-one	406:25	391:15	164:18	236:24	296:2,10,20	outlined
266:20,24	6:11 388:4	416:21	opportunities	optimistic	237:2	297:14,22	247:5
273:20	one-year	417:20	13:11	339:16,18	269:24	298:9,13	outrage
285:10	167:13	431:18	153:11	optional	285:19	299:22	441:22
295:25	ones 101:22	449:10	165:12	114:17	425:6	300:9,13,21	outraged

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 35

381:11	overnight	228:15	194:18	290:19,20	254:17	60:24 79:7	partnerships
outreach	192:8	252:9	220:24	297:2 302:8	256:10	79:11 95:8	177:20
142:18,20	overoptimis...	paintings	223:11	303:10	258:12	126:14	229:7
237:4	366:8	170:9	250:3,4,12	304:2	287:24	150:19	parts 36:12
264:13	overpayme...	paired 306:20	250:13,18	307:19	306:21	183:23	36:13,13,14
outside 41:25	453:16	308:14	250:19,20	314:13	309:13,14	213:5	36:14
126:11	oversaw	pairing	251:12,18	318:15,20	311:9 312:6	276:21	party 325:16
129:14	249:23	304:16	252:9,20	319:21	312:24	329:9 350:6	Paschalville
161:5	overseeing	Palantino	283:13	323:24	319:8,14	419:14	6:13 150:15
162:24	8:25	245:18	289:5,10,13	335:13	323:10	particularly	pass 183:5
182:6	oversight	269:16	290:15,17	342:16	352:24	5:21 16:22	341:25
190:17	20:4,12	275:11,12	291:17	343:7	357:22	18:4 29:9	passage
191:20	194:25	275:24	292:5	344:25	425:7 431:6	39:23 43:4	369:19
221:4 260:8	195:2	312:14	295:10	345:11,21	part-time	67:12 81:21	passed
317:5	overtime 63:9	318:4,13	307:9 324:8	348:21	13:2 40:5	119:17	169:17
450:18,19	63:18,18	319:2,7	324:12	350:7	50:14 62:7	143:10,11	271:3
456:2,21	123:15	358:15	327:13	352:16	63:17	148:13	292:15
464:11	owned 93:21	360:20	333:17,18	462:4,8,20	105:16	152:5	357:17
465:11	300:22,23	palm 186:24	335:3	Parkside	136:4 419:7	153:25	425:16
outstanding	owner 461:10	palpable	424:12	273:3	participant	158:13	passing
431:5	owners	164:8 225:5	Parker 242:7	Parkway	192:18	184:25	292:16
ovation 437:2	387:20	Palumbo	242:8,13	26:21 39:2	participants	237:23	passion
overall 50:18	440:8	399:25	269:7,8	66:9 87:3	141:21	263:19	384:18,19
72:19	owns 72:9	Pam 19:4	270:17,20	92:4 93:6	167:2,10	328:13	passionate
109:19	286:10	72:25 135:7	271:17,23	118:3	189:8 200:5	396:23	217:6
149:21	346:4	Pamela 4:21	272:4,18	119:17	201:3	413:5	401:19
281:5	Oxford	408:20	273:20	398:18	202:20	partly 202:19	405:19
284:13	170:20	panel 371:3	274:10	416:25	208:13,14	partner 10:7	patched
374:4		Panther	275:18	Parodi	210:7	48:15	137:14
375:25	P	170:12	277:3	428:10,11	236:16	182:11	paternity
464:14	p.m 361:9	Paper 209:15	parking	431:25	participate	203:22	151:24
Overbrook	468:8	paperwork	282:10	432:2,8	54:19 223:6	210:17	path 166:22
99:15 102:7	package	347:20	283:11,13	433:4,23	225:14,15	231:20	260:5
424:12	136:7	paradigm	283:20,24	part 14:8	311:13	348:22	pathogen
438:2	packed 9:15	201:23	284:9	18:23 23:2	358:23	412:12	147:4
overburden...	449:15	Pardon	285:15	32:13 45:12	359:12	partnered 6:7	paths 306:13
395:18	page 19:25	261:11	286:15	54:16 60:25	430:21	259:24	pathway
Overcrowded	21:14 49:22	parenting	parks 4:5	65:9 66:13	participated	partners	415:4
377:23	paid 12:7	192:19	194:11	73:20,24	171:22	163:2	pathways
overdoses	166:24	parents 18:7	235:7 244:7	76:23 83:3	195:16	172:21	175:4
412:4	292:25	30:4,15	245:17	96:20 110:7	223:7	177:18	209:20
overdosing	422:20	124:21	246:14,22	110:7	participating	209:22	210:12
143:21	paint 189:19	381:5,8,16	247:8	113:13	227:12	210:11	patient
434:24	225:25	382:13	248:10	114:5,18	375:12	211:7	363:16
overdue	228:17	388:5,21	249:7,10	127:21	participation	313:16	388:14
366:16	306:16	401:3 450:2	252:17	135:24	140:13	partnership	patron 412:3
overhaul	386:3 402:6	Paris 279:24	253:2	138:7	284:22	172:11	449:5
387:13	402:7	280:12	273:22	202:11,19	355:21	174:17	patrons 411:5
overlay	painted	282:19	275:13	217:7 220:3	375:9	212:11,17	420:12,17
321:11	183:23	457:10	278:7,17,22	220:21	particular	219:5	420:24
overlooked	228:7	park 41:24	279:4 282:3	223:15	11:8 12:2	220:16	421:3
326:7	painting	99:15 102:8	284:8	226:22	15:6 18:23	249:2,15	441:22
overly 144:3	225:19	143:22	289:18	227:8	24:7 29:12	374:25	patrons'
	226:3,20						

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 36

pattern	65:3 89:16	173:2,3,14	287:21	450:9	455:11	person 4:8	340:9
400:17	110:23	173:23	290:3	452:21	460:9	70:15 89:22	Philadelphia
Paul 197:18	148:21	174:2,19,21	293:21	454:16,18	percentage	91:13	1:2,6 2:25
pavement	363:21	175:4	296:5,18,21	454:24	25:17 64:10	106:14	3:3 4:19
307:16	432:4 465:5	176:18,24	298:21	455:3,19,24	64:18 76:14	203:19	12:12 27:20
pay 13:9	pension 65:5	177:6,24,25	299:10	461:24,25	96:5 140:25	256:20	28:21 36:15
95:11	pensions	180:8	301:9 306:7	462:22	141:2	262:4,11	46:16,20
107:21	96:20	181:10	306:16,17	465:16	281:18	263:24	54:4 65:5
171:17	people 4:9	182:25	307:17,20	people's	289:14	294:2	65:16 66:3
177:17	8:15 11:17	185:24	308:17	390:2	467:4	348:23	68:17,18,20
179:13	15:16,19	190:9 192:5	315:11	percent 25:11	percolating	364:8 373:5	71:21,23
257:25	16:17 20:7	195:14,19	323:21	25:13,15,23	163:22	395:22	79:24 87:22
297:21,25	23:14 24:13	197:2,6,8	325:21	47:11 49:25	perfect	396:17	107:21
298:6 382:7	25:6 29:17	198:8 201:8	326:7 330:2	50:19,20	215:13	408:14	110:24
392:5	29:23 33:24	201:10,23	332:19,25	54:12,22,23	305:2	413:14	115:7
419:14	36:22 41:25	202:7 203:6	336:8	64:18,24	326:13	435:16	116:11
431:2	42:11 43:8	203:7,22	340:15	65:13,14	452:13	442:21	122:4
464:24	58:12,23	204:2,17	341:12	67:14 76:22	perform	452:14	129:24
465:8,24	60:22 62:9	207:6	342:4 343:5	93:20,21,22	364:17	465:16	130:19
466:15	67:13 81:12	208:20,22	343:14,15	93:23 97:12	performance	personal 18:4	139:22
paying 53:10	81:15 84:3	209:3	343:21	112:5	54:11	390:11	140:23
53:13 286:5	87:17,23	210:19	344:8,12	117:10,16	109:20	personalities	149:21
286:7	88:8 89:14	212:3,8	347:14	120:2 151:3	performing	367:4	151:16
438:16	89:24 90:17	213:17,20	349:10	151:4,12	310:18	personally	155:18,20
payment	91:3 92:9	214:2,3,7,7	358:20	152:20	390:20	397:11	160:13,14
277:2	92:11 93:21	214:13	362:5 364:7	167:14,15	period 55:4	personnel	162:12
payroll 464:7	104:10	215:5 216:9	367:21	167:17	102:16,19	105:9	165:20,24
pays 105:18	106:3	216:14,20	371:19	170:22	117:7 134:6	perspective	167:6,22
PCVB 235:25	108:17	218:4	372:14,16	200:5	147:10,16	263:24	169:19,21
240:14,15	110:12	219:22	374:13	230:17	197:12	pervasive	170:16
241:8	113:8,25	221:21,23	377:8	231:4,6,8	227:7	402:4	171:6
peak 197:13	118:8,12	222:6 223:5	382:20,21	231:11	periods	pessimistic	175:10
Pecora 52:22	119:15	223:7,16	383:24	246:16,17	222:25	366:9	177:6
52:23 53:11	120:6,11	224:22	384:10,22	246:18,18	224:3	pest 381:22	181:10,15
53:15,21	124:14	225:6,11,15	386:23	246:19,20	perks 400:23	pests 381:15	182:13
54:7 56:7	125:4,5,8	225:15	387:23	249:9	permanent	petition 381:6	187:19
56:16,21	125:19	227:11,21	397:4 400:9	266:16,16	381:14	382:16	188:2
57:12	130:21	228:16	400:13	266:17,17	433:15	387:5,7,23	197:11
101:19	133:19	229:7	402:9,14,18	266:18,22	permission	387:25	208:16
102:17,20	135:20	240:21	407:8 409:2	273:5	220:6	388:8	210:5
peeling 402:6	136:4	251:4	409:8	284:22	227:25	PFT 380:23	212:18
peer 127:5,6	137:25	254:22	421:10	316:11	permit	382:15	216:5,10,23
peer-to-peer	146:21	257:4,21	425:20	377:16	332:15	387:4,24	217:9,20,22
375:10	150:13	259:19	426:8	407:7	459:3,16	388:20	218:7
peers 378:6	151:21	261:19	432:10,12	414:12	permits	397:19	219:10
400:16	156:5,9	262:9 263:7	432:20	426:7	349:11	402:2	220:13
Penn 28:24	157:15,22	263:14,18	433:7 438:9	432:20	permitting	ph 251:15	223:18
140:5,15	162:21,23	263:21	439:17,17	440:24	332:18	269:19	228:14
145:25	165:9,10	264:12,14	440:5,9	441:9	perpetrating	Ph.D 91:14	229:15
204:4	166:4,5	264:23	442:22	443:19	410:4	phases 52:14	231:13,15
Penn's 326:2	168:4	266:22	443:6,7,8,9	444:7,9,19	perplexed	phenomenal	231:24
Pennsylvania	171:21	267:12	449:15,18	444:20	77:3	89:11	232:22
1:6 3:8 29:3	172:14	286:4,6	449:21,24	454:2,3,4	persist 435:7	phila.gov	234:14,23

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 37

235:25	408:9 411:6	Phillies	315:16	461:11	235:16	315:10,25	389:12
236:2,5,16	411:22	235:25	piece 44:17	place-based	430:23	322:19,22	393:17
239:12,13	414:3,22	Philly 39:3	51:14 91:10	458:8	planning	324:9,13	403:25
239:17	415:3 416:7	84:25	127:16,20	placed 127:6	38:16	331:17	405:3
240:13,21	418:15	153:10	154:9	placement	108:22	358:24	428:23
242:4,20	419:7,21	175:15,24	284:10,11	120:5	134:5	359:11,19	429:4
244:7	422:2	177:5	385:16	130:11	236:22	360:12	431:16
246:14,22	424:10,13	222:21	pieces 157:2	174:15	256:8	playgrounds	433:8
249:3	424:14,21	223:20	198:13	203:8	364:14	247:8	434:13
250:25	425:10	228:12	358:25	208:25	366:13	307:10	455:25
274:6 275:2	426:3	229:11	pilfered 392:8	209:25	433:17	312:11,17	pleased 234:5
275:3 279:8	427:17,19	248:21,25	pillars 216:22	210:8,12	plans 11:6	312:19	pleasure
279:15	431:7 432:5	310:3	piloted	placements	366:22	323:25	94:10
280:6	432:13	313:25	351:20	209:4	367:17	357:18,25	245:22
282:21	434:2	382:2,11	PILOTS	places 14:7,9	394:19	358:19	plenty 288:19
286:5,6,7	437:21	390:6 420:2	382:8	254:23	plant 333:19	360:5	plethora 5:19
286:10	438:10,16	420:3,4	pin 242:24	291:19	335:10,16	playing	plug 14:23
289:5,15	440:3	425:2 438:2	pinch 163:24	307:2	planted	307:21	plumber
292:21	443:12,15	458:8,12	pipe 147:15	322:18	333:16	349:13	276:11
293:13	445:24	philosophy	pipeline	412:10	334:20,23	390:17	plus 125:23
303:19	448:8,10,12	221:9 322:6	11:15	458:16	334:25	426:13	143:22
307:14	449:7	323:23	157:21	462:7,16	335:7,9	450:7	288:13
321:5 323:3	452:25	324:19	247:23	plain 365:9	planting	playoff	427:6 465:5
325:6,11	458:13	Phoenix	259:6,12	plan 3:2,24	249:22,25	235:19	PO 14:19
326:12,19	460:7 463:4	185:20,21	272:7,19	43:23 54:16	307:16	playoffs	pocket 190:4
328:10,19	463:22	192:16	344:12,19	92:16 98:24	335:12	394:7	pockets
337:25	464:4,10	214:5	pipes 146:13	112:16,17	platform	pleas 462:6	438:20
340:9	465:14,22	phone 395:18	pirated	126:18	375:14	pleasant	Pocono 249:4
342:14	466:5,19,24	395:23	392:14	134:2,7	play 65:23	303:18	poetry 173:8
349:9,18	Philadelphi...	phones 8:17	pitch 328:25	139:21	120:13	331:17	point 44:18
356:4	5:6 168:19	photography	Pittsburgh	140:2 155:6	129:10	pleasantly	109:25
359:25	234:15	226:19	28:24	155:13	148:16	338:19	114:8
363:15	365:12	Phyllis 437:4	419:11	157:5	187:17	please 2:6,12	118:11
367:18	454:21	440:16	place 6:7	159:14,20	248:14,21	8:13 12:17	145:22
369:17,18	458:11	physical	22:14 29:20	247:6,9	310:2	19:16 20:9	150:2
369:24,25	459:6	118:14,17	29:20 30:20	248:8	Play-and-L...	26:8 31:20	172:22
374:11	Philadelphi...	248:23	42:5 99:19	254:17	5:22 139:18	52:3,20	183:9
376:6,9	179:15	358:2,21	110:11	308:4	140:4	57:23 67:3	193:23
377:12	Philadelphi...	360:7 387:3	125:12	309:13,14	players	69:23 73:17	197:14
381:10	163:25	physically	168:21	316:9 318:9	171:12	74:10 75:10	211:4
384:11	166:22	24:23 97:25	179:18	323:11	251:4	85:16 105:5	253:23
385:7,11	169:10	106:20	209:21	330:4	playground	156:19	261:4
386:24	176:14	pick 40:18	211:24,24	335:10	183:12,21	180:5	298:17
387:20	280:7	118:23	268:7	363:19	183:25	233:18,21	304:16
389:18	281:19	394:21	287:19,22	364:23	251:14,15	245:11	306:12
396:14	288:3 369:4	picked	304:11	367:4 369:3	251:16	363:2,11	310:10
397:2,23	403:12,20	198:13	328:4,5	369:11	255:9	371:17	314:22
398:8,11	405:21,22	picketing	352:11	373:21	257:12	372:4,19	333:15
400:3,6,13	406:4 415:9	456:21	353:21	387:8,11,13	267:23,24	373:6,10,11	362:19
401:18	427:16	picture	359:13	409:6	297:10	376:22	372:19
405:7 406:9	452:25	186:23,24	404:8	453:13	305:2 312:4	380:19	395:21
406:21	453:5,24	446:8	427:13	planned	312:25	384:20	439:2 453:7
407:6,18	Philip 206:9	pictures	441:24	193:6	313:20	385:3	455:13

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 38

456:11	439:16	97:23 107:9	286:3	practitioner	429:14	295:18,19	442:9,13
points 8:20	444:12	107:23	360:11	201:20	presenting	295:22,24	445:10,18
163:24	455:10	108:3,8,14	362:19	pre-appren...	365:5	296:8,17	445:20
272:11	poorest	109:2 150:4	370:11	166:25	presents	297:12	448:13,20
poison 381:13	279:16	154:15	372:20	Pre-Cassidy	348:19	298:18	448:23
poisoned	419:23	209:9	possibly	390:16	preservation	299:6	449:2
386:2	425:11	246:10	256:25	pre-entry	458:25	301:20	451:25
pole-mount...	poorly 378:4	257:19,20	258:13	214:15,21	459:25	341:22	452:6,7,11
318:19	populated	260:11,14	310:17	pre-K 412:14	preservatio...	361:13	452:15
police 315:17	71:14 72:13	260:15,18	329:5	preceding	458:15	363:6,10,13	456:7,24
316:12,14	78:22	265:13,16	348:24	249:10	President	363:14,25	458:4
316:24	population	265:20,22	post 353:25	Precisely	1:10 4:17	370:15,20	461:15,18
321:5,11,17	93:23 118:2	265:25	posted 269:3	23:16 55:18	18:14 52:23	371:2,8,15	461:20
393:25	209:24	266:5,7	324:15	108:9	116:17,22	372:12	463:13,16
394:4,24,25	222:23	267:10,19	potential	predictable	120:18,19	373:14	463:19
policies 7:10	293:16	268:2	175:3 179:9	400:17	120:24	376:11,15	465:3
21:20 83:12	307:7	276:19	327:20	predomina...	131:15,16	376:18,21	467:12,16
369:8	348:17	336:20	potentially	25:10 27:20	131:21	377:2,4	467:23
409:13	349:3 426:7	337:11	355:25	442:24	138:20,21	378:21	President's
policy 47:22	433:6	338:25	pottery	premature	138:24	379:3,8,12	419:4
317:9 364:4	populations	339:2,11	225:21	112:11	139:3,5	379:17,23	press 32:14
369:11	359:25	342:14	pound 30:11	premier	144:22	380:2,5	32:20 33:12
409:14	populus	343:15,16	poverty 37:20	234:12	145:14,15	383:16	144:23
410:22	37:25	351:7 395:5	37:22,23	preparation	145:20	384:3,7,12	177:2
452:10	419:22	399:11,13	120:12	6:18	147:23,25	384:17	299:18
politically	Porch 165:13	417:8,11,15	142:4	prepare	148:6 158:3	385:2	pressing
438:15	172:10	417:20	160:16	108:21	158:8,25	388:18	368:24
politics	Port 400:2,12	positive	322:11	377:21	159:5,11,15	389:4,9	pressure
366:12	portal 341:23	234:21	368:25	413:8	159:25	392:18,23	274:3,15
367:3	portion	314:7,21	369:4 398:8	prepared	160:6	393:7,10,13	443:9
pool 20:15	149:10	327:19	407:5,9	158:16,19	161:12,15	396:7,11	447:21
179:14	portrait	332:4	426:6	334:8 394:8	161:21	399:18,21	pretend
213:12	186:23	373:16	power 65:6	preparing	162:2,17	403:9,15,23	125:15
251:18	Portuguese	374:2 375:2	174:4	365:5	239:20	404:14,17	pretty 26:15
258:13	406:2	375:6,13,18	259:25	430:17	240:7 241:4	405:2,17	27:7 86:17
259:19	position 12:9	375:20	388:13	preplanning	253:13,21	407:19,23	88:9,15
300:14,14	12:23	377:5 401:9	456:20	154:13	255:11	408:2,5	111:14
300:22	148:15	429:16	powerful	preschools	256:9	409:5 410:2	118:2
301:2	209:11	positively	275:4	412:13	260:22	411:8	131:12
345:13,25	247:22	374:18	425:21	present 1:9	261:3,10,16	415:12,18	132:8
347:12	258:17,21	possibility	PRA 267:7	133:10,13	262:2,14	415:25	135:15
348:12	259:4 261:9	394:20	342:22	135:9	263:13,17	416:4	141:14
352:3	261:14	possible	practically	245:24	264:19	417:21	201:21
pools 248:11	263:2	10:25 43:6	224:15	256:3	265:2	418:18,21	234:20
301:3 346:4	339:15	104:19,20	practice	363:17	266:11,19	421:24	288:2 310:6
346:16,19	340:20	134:23	73:25 92:3	365:21	266:23	422:7,12	318:23
346:21	343:19	159:4	273:6	presentation	267:11	424:2,5	339:18
347:5,9,21	362:7	160:19	359:18	133:12	268:9,24	429:6,8	prevailing
347:23	418:10	165:20	practices	365:22	269:4,9	432:3	141:4
poor 104:11	positions 11:8	178:14	7:11,13	presentations	277:13,18	434:11	prevent 5:16
369:3	11:19,21	200:11	153:2 220:9	193:21	277:19	437:8,12	276:15
377:22	12:8,10	211:16	247:12	449:16	278:16	439:24	374:21
386:19	23:25 50:9	279:20	364:12	presented	283:19	440:12,17	Prevention

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 39

172:22	191:12	158:12	212:6	160:23	218:8 220:4	309:3,6,16	397:5 401:6
212:13	192:16	183:10	247:20,25	285:18	226:4,6	309:20	406:19
previous 14:5	212:22	192:14	254:16	308:2	247:10	310:12	416:22
122:23	213:18	257:15	257:16	314:15	248:15,21	311:18	421:17
226:13	427:4	292:19	264:3 265:5	341:6,8	248:24	324:8	431:2
367:15	452:23	317:3 323:4	265:17	406:14	249:2 250:5	328:12	450:21
previously	prisons 10:6	326:14	271:2	416:23	250:7	329:6,7	451:4
318:15	89:5,17,20	327:15	272:11	professionals	255:16	348:6 351:3	progress
priced 403:13	90:15 91:20	330:23	275:10	25:18	259:15,16	programs	18:22 20:18
priced 288:2	168:4	338:13	283:5	profound	259:18,25	9:20 60:24	90:13 145:2
pride 181:9	175:15	396:16	285:20	169:10	260:6,16,21	61:4 63:25	145:8 150:5
234:24	202:24	problem 14:3	318:3 323:9	program 2:15	264:7 267:9	137:3 166:4	324:15
primarily	208:17	14:11 20:6	336:18,23	3:23 55:22	272:3	166:16	368:6
97:20	212:19	43:25 77:10	338:9,12	61:10,11,23	274:24	168:9	project 52:2,4
148:14	214:16	130:5	339:17	62:3,5	275:5	171:22	177:11
311:11	privacy 80:11	146:22	334:25	66:14,15,23	292:23	172:2 173:2	182:22
primary	private 66:20	147:12	354:25	88:20,24	293:4 301:4	174:6,21	183:11,17
136:11	105:21	332:22	356:19	93:2 99:8	307:24	190:6	184:4,7
Prince 206:9	106:13,21	368:24	365:23	106:16	309:17,18	197:22	193:21
principle	140:15	402:5	367:16	135:22,23	309:25	199:5 200:2	197:5
414:9	174:18	419:16	397:13	141:11	310:3,4,16	200:7,16,18	201:10
principles	198:5	444:25	process-wise	144:10	311:14	202:21	218:15,16
359:20	213:21	451:7 463:6	338:4	162:12	317:25	203:11,17	251:11
print-making	232:9	problems	processes	163:12	318:8	206:14,15	254:6 258:7
226:20	313:15	13:21 27:13	146:4 154:5	165:13	335:14	215:11	268:15
printing	335:21	77:9 164:17	353:20	166:17,20	341:10	217:4	271:6 273:4
388:9	349:12	391:2	354:10	166:20,25	345:14	218:23	276:3
prior 58:5	465:6	398:13	410:20	167:9 168:3	346:5	219:21	319:14
80:23	private-sect...	412:6	Procurement	168:11	350:18	220:19	342:19
116:10	266:4	447:19,21	452:21	170:10	351:5,11,19	221:15,16	350:14
151:19	privately	procedures	produce	172:10	351:22	221:21	352:4
155:11	66:12 99:12	370:12	118:19	174:11	373:17	222:7	353:18,24
459:15	106:4 140:4	proceed	234:24	176:25	402:11	225:13,24	356:9
priorities	privilege	12:18	237:13	177:17,20	421:14	226:17,18	424:23
17:3 78:23	180:18	245:12	239:23	185:15	430:22	246:25	458:9
361:22	465:23	362:15	319:22	187:21	450:6	249:9	project-bas...
365:8	privileged	363:11	368:2	188:8,17	program-b...	255:21	174:12
prioritize	401:3	373:11	produced	189:6,7,8	232:21	259:24	projects 52:8
16:21 440:5	proactive	376:22	236:7	193:23	367:9	260:2 267:3	52:13 61:2
prioritizes	128:5,6	385:3	239:10	194:6,8	programm...	267:4,5	86:16
54:5	191:7	389:12	320:5,18	200:21	197:5	306:18	105:13
prioritizing	proactively	393:17	producing	203:12,17	programm...	307:3,7,22	166:7,11
444:5	95:15	405:3 429:4	238:21	203:25	351:24	308:14,16	167:6
priority	probably	434:13	product	204:11	programm...	309:9	168:10
16:19 17:6	10:10 22:9	proceedings	268:17,19	206:25	118:14,15	311:22,22	171:7
58:15 78:24	25:23 31:18	469:4	268:21	208:15,19	118:17,18	314:2	192:21
79:3 84:10	35:12 40:11	process 24:2	productive	209:23	171:2	325:10,14	195:16
232:5,5	40:13 41:21	71:7 74:7	42:17	210:6,19,20	222:15	326:18	209:14
341:17	41:24 51:11	110:7 113:7	Products	212:4,11	224:5	351:17	251:10,21
418:15	54:21 61:9	113:14	209:14	213:9,24	247:14	368:11	251:23
prison 10:2	96:17	115:10,10	profession	214:10,15	290:2	373:25	252:4,5,6
10:20 91:4	125:20	154:18	19:8	215:13	304:17	374:20,20	252:15
165:19	129:15	157:11	professional	216:18	306:20	375:10,16	268:19

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 40

272:15	387:19	424:18	307:2	401:18,20	20:4 36:22	309:20,22	269:13
273:2,10,13	460:18	provide 21:17	383:11	407:7 411:4	36:23 52:7	416:22	315:4
273:17,23	466:19	21:18,23	420:22	414:4	73:12 87:4	418:14	questionnaire
273:24	Property's	69:23 70:13	462:24	416:11	92:18 110:5	quarter	111:14
274:15	56:6	105:21,24	provisionals	439:6 446:5	110:11	281:10,12	questionnai...
275:19	proportion	127:24	262:3	447:3 458:9	122:10,25	284:25	110:5
318:24	98:5	142:6 161:6	provisions	469:15	123:4,7	Queen	questions
319:4 327:5	proposal	161:12	368:10	publications	144:19	148:18	10:13 11:2
339:5,10,23	34:25 89:7	166:21	pruned 250:4	399:3	167:3	question 11:3	18:20 26:11
342:20	94:5 127:3	197:21	pruning	publish	177:23	12:15 16:15	34:22 48:18
350:13,17	283:7 315:9	198:18	249:22,24	368:17	189:20	27:15 29:6	51:17 68:7
351:25	proposed 3:5	234:6	PTSD 171:5	369:10	241:8 271:7	41:10,15	78:18 85:20
352:25	3:21 100:8	248:17	173:20	453:14,19	273:16	46:8,14	90:4 94:19
353:18	122:3	273:15	public 2:8	Puerto	287:9	47:14 55:20	109:7 142:9
398:5	245:25	276:5	3:18 4:6	156:13	288:12	57:2 65:21	144:19
Prolonged	246:11	280:19	9:14 27:21	puff 391:23	289:20	67:7 100:14	148:8
447:18	262:8 281:8	285:22	33:10 56:5	pull 265:14	291:7,10	101:8	149:19,23
promise	285:5	302:7	56:14,17	332:2	292:2	103:11	150:19
137:25	361:20	313:10	57:4,13	333:23	302:11	104:2 112:9	158:11
411:5	363:18	316:24	73:6,8	341:3	315:8,9	112:11,15	180:23
459:23	364:20	320:24	84:23 95:4	pulled 276:7	320:9	116:24	184:13
promote 13:4	366:17	325:17	96:2 102:4	276:14	323:19	119:3 129:8	187:14,15
109:3	442:5	326:8	105:22,24	339:7	337:2 360:5	129:12	207:22
234:18	459:18	344:24	134:3	pulling	372:18	134:16,17	218:19
236:8	proposing	351:3	148:25	340:24	385:19	141:4	236:12
241:23	4:25 121:23	368:21	153:19	pump 412:22	390:2	147:24	241:12
248:22	364:18	405:20	165:22	pumping	394:18	151:14	242:14
291:8 342:8	prosperity	406:6	166:4,5,6	401:13	421:4	152:10	253:12,15
405:10	398:11	412:13,24	166:10	punitive	433:17	153:22	277:4 278:5
promoted	407:9	415:4	167:3 168:9	413:17	434:5	156:25	279:12
343:16	protect	provided	168:12	purchase	455:15	160:9 193:3	285:13
promotes	176:19	52:8 89:8	176:17	404:10	puts 327:4	205:7,16	315:3 347:2
234:23	332:11	149:3 264:8	177:7 178:2	466:2	putting 16:15	210:23	364:18
promoting	Protection	285:25	181:10	purchased	20:6,11	239:2	371:5 373:8
342:13	447:13	320:7 351:7	197:21	402:18	41:3 154:7	270:10,23	373:9
promotional	protocols	374:13,18	198:4 199:4	purpose	177:13	273:23	378:18
7:10 234:13	21:21	374:22	201:19,24	61:16	216:9	294:21	409:25
237:24	proud 167:11	provider	218:20	135:21	226:10	319:18	quick 46:11
339:15	167:12	174:14	224:22	pursuant		330:12	47:14 105:5
promptly	171:13	providers	225:4	3:10 368:21	Q	333:13,22	105:5 335:5
109:6	172:7 206:2	285:17	232:14	push 42:25	quadrants	340:12,17	quicker 31:15
pronounce	206:3 207:2	provides 21:6	340:5	132:13	92:21	343:3	quickly
20:22	229:8 236:2	27:19	344:11	136:23	qualifications	345:19	103:12
404:20	242:5	230:16	345:12	231:24	256:13	350:2 357:3	108:25
property	353:17	451:3	355:9 361:9	pushback	qualified	357:15	164:11
52:24 55:20	381:8 385:9	providing	361:16	421:3	248:2 341:2	403:18	quiet 119:13
56:4,15,17	397:17	2:24 6:10	363:16	pushes 377:6	406:14	408:23	119:16
57:4,13	414:20	131:3	365:2,16	pushing	qualify	410:5	380:17
102:5	420:4	153:18	366:19	33:19	287:11	422:10	quietly 30:4
219:12	prouder	173:18	367:5 378:7	439:16	qualitative	443:13	Quinones-S...
275:21	220:14	190:5	386:9,23	443:22	141:10	questioning	411:17
340:5 345:9	proudly	255:21	390:14	put 8:24 9:21	quality 14:8	76:12 107:4	Quinones-S...
355:10	226:8	285:20	400:5 401:4	9:24 19:24	207:5	164:12	18:6
					247:10		

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 41

Quinton	213:21	Razzaq 424:9	132:17	127:23	312:5	33:13,20	106:11
457:12	230:25	re-envision	201:23	135:14	315:11	34:2,18	107:12,16
quite 8:23	231:3,5	311:20	291:9	140:10	316:22	39:12,19,22	107:22
47:4,6 53:3	291:11	reach 95:15	297:10,10	144:7	317:22	40:8,11,19	108:2,9,16
57:14 86:15	raised 6:24	174:19	301:5	152:14,23	320:16	41:2 43:10	109:21
99:17	60:19 68:9	200:6 263:6	353:14	152:23,25	324:20	43:19 44:2	111:10
100:17	94:20 146:5	285:16	401:23	152:25	326:10,16	44:7 45:25	112:17
107:23	182:5	289:11	409:6	160:15	327:7	46:13 47:15	114:7,23
111:2	189:22	319:12	410:21	163:6	328:25	47:20,23	115:2,14
119:19	290:7	369:15	438:11,21	167:12,12	330:3,6	48:9,13,16	116:8 117:4
151:23	350:18	386:4	466:16,18	174:10	332:23	48:22 49:7	117:12,18
152:6	351:4 420:2	reached 74:6	realign	177:10	333:13	50:4,21	117:23
154:14	raises 430:24	358:11	323:14	178:11,15	338:19	51:6,12,15	118:24
193:3 283:6	raising 66:4	reaches 77:4	realigning	182:20	347:11	51:22,25	119:7
284:2 330:7	137:5	216:21	324:4	184:10,20	349:8,17	54:15 55:7	120:15
401:10	ran 137:10	242:18	realignment	185:12	350:25	55:14,18	121:25
quote 71:7	range 99:22	reaching	254:18	186:9,13,19	351:17,21	58:3 59:13	122:7,11,14
102:4 109:8	100:4	230:3	256:7	187:14	352:2,16,17	61:7 62:25	122:19
111:23	101:23	280:18	323:10	188:9	353:17	63:12,16	123:4,8,12
114:15	164:16	read 2:12	realistically	196:18,19	354:14	64:3,20	123:23
459:12,17	168:9,24	3:20 6:3	8:2	198:11	355:18	65:25 67:6	125:25
460:25	272:10	60:6 125:15	reality 256:14	200:3,9	357:24	67:11,18	126:4,7,19
quotes 29:22	322:25	125:15	406:23	201:15,17	358:12,13	68:4,16	128:7,12,15
	ranging	372:25	realize	202:5 203:9	360:18	69:8 70:2	128:19,24
R	165:10	413:15	127:14	211:24	383:4	70:10,14,19	129:3
Rabb 449:14	rank 380:23	425:12	183:10	212:16	421:23	70:22 71:4	130:23
race 19:8	382:15	446:3	291:15	217:24	434:22	71:12 72:3	133:8
70:6 107:8	385:10	454:16	realized	223:16	446:23	72:24 74:13	134:11
races 236:19	387:21	readily 7:21	218:16	230:5,7	466:19	75:4,8,14	135:5 140:3
racial 7:5	410:15	111:24	462:21	231:17	realtime	76:4,16,18	141:8
383:21	rare 8:14	readiness	reallocated	242:5 258:5	368:18	76:20 77:11	142:14,17
408:12,21	rarely 400:13	210:15	215:12	260:17	rear 380:11	77:17 78:9	142:23
rack 450:18	rate 11:22	reading 60:25	reallocation	262:17	Reardon 4:10	78:13 79:16	143:4,19
radar 356:12	12:16 45:14	61:8 66:13	215:14	267:18	4:15,17	79:19 80:10	144:11,15
radiator	47:10	121:21	really 8:22	268:8,16	11:10 12:4	80:15 81:6	145:11
385:20	150:25	138:15	9:23 10:23	278:10	12:15 15:14	82:18,24	146:9,12,19
radiators	153:22	209:17	26:12 29:18	279:6,19	16:2,5,23	83:4 84:8	146:23
391:5	167:13,15	430:17,22	33:22,24	283:11	17:7,10	85:22 86:3	147:2,6,9
Radio 394:4	187:20	451:3	38:23 44:17	284:7 286:2	18:15,25	86:9,15,20	147:17,20
raid 461:11	200:25	reads 381:7	47:6,7 58:7	286:12	19:13,19	87:24 88:6	150:22
Railroad	208:21	ready 61:19	62:8 69:12	287:9 288:2	21:3,3,4	88:12,16	152:4,17
460:23	342:11	92:24 139:7	81:23 88:17	289:4,25	22:2,20	89:2,12	153:21
raining	407:5	271:5	88:23 93:24	291:14	23:9,16,21	90:2,7,20	156:24
129:14,15	453:11	361:15	103:11	292:22	24:8,12,19	92:2 93:8	158:23
rains 451:9	rates 150:7	382:21	109:22	297:8	25:7,9,15	93:12,17	159:13,22
rainwater	376:2,3	383:13	110:9	298:16	25:19 26:15	94:2,7,10	161:13,20
129:18	rationale	398:10	111:12	299:24	26:20 27:9	95:18 96:12	reason 11:25
raise 10:4	47:16	452:14	112:20	304:23	27:18 28:4	99:7,24	51:23 86:20
65:24,25	Ray-Riek	real 36:16	113:4,11,15	305:18	28:7,15,20	100:13,25	108:18
66:21	437:3	99:4 105:4	113:25	308:17	29:13 30:13	101:7,11	148:14
105:19	442:15,16	105:5	114:7	309:2,4,9	30:22 31:6	103:19,24	150:16
135:11,15	442:20	127:13	120:12	309:15	31:11,24	104:7	204:15
178:18	444:15,23	130:5	125:11	311:7,24	32:6,16,22	105:11	274:23
203:23							

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 42

294:11	306:14	receiving	recommend	recreate	redeploying	155:8 315:5	254:2 262:7
408:24	rec 42:7	109:18	366:2,15,20	176:4	324:5	350:4	264:3
430:4	171:7,9	213:8	367:8 368:2	recreation	redesigned	regardless	361:16
442:25	189:19,20	257:25	368:10,15	4:5 171:7	304:11	77:4 360:16	362:21
reasonable	193:19	reception	recommend...	211:21	Redevelop...	367:3	relating
111:5	194:12,18	296:23	114:10	235:8 244:8	265:10	regards 67:25	265:4
reasons 111:8	201:14	recess 233:12	141:23	245:17	reduce 150:6	276:20	relation 7:17
124:15	206:16	233:14	142:2 145:4	246:14,23	373:18,21	regattas	113:9
225:13	223:11	361:7,9,12	367:25	247:11,21	374:21	282:11	relations 24:2
343:18	247:8	468:3	368:9	248:3,10	376:2	283:21,21	77:5 110:23
rebranded	256:17	recession	recommend...	249:7,11	reduced	region 160:14	110:25
282:16	258:9,16	399:17	156:21	251:13,16	374:8	240:22	relationship
rebuild 99:8	259:7,10	recidivism	364:12	251:18	reducing	280:9	194:20
99:18,21	261:8,13	167:15	365:20,25	252:18	373:22	regional 6:10	197:10
102:3 124:5	264:20	187:20	459:2	253:3 255:3	376:4	24:21 26:18	238:4
124:6	265:5	200:25	recommend...	255:6	reduction	108:23	262:18
144:10	269:23,25	216:8	459:13	264:12	208:15	117:5,5	342:7 346:6
187:17	270:2	reciting 9:22	460:18	270:5	212:11	416:25	346:7
193:3,5,16	274:11	reclaim	recommend...	275:13	reentry 10:2	register 22:17	relationships
193:18	278:9,18	173:14	9:2	278:7,22	10:20	registered	232:25
194:13	299:23	reclaiming	reconcile	279:4 282:3	200:15	250:13	relatively
252:15,16	304:25	201:24	367:20,21	284:8	202:11	regs 257:2	12:24 13:10
254:2,6	315:9,24	recognition	reconsider	289:19	203:10,12	regular 219:4	62:17
265:5,15	317:6	8:3 112:7	441:15	290:21	204:6 213:9	342:20	relay 236:11
266:15	318:24	recognizable	reconvene	297:3,9	213:13	410:19	released
268:2 271:2	323:23	460:19,25	468:5	302:9	referrals	412:21	214:17
271:10,10	324:7 328:5	461:4	record 35:3	308:11,22	212:12,23	456:16	458:25
271:16	328:11	recognize	144:20	309:21	reflect 163:14	464:13	relevant
272:2,6,15	329:6	35:18 45:7	148:9	310:13,17	192:3	regularized	119:17
276:16,19	330:17	293:13	149:12	311:16	234:25	21:23	247:15
297:5,6	331:2	406:3	188:21	314:14	248:4	regulate	255:22
299:16,25	332:13	recognized	192:2 227:2	317:23	364:13	283:16,17	305:24
303:9 304:5	342:16	28:25	240:20	319:22	reflective	283:20	309:10
305:10,19	343:7	167:24	243:6 303:6	320:12	222:22	regulations	413:10
308:15	344:25	228:9,11	325:7	324:10,12	reflects	258:15	relied 395:20
310:11	345:11,21	229:3,10	326:11	330:20	155:19	Rehab 427:2	relief 176:7
311:3,19	348:21	recognizes	328:17	331:16	246:5	rehabilitation	religion
318:8,25	351:2	116:19	362:14,15	350:8,15	333:14	203:2	398:23
342:22	352:17	120:21	372:24	360:12	Reforma	reimbursed	rely 231:20
344:6 350:5	356:3	131:18	373:7	462:4,16	405:9	103:2	436:22
350:8,13	462:13,20	139:11	376:19	463:9	refreshments	reintegration	remain
352:5,7,21	Rec's 303:11	145:17	389:13	recreational	325:18	166:23	394:25
353:6,16,22	462:8	148:3 158:5	record-brea...	346:11	refunded	reinvest	447:24
353:23	recall 18:18	205:18	240:22	459:7	87:20	290:13	remaining
354:22	73:18	207:15	records 53:17	recreations	refuse 444:16	reinvested	15:8 142:9
355:12,16	receive	269:6	240:16	304:2	regard	314:10	remarkably
355:21	260:16	277:15	recover	307:19	131:12	rejected 78:7	19:9
356:5,9,19	330:24	299:3	441:17	recruitment	236:25	78:12,14	remarks
357:22	received	314:23	recovered	247:20	275:25	relate 26:12	79:25
463:10	77:25 95:5	333:10	440:25	recruits	regarding	related 81:2	370:19,25
Rebuild's	260:9,25	349:22	recovery	238:15	2:10 18:20	84:15	remediate
32:14	358:9	recognizing	165:15	recs 273:22	64:21 68:7	relates	387:8
rebuilding	429:16	181:13	173:16	308:17	149:19	149:20	401:22

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 43

remediation	rent 287:24	248:6	140:14	397:13	153:25	77:17 80:20	211:20
381:18	288:4	265:20	145:7	398:5	204:16	84:14	restore 176:3
remember	295:16	266:7	148:10	412:24	209:21	109:11	416:20
45:7 89:10	444:2	319:22	152:24	416:24	219:15	140:20	restraining
91:13 180:6	rentals	320:16,23	155:8	reserve 52:13	231:8	172:19	391:11
205:24	294:24	321:2,4,13	181:21	reset 305:11	247:18	371:7	restricted
294:15	renters	367:10	195:25	Residence	258:8	379:22	105:13
317:2	432:20	368:3	246:7 276:2	220:4 221:2	260:13	391:18	restriction
332:15	reopen 311:2	reported	276:3,23	221:25	262:20	428:9	105:15
392:17	reorient	284:21	302:12	residency	290:22	429:16	restrictions
remembering	440:6	reporter	316:14	171:19	291:7,11	457:8,11,14	106:7,9
171:14	reorienting	469:24	330:24	224:10	304:9 320:9	457:16,21	restrictive
remind	202:23	reports 320:3	340:21	resident	340:22	457:23	140:22
420:21	Rep 233:17	320:5	344:23	170:22	364:24	467:22	result 304:19
reminder	299:8	represent	368:22	424:18	370:10	responses	356:8
436:17	repair 100:10	74:19	429:14	residential	375:16	7:18 79:12	409:24
reminding	100:17,21	148:23	requesting	174:14	417:19	responsibili...	resulted
181:9	100:24	246:15	55:22	203:7	421:13	345:20	272:2
reminds	101:6 134:3	representat...	148:11	residents 5:6	424:20	responsibility	results
176:18	134:9 268:7	75:16	requests 93:5	164:11	430:9	107:10	280:22
removal	268:22	165:25	122:25	222:7	459:21	108:15	367:11
249:22,24	276:22	235:2	249:23	234:19	respect 3:6	409:24	resume 6:17
remove	341:15	representat...	375:21	242:19	78:4,6	responsible	73:25
366:11	342:21	4:5 234:2,7	406:16	275:2	82:15,16	66:4 320:15	233:16
removed	399:16	234:11	require	282:21	158:14	409:19	421:5
166:12	repairs 5:16	242:16	319:21	357:19	159:20	410:7	resurrect
250:3	129:11	363:23	366:21	358:4	163:18	responsive	375:9
renaissance	132:18,21	402:2	367:9	365:10	201:11	242:17	retain 289:7
170:8	136:17	449:14	444:19	370:13	256:12	243:4	289:18,19
Rendell 239:5	252:7,7,8	representat...	required 54:3	404:5,9	344:10	309:11	retains
Rendon	387:18	454:8	54:12,24	414:3,3	467:9	rest 27:6	179:19
269:17	repaving	represented	114:18	415:6	respected	49:12 53:19	rethink
renew 284:3	306:13	75:21 76:15	142:6	432:19	178:25	153:4	186:10
renewed	307:15	236:20	144:25	resign 139:7	respectful	241:21,22	370:3
264:20	repeal 444:15	411:16	288:12	resilient	83:25	414:9	retire 344:10
renovate	467:10	representing	367:20	179:10	respectfully	438:16	retirement
313:2	repeat 20:9	139:15	368:21	Resist 425:3	205:6	restaurant	244:25
renovated	193:13	251:6	375:18	resolution	375:21	290:15	344:9
118:5 119:8	repetitive	424:14	requirement	1:17 2:11	respiratory	restaurants	retrofitted
312:19	10:10	represents	338:6	2:13,23,24	391:7	209:13	311:18
renovating	replaced	95:9 382:18	requirements	resolved	respond	225:3	return 391:25
9:12	102:13	453:16	262:22	146:18	45:25 127:9	restoration	returned
renovation	402:13	reprioritizing	requires	resource 92:3	281:4,5	196:24	179:12
66:6 100:3	replacement	314:9,10	186:10	102:11	295:22,23	restorations	returning
100:6	252:10	reproduction	414:11	140:18	434:25	166:7,10	10:24
218:11	replied	469:21	454:22	173:10	responded	175:21	165:19
251:12,15	408:23	request 43:15	459:17	420:19	79:11	restorative	200:22
319:3	report 144:25	98:16	requiring	421:7	responding	168:3	207:24
renovations	145:7	121:23	331:14	resources 5:7	72:10 98:15	185:14	210:21
98:21,24	159:10	122:6,7,10	382:6	11:14 24:14	109:5	187:21	returns 87:13
137:6	167:11	122:13,16	research 7:13	29:2,21	response	200:2,20	87:18
138:13	172:23	122:18	28:22	85:4 124:24	21:13,18	202:11	reunions
318:9 319:6	240:14	123:5,7	119:18	140:9	39:10 77:16	208:10	242:21

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 44

revamp/con...	251:24	147:22	370:21	221:16	24:24	221:18	salary 11:24
261:6	Rican 156:14	184:4 187:6	371:3	345:14	Rossi 457:3	242:11	12:24 13:8
revamps 9:18	rich 20:15	187:22	403:10	381:21	roster 16:8	270:9	464:25
revenue 87:8	156:9	189:17	409:16	rodent	93:3	301:11	sales 464:15
242:23	212:17	190:9	414:8 422:3	386:10	rougher 37:6	446:17	465:2,24
246:4 289:8	richer 210:14	193:10,12	422:5	387:12	205:4	runs 61:10	466:3,21
289:9,20	Richmond	195:23	428:23	rodent-free	roughly 27:9	85:21	same-day
290:16	400:2,12	196:9 199:6	430:15	403:6	76:16 96:8	Russell 187:5	177:17
291:12	Rick 203:22	208:5 212:2	431:15	Rodriguez	99:23	191:13	Sanchez's
292:9 303:8	203:23	215:5 225:9	435:19	102:2	117:11	Russo 307:9	143:2
304:5	ride 204:22	225:11	442:3,21,22	role 65:23	198:21		Sanctuary
revenues	455:7	226:15	442:23	71:17 72:2	304:7	S	369:5
366:8	riders 454:13	227:20,24	443:7 452:9	72:3 120:14	round 59:12	S 1:12	satisfaction
review 7:9	Ridge 169:13	255:12	456:22	130:17	61:6 62:7	sacrifice	109:9,14
80:18	169:14	256:10	463:8	180:7	136:13	439:8	110:6
364:22	224:2	258:10	465:16	187:16	144:12,14	sad 419:23	367:12
366:9	right 13:25	259:11	right-to-kn...	194:4,7,8	167:18	saddened 9:4	satisfied
reviewing	15:12 25:7	260:4,23	368:22	239:3 350:6	253:15	saddles	460:16
287:2	27:9 28:20	261:22	Rightfully	350:9	277:4	413:16	Saturday
364:17	29:13 32:19	266:12,24	13:16	352:21	346:10	sadly 412:4	28:9 41:8,9
Revised 3:2	34:23 39:19	267:12	rights 432:12	354:19	417:3	425:24	41:12,16,17
revisit 287:17	43:15 47:16	268:23,25	ring 46:4	355:25	430:25	sadness 145:3	41:20 42:15
revitalization	47:17 49:8	272:19	rings 459:25	356:18	rows 186:5,5	safe 14:7,8	43:4 48:19
223:15	51:12,22	275:25	rips 391:6	374:8 435:8	186:6	15:8,10	49:6,12,17
424:23	52:5 53:5	280:6	rise 108:13	roles 129:10	RPR-Notary	29:20	49:20 50:3
revitalize	53:20,23	281:23	risked 191:15	435:3	469:15	110:17	50:12 61:25
216:7	54:8,15,20	293:8 294:7	risks 408:11	roll 92:16	rule 264:10	125:18	62:18,24
219:19	55:15 61:13	295:14	Rite 209:16	roof 101:25	270:12	173:5	63:2 148:13
revitalizes	61:15 62:20	296:16	464:21	102:25	ruled 270:14	304:11	204:21
227:7	65:18 66:25	297:13	River 283:22	129:12,22	270:22	307:2	224:24
reward 453:3	68:4 71:4	298:23,24	Rivera	252:7	271:19	310:23	327:9,12
rewarding	75:8 78:15	302:25	197:23	398:20	rules 80:12	315:12	329:10
174:9	81:14 82:20	303:3	199:5 428:2	roofing 132:5	362:2	329:17	331:18,20
439:15	88:13,16	305:15,21	428:6,8	339:12	380:10	332:11	Saturdays
Reynolds	89:2,12,24	308:24	Riverside	roofs 52:10	384:23	376:8 381:6	41:6,7
1:14 17:13	90:2,20	309:22	213:23	100:9,17,20	run 44:12	382:11,23	50:15 62:22
67:2 94:21	93:12 99:25	310:23	road 204:10	101:6,16,20	60:23 61:5	412:10	117:22
106:25	103:6	315:17	212:5 213:2	102:14	61:13 62:5	417:25	347:9
121:3	104:12	316:11	213:5,8,10	124:4	103:14,15	418:13	451:18
139:12	106:7,23	317:10	215:6 344:8	room 1:6	103:25	429:25	save 57:10
149:18	109:21	321:8 323:9	roadblocks	58:13,16,23	104:3	435:11	117:20
155:8	111:10	323:17	113:21	94:24	106:13,15	462:18	143:21
236:12	114:23	324:9	robberies	129:19	172:11	SafeCam	187:19
RFP 282:22	117:12	328:15,16	320:11	190:11	290:25	219:21	268:5 436:3
286:25	120:15	332:18	robbing	201:24	300:23	safely 418:8	458:16
287:2,9	126:4 128:7	337:21	191:5	300:18	432:9 454:9	safer 225:17	saved 357:8
288:11	129:13,16	340:2	Robert	317:9	rung 25:25	safety 168:15	saving 42:11
rhinitis 391:8	130:24	341:17	169:16	371:20	76:3 116:15	267:23,24	187:25
ribbing-cut...	131:14	346:18	428:2,6,7	385:22	running	268:3,4,7	192:13
398:16	138:19	347:12,16	Robinson	395:2 468:5	47:10 54:20	268:15	411:24
ribbon-cut...	139:9 141:8	352:22	269:20	rooms 119:10	174:11	317:23	435:12
139:2	144:15,16	356:11,22	robust 61:11	119:13,20	203:24	383:21	436:14
ribbon-cut...	146:6 147:6	356:22	188:16	Rosenbach	214:14	395:7	464:7
						sake 35:21	

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 45

savings 86:7	100:2	462:19	234:24	169:21	331:24	sell 308:6	series 55:7
188:4,7	schlepped	463:24	321:14,17	424:12	334:19	466:22	325:20
192:23	191:14	467:6	scramble	sections	338:19	Senator	serious
252:5	school 5:14	schooling	14:15	129:24	348:4	363:4,8,12	114:14
saw 38:18,19	15:23 16:6	400:21	scrambling	311:12	351:22	363:24	399:8
38:20 90:13	59:6,11,14	schools 59:17	349:11	sectors 242:4	355:20	370:19,25	441:17
98:20 187:4	59:15,21	88:21,22	screen 346:13	secure 310:25	357:7 372:2	371:12	447:19
251:3	60:3,8,23	174:13	347:10,17	secured 250:9	402:4	send 56:8	seriously 7:2
258:25	61:18 175:8	175:15	371:21,22	secures 21:7	420:11	301:8 404:8	8:24
385:16	175:10,11	189:23	371:24	security	431:11	454:8	servants
saxophonist	197:10,15	190:16,21	372:3	55:24	437:25	sending	218:21
459:9	198:10,10	197:21	screening	142:11,13	449:20	401:18	232:15
saying 35:3	199:19,21	198:9 199:2	301:7	427:4	452:5	442:7	serve 157:21
44:3 59:8	238:13	199:3	screw 269:18	448:17	454:13	sends 114:19	165:10
64:21 78:8	249:7,13,19	206:14	scrutinize	see 9:13	456:6	senior 79:7	202:7
80:15 116:6	267:4	369:7	163:24	15:15,17,20	461:23	80:20	208:11,12
128:3	300:23	381:19,20	search 131:3	16:17,22	463:6	113:23	213:25
134:20	301:3,12	382:23	427:13	18:3 35:23	seeing 15:24	345:14	222:23
139:4,6	308:16	383:20	searches	38:25 42:13	118:3,5	434:16	234:2,12
151:12	332:15	387:9,13,15	131:9	42:20 43:8	196:21	seniors	247:2
156:15	345:3,5,7,9	388:3,22	searching	56:19 57:10	200:5,19	206:16	326:16
235:19	345:10,11	389:3,8	427:7	61:5 83:21	325:14	226:18	395:8
265:9	345:16,19	392:22	season 250:7	86:7 91:22	354:16	348:10	411:19
269:14	346:3 347:3	397:12	430:18	98:22 99:3	423:23	405:21	424:18
293:23	347:24	398:6 400:5	seasonal	104:3,18	seek 163:21	sense 38:9	433:5 438:9
294:3 308:5	348:6 349:4	400:25	14:19,20	119:12	seen 19:3	330:23	440:16
308:21	373:22	401:4,20	50:13	120:4	160:20	331:12	462:2
327:10	376:2	412:23	257:17,19	134:18	186:5	353:2 423:8	served 208:18
330:5	377:13,16	414:20	257:19	135:10	224:20	sensitive 7:20	248:13,21
348:17	377:17,22	421:11	259:19	140:10	257:7	183:24	363:22
408:23	378:6,8,9	436:24	351:7	152:13	315:13	184:2	367:16
Sayre 300:8	380:22	437:22	second 91:10	161:21	320:4	sent 21:8	389:17
300:11	381:10,12	438:23	148:23	164:21	369:20	186:24	services 405:13
301:11	385:6,15	439:6	181:4 211:5	173:13	371:22	187:3	413:12
says 15:17	386:9 387:3	462:12	227:6,16,20	175:2,3,12	402:12	separate 86:4	433:7
38:9 49:22	387:6 389:2	463:2,8	228:24	175:12	select 264:16	86:21	service 5:13
79:3 121:13	389:17	466:24	241:5	180:15	selected	239:19	6:6 7:12
189:15	390:12	Schuylkill	243:13	186:18,20	168:6	335:18	15:23 16:4
190:18	391:6 398:2	283:22	277:4	191:8,14	381:21	359:10	16:6 17:2,4
scale 95:11	400:4,23,23	science	281:10	196:19	416:23	456:18	17:9 27:21
130:18	401:5,19,24	145:25	284:25	200:3,24	selecting	separated	31:4 41:11
196:20	404:6,7,12	175:9	285:12	214:4 218:2	340:14	392:4	44:24 49:23
199:18	405:24	398:22,24	366:15	225:5	selective	SEPTA	49:25 50:6
218:25	411:25	Sciences	380:9	226:11	406:14	177:19	55:17 59:2
310:7	413:2	385:7	391:24	240:6	self-care	454:2,5,20	59:13,22
scarce 364:23	421:12	scientist	405:14,23	241:11	421:18	455:2	60:16 70:18
scenario	430:18	146:2	422:8 453:7	244:11,19	self-love	September	70:21
96:25	434:17,22	scope 163:15	seconds	257:9	421:18	16:7 60:9	105:22,25
schedule	438:3 446:3	285:24	191:11	286:11	self-select	390:22	108:12
235:13	447:5	score 263:10	377:15	297:9	373:10	sequence	110:10
276:2,5	449:23	322:11	Secretary	301:11	380:19	193:9	122:15
394:15	450:2	323:5	424:19	305:5	393:17	Sergeant	134:20
scheduled	453:22	scores 138:15	section 54:4	323:20	405:3	169:16	135:2 138:2

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 46

153:18	421:4	249:16	short-term	254:5,7	386:11	345:25	420:18
218:18,19	462:24	382:7	447:15	348:7	394:14	401:23	skipping
220:18	serving 198:7	390:10	shorter	sides 175:23	419:9	430:12	425:9
243:9	208:21	438:17	451:20	176:13	420:10	situations	sky 305:21
247:11	246:13	shared	shortfall	sidewalk	429:23	395:11	skyscrapers
249:11	248:16	219:25	348:8	402:23	sink 413:20	six 2:16 5:13	440:8
250:21,23	274:25	220:3,12	shortly	sign 15:17	sinuitis	24:9 32:5	slave 452:24
256:12	311:10	Sharif 457:4	194:11	340:10	391:21	40:11,14,20	sleep 8:17
257:2	session 60:23	sharing 37:2	273:19	380:14	Siobhan 4:10	59:3 117:6	9:22
258:14	sessions	274:12	461:11	signals 179:7	4:17 8:20	128:21,23	sleep-away
260:20	21:17	Sharon	shot 288:10	signed 382:15	10:11	134:19	249:4
262:22	set 98:25	379:16	shout-out	387:5,23	sir 302:15	135:2	slice 30:11
263:2,9	112:25	380:7	269:25	significant	379:11	136:13	sliced 435:4
264:9 267:9	148:19	389:16	shoveled	7:23 38:11	427:24	141:5	licer 31:18
283:8	149:2	she'll 83:10	402:22	58:14 95:8	467:17	191:10	slide 60:4
285:17	287:11	sheer 274:13	show 15:21	112:2	sisters 189:11	200:6	slow 71:14,15
288:9	368:7	Sheila 233:24	53:17 84:16	132:18	189:13	222:15	303:15
337:14	394:15	shelter-in-p...	84:17,18,19	149:10	390:19	294:16	slowdown
338:3	397:7	317:9	84:20 142:5	156:7	sit 81:14 85:6	325:22	343:17
344:11	sets 172:5	Shepherd	229:12	251:10	85:8 125:14	352:10	slush 453:10
371:11	setting	269:18	377:18	253:24	125:16	398:25	small 7:22
392:5 406:6	355:24	shift 151:20	456:14,15	362:3	381:12	399:2,3	13:10 92:6
406:24	462:24	168:16	456:22	459:15	site 102:3	425:17	92:7,8
411:4 417:2	settle 273:9	201:23	showcase	significantly	270:7	six-day 15:22	141:2 167:6
451:23	setup 462:23	shimin	242:22	69:12 96:22	276:21	16:4,6,8,25	178:24
462:2	seven 40:2,7	376:24	303:19	268:17	290:14	17:4,9	187:14
services 5:7	67:19 104:4	shined 219:8	showed 98:24	406:18	292:11	41:11	226:22
5:19 10:2	136:14	ship 13:15	270:6	signing	311:3	six-day-a-w...	286:16
10:20 55:25	224:25	Shira 378:25	showing	149:15	316:18,20	138:2	322:9,13
58:9 61:10	303:22	380:3,4	151:8	340:15	316:21	Sixers 235:19	421:14
65:8 120:3	398:2 447:4	385:5	shown 374:7	signs 380:11	319:9,25	Sixteen 426:6	smaller
125:21,22	447:23	shooting	shows 51:4,18	similar 27:8	323:17	size 27:2	213:17
127:17	seven-hour	191:4 317:5	362:5	56:9 86:18	349:6,6,8	211:2,12,17	218:25
130:14,15	63:3	317:7	shut 147:13	157:18	349:16	291:21	Smith 373:12
136:13	Seventh	328:20	227:17	166:8 366:4	sites 248:14	322:5	373:12
150:8	411:15	shootings	shuts 268:10	397:6	252:17	359:21	snacks
172:13,21	severe 152:8	328:17	shuttling	414:19	254:19,21	skill 206:20	325:17
173:19	391:10	329:23	301:9	similarly	254:22	skilled 173:5	sneak 65:21
174:18	severely	shop 137:11	347:17	370:24	270:23	252:2 265:8	snow 402:20
178:8,8	394:25	209:15	sic 433:25	simple 256:14	271:4 272:6	266:2,5,10	social 125:21
198:18	sewer 252:9	393:23	sick 14:14	307:15	272:9	267:9	126:3,23
218:24	sewing	454:24	47:11	414:2	305:23	268:18	127:11
248:18	226:19	455:2	442:25	simply 372:2	318:21	276:17	178:7 179:2
280:20	sexual 409:14	464:21	443:2 446:9	406:25	323:13,21	336:20,21	180:13
285:24	shades 83:20	shopping	446:14,21	sing 171:11	351:9 356:5	337:19	342:9
314:16	shame 448:3	464:14	side 80:25	single 22:4,25	356:7	340:3	448:17
341:8 344:4	Shannon	short 7:25	107:15,19	101:13,14	sits 69:25	342:14	society 210:5
367:11	393:2,4,15	112:3	108:12	101:15	sitting 154:3	skills 6:17	439:19
374:14,17	393:20	233:14	136:6	133:16	371:21	139:20	socioecono...
399:9	shape 130:22	308:6	155:25	135:3	380:13	167:2	400:10,16
405:10,19	share 5:3	361:12	164:9	136:14	situation	170:24	soda 265:17
416:18,21	51:10 66:8	395:6	190:20	189:14	80:18	202:2	466:2
420:22	163:15	420:16	206:13	341:14	283:14	373:24	soda/sugar

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 47

467:10	107:25	335:18	37:7 61:9	specific 21:19	spending	412:9	256:21
Soffa 457:17	129:4	375:24	107:5 135:6	26:23 63:15	3:22 97:9	Stabilization	262:5,11
461:17,20	138:22	413:7 431:2	141:20	81:2 105:13	192:17,18	453:11	265:8,9
462:3,15	153:22	South 68:17	162:15	137:16	361:22	Stadium	268:20
soil 146:2	160:8 183:8	68:18	170:23	159:19	364:11,20	349:14	269:22
273:8	186:25	175:10	189:4 201:4	196:15	365:4,8,11	staff 6:23	270:3
sold 454:23	190:15	222:20	202:13	217:18	366:19	7:15 9:3	276:17
sole 295:7	194:23	400:3 420:2	203:25	218:7	367:17	15:7 21:16	278:18
solely 222:12	241:3	438:2	214:9 316:8	244:20	368:12	31:14 33:14	279:4
solid 44:23	251:22	Southeast	338:2 365:9	265:25	369:13	39:14,24	282:20
solidify	271:18	170:15	378:11	266:4 276:6	370:5	40:5 44:4,8	292:24
247:12	299:7 335:9	Southwark	384:22,24	280:20	spent 9:5	44:10 45:8	301:4 302:4
solidifying	338:9 357:7	400:4 402:3	405:25	352:21	64:11,19	46:15,20	306:23
50:6	sort 36:25,25	Southwest	408:16	specifically	96:6 136:15	47:2,5 51:9	317:7
solutions	37:6 38:5	93:10	425:20	6:18 10:4	185:3	54:12,19,22	318:21
167:25	42:3 49:2	space 87:16	454:16	75:12 87:12	303:24	54:24 57:14	321:23
180:4 444:8	52:14 54:24	110:17	speaking	106:17	368:5	60:15 63:8	322:5,7,14
solve 444:25	55:10 81:16	119:9,15,16	97:17	143:2	456:11	63:18 70:11	323:14,19
somebody	92:5 111:14	125:18	238:11	155:14	spin 177:23	72:14 75:5	323:19,20
23:4 39:7	112:25	170:24	275:15	259:18	spirit 164:19	75:20 76:15	324:5,5
83:17,25	113:21	171:23	281:22	276:10	170:4	76:21 79:23	343:4 346:5
136:5	115:15	172:18,23	282:7	345:2,7	spite 164:17	80:21 93:2	359:3
202:10,13	118:18	173:4	314:12	347:21,24	164:20,21	97:24	386:10
225:20	130:12	201:24	348:15	396:21	392:7	105:16,19	390:7
226:3	135:18	211:6,8,19	355:23	410:14	splash 38:15	106:12	406:17
389:10	143:7,21	219:25	speaks 409:8	413:25	spoke 42:2	109:9,13	408:17
somebody's	196:12	220:3,12	spec 258:16	specification	spoken	110:6,17	410:21
325:16	198:11	221:12,17	260:14	261:5,15	121:14	113:11	411:3
Somerset	210:15	222:2	316:17	specifications	131:25	115:22,24	412:16
322:24	265:16	329:17	special 18:11	261:18	199:25	116:9	416:23
something-...	288:5	381:23	66:18	specifics	432:15	123:18	417:8,11,18
294:6	294:24	436:6	190:15	80:11 316:8	spokesman	126:24	417:25
somewhat	319:23	spaced	225:3	specs 262:7	459:12	127:18,21	418:9
266:9	327:18	359:15	242:15	264:8	sponsors	127:23,23	429:23
son 30:6	330:4	spaces 5:22	243:5 252:4	Spectacor	113:9	135:9,10	430:3,6,11
401:8	331:11,24	9:18 119:6	273:23,24	209:13	sports 329:13	141:11	431:3
soon 10:25	351:18	139:19	274:14	spectacular	spot 16:16	144:5 152:7	441:20
99:11	359:7	140:4 167:3	275:15,19	221:24	92:8 328:8	152:15,17	442:6 460:8
169:17	365:24	201:7	275:25	455:17	sprain 391:11	152:24	460:12,17
185:18	sorting 435:9	222:18	313:20	spectrum	spread 92:19	153:12,14	461:2,5
286:20	sorts 123:22	224:19	339:3,23	312:8,22	spring 73:6	153:15,17	464:24
300:17	sound 53:19	226:23	342:19	313:22	250:20	157:3,3	staffed
338:22	101:3 196:9	332:21	352:11	speeds 439:14	383:7 386:6	162:25	323:17,24
340:18,23	204:2	398:16	366:11	spell 404:21	Springfield	173:7,25	323:25
391:17	310:22,23	435:11	450:20	Spencer	451:16	216:11	395:2
sooner 154:6	sounds 300:2	spacial 312:4	451:4	205:24	squad 339:4	222:4 223:8	406:13
154:20	source 265:19	Spanish	Specialist	spend 92:10	square 56:3,5	246:16,22	431:19
sorry 2:4	290:16	378:12	420:20	96:10	56:6,11	247:11,13	441:25
16:15 20:8	295:7	406:2	421:7	364:23	99:10 100:3	248:15	staffing 38:22
25:12 39:3	335:21	Spanish-Sp...	specialists	367:23,24	Squilla	249:23	39:25 149:9
46:7,8	433:15	405:11	24:14	383:5	405:18	253:7 254:5	254:11
53:11 79:18	sources	spans 168:23	specially	414:12	stability	254:19,20	267:14
102:17	333:20	speak 18:22	270:4	467:2	394:15	255:7	321:21,22

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 48

322:7,12,15	213:22	97:12,16,18	staying	219:24	461:2	171:5	subjected
331:7	217:15,23	97:18 98:5	405:16	stores 463:21	464:22	172:15	401:16
398:13	244:16	107:6 108:7	453:3	464:8,9,10	streets 190:9	173:20	submit 73:16
417:6 441:5	249:17	111:23	steadily 161:4	464:23	204:8	265:24	submitted 3:7
459:18	259:7,9	146:2	stealing 191:5	465:5,12,15	316:21	292:22	148:9
stage 9:11	265:16	149:12	390:3	466:5,7	streetwear	347:11	subsidize
33:5 113:2	269:11	185:25	stenographic	stories 132:6	229:2,9	390:7 406:7	303:10
140:17	310:2	188:21	469:6	169:4	strength	406:25	subsidized
staggering	343:20,24	212:5,25	Stenton	176:14	111:18	stuck 317:12	426:4
407:6	344:18	213:4,8,10	251:12	411:23	406:11	student	subsidy
stain 81:19	345:18	215:5	step 62:20	460:21	strengthen	377:15	414:14
stairs 345:13	361:16	236:14	139:8	466:13	459:24	391:2,12	substantial
stand 33:9	373:4	303:5 305:5	190:17	467:9	strengths	437:21	11:11 99:9
175:10	380:17	305:13	step-away	story 164:9	72:17 406:8	446:4	100:5
189:6,8	385:15	310:19	119:16	412:13	stress 290:8	students	substantially
190:20	425:13	362:14	stepped 6:24	418:4	291:13	59:19	151:11
361:7,8	446:12	363:22,24	stepping	420:16	429:21	169:22	substantive
377:9	started 22:3	366:7 373:6	270:7	458:17	stretch 36:11	171:16	274:24
380:11	32:11	376:19	379:10	460:11	184:24	238:16	suburban
392:15	148:24	389:13	steps 7:22	straight	232:10	377:13,19	400:22
429:22	205:24	413:5	111:25	150:2	striking	378:16	454:11
442:18	218:18	414:15	218:3	191:12	201:18	381:18	464:11
455:24,25	224:15	445:5	348:13	325:22	strive 427:20	382:12,23	465:11,13
468:2	239:9,12	449:13	426:17	strategic	strong 326:12	384:11	suburbs
standard	259:17	465:5	Steve 193:12	54:16 155:6	355:23	385:14,23	400:21
26:13	292:25	stated 73:19	Steward	155:13	376:6	386:2,9	403:4
309:23	346:6	statement 7:3	393:24	247:6	407:12	388:6,21	succeed 175:5
451:11	350:19	227:15	Stewardship	254:17	stronger	390:7 397:4	378:17
standards	408:15	419:24	250:12,18	309:13,14	153:17	397:22	success 72:18
56:23	419:6 423:7	422:15	stirring	323:11	struck 18:4	439:9	140:7 157:7
109:11	462:21	statements	391:19	408:7	structurally	447:24	196:19,21
309:15	463:25	409:12	Stitt 2:12	strategies	310:22	467:5	337:17
standing	464:5	440:20	3:20 4:8	23:12	structure	students'	374:15
224:23	starting 64:7	states 74:15	363:2	139:25	110:15	386:14	398:4
437:2 447:9	173:15	377:14	371:17	strategy	239:16	439:8	successful
standpoint	314:7,7	405:12	372:4	23:18	240:3	studies	29:23
16:13 60:11	343:6	409:15,18	392:24	158:20	321:21,22	377:18	139:17
79:17,20	346:15	statewide	415:19	180:12	322:15	studio 169:23	167:21
80:22	434:3,6	167:17	stomach	223:16	331:7	study 29:20	177:21
155:20	starts 178:12	statistics	446:11,22	230:8	structured	30:3,19	182:23
240:23	430:18	166:3	stop 193:12	254:10,24	108:18	119:10	200:4
300:24	446:7	status 392:3	216:8 375:3	street 189:16	248:23	stuff 141:13	203:14,18
stands 155:19	state 5:11	400:10	438:10	204:3	292:23	style 251:3	210:7
Star 5:25	21:15,15	statuses	466:6	223:25	struggle	Suarez	212:16
282:15	26:22 27:3	236:20	stopped	227:17	266:3	457:20	214:25
291:6	27:15,16,18	stay 22:15	198:15	248:14	337:18	sub-fund	351:21
STARS 66:16	28:17,18,23	42:24 43:3	store 42:2	249:25	397:20,20	432:25	358:13
66:17	28:24,25	43:5 162:4	219:12	250:2	420:11	433:6 434:4	succession
start 2:3	41:4 50:24	188:18	464:3,14,18	333:17	struggled	Subcommit...	108:21
12:23 21:25	63:21,23	236:13	464:18	335:3,13	293:2	408:22	suddenly
59:8 60:8	64:9,17	361:18	466:2	363:5 364:2	300:25	subject 133:6	201:16
61:18 142:7	74:18 83:13	394:8	storefront	370:18	338:24	401:17	suffering
211:4	96:5,14	461:11	178:4	454:24	struggling	413:10	381:25

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 49

391:10	330:19,21	375:24,25	129:5,25	430:8 431:4	153:4	372:11	233:11
sugar 466:10	451:19	376:5 400:5	134:7 136:9	surface	168:18	379:15	239:7
suggest	Sunoco 465:6	401:4	136:22,25	267:23,25	187:25	393:6	246:21
215:12,14	sunset 368:10	405:15	137:24	268:3,5,7	203:4 252:8	404:25	279:2 331:4
suggested	Super 349:6	418:12	138:5	268:12,15	263:9	415:24	331:12
56:24	349:8,16	429:24	145:23	surprise	267:22	428:5,13,21	340:11
suggesting	superior	430:9	146:6 149:8	133:18	283:13	437:6	360:17
86:13	390:16	431:21	155:15,16	164:4	289:13,21	445:16	362:7
suggestion	411:3	440:9 445:2	155:23	184:20	291:17	449:25	382:21
57:17	supervision	460:14	157:12,20	surprised	292:5	457:6,19	396:4
suggests	469:23	supported	158:23	29:22	295:10	458:2	403:20
441:7	supervisor	10:5 87:7	160:18	228:18	298:3	tables 129:19	413:11
suite 69:25,25	409:22	88:3 89:8	161:13	316:23	303:15	451:13	417:14
70:9 73:23	419:13	148:10	178:7 185:4	331:25	310:8	tabletop 62:4	420:21
suited 311:10	supervisors	374:11	185:7 187:9	338:19	316:16	TAC 429:9	435:3
suites 71:22	409:19	Supporters	187:23	surround	344:19	tackles	454:22
summarize	supervisory	438:25	188:3 192:6	80:12 364:8	377:11	419:15	459:24
365:24	55:9 343:5	supporting	194:12	surrounded	378:6	Tacony 68:23	467:10
372:20	343:15,16	168:8	202:15,15	133:5	396:25,25	92:15,16	take-out 42:2
452:18	supplement	224:16,16	208:4	survey 95:6	413:16	171:19	327:15
summary	41:3 50:24	224:17	220:17	408:15	415:9	218:9,13	taken 8:22
53:22	supply	250:17	226:25	459:21	416:16	222:8,11,12	52:9 54:24
160:23	341:16	398:4	232:25	460:4	422:23	222:14,20	79:15 140:8
281:7 367:9	support 5:15	supportive	254:14	sustains	430:2	223:2,8	154:21
summer	8:6 27:21	401:3	255:20	246:8	435:10	224:6,20	169:22
59:12 60:4	52:8 65:4	440:19	266:14	Swarthmore	441:4 453:2	227:11	312:20
60:7,24	69:20 85:10	supports	267:12	420:9	454:3,13	230:5	344:5
61:2,5,8,13	86:22 89:21	66:20	278:21	swath 293:16	systemic	tactically	357:23
61:14,18	89:23 100:9	supposed	279:6	sweet 92:8	387:2	111:17	408:11
66:13	121:18	121:10	281:16,20	swift 82:9	systems 86:18	tactile 118:18	412:20
149:11	126:21,24	320:6,6	286:2,14	swim 346:9	100:10	tad 161:2	469:6
197:24	127:5,16	385:22	289:3	swing 10:24	170:25	tags 166:13	takes 44:12
199:20	131:3	413:13	298:10,14	swings	252:12	tailoring	44:23 59:15
206:14	134:24	423:5	298:22	268:11	289:6 365:5	260:17	92:12
248:10,16	137:18,21	supposedly	300:10	360:13	365:13,18	take 7:2 9:8	112:24
248:19	141:10,11	438:20	303:9,17	Sylvester	369:23	22:23 33:13	175:14
249:17,18	141:16	Supreme	304:17	90:16	378:3	36:24 45:17	191:24,25
251:8	157:20	270:12	307:2 309:9	synthetic	387:14	47:7 53:6	206:20
297:20	162:21,25	sure 10:12	309:19	391:15	443:8	57:5,8 61:8	329:3,12
298:16	173:9 176:8	11:10 16:18	312:12	system 11:16		88:4 89:22	434:21,22
301:7	202:3 207:2	22:24 27:18	314:18	18:12 35:4	T	101:5,24	445:7
309:19	215:2 217:2	31:19 32:17	315:11	44:13 45:5	T-shirt	112:22	talent 175:3
328:13	217:3	32:17,17	328:11	62:19 64:16	458:19	120:11	187:9
346:13	230:17	33:15 37:24	329:4 331:6	77:10 80:8	table 12:14	124:3,25	237:12,14
386:5	253:2 264:2	38:2 40:3	344:4,8,20	92:18 95:17	52:19	127:15	talented
430:17,22	269:22	41:10 54:25	345:22	96:7 97:19	142:21	147:11	378:14
431:8 451:2	270:3	58:17 62:13	346:3,5,23	98:25 104:3	161:25	150:24	talk 19:5
summertime	278:24,25	64:22 69:16	348:2 353:4	108:11	188:14	159:22	33:14 34:24
60:20 332:7	286:3,4	80:13 82:17	357:24	126:10	202:17	176:5	35:15 40:17
sump 412:22	308:25	88:7 90:23	360:4,9	130:3	208:7	185:17	59:24 61:3
Sunday 28:11	315:22	92:21 95:12	372:23	133:14	233:20	186:14,18	72:25 75:22
103:16	326:12	103:25	379:20	141:7	244:13	211:13	78:23 80:8
Sundays	373:25	123:24	406:12	152:22,22	271:13	218:3 220:8	84:19 87:10
					362:11,13		

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 50

99:2 110:18	Tamia 428:3	384:10	397:14	62:6 399:6	191:10	318:24	404:15
113:12	428:15	387:19	414:23	434:17	226:12,13	319:23	407:24
180:2 188:4	434:16	388:25	437:23	teenagers	289:17	363:22,23	411:9
197:12	tandem 171:2	401:2	439:9	397:12	302:12	365:4	415:15
200:12,18	342:18	402:10	teachers'	398:8	332:2	373:10	418:19
203:5 225:2	tangible	403:18	439:7	405:20	419:22	terrible 147:4	434:12
227:5	72:21	436:25	teaching	413:12,19	466:16	377:23	442:10
237:23	tap 235:17	438:6,8,14	89:18 90:17	teens 6:19	ten-minute	terrifying	452:3,18
274:16	target 414:15	438:19	91:6,20	248:17	233:12	378:8	461:16
277:5	targeted	439:2,12,21	92:10 93:14	436:7	ten-year	test 154:8	463:14
279:15,17	209:25	440:7	93:16 224:7	tell 11:6	382:5	258:9 259:3	467:18
284:12	210:8,12	448:10	230:6 386:9	19:16,23	383:25	340:11,13	tests 110:10
287:18	369:15	455:10	390:22	20:22 25:4	384:10	340:14,15	110:10
306:19	targeting	464:15,17	450:12	30:17 41:16	387:19	testaments	263:14
307:4	117:15,20	464:25	team 72:8,13	42:17 43:22	388:24	168:25	Texas 91:4
308:13	141:5	465:23,24	112:21	81:19 84:13	438:6,8,19	tested 401:9	textbooks
312:9,13	targets	465:24	113:5 114:6	84:14 107:3	439:2,12,20	testify 4:9	377:20
316:2 318:2	444:17	466:2,3,10	114:11,19	130:21	tenacity	163:7,9	thank 3:16
321:23	task 142:21	466:16,18	195:11,22	159:10	164:19	361:19	4:14 8:5
343:9	143:9,16	466:21,23	239:10	176:14	tend 101:16	389:10,11	10:7,15,17
350:11	426:15	467:10,11	243:6	187:16	tennis 390:17	414:21	21:12 23:10
352:6 358:4	458:25	tax-abated	251:11	220:14	tens 137:8	437:23	26:4,5,9
358:7	459:13	400:19	252:2,4,15	245:6,9	385:25	456:14,22	31:6,9,16
361:21	taste 351:14	402:25	269:15	275:10	tension	testifying	31:21,25
453:25	Taubenber...	taxed 466:17	271:7,10	331:21,23	136:19	372:17	32:8 34:4,5
462:9	1:15 26:7,9	taxes 107:21	273:24,25	354:14	term 157:5	376:16	34:6 39:7
talked 105:6	26:17 27:5	286:5,7	274:15	358:8	230:8 255:2	442:16,21	48:2,3,4,6
105:7	27:11,25	400:25	275:20	396:22	Terminal	442:23	48:11,13,16
155:11	28:5,12,16	465:22	277:5	400:12	209:17	testimony 4:2	57:18,20,21
280:2	29:4,15	466:16	299:25	413:13	terminology	4:7,12	57:24 58:16
282:13	30:14,24	taxpayer	302:4	449:8	321:18	10:22 25:2	62:11 65:18
327:23	31:7,13	121:8,13	305:19	454:24	terms 45:10	73:21,24	65:19 66:25
386:7,12	103:9,10,21	taxpayers	316:17	455:3	82:6 83:8	111:23	67:24 76:5
talking 32:12	104:5,8	83:20 95:3	321:10,11	458:16	99:4 129:10	120:17	76:7,10
37:20,21	145:18,19	121:9,14	339:6 341:9	461:9	130:11	139:16	84:6 85:14
50:9 58:8	146:10,17	293:18	341:9,10	telling 33:7	132:20	159:9,17	85:17 87:15
72:11 75:7	146:20,24	365:10	352:8 361:4	71:6	158:20	161:18	87:23 94:9
75:11 76:21	147:3,7,14	461:25	370:2	temp 50:13	161:4	233:10	94:11,13,16
76:21 92:24	147:18,21	taxpayers'	390:21	temperature	187:20	234:6,10	98:13,15
132:4 139:4	333:10,11	121:11	teams 229:11	390:25	200:2	258:7 361:5	103:7,8
190:5,7,8	333:24	TD 250:10	251:5	temperatures	255:15	361:10,16	104:23,24
192:7	334:6,14,16	teach 89:5	275:16	381:15	259:5	362:8,16,22	104:25
217:17	334:22	90:5,5 91:2	276:2	Temple 204:4	267:14,22	363:11,18	106:23
262:25	335:2,17,22	91:22 131:7	342:19	238:4,12,24	278:22	370:16	109:5
264:13	336:2,6,13	380:21	353:21	420:8	279:10	372:18,20	116:16,18
299:16	taught	385:5	tear 123:20	temporary	281:4	372:21	116:21
305:20	389:21	386:13	technical	14:19 63:17	285:24	373:2,7	120:16,17
339:8 341:5	tax 87:9,11	390:8 400:3	142:6	348:25	291:19	376:13	120:18,20
342:25	87:13,18	434:23,24	technology	tempted	293:25	378:22	120:23,24
351:25	265:18	463:3	55:9 86:2	188:9	294:13	380:18	131:14,15
352:3	369:11	teacher 89:10	318:17	ten 18:15,17	301:6	392:19	131:17,20
432:22	382:5,22	teachers	369:22	20:18 67:21	305:11	396:8	138:19,21
talks 409:15	383:25	385:11	teen 9:15,18	67:25	310:11	399:22	139:9

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 51

145:13,14	252:17,23	399:22	Theresa	209:7	128:16	288:22	405:23
145:16,20	253:10,14	404:13,15	372:6,8	217:16	130:8,25	289:4 290:9	453:25
147:23	253:20	405:4	thing 8:21	218:5	135:7	290:23	Thornton
148:2,5	257:6	407:20,21	23:13	238:21	136:10,18	291:23	292:15
149:13	268:25	407:24	135:18	240:3	137:19	293:12,12	thoroughly
157:24	269:5,8,14	408:4,5	136:2	244:18	138:3	293:18	121:22
158:2,4,9	269:21	411:7,9	176:17	262:21	144:18	294:9,18	thought
160:2,2	273:21	415:10,13	177:9 186:3	264:21	153:15	295:13,14	90:14
161:14,16	274:3,11	415:14	186:4	276:24	160:17	304:23	174:25
161:17,17	277:12,14	416:4,4	224:21	278:23	177:7 180:4	305:5,9,10	217:19
161:19,20	277:17	418:16,19	228:17	280:5,13	180:11	305:23	221:7
162:14,23	278:6	418:19,20	240:6	285:14	182:6	307:24	254:16
179:22	295:18,20	418:21	241:11	303:14	184:22	308:5,6,17	286:22
180:19	297:14	422:8	258:15	308:20	185:6 188:6	309:25	355:13
181:12,16	298:25	423:17,20	265:4	312:21	192:13,15	310:9,12	367:14
182:9,14	299:5,8,12	423:21,23	286:16	314:16	192:25	311:19,24	410:25
183:18	300:4,5,6	423:25	288:21	325:4,9,23	193:7,8,14	314:4 315:6	412:2
185:12,13	301:15,19	424:3	308:3	326:5 327:9	194:2,3,15	316:22	thoughtful
186:13	301:20,21	427:23,24	318:14	341:14	196:20	317:20,24	62:5 185:2
189:3	302:2,3	429:5	327:8 410:9	344:15,23	198:12	325:23	203:8
190:11	303:4 311:2	431:20,22	422:3,5	345:17	199:17,20	328:15	364:14
192:9,10	314:25	434:9,12	442:3	359:13,16	200:24,25	329:16,18	thoughts
195:3,5,8	315:19	437:10,13	444:23	360:4,14	201:3 202:4	330:7,11,18	43:22
195:10	326:20,21	439:25	452:20	421:22	202:4	330:19,21	235:10
205:13,17	326:21	440:11,13	things 9:2	435:24	203:11	331:13	280:25
205:20	327:2 333:8	440:19	10:21,25	453:4 463:7	209:19	332:22,23	310:10
206:22,24	333:12	442:10,10	24:16 29:20	think 10:9,22	210:13,19	334:7	thousand
206:24	336:2,4	442:11	35:16,20,23	12:2 15:16	210:23,25	342:17	167:9,10
207:7,8,10	349:24	445:11,11	36:10,17	15:18 19:22	211:6,9,11	349:7,15	171:21
207:12,13	356:22,24	445:17,21	39:11 50:5	21:10 23:2	211:15	352:12,22	223:4
207:17,21	360:21,22	448:14,19	60:18 62:12	35:4,9,10	214:3,12	352:25	288:14,15
215:16,16	360:23,24	448:21	63:11 64:7	38:12 41:14	215:6 216:6	354:2	294:16
215:20,21	361:4,11	451:24	64:23 65:11	42:25 43:7	216:18,24	355:18	325:20
215:24	363:12,16	452:2,2	81:9,13,15	44:3,4,22	218:24	358:9,12	335:6
216:14	370:14,16	456:8,23,25	96:18 98:14	46:13 54:7	222:18	365:23	432:23
217:11,12	370:21,21	461:13,16	105:20	57:8 59:9	223:18	371:22	thousands
221:2,3	371:10,10	462:2,15	121:2	61:21 64:6	225:2 230:9	420:5 422:9	337:24
222:3,3,4,4	371:16	463:12,14	123:22	64:18,22	241:19,20	441:11	338:2
224:11	372:3,14	467:15,17	124:12	65:10,15	243:14	442:2	385:25
229:17,19	376:10,12	467:17,19	129:11	78:5 80:2	244:23	447:11	388:4 403:2
232:2,7,7	376:12	467:24,24	136:16,17	81:5,14	255:17	448:7,16	427:15
233:5,6,9	378:20,22	468:6	137:9	82:2 85:10	261:4	thinking	thread 169:7
233:13,23	379:13	thankful	138:10	87:4 88:3	263:22	194:24	threat 401:24
235:4,8,12	380:6,18	218:11	149:4	89:15,23	264:6,10,20	221:4	threatens
235:12	383:17	thanking	155:11	90:8 94:23	265:7,9	274:19	451:8
241:15	384:22	201:12	169:13	95:22	267:2,7	293:6	three 24:21
242:8,15	388:19	thanks	181:13	104:16	268:16	324:16	46:6 60:19
243:5,7,10	389:5,15	174:16	184:19	106:23	277:10	355:5	70:4 73:13
243:15,19	392:19,19	371:12	188:5	109:15	279:8,9,18	third 88:10	73:14 88:2
243:25	393:16	443:13	191:22	115:18	280:13,20	250:24	107:8 108:4
244:2,3	396:8,8,10	462:7	193:10	116:2,8	281:21	281:11	146:23
245:13	396:11	themes	200:13	117:16	282:7 284:7	285:6	147:19
246:22	399:19,20	168:24	202:4 206:8	121:7,8	286:8 287:4	366:20	150:19

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 52

152:19	Tim 205:24	369:20	11:13	147:5	314:8 348:9	127:19	transition
181:12	404:22,23	370:2 373:3	tobacco	tomorrow	toughest	268:4	213:11
197:25	411:12	377:18	373:23	235:21	11:21	trainee 258:9	270:8
208:14	time 13:4	394:5	today 3:18	tomorrow's	tour 176:25	258:17	translate
212:9	14:13 26:3	403:20,21	4:2,9 87:5,9	235:24	Tourism	259:10	375:15
219:13	26:19 30:8	412:13	87:12	tonight	238:14	261:9,14	transmit
254:12	30:19 39:2	418:4	120:17	235:18	tourist	trainees	369:9
267:19	45:11,17	423:23	157:25	413:25	234:21	247:21	transparent
285:16	46:21 47:2	425:9	162:16,24	tons 170:10	239:15	259:8	353:19
287:7 313:8	47:16 48:20	437:25	163:9	288:8	tournament	training	354:25
346:19	55:4 63:8	438:5 445:6	179:23	tools 214:24	251:3	21:16,19	365:3,18
350:12	76:23,23	451:8 456:5	194:13	369:22	tours 166:6	22:4 112:21	transportat...
362:24	82:8 92:10	456:12	197:16	370:4 398:9	225:3,3	115:5,12,25	369:14
368:25	98:10	462:21	205:5 234:3	toot 205:11	town 299:11	120:6	trapping
371:18	102:16,19	468:4	235:10	top 9:25 17:2	toxic 381:13	127:22	391:22
372:5	107:24	time-specific	245:18,23	22:15 46:17	381:19	130:11	trash 129:17
385:14	117:8	158:20	246:24	151:17	389:2 390:9	131:6 142:3	385:20
390:18	118:12	timeline	252:19	205:10	391:4,19	145:10,25	trauma
391:7	128:4 134:6	112:23	253:11	216:21	400:24	152:16,18	172:15
394:10,11	139:16	timelines	299:15	251:3	toxicity 387:3	153:13	trauma-inf...
404:18	147:10,16	112:12	361:3,7,9	321:12	track 367:11	301:6	127:2,19,25
419:9 427:6	149:24	274:16	362:4	399:11	379:20	410:16,23	travels 351:2
464:8,9	151:18,22	timeliness	363:24	419:22	419:20	411:3	treat 387:12
three-decade	152:16,18	275:19	364:10,13	topic 361:19	trade 276:7	412:25	434:23
363:20	154:17,21	timely 7:19	364:25	462:10	338:15	462:22	treated 73:11
three-quart...	164:8 176:6	274:17	365:21,25	torn 402:13	342:15	trainings	294:2
365:15	180:10,10	314:17	367:12	Torresdale	trades 169:25	21:22 22:11	treating
threshold	181:4	362:8	369:17	68:23,24	209:22	247:10	201:11
289:11	187:12	426:24	370:7 377:9	429:8	210:2 252:2	313:10	treatment
thrilled 90:11	192:4	times 71:10	381:4	430:15	266:2,5,10	359:4	173:11
115:6	197:12	143:6	387:21	total 17:22	267:9	trains 166:25	tree 250:6
257:22	206:19	153:11	396:18,19	152:19	268:18	trajectory	285:8
thrive 171:20	222:25	176:12	409:25	207:24	276:17	132:23	336:12
throat 447:17	224:3 242:7	301:18	422:16	208:18	336:20,22	134:10	TreePhilly
throw 446:12	242:25	313:8	423:18	230:13,15	337:19	tranches 5:10	250:5,9
446:13	244:18	324:11	425:25	230:17	340:3	transcendent	335:14
throwing	258:2	390:18	427:15	250:8 395:3	tradespeople	174:4	trees 249:24
349:19	264:22	394:12	429:11	414:13	265:8	transcript	249:25
thumbs	268:6 277:4	395:10	432:24	totality 65:3	tradition	469:8,21	250:2,3,4,8
299:25	278:13	435:5	434:8	totally 220:22	415:7	transfer	307:16
Thurman	284:2 286:8	449:17,20	446:23	220:23	traditional	12:11 455:7	333:16,22
269:16	286:11,12	timing 27:8	today's	231:20	96:19 180:9	455:9	333:25
Thursday	288:24	285:2	328:18	264:25	traditionally	transfers	334:5,10,14
28:8 61:24	290:25	tinkering	toddlers	touch 130:21	12:22	455:4	334:19
Tiberino	300:17	326:14	226:17	325:20	151:16	transform	335:7,8,10
206:11	319:19	Tioga 36:12	418:2	342:3	tragedy	169:5 219:2	335:11,14
tick 163:20	323:22	tired 321:24	toilets 378:2	touched	396:4	transforma...	336:13
Tier 210:11	330:22	tireless	441:23	218:4	trail 251:19	195:18	tremendous
ties 59:18	332:16	252:24	told 10:12	touching	train 92:25	transformed	44:21 58:17
Tiffany	345:15	tirelessly	176:21	92:21	346:13	169:15	140:6 165:2
269:15	355:24	425:16	298:6,11	tough 279:6	347:18	201:17	184:23
tight 86:18	357:8	titled 374:12	460:5	303:7	391:14,23	transforming	190:16
tighten 11:14	362:18	titles 2:13	tolerated	304:20	trained 72:9	201:7,25	195:12,21

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 53

305:11	Truth 460:5	413:15	373:5	454:15	417:13	388:5	untenable
349:10	try 10:23	turned 81:24	378:11	unbeknownst	421:25	393:24	426:11
364:22	92:18,19	224:21	390:18	317:10	436:5	410:13	unusual
tremendously	120:4	228:17	394:10,11	unbelievable	440:21	437:21	46:15
86:11	134:21	390:25	398:24	87:17	understand...	unionized	266:10
trend 292:6	136:22	turns 349:4	402:19	uncertain	79:6 81:8	75:5	upcoming
tribute	141:14	tutoring	420:6 423:5	62:18	92:12 96:15	unions 74:22	319:3
169:16,18	196:20	449:21	425:6 427:5	uncleanliness	98:16 110:2	75:15,19	436:18
171:4,8,17	213:21	Twain 435:15	443:24	220:21	113:3,6,19	105:24	update
349:17	237:6,10,13	tweets 150:13	462:20	unconcerned	113:20	210:2	267:16,17
tributes	237:25	Twelve	464:10	448:5	154:3	unique 131:5	273:15,16
168:24	258:12	100:25	465:12,15	underfunded	306:25	131:12	357:21
tricky 345:25	273:15	two 5:9,10	two-year	414:20	374:16	177:23	updated
tried 58:6	276:4	11:20 16:2	218:15,16	undergone	441:12	289:8	157:10
305:18	301:17	16:5 23:25	twofold	359:3	understands	unit 26:23	261:14
412:19	319:11	24:11,12	210:23	Undergrou...	84:2	250:13,19	upgrades
trigger	331:8 359:9	30:6 32:19	Ty 270:4,4	460:22	understood	385:21	252:9
381:15	362:18	33:12 37:16	type 18:10	underline	398:19	United 87:7	uphold 165:6
trip 185:18	trying 8:4	41:20 57:10	110:3 145:9	176:11	undertaking	377:14	upkeep
186:16	17:9 22:15	67:20,20,21	258:18,20	underscore	7:24 112:2	405:12	341:11
trips 374:22	35:21 80:6	70:4 71:5	259:3,22	142:2	364:22	units 117:6	342:20
trolls 342:10	112:8	71:23 73:13	349:5	understaffed	underway	426:3	348:6
trouble	118:19	73:14 78:21	420:14	395:2 399:7	52:2,4	Unity 250:25	upper 391:7
259:22	132:12	81:8 90:16	types 63:11	understaffing	273:18	universe	400:7
troubling	136:20	90:25 93:4	136:16	396:22	312:23	115:18	upper-level
159:18	137:23	93:13	209:5	understand	318:6	universities	81:16
true 366:19	144:7	100:20	215:11	37:12 43:11	unemployed	237:22,25	uprights
399:4	209:18	101:25	309:5	59:5 64:24	6:16	382:6	273:7
409:12	219:16,18	126:3 150:9	typical 48:19	75:15 77:2	unexpected	university	upset 446:22
469:7	242:12	159:7 171:6	62:24	77:13 78:4	169:7	126:20	upstairs
truly 178:21	262:20	172:19,24	342:10	80:14 81:6	unfair 418:10	127:3 146:2	30:17
180:17	279:6	181:21	397:3	81:10 104:2	430:5	148:20	149:17
248:4	286:14	187:15	typically	106:10	unfavorable	204:4,5	uptown 125:3
255:22	302:7	188:5	105:17	107:18	125:9	238:5	Urban
305:23	303:14	249:10,17	208:11	111:15	unfortunate	398:21	112:19
376:9 404:2	311:23	254:12	209:9 212:8	115:2	264:18	419:11	115:7
trust 104:17	313:12,16	258:10		127:24	389:24	unnoticed	249:20
425:4	321:23	264:10,15	U	128:3	unfortunat...	231:16	urge 452:20
432:17	332:6,8	272:14	U.S 110:22	136:20	47:4 152:5	unplugged	urgency
433:2,4,16	341:14	285:14	426:10	139:24	152:6 263:3	450:8	423:8
433:19	342:8 344:6	287:7	453:20	153:2	297:7	unrecognized	urging
434:5	348:22	298:22	Uber 455:14	158:12	301:12	182:4	348:11
444:17	379:20	299:17	455:17,20	159:14	425:10	unreliable	463:10
Trustee	456:3	304:3,3	ultimately	202:21	unhappy	451:13	USA250
155:25	Tuesday	313:8 317:4	114:13	204:25	446:23,24	unrestricted	236:5
158:25	450:10	327:9	121:9 247:7	209:23	unhealthy	135:13,14	usable 298:16
Trustees 4:21	468:3	336:23,24	unabated	255:19	390:9	unscientific	usage 118:6
70:25 73:3	tune 255:18	344:5,23	460:3	262:10	uninterrupt...	69:17	150:7
111:19	tuned 206:17	346:19	unacceptable	344:2 355:4	30:19	111:15	151:15
145:4	turf 285:8	347:6	79:13 80:3	366:24	union 74:6	unstaffed	use 14:18
408:19	turn 76:3	350:14	194:3	383:3	75:3 95:9	255:8	35:24 46:20
Trustees'	77:12,13	354:13	unafraid	384:18,19	141:13	unsuccessful	47:2 50:12
103:2	90:9 375:15	359:5 360:8	204:25	398:12	385:10	391:25	54:2 97:20
			unbanked				

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 54

131:8	154:15	venture	349:3	wage 257:24	52:16 54:17	226:10	421:17
136:11	263:5	179:12	visionary	455:22	54:25 58:15	227:5	422:11,14
151:18	264:16	venue 120:7	364:14	waged 386:25	59:4 60:12	228:20	452:20
168:16	340:3	296:22,24	visit 35:10	wages 179:13	67:7 68:5	229:17	453:8,25
212:10	343:22	venues 292:7	36:2 118:15	190:4,4	71:21 72:11	232:10	456:11
267:25	vacancy	293:9,24	240:13,21	192:20	72:25 76:11	241:23	wanted 34:23
282:5	340:20	versa 422:4	242:4	257:23	77:20 84:21	242:15,24	34:24 45:9
284:23	vacant 23:25	version	visited 17:25	Wagner	85:10 87:5	243:17	47:25 48:18
293:17,22	219:12,13	372:25	144:6	68:21	87:15 88:2	252:17,23	58:25 86:25
294:4 295:2	219:23	versus 59:11	visiting 173:8	wait 76:3	88:18 91:2	262:10	96:4 120:25
295:5,9	220:19	192:16	visitors 18:7	94:8 273:8	91:21 92:20	263:12	121:2,19
296:15	vacation	vet 314:15	234:20	296:8 357:2	94:19 95:11	264:17	134:16
308:10,15	14:14 47:11	Veteran	248:12	379:17	100:19	267:12	147:8 148:8
326:14	valid 368:22	153:7	visits 116:24	waiting 172:3	104:2 109:5	269:11,21	149:23
332:25	Vallas 197:18	veterans	116:25	197:7	110:8 129:5	270:4 271:2	184:18
346:8 347:5	valuable	171:5	118:9,23	318:25	135:5,25	274:16	195:24
370:4,10	290:9	173:19	vital 224:6	340:13	138:8 139:6	278:6	196:16
373:22	value 355:18	Vetri 209:13	voice 110:13	388:15	141:25	279:11	207:22
412:3	355:21	vetting 115:5	110:14,14	418:4,5	144:2	285:11,12	226:25
455:23	values 440:7	115:11	326:11	450:2	145:23	286:17	237:21
useful 167:2	van 350:25	viable 291:9	374:14	waits 33:2	146:6	288:25	243:5
316:12	351:8,12,13	vice 52:23	410:21	waiver 97:16	149:11,25	290:5	244:20
user 271:6	Vanguard	377:4 422:4	425:21	waivers 97:15	150:4 151:3	291:22	281:3
353:18	66:18	454:7,10	voices 95:12	walk 133:3	152:23	296:14,25	296:12
users 193:21	106:16	vicinity 323:2	volatile 447:8	212:6	153:3	297:17,19	298:17
353:24	vaporizes	videos 64:14	447:12,14	437:25	155:21	297:23	315:3 325:7
uses 68:9	447:7	view 75:22	447:25	walkable	159:6,9	302:3,12	326:10
105:8	Vare 310:12	316:14	volume	219:16	162:4,23	303:5 304:7	327:7
315:12	310:15,16	380:12	395:10	walked	165:17	305:21,22	wanting
345:14	310:24	viewed	volunteer	317:13	172:17	306:19	196:22
360:10	311:9,16	460:11	257:14	walking	175:4 177:4	309:7	wants 71:19
usually 12:25	variety	viewers 169:9	292:24	225:16	177:9	315:19	172:2 232:4
46:17 50:14	237:10	views 292:20	331:16	310:14	178:15	322:7,25	389:10
208:17	359:2	342:11	449:5,21	wall 137:12	179:25	326:20,21	395:16
243:2	430:10	412:8	volunteering	187:4	181:12	326:21	410:17
utilities	various	village 44:23	257:10	189:21	182:21	327:2 329:8	461:8,8
369:14	124:15	violence	volunteers	201:15	185:12,13	332:25	warm 42:14
utilize 86:8	212:22	42:12	87:13 173:6	walls 214:2	186:14	333:25	329:3,19,20
220:11	246:15	190:22	250:22	227:25	188:11,15	334:7 341:2	332:7
267:2	285:17	192:8	256:15	460:21	189:15,16	348:3	Wash 209:16
368:10	313:7 409:7	208:14	278:19	wand 223:23	189:16,17	353:15	Washington
370:11	vast 29:2	212:10,13	vote 436:18	304:25	191:17	358:7 360:9	154:12
utilized	165:22	373:19,21	436:23	wanna-be	192:12	360:18	245:21
308:11	179:9	374:9,21	454:9,11	438:21	195:20	371:9,20	284:12,15
utilizes	237:10	376:4	voters 448:11	want 6:25	196:24	373:11	284:16,20
221:22	vendors	virtual 118:8	votes 303:7	8:19 9:21	202:6,12,13	379:19	457:7
Utilizing	115:5,11,16	vis-a-vis	vulnerable	10:13 19:4	203:8,9	384:22	wasn't 236:13
373:20	116:4	110:6	165:15	20:21 21:5	207:3 208:4	401:16	317:21
	227:18	143:12	177:15	25:11,22	214:18	402:8 404:2	332:3
V	ventilate	151:2		33:24 40:2	216:10	404:9 406:4	waste 185:4,8
vacancies	113:22	visibility	W	41:5 42:10	217:15	406:11	187:10
11:5,11	ventilation	234:16,22	Wadsworth	45:22 47:13	221:2,3	410:24	watch 23:14
24:11,13	252:11	vision 238:18	449:6,9	47:18 48:11	222:2	421:8,16,16	watching
150:3,6			451:5				

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 55

87:17	294:2,25	71:15,24	212:20	342:8 343:5	280:2	27:12 28:4	weight
149:17	314:15	72:11 81:18	213:20	343:19	282:13	33:18 38:19	263:22
188:25	323:5 324:4	86:16,21	218:11	347:10,16	283:24	48:23 50:7	welcome
225:11	324:16	91:9 92:23	219:15,15	350:6,12	289:22	59:3 61:14	87:24
227:12	329:2	100:3	224:6,24	351:21,25	290:5,6	61:24	114:11
water 13:11	351:15	101:22,25	228:22	352:3 353:2	291:10	103:17	188:20,22
251:20	354:18	102:3,13,21	230:7	353:17	293:5	104:4 114:9	205:15
340:6	355:14	103:4 110:2	231:17	356:12	300:24	134:19	239:18,20
385:18	359:10	112:8,18	232:8,8	359:16	301:9	135:2	239:24
386:3	362:8	113:18	233:15	361:14,15	305:18	136:14	277:20
447:10	371:23	117:21,25	235:13	361:17,19	311:14,17	149:10	290:14
453:8,9,17	420:14	118:2,19	238:21	361:25	312:18	222:15,16	326:4
Waterloo	466:13,22	126:21	242:5,11,11	362:4,18	316:6,22,23	224:9	397:11
171:9	Wayne	130:24,25	247:24	372:13,15	320:18	250:19	welcoming
waters	426:25	132:6,14	254:16,25	372:17	322:3	254:23	287:10
413:21	ways 281:2	133:2,8	255:21	373:4	323:22	286:19	357:25
wave 223:22	295:15	134:20,21	256:8	379:20	328:17	299:17	429:25
304:24	WBEs 354:5	136:19	257:16	380:7,17	337:16	300:18	welding 391:5
Wawa 326:3	we'll 27:13	143:12,20	259:14	384:19,23	338:18,21	302:17	welfare
464:21	29:17 31:15	149:9	260:17	397:21	338:24	314:22	153:14
way 4:13 18:8	33:13 43:19	154:12	263:5 264:7	399:8 415:6	342:25	324:11	well-being
37:22,25	43:21 49:19	155:16	264:13	432:22	348:19	325:21,21	366:13
53:17 70:18	55:3 95:21	160:15	265:23	442:2 443:3	354:12	325:21	well-deserved
87:7 88:22	100:21	165:8	266:6,24	446:19	358:10,17	332:14	233:3
95:8 96:7	104:14	167:12	268:22	450:12,15	402:12	385:23	well-stocked
114:14	111:13	168:12	270:21	450:17	447:5	390:18	418:14
121:7,10,12	127:9,20	171:13	271:6	454:2,4,23	wealth 92:19	398:16	wellness
144:24	159:22,23	173:7	278:17	455:2	279:17	402:3	165:13
147:5 151:5	173:18	174:18	284:2 289:4	we've 10:11	280:8	430:21	177:14
152:9	194:10	176:3,4,5,7	290:12,15	31:3 32:12	389:23	449:8,17	310:5
169:11	195:2	177:4,16,22	295:16	39:20 53:9	392:8,17	week's 443:14	went 8:17
173:4 182:6	253:23	177:25	299:11,16	72:5,13	wealthy	weekday	41:21 46:22
201:21	254:4 256:5	178:3,5,6,9	300:2	82:2 92:24	382:5 390:6	62:16	89:8 116:25
205:4 215:4	269:3 294:5	178:17	304:13,16	100:16	438:15	weekdays	124:12
222:9	320:20	185:17	305:18	102:13	439:15	449:10,11	147:11
223:10,11	324:14	189:18,20	306:2,21	108:4,25	wear 123:20	weekend	152:11
238:7	331:22	189:21,23	307:2,6	119:10	wearing	38:15	161:2 186:2
239:16	333:6	191:6,7	313:11	150:23	401:14	124:24	197:25
240:3	345:25	192:13,17	314:6,7,9	151:4,23	weather	451:9	220:5
242:21	362:12	193:8,15,16	316:7,22	152:6	227:19	weekends	238:10
243:10	373:8	196:21	318:17,25	166:11	307:22	62:15 329:9	394:7 402:3
253:24	we're 2:2 9:4	197:2 198:6	320:14	173:17	329:4,20,21	weekly	411:25
259:12,14	9:17 16:24	198:9,10,11	323:7,9,11	193:20	332:8	170:23	463:25
261:23	22:25 35:21	198:15,16	324:3,14,17	194:18	weaves 169:8	316:13	464:15
262:4 263:8	37:21 38:24	199:7,20	324:20	203:3 218:4	weaving	350:11	West 36:13
264:22	39:17 41:3	201:12	332:17,18	223:3	173:7	weeks 32:13	352:4
269:11	41:7,12	202:19	332:23	254:15	website 292:3	146:23	424:13
272:9	47:10 49:18	204:24,25	336:18	257:7 258:5	wedding	147:19	Westerman
278:20	49:24 50:9	206:7 207:2	337:10,10	260:12	296:6,22	249:18	271:14,15
280:16,24	53:9 54:20	208:11,21	339:2,3,11	262:18	297:19	325:22	271:21,25
281:9,13	56:10,13	209:18	339:16,17	271:5	week 5:13	412:18	272:8,25
287:4,8,9	58:21 59:18	210:4,10,14	339:18,18	276:12	14:17,22	462:20	353:4,5,9
290:24	66:15 71:14	211:25	340:24,24	279:22	26:22 27:10	weigh 355:8	354:20,23

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 56

Wharton	255:9	woman 23:23	59:18 62:7	196:22,23	401:14,21	92:6,15	437:20
459:3	257:12	80:5,6	66:9 72:19	196:24	409:20	101:22	464:5
wheelchair	wish 223:22	81:10 266:9	73:4 84:21	197:15	411:15	106:16	workplace
360:8,10	253:5	women 19:7	86:18 91:20	199:17,18	412:23	112:19	7:23 109:10
427:12	283:12	25:4,5,10	92:5 94:3	199:19,21	413:24	126:19	111:25
whichever	304:24	25:11 73:14	99:14	199:25	419:18,19	127:3	112:14
212:22	306:4	151:24	102:25	200:4,18	420:4 422:4	128:20	409:17
white 67:21	384:24	182:3	106:18,21	202:11,12	430:8 431:3	130:6,13,24	429:25
70:5,15	Wister	246:13,19	107:20	203:3,11	437:18	153:23	works 106:17
93:21 107:7	183:12	311:3	109:22	204:25	454:14,15	154:10	125:7
107:8 108:4	withhold	329:14	110:2,4,7,8	206:4,12	454:17	179:19	170:18
384:6 460:9	277:2	420:7	112:18	209:8,12,24	461:23	198:10,11	175:23
whites 73:14	witness 12:13	Women's	113:3	210:13,15	work-based	198:11	206:10,15
Whitman	12:13 52:18	424:22	115:15,17	212:13	210:15	201:22	220:10
5:23	52:18	wonder	116:10,12	213:7,16,19	worked 30:7	210:4 211:3	239:21
Whittle	161:24,24	345:18	124:5	214:5,6	81:11 102:4	212:20,23	251:20
269:21	162:5 174:6	401:12,15	127:15,20	216:9,13	169:22,25	212:25	299:9
whiz 369:24	188:13,13	401:16	130:10	220:10,12	171:15	213:10,22	Workshop
widespread	202:16,16	wonderful	134:12,25	221:21	194:18	219:20	380:22
381:24	208:6,6	172:21	137:22	224:12,13	213:4	223:11	world 44:4
Wilkes	233:19	179:16	138:16	235:6	220:24	228:10	144:6
445:13,17	244:12	184:7	139:19	236:23	221:15,15	232:15	165:22
445:19,23	271:12	188:17	141:10,15	237:5	252:4 258:5	236:25	195:14
448:4,15	362:13	194:21	141:17	238:22	315:7 321:4	239:24	241:22,24
William 1:12	372:10	199:17	143:11	243:22	347:7 352:9	255:18	251:2
140:5,14	379:14	210:9	153:9,10,16	252:3,22	425:15	256:2	427:12
372:7,9	393:5	216:14	154:16	254:20	worker	257:14,23	world-class
460:22	396:18	223:19	157:2	256:17,23	264:13	258:3	311:4
Williams	404:24	325:9,24	162:22	262:22	workers	260:12	416:17
188:10,17	415:23	332:25	163:16	274:17	45:15 126:3	263:21	worldwide
188:23,24	428:4,4,12	351:6,19	164:25	275:7,17	126:23	271:7	288:18
189:10	428:12,20	413:8	165:5,7,18	277:2 278:7	127:11	276:11	worry 32:4
190:3	428:20	wondering	166:23	278:11,25	136:5	286:18	worsened
202:15	437:5	57:2,3	167:3,8	279:3	142:20	293:9	426:3
203:15	445:15	395:23	168:4,14,19	280:22	331:12	299:11	worsens
205:15	457:5,5,18	458:19	168:23	291:25	386:12	322:18	386:14
363:4,8,12	457:18,25	wooden	172:14,14	303:13	414:22	326:8	worth 185:11
370:19,25	457:25	451:12	172:20	304:21	439:16	342:18,22	199:10
371:12	witnesses	word 39:8	173:18,22	308:23	455:16	342:24	368:12
Willie 457:22	233:19	186:19	175:7	327:3 339:8	workers'	344:3,5,14	385:19
willing 89:22	244:12	423:11	176:16	339:9 341:2	391:10	346:20	wouldn't
314:18	271:12	words 80:2	177:12,13	341:13	workforce 6:5	347:12	133:6
328:11	362:23	188:10	177:22	349:15	6:8 62:8	348:20	220:23
394:18	363:3 371:6	225:9 447:2	178:14	350:6,7	130:8	350:12	310:14
455:24	371:18	work 5:24	181:2	351:23	151:20	352:17	331:25
willingness	372:5,10	6:12 14:22	182:18	352:15,16	344:18	378:4 381:3	418:7
216:7	379:14	29:11 37:18	184:21,23	353:12,13	419:17	385:12	Wow 229:19
Willis 183:13	392:25	38:8,12	186:11,12	355:19	444:5	403:7	321:7
Wilson	393:5	43:19,21	186:20	364:16	working 9:6	414:23	wrap 384:13
169:16	404:24	44:21 45:7	187:8 191:2	370:8 378:3	11:13 41:7	419:6	403:24
win 223:13,23	415:23	48:12 54:2	191:19	388:25	41:12 55:13	425:14,15	wrap-around
425:3	437:5	56:8 57:13	193:4,22	391:9,17,25	66:15 76:22	425:17	178:8
Winchester	445:15	58:17 59:15	195:12,18	394:8	86:16 87:4	432:16	writing 73:16

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 57

106:8	355:17	346:10	195:13	347:8	youth-on-y...	48:25 49:14	192:24
346:23	358:12	349:21	197:19,25	yoga 421:16	373:18	63:4 468:4	14 66:22
433:11	year 2:22 3:2	351:20	199:7	York 255:6		10:22 1:7	14,000 251:4
447:2,3	3:6,22,24	363:19	201:22	274:7 289:9	Z	100 76:22	144 248:15
written 4:12	3:25 5:14	367:13,15	205:25	young 29:16	Zaire 457:9	90:5 120:2	146 52:8
54:23 159:9	15:23 16:7	367:21	206:2	41:25 42:11	zero 399:3	163:8 246:7	15 1:7 35:10
287:5	22:5,10	377:12	213:15	43:8 60:22	401:11	377:25	49:25 50:18
372:21	32:10 39:20	386:14,25	215:9 218:9	62:9 157:22	zip 448:6	386:5 460:9	93:5 102:13
373:2	47:3,5	397:3,11	219:13	165:9,10	Zumba	100,000	102:14
wrong 81:17	55:23 59:4	416:14	221:17	174:19,21	390:19	433:25	117:10
82:4	59:6,7,11	417:3 427:7	226:12,14	175:4		101 229:2,9	122:16,18
wrote 18:2	59:12,14,21	430:24	244:22	182:25	0	104 251:4	124:10
Wynnefield	59:21 60:3	433:8,16,25	249:10	186:22		105,000	151:4,12
424:12	60:3 61:6	434:3,3,6,6	254:13	189:5 192:7	1	433:8	181:21
Wyoming	62:6 89:3	435:4,5	256:11,24	198:8 203:6	1 5:25 53:6	106,800	199:7
5:23	90:18 99:16	443:20	257:15	203:7,21	66:16	49:23	208:13
	123:25	444:3	258:2,10	206:24	246:17	107 387:25	210:25
X	132:24,24	453:13	287:22	212:8 217:5	449:13	109 316:7	257:15
X 320:12	134:7	466:7	289:17	228:25	1,000 248:17	10th 378:10	258:4
	136:13	year's 32:10	290:24	311:3	249:25	380:22	264:12,14
Y	150:25	90:22 251:7	291:6 293:2	315:11	1,040 166:12	11 117:16	312:23
y'all 39:3	152:6,21	299:20	303:23	327:16,24	1,200 251:4	165:11	327:17
189:6,24	161:2 163:5	433:19	304:3,4	329:14,25	1,287 316:6	427:2 466:7	399:11
190:11	163:16	year-end	311:15,17	332:19	1,311 152:12	11,000	437:19
191:20	168:5,22	368:3	317:4	373:23	1,400 257:20	192:18	15,000 166:5
192:9 270:3	169:12	year-round	330:23	374:5,13	1,500 74:19	11.4 51:19	176:24
yank 33:4	173:16	59:9,22	336:23,24	375:11	76:18	115 250:13	332:16
Yard 250:6	176:25	61:21	352:10	377:8 397:4	109:17	395:6	15.8 416:19
yards 335:16	192:24	132:17	364:13	413:13	397:4	11th 21:9	441:15
yarn 450:17	196:3	134:19	368:25	420:7	1.1 250:9	12 64:18,24	150 90:6
yeah 17:7	197:21	135:2 138:2	377:20,25	421:10	1.2 60:14	65:13,14	255:5
33:20 46:5	198:24	174:20	378:14	446:25	134:21	66:22 67:19	274:11
67:18 115:3	207:23	yearly 368:8	389:19	449:18,24	377:12	97:12 100:4	1563-A 3:14
117:23	208:12,20	years 2:16	394:2,4,11	younger	1.3 60:14	101:6	15th 87:10
123:8	212:20	3:4 9:5,10	399:11	46:24	1.5 248:12	167:15	250:6
128:24	213:5,6	18:16,18	402:12	151:23	252:6	191:10	322:24
139:4	227:22	20:18 52:6	403:3 417:7	378:13	1.7 179:16	208:16	16 14:22
156:20	234:8,25	55:3 68:2	423:5	youth 61:10	1:00 28:15	414:12	90:17 251:9
159:16	235:16	71:6,23	425:17	155:3	49:12 63:5	12:00 28:13	390:24
185:20,22	236:4,6	73:18 78:21	427:5,6	208:14	10 48:24	49:2	426:16
188:6	240:19	88:2 102:10	432:11,18	209:21	56:12 93:5	120 251:5	432:20
197:17	243:21	102:20	436:17	248:20	93:21	122,000	441:9
200:23	246:2 248:8	108:5,8	437:19	373:16,21	230:21,23	49:24	16-week
222:17	249:7	122:24,24	447:4,23	374:7,11,12	249:9	13 99:7 100:5	197:22
230:24	250:24	123:3,11,15	451:11	374:17,19	284:22	144:9	1637 393:23
296:18	251:25	133:22,23	458:17	374:20,21	285:5	191:11	16th 468:3
298:19	259:17	161:3	463:24	375:5,8,12	312:23	454:4	17 32:21
300:21	260:10	163:17	464:19	375:14,20	377:20	13,562,824	67:12 391:9
316:5,6	270:21	172:19,24	466:16	376:6,9	10,000	246:4	395:4
333:25	281:9	181:21	yelling 448:2	377:4,6	249:12	130 310:18	463:24
336:25	288:13	182:23	yesterday	379:6	298:12	136,000	18 47:10
344:21	301:19	191:10	32:24	youth's	10,115,490	192:14	102:22
350:10	313:8 317:3	194:19	YMCA 249:3	374:23	246:10	136,874	117:2
355:15,15					10:00 28:9,10		

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 58

130:25	69:1 70:1	175:1 176:1	281:1 282:1	387:1 388:1	1987 464:2	377:20	236:4
165:11	71:1 72:1	177:1 178:1	283:1 284:1	389:1 390:1	464:19	432:18	21 109:7
166:3	73:1 74:1	179:1 180:1	285:1 286:1	391:1 392:1	1989 426:12	437:18	2186 419:5
270:19,22	75:1 76:1	181:1 182:1	287:1 288:1	393:1 394:1	1990's 374:10	464:5	2187 75:25
271:19	77:1 78:1	183:1 184:1	289:1 290:1	395:1 396:1	1992 3:13	20's 152:8	405:8
304:6 338:5	79:1 80:1	185:1 186:1	291:1 292:1	397:1 398:1	1996 424:11	200 163:8	408:10
391:24	81:1 82:1	187:1 188:1	293:1 294:1	399:1 400:1	1999 419:8	246:11	21st 66:5
426:12	83:1 84:1	189:1 190:1	295:1 296:1	401:1 402:1	1st 22:9	250:22	99:18
436:17	85:1 86:1	191:1 192:1	297:1 298:1	403:1 404:1		285:6 465:4	218:14
440:24	87:1 88:1	193:1 194:1	299:1 300:1	405:1 406:1	2	465:7	219:3
464:5	89:1 90:1	195:1 196:1	301:1 302:1	407:1 408:1	2 4:25 5:8,25	2008 97:4	221:22
18- 212:9	91:1 92:1	197:1 198:1	303:1 304:1	409:1 410:1	15:21 21:14	440:24	369:17
18-month-old	93:1 94:1	199:1 200:1	305:1 306:1	411:1 412:1	34:25 36:5	2009 51:21	22 19:19 54:4
401:8	95:1 96:1	201:1 202:1	307:1 308:1	413:1 414:1	39:12 50:22	166:24	67:19
19 49:23	97:1 98:1	203:1 204:1	309:1 310:1	415:1 416:1	51:7 66:16	2010 366:7	265:22
102:22	99:1 100:1	205:1 206:1	311:1 312:1	417:1 418:1	121:20	2013 315:7	266:6
117:2,20	101:1 102:1	207:1 208:1	313:1 314:1	419:1 420:1	149:6	2016 239:9	337:11
281:9 417:5	103:1 104:1	209:1 210:1	315:1 316:1	421:1 422:1	210:11	312:15	338:11
433:17	105:1 106:1	211:1 212:1	317:1 318:1	423:1 424:1	441:7 455:6	357:16	339:17
190152 1:17	107:1 108:1	213:1 214:1	319:1 320:1	425:1 426:1	2,000 112:5	358:17	2200 54:5
2:1,10,14	109:1 110:1	215:1 216:1	321:1 322:1	427:1 428:1	165:10	390:22	22nd 178:12
3:1 4:1 5:1	111:1 112:1	217:1 218:1	323:1 324:1	429:1 430:1	174:19	2017 22:14	23 49:8,9
6:1 7:1 8:1	113:1 114:1	219:1 220:1	325:1 326:1	431:1 432:1	197:7 198:8	71:3 98:21	23,000 250:9
9:1 10:1	115:1 116:1	221:1 222:1	327:1 328:1	433:1 434:1	397:12	145:5	237 395:4
11:1 12:1	117:1 118:1	223:1 224:1	329:1 330:1	435:1 436:1	2,349,602	240:21	24 89:23 90:5
13:1 14:1	119:1 120:1	225:1 226:1	331:1 332:1	437:1 438:1	163:11	391:4	243:2 252:5
15:1 16:1	121:1 122:1	227:1 228:1	333:1 334:1	439:1 440:1	2,500 382:14	419:13	330:5,8
17:1 18:1	123:1 124:1	229:1 230:1	335:1 336:1	441:1 442:1	387:24	2018 22:6	458:23
19:1 20:1	125:1 126:1	231:1 232:1	337:1 338:1	443:1 444:1	2,511,000	171:21	24-year-olds
21:1 22:1	127:1 128:1	233:1 234:1	339:1 340:1	445:1 446:1	246:12	207:23	212:10
23:1 24:1	129:1 130:1	235:1 236:1	341:1 342:1	447:1 448:1	2,740,630	270:21	245 196:8
25:1 26:1	131:1 132:1	237:1 238:1	343:1 344:1	449:1 450:1	246:11	271:4	25 35:12
27:1 28:1	133:1 134:1	239:1 240:1	345:1 346:1	451:1 452:1	2.3 53:7	391:16	43:15 54:11
29:1 30:1	135:1 136:1	241:1 242:1	347:1 348:1	453:1 454:1	230:19	2019 1:7 3:6	124:11
31:1 32:1	137:1 138:1	243:1 244:1	349:1 350:1	455:1 456:1	2.4 93:22	21:9 22:6	192:4
33:1 34:1	139:1 140:1	245:1 246:1	351:1 352:1	457:1 458:1	2.5 15:14,25	234:8	273:13
35:1 36:1	141:1 142:1	247:1 248:1	353:1 354:1	459:1 460:1	121:25	235:23	327:18
37:1 38:1	143:1 144:1	249:1 250:1	355:1 356:1	461:1 462:1	416:12	272:21	377:16
39:1 40:1	145:1 146:1	251:1 252:1	357:1 358:1	463:1 464:1	2.50 455:8,9	273:3,11	25,000 166:4
41:1 42:1	147:1 148:1	253:1 254:1	359:1 360:1	465:1 466:1	2.9 51:4	377:18	288:13
43:1 44:1	149:1 150:1	255:1 256:1	361:1 362:1	467:1 468:1	20 6:8 47:5	392:4	25.7 407:6
45:1 46:1	151:1 152:1	257:1 258:1	363:1 364:1	190153 1:17	49:24 53:7	425:25	250 76:16
47:1 48:1	153:1 154:1	259:1 260:1	365:1 366:1	2:10,18	54:21,23	468:3	453:15
49:1 50:1	155:1 156:1	261:1 262:1	367:1 368:1	190154 1:17	92:9 93:6	2020 2:16,19	25th 21:11
51:1 52:1	157:1 158:1	263:1 264:1	369:1 370:1	2:11,20	117:21	2:22 3:4,22	261:21
53:1 54:1	159:1 160:1	265:1 266:1	371:1 372:1	190164 1:17	130:25	3:24 246:2	26 377:15
55:1 56:1	161:1 162:1	267:1 268:1	373:1 374:1	2:11,23	166:7	272:21	389:19
57:1 58:1	163:1 164:1	269:1 270:1	375:1 376:1	19151 448:6	197:21	273:12	417:4
59:1 60:1	165:1 166:1	271:1 272:1	377:1 378:1	1950 369:18	198:25	459:18	26,000
61:1 62:1	167:1 168:1	273:1 274:1	379:1 380:1	1950's 322:4	199:3	2024 3:4	443:20
63:1 64:1	169:1 170:1	275:1 276:1	381:1 382:1	365:15	210:25	2025 2:16	444:3
65:1 66:1	171:1 172:1	277:1 278:1	383:1 384:1	1970's 298:2	258:2	3:25	265 196:13
67:1 68:1	173:1 174:1	279:1 280:1	385:1 386:1	1976 463:3	270:18	2026 235:24	26th 111:13
					327:16		

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 59

27 88:4	433:20	67:1 68:1	173:1 174:1	279:1 280:1	385:1 386:1	381:20	50-plus
246:19	434:4,5	69:1 70:1	175:1 176:1	281:1 282:1	387:1 388:1	466:5	397:12
2774 172:18	451:11	71:1 72:1	177:1 178:1	283:1 284:1	389:1 390:1	40,000 87:22	50,000
28 405:13	350 101:21	73:1 74:1	179:1 180:1	285:1 286:1	391:1 392:1	400 1:6	268:14
287 176:25	196:7,11,13	75:1 76:1	181:1 182:1	287:1 288:1	393:1 394:1	101:23	500 194:6
29th 169:14	350,000	77:1 78:1	183:1 184:1	289:1 290:1	395:1 396:1	346:12	241:8
	198:24	79:1 80:1	185:1 186:1	291:1 292:1	397:1 398:1	458:17	246:12
3	37 191:11	81:1 82:1	187:1 188:1	293:1 294:1	399:1 400:1	468:5	297:2
3 3:13 50:25	380 215:6	83:1 84:1	189:1 190:1	295:1 296:1	401:1 402:1	41 93:23	52 246:18
50:25 53:18	389 248:14	85:1 86:1	191:1 192:1	297:1 298:1	403:1 404:1	42 27:9,11	251:5
66:17	39th 393:21	87:1 88:1	193:1 194:1	299:1 300:1	405:1 406:1	246:16	52,490,935
449:11	4	89:1 90:1	195:1 196:1	301:1 302:1	407:1 408:1	421 250:14	246:8
455:7	4 51:11 56:11	91:1 92:1	197:1 198:1	303:1 304:1	409:1 410:1	43 170:22	52nd 170:6
3-1-1 13:11	66:17	93:1 94:1	199:1 200:1	305:1 306:1	411:1 412:1	240:20	223:25
3,000 250:4	246:17	95:1 96:1	201:1 202:1	307:1 308:1	413:1 414:1	45 39:14,18	53 24:19 25:8
382:13,19	4,000 175:23	97:1 98:1	203:1 204:1	309:1 310:1	415:1 416:1	50:9 70:16	25:13 49:19
382:21	4,300 250:22	99:1 100:1	205:1 206:1	311:1 312:1	417:1 418:1	432:11	125:23
3,300 387:23	4,600 215:5	101:1 102:1	207:1 208:1	313:1 314:1	419:1 420:1	45,000 215:9	54 55:25
3,600 250:3	252:3	103:1 104:1	209:1 210:1	315:1 316:1	421:1 422:1	468 101:22	120:8
3/400 246:12	4.5 96:12	105:1 106:1	211:1 212:1	317:1 318:1	423:1 424:1	47 51:9 72:14	540,000
3:22 8:18	4.7 55:23	107:1 108:1	213:1 214:1	319:1 320:1	425:1 426:1	74:17,18	117:2
30 41:24 49:9	4/15/19 2:1	109:1 110:1	215:1 216:1	321:1 322:1	427:1 428:1	75:24 76:15	59 266:18
87:12	3:1 4:1 5:1	111:1 112:1	217:1 218:1	323:1 324:1	429:1 430:1	77:5 95:9	5th 74:6
194:19	6:1 7:1 8:1	113:1 114:1	219:1 220:1	325:1 326:1	431:1 432:1	95:15,18	6
230:16	9:1 10:1	115:1 116:1	221:1 222:1	327:1 328:1	433:1 434:1	405:7	6 13:9 117:22
231:8 272:8	11:1 12:1	117:1 118:1	223:1 224:1	329:1 330:1	435:1 436:1	408:10	148:11
272:19	13:1 14:1	119:1 120:1	225:1 226:1	331:1 332:1	437:1 438:1	410:17	6,000 249:24
273:17	15:1 16:1	121:1 122:1	227:1 228:1	333:1 334:1	439:1 440:1	411:14	6.7 27:19
327:16	17:1 18:1	123:1 124:1	229:1 230:1	335:1 336:1	441:1 442:1	416:8 419:5	6.00 28:9,10
399:12	19:1 20:1	125:1 126:1	231:1 232:1	337:1 338:1	443:1 444:1	49 24:20	49:2 172:25
443:18	21:1 22:1	127:1 128:1	233:1 234:1	339:1 340:1	445:1 446:1	49:19	6.45 468:8
444:18,20	23:1 24:1	129:1 130:1	235:1 236:1	341:1 342:1	447:1 448:1	4th 6:4	60 25:11,14
30-year	25:1 26:1	131:1 132:1	237:1 238:1	343:1 344:1	449:1 450:1	390:23	25:15 66:11
102:25	27:1 28:1	133:1 134:1	239:1 240:1	345:1 346:1	451:1 452:1	5	169:23
300,000	29:1 30:1	135:1 136:1	241:1 242:1	347:1 348:1	453:1 454:1	5 51:11	208:13,22
196:6	31:1 32:1	137:1 138:1	243:1 244:1	349:1 350:1	455:1 456:1	152:20	392:6 417:2
30th 158:17	33:1 34:1	139:1 140:1	245:1 246:1	351:1 352:1	457:1 458:1	266:16	421:12
159:3,7,23	35:1 36:1	141:1 142:1	247:1 248:1	353:1 354:1	459:1 460:1	364:20	455:10
159:23	37:1 38:1	143:1 144:1	249:1 250:1	355:1 356:1	461:1 462:1	455:10	464:6
161:22	39:1 40:1	145:1 146:1	251:1 252:1	357:1 358:1	463:1 464:1	5.4 117:20	60,000 397:3
32 266:16	41:1 42:1	147:1 148:1	253:1 254:1	359:1 360:1	465:1 466:1	5:00 28:10,11	61 11:4
464:19	43:1 44:1	149:1 150:1	255:1 256:1	361:1 362:1	467:1 468:1	28:15 49:12	612 166:12
33 51:9 95:19	45:1 46:1	151:1 152:1	257:1 258:1	363:1 364:1	4:00 28:13	49:14 63:4	65,000 251:9
231:11	47:1 48:1	153:1 154:1	259:1 260:1	365:1 366:1	4:30 361:9	63:5 451:19	659 335:10
283:21	49:1 50:1	155:1 156:1	261:1 262:1	367:1 368:1	40 62:25	50 89:14 90:5	659,342
312:18	51:1 52:1	157:1 158:1	263:1 264:1	369:1 370:1	166:10	151:3	246:6
358:18	53:1 54:1	159:1 160:1	265:1 266:1	371:1 372:1	265:6,7,13	251:24	67 26:21 28:4
393:23	55:1 56:1	161:1 162:1	267:1 268:1	373:1 374:1	265:15	255:6 274:7	28:5
410:18	57:1 58:1	163:1 164:1	269:1 270:1	375:1 376:1	266:22	330:23	67,858,055
335 395:3	59:1 60:1	165:1 166:1	271:1 272:1	377:1 378:1	332:14	421:11	246:3
35 25:23 63:3	61:1 62:1	167:1 168:1	273:1 274:1	379:1 380:1	337:11	444:6,9	685 196:15
67:14	63:1 64:1	169:1 170:1	275:1 276:1	381:1 382:1	339:2	449:24	685,000
163:17	65:1 66:1	171:1 172:1	277:1 278:1	383:1 384:1	372:14	466:5	196:5
167:17							

Committee of the Whole
April 15, 2019

Page 60

6th 68:25	395:21					
385:5	9:00 28:8,8,9					
418:25	28:10					
	172:25					
7	451:17,17					
7 49:22 50:20	90 273:5					
100:2 417:4	449:7					
7-Eleven	900 173:3					
463:21	900,000 51:6					
465:4 466:6	91 332:15					
7,000 377:15	926 250:2					
7,200 248:16	95 249:9					
7.1 240:22	266:15					
414:17	302:23					
7.6 98:7,8	950,000					
70 231:4,5	248:13					
441:2	98 65:16 96:8					
70,000						
443:15						
70/30 232:20						
700 432:22						
708 11:5						
72 248:11						
73 246:19						
740,000						
248:11						
759 246:9						
76 200:5						
223:4						
7720 464:4						
78.8 93:19						
7th 158:18						
159:6,7						
8						
8 41:22 56:12						
8,000 298:12						
8.6 414:14						
8:00 49:2						
80 133:23						
208:19						
454:2,3						
82 167:14						
82,000 215:8						
83 166:6						
84,000 215:9						
215:10						
86.5 272:2,4						
8th 435:13						
9						
9 97:7 266:17						
303:25						
9-1-1 395:13						