

COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA  
COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Room 400, City Hall  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania  
Wednesday, May 1, 2019  
10:26 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE  
COUNCILWOMAN JANNIE L. BLACKWELL  
COUNCILMAN ALLAN DOMB  
COUNCILMAN WILLIAM K. GREENLEE  
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON  
COUNCILMAN KENYATTA JOHNSON  
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.  
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH  
COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL  
COUNCILWOMAN MARIA D. QUINONES-SANCHEZ  
COUNCILWOMAN BLONDELL REYNOLDS BROWN  
COUNCILMAN AL TAUBENBERGER

BILLS 190152, 190153, and 190154  
RESOLUTION 190164

- - -

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good  
3 morning. We're going to get started. We  
4 have a timing issue. We want to make  
5 sure we get the department out.

6                   This is the public hearing of  
7 the Committee of the Whole regarding Bill  
8 No. 190152, 190153, 190154, and  
9 Resolution No. 190164.

10                   Mr. Stitt, please read the  
11 titles of the bills and resolution.

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

16                   Bill No. 190153, an ordinance  
17 to adopt a Fiscal 2020 Capital Budget.

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

21                   Resolution No. 190164,  
22 resolution providing for the approval by  
23 the Council of the City of Philadelphia  
24 of a Revised Five Year Financial Plan for  
25 the City of Philadelphia covering Fiscal

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

14                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

15          Thank you.

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

24                   Today we will hear testimony  
25          from the following City departments:

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Philadelphia Police, Prisons, and Fire  
3 Department.

4 Mr. Stitt, our first person to  
5 testify from the Administration is?

6 THE CLERK: Commissioner Ross.

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

8 Thank you very much.

9 Good morning, Commissioner and  
10 Commissioners.

11 COMMISSIONER ROSS: Good  
12 morning, Council President. Good  
13 morning. My name is Richard Ross, Police  
14 Commissioner. I am here with First  
15 Deputy Commissioner Patterson and  
16 Commissioner Coulter, also accompanied by  
17 several other Commissioners and other  
18 staff that will be assisting us today.

19 If you will, Council President,  
20 in the interest of time, we've submitted  
21 our testimony, so I'd just assume go  
22 right into the line of questioning and we  
23 can proceed from there. And also thank  
24 you for your understanding with regard to  
25 our scheduling conflict.

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Absolutely. Absolutely. Always want to  
4 accommodate our folks in blue.

5 I was going to ask you about  
6 public safety officers. One, I do want  
7 to thank you and I want to thank --  
8 what's Inspector Smith?

9 COMMISSIONER ROSS: Walt Smith?

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

11 Yeah. I want to thank him for --

12 COMMISSIONER ROSS: He went to  
13 New York with you, right?

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

15 Yeah. I want to thank him actually for  
16 working on deploying police officers at  
17 congested intersections. As we said,  
18 when you have a person on a corner, it  
19 makes a significant difference,  
20 particularly along rush hour time.

21 COMMISSIONER ROSS: That's  
22 correct. Thank you.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So  
24 thank you. And thank you obviously for  
25 your service.

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Can you talk about the body cam  
3 program? There were a number of people  
4 requesting the status of it, where we  
5 are, how many, its effectiveness.

6 COMMISSIONER ROSS: Sure.

7 Right now we are proceeding in pushing  
8 that body-worn camera program out. We've  
9 deployed in the 22nd, the 24th, 25th,  
10 26th, Civil Affairs, the 35th, and now we  
11 are in Southwest Philadelphia. So right  
12 now that gives us just a little bit  
13 over -- around 1,100 officers that are  
14 actually wearing the body-worn cameras.  
15 I'm hopeful of pushing out about 800 a  
16 year. That's what we're budgeted for.

17 It does take a little bit of  
18 time in terms of our infrastructure to  
19 get some of the buildings ready so that  
20 we can upload the data. So it's not just  
21 as simple as walking into a division and  
22 deciding where we will go. You may  
23 recall last year we were going to go to  
24 another division and we had to redirect  
25 because of a problem with the building

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           and infrastructure.

3                       But the program thus far is  
4           going pretty well. I know many of the  
5           young police officers and I think even  
6           some older ones have really taken to it.  
7           There's some preliminary indications that  
8           it's actually helpful in driving down  
9           some police complaints. Obviously we  
10          believe that modifies both officer  
11          behavior and in some instances civilian  
12          behavior. And so we have every intention  
13          of pushing this forward.

14                      It's something the Mayor  
15          wanted. It's something that we believe  
16          in, obviously something the industry is  
17          doing. So we're optimistic about where  
18          we're going with it.

19                      COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:  
20          Okay. I know there's a lot of issues. I  
21          know that the Police Advisory Commission  
22          and Hans had given us an earlier preview.  
23          Is that all worked out between you all  
24          and Hans Menos and the Police Advisory  
25          Council as it relates to body cams?

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2                   COMMISSIONER ROSS: Yeah, I  
3 think so. So we communicate with Hans  
4 frequently. So what will happen  
5 generally is, they'll produce a report on  
6 an issue. This was one of them. And we  
7 will then send back a report either  
8 agreeing with or modifying something,  
9 sometimes changing and acknowledging some  
10 of the recommendations that the Review  
11 Board has made.

12                   There's been an additional step  
13 that has been added that we think is  
14 helpful where in between that, Hans will  
15 offer to come over with his staff to just  
16 kind of see where we are, to let us know  
17 what the report is about. It hasn't been  
18 done on every issue, but it's been done  
19 on a couple, and we find it to be  
20 helpful. I mean, the relationship has  
21 been beneficial, we think. Like anything  
22 else, we don't always agree, but we  
23 respectfully disagree sometimes, and  
24 that's what the dialogue is about.

25                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:



1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Thank you. Thank you.

3 Let me jump right into it.

4 Violence. I was actually participating  
5 with you and the Mayor and a number of  
6 other Councilmembers on the violent crime  
7 reduction strategy. You had the big  
8 press conference. Numbers were up.  
9 Obviously concerning to all of us in the  
10 City of Philadelphia. Then I understand  
11 that there's actually a continued spike.

12 COMMISSIONER ROSS: That's  
13 correct.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: As  
15 I'm out in the industry, we got the top  
16 three questions. Violent crime is always  
17 in the top three, if not number one,  
18 depending on what part of the City that  
19 you're in.

20 COMMISSIONER ROSS: Right.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I  
22 happen to represent the 22nd Police  
23 District. So needless to say, it's  
24 usually number one in that district.

25 So what -- and I know there's

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 no magic solution at the end of the day,

3 but what are we going to do about this?

4 I mean, we've got to do something.

5 COMMISSIONER ROSS: So, Council

6 President, I mean, obviously it's a

7 question that's very legitimate, we

8 expect. It's an intractable issue that

9 we have dealt with essentially in the

10 City for a lot of years. It has ebbed

11 and it's flowed, and it's very concerning

12 to us over the last couple of years.

13 First and foremost, let me

14 start with the fact that it is my humble

15 opinion that as a city, that if we don't

16 do something with this poverty rate, that

17 we're going to continue to be on this

18 never-ending cycle where it will go up,

19 it will go up, but when we -- this

20 transcends any particular administration.

21 This is not about the Kenney

22 Administration, the Nutter Administration

23 and going back. This has been an issue

24 that we've dealt with, poorest big city

25 in the country of the top ten, and with

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           that comes a whole host of issues, with  
3           the concentrated poverty. As you know  
4           from your district and many others, that  
5           leaves many hopeless and feeling like  
6           that they can't get out and that some of  
7           the young men out there resort to  
8           behavior that we would hope that they  
9           wouldn't otherwise engage in.

10                        That notwithstanding, one of  
11           the things that we're seeing in the last  
12           couple years is this uptick not only in  
13           the opioid crisis, but we're having a  
14           significant problem with  
15           marijuana-related shootings where we know  
16           that some of these shootings are directly  
17           correlated to the sale of marijuana  
18           throughout different parts the City.

19                        I'm not going to get into the  
20           merits of whether marijuana should or  
21           shouldn't be this. I think there are --  
22           my professional opinion, there's some  
23           people who think that legalization will  
24           kind of eradicate that issue. It won't.  
25           If you are a person involved in drug

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           sales, you're not automatically going to  
3           stop selling marijuana simply because  
4           someone legalized it. And so I think we  
5           still have to recognize the perils of  
6           marijuana, but drugs as a whole, it was  
7           responsible for a large part of our  
8           uptick last year and we're seeing that  
9           trend. It doesn't seem to be ending.

10                        If you look at certain parts of  
11           the City, you don't have to go far to  
12           look for people who are buying different  
13           kind of drugs, particularly opioids. If  
14           you look at those numbers, I think it was  
15           down slightly last year for opioid  
16           overdoses, 1,100 and something, right,  
17           1,200 the year before. By contrast, New  
18           York with a similar problem I think had  
19           1,800. New York is significantly bigger  
20           than Philadelphia. And so with that  
21           issue of the market being so large,  
22           people are going to resort to selling.  
23           Then somebody is going to try to take it  
24           from them. So we get on this endless  
25           cycle, and this is why we have to be

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           careful as a city about our policies  
3           about drugs as well.

4                         We're not interested in the  
5           Police Department in mass incarceration  
6           and unduly putting people in jail for  
7           minuscule drug charges. That's not what  
8           we're about, and I think our record is  
9           dictating that. However, what we do have  
10          to do is, we have to make sure -- and  
11          this is applies to everybody who has a  
12          stake in the City -- that our ideology  
13          matches up with reality. And sometimes I  
14          think that gets lost on us, and we'll be  
15          stuck admiring a particular ideology  
16          about what we're trying to do, whether as  
17          a nation or as a city, and sometimes we  
18          lose sight of what the reality is down on  
19          the ground.

20                        You're out there. Many of  
21          these Councilpeople are out there. We  
22          certainly are. We see what's happening  
23          on the ground to a lot of these  
24          neighborhoods. We are struggling.

25                        So now let me just segue into

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           another piece which is important to you  
3           relative to this whole issue. Guns  
4           themselves. People always ask, well,  
5           where are these guns coming from?  
6           They're not built in this neighborhood or  
7           that neighborhood. You're absolutely  
8           right, but guess what's happening? Last  
9           year, we had over 800 guns that were  
10          reported stolen, legal owners reporting  
11          them stolen, many of them permit holders.  
12          This is not an indictment of permit  
13          holders. This is actually an ask at the  
14          same time that I'm answering your  
15          question and, that is, we have to  
16          safeguard these weapons.

17                    If you have 200-and-something  
18          guns that were stolen from vehicles,  
19          300-and-something that were stolen out of  
20          thefts, and another roughly close to 200  
21          that are stolen from burglaries, there is  
22          your market each and every year.

23                    We're upwards of 250 already  
24          this year. Guns that are getting on the  
25          street that are not helping our issue,

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           and all that issue intersecting with  
3           poverty, hopelessness, and a whole host  
4           of other things; i.e., illegal drug  
5           sales, it's a dangerous mix and it's one  
6           that we've got to get ourselves out of.

7                        COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

8           Okay. So it's a cross-section of issues,  
9           and I concur, being a person that is out  
10          there on the street and recognize the  
11          realities. I do think there is a couple  
12          of other issues. These flash-point  
13          shootings, anger.

14                       COMMISSIONER ROSS: No question  
15          about it. Those are staples. You're  
16          absolutely right, where -- we got one  
17          last night where a young teenager gets  
18          shot. He had nothing to do with it, but  
19          guys arguing over a car, the sale of a  
20          car. So your flash-point, you're  
21          absolutely right. And that's always  
22          going to represent more of our shootings,  
23          retaliatory shootings unfortunately where  
24          people struggle with impulse control.  
25          They struggle with understanding the

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 consequences of what they're doing when  
3 they're pulling those triggers.

4 Right now I use 2015 as a  
5 benchmark of where we are with our gun  
6 arrests. We have almost double the  
7 number of gun arrests than we had in 2015  
8 at this time. Now, some things have  
9 changed along the way, and I'm going to  
10 leave that to some other folks to figure  
11 out what they could be, but I will tell  
12 you that it is a serious crisis that  
13 we're in May now and we already have over  
14 500 gun arrests. I'm not talking about  
15 arrests that accompany some other charge.  
16 Just gun arrests. That is astounding,  
17 and what it suggests to you is a lot of  
18 people are carrying guns and they think  
19 they can do so with impunity, for  
20 whatever reason. It does not suggest  
21 that your Police Department is not out  
22 there policing these neighborhoods. And  
23 a lot of it is frustrating, because these  
24 guys are carrying these guns. They don't  
25 understand what they're doing. They



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           don't even -- even some of these guys who  
3           don't have serious records, what they're  
4           doing is putting themselves in harm's  
5           way. Now they feel empowered to carry  
6           this gun, but they're not removing  
7           themselves from situations where they  
8           would otherwise turn and go the other  
9           way. And so that gun empowers people.  
10          It makes people resort to behavior they  
11          shouldn't resort to.

12                         Here is my issue, and I swore I  
13          wasn't going to go here, but Imma do it  
14          anyway, because I will sit in multiple  
15          meetings with different groups and I'll  
16          have one group saying, you stop too many  
17          people. Then I'll have another group  
18          saying, you don't stop enough people, and  
19          what are you going to do, when are you  
20          going to drop the hammer on these guys?  
21          So smack dead in the middle -- and, look,  
22          it is what it is, but we have to come  
23          together as a city, leaders, to  
24          understand getting all these people in  
25          the room together.

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2                   Nobody is wrong. It's just  
3           that we have to understand what the  
4           dynamics actually look like out here, and  
5           we have to stop playing games with this  
6           situation if we really care -- and I know  
7           people do, but we get frustrated just  
8           like you do and everybody else in this  
9           room when a bunch of rhetoric gets  
10          spouted back and forth about what to do  
11          about gun violence.

12                   At the end of the day, if we're  
13          for real about it, we need to roll up our  
14          sleeves, get everybody in the room that  
15          has a stake in this issue, whether you  
16          think the Police are culpable in  
17          something or that they're not, and really  
18          get it together and work to make this  
19          thing better than what it is.

20                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:  
21          Right. I concur. And thank you for,  
22          again, your words at the press conference  
23          on lost and stolen, along with the  
24          District Attorney. Hopefully we will be  
25          bringing a case soon. I do believe

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           that's a significant part, the  
3           proliferation of weapons in the City and  
4           in our state, because I understand we're  
5           right up there at the top in terms of  
6           where people get weapons for other  
7           states. It doesn't look like we're going  
8           to get any relief in Harrisburg from the  
9           legislative side any time soon.  
10          Hopefully we'll get in court sooner than  
11          later, and maybe we can get a favorable  
12          ruling in this particular Supreme Court.

13                        So as you know, we're all  
14          prepared to be supportive.

15                        One other thing I wanted to  
16          talk to you about, and I'm looking at my  
17          clock, because my guys are looking at me.  
18          I'm running my time.

19                        We had a brief conversation  
20          earlier about PDAC and PDAC as it's  
21          currently constituted, as those that  
22          don't know -- I know all of you know.  
23          Bottom line, people in neighborhoods --  
24          and it's usually the people that pretty  
25          much do everything in the neighborhoods.

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           It's usually the block captains,  
3           committee people, committee organizations  
4           come to the PDAC meeting. The PDAC  
5           meetings are normally in the police  
6           station, and in a lot of parts in the  
7           City, the participants are dwindling.  
8           The participants are -- I hate to use  
9           this term -- getting a little more  
10          seasoned. We don't see a lot of young  
11          people coming to the PDAC, which is  
12          really who we need to have as a part of  
13          that conversation between Police and the  
14          constituents. And I know briefly we  
15          discussed possibly changing the format so  
16          we can have a different level of formula.  
17          Because a lot of people, particularly  
18          young people, they're not going to come  
19          to the police station to a meeting.  
20          They're just not going to do that. And  
21          we didn't -- I'll take responsibility. I  
22          didn't really follow up. I really need  
23          to figure out a way to get some sort of  
24          format similar to PDAC, but understanding  
25          the need to get different people engaged

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           in this process, because as our seasoned  
3           members of our community kind of go,  
4           retire, do whatever, we can't continue to  
5           put the burden on them.

6                        So if you can really give me  
7           some kind of recommendation on how we --

8                        COMMISSIONER ROSS: We'll do  
9           that, and you're right, we did talk about  
10          that and so -- but independent of even my  
11          lack of follow-up, there are captains who  
12          are already doing that. And so in some  
13          shape or form, not just reconfiguring but  
14          just a membership thing. Because like  
15          you said, some people, they get a little  
16          tired. They've been doing it a long  
17          time, to their credit, and they might be  
18          ready to move on.

19                       But I would submit to you that  
20          you're not only right about that, but  
21          we've got to find a way to engage younger  
22          people, younger adults in venues even  
23          beyond that. I mean, it's a constant  
24          struggle. You've been to thousands of  
25          community meetings in your career, and

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           it's typically people our age, you know,  
3           and sometimes it looks like church, you  
4           know. It's older women and mostly women  
5           and middle age and so forth. And so  
6           trying to engage those groups, even those  
7           groups who have issues with Police to be  
8           able to air those views, to be able to  
9           provide their perspective in a way that  
10          we can have a dialogue and exchange those  
11          ideas and concerns, because that's what  
12          opens it up and makes people understand  
13          the varying perspectives as opposed to  
14          that's the police over there, those are  
15          the young people, we're not going to mix  
16          and mingle. That's not the way you get  
17          stuff done, because those are the folks  
18          in many instances that you're most likely  
19          to encounter. And they're not folks  
20          doing things wrong, but these are  
21          intersections that we got to avoid,  
22          misunderstandings and issues like that.

23                        So we're still open to that,  
24          but please know that there are individual  
25          captains who are already looking at their

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2       respective PDACs.

3                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:  
4       Yeah. We got to figure something out.

5                   COMMISSIONER ROSS: I agree.

6                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: We  
7       got to think outside of the box, and  
8       you're always willing to entertain  
9       something a little different.

10                   The Chair recognizes  
11       Councilwoman Quinones-Sanchez.

12                   COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank  
13       you.

14                   Good morning.

15                   COMMISSIONER ROSS: Good  
16       morning.

17                   COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: I want  
18       to thank you and the entire Police  
19       Department, particularly those folks who  
20       over the course of the last two years in  
21       East Division have had the monumental  
22       task of really becoming mental health  
23       experts, trauma experts, everything  
24       experts. And I appreciate the fact that  
25       we have a long road, but that there is

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           this willingness to continue to go out  
3           there every single day and just try a  
4           little harder, try something different.  
5           And I didn't think when I got elected to  
6           Council that I would have to become so  
7           intricately involved in public safety the  
8           way I have, but I appreciate the fact  
9           that there's mutual respect and  
10          understanding, and folks are frustrated  
11          in East Division, but your officers still  
12          get up every day, show up, captains show  
13          up every day, and we work at it.

14                   And I particularly appreciate  
15          the Commissioner. I know you've  
16          personally gone out there yourself at  
17          different times, because it's  
18          indescribable to folks. We talk about it  
19          in this room. I spent eight years trying  
20          to convince Commissioner Ramsey about our  
21          open-air markets, and he debated me on  
22          it. Now we have a lot of crazy things  
23          going on over there.

24                   I don't think the Police is  
25          responsible for taking care of everything



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           over there in the opioid situation. I'd  
3           like to hear from you -- I keep talking  
4           about disrupting the behavior, and every  
5           time I talk about what we need to do in  
6           Kensington, everything goes back to the  
7           Police Department.

8                         From your perspective, what are  
9           some of the things you see that we're  
10          doing that's working so that the burden  
11          is not only on the Police Department, and  
12          then what would you like us to intensify?

13                        COMMISSIONER ROSS: So, first,  
14          let me start by saying thank you for the  
15          way you characterized it, because that's  
16          essentially how I was starting out my  
17          conversation with Council President about  
18          the intractable issues that we contend  
19          with, and by no means, are we being  
20          dismissive of our responsibility on  
21          anything. We just don't adopt that  
22          mentality.

23                        However, and you're right, I  
24          spend a lot of time over there. A lot of  
25          my folks do. I mean, Commissioner

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           Sullivan is out there with the Resiliency  
3           Project. So that's one of the things  
4           that I think is really working to help.  
5           And thank you for acknowledging the  
6           commanders over there and the police  
7           officers that really deal with the  
8           circumstance that most people can't  
9           comprehend. When I had my mentee, a  
10          seasoned deputy commissioner from  
11          Houston, we walked over there. That was  
12          when Officer Sulock got shot. I just  
13          walked past him. And I spend a lot of  
14          time in your division, as you know, on  
15          the ground, on foot, because you do have  
16          to see it. You and I just walked around.  
17          And you have to see it to understand it.

18                        So, one, I think we have to  
19          continue as law enforcement to be  
20          vigilant, which we are, but we've got to  
21          figure out a way, one, to work more  
22          collaboratively with our partners. And I  
23          know they want to help us. We've got  
24          some commitment from federal authorities.

25                        But please understand that

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           while we want to interdict drug activity,  
3           we know that because of the economy, we  
4           don't want to be in a revolving cycle and  
5           a revolving door, and we've got to have  
6           this multi-pronged approach. I would say  
7           that the City has undertaken that. It's  
8           just a lot of work to do.

9                        So obviously the first step  
10          would be to get these young guys not to  
11          be involved in the first place, right?  
12          And so to make them feel like they're not  
13          as disenfranchised as they might believe  
14          and that there are opportunities. I know  
15          they may look around and they might feel  
16          like they don't have a pathway or a  
17          gateway to something else, but there  
18          really is. And so the first step is to  
19          tell them and to get them to know through  
20          opportunities that maybe the City, the  
21          government has an obligation to try and  
22          attempt. That's number one. Because  
23          once they're mired in this activity, it  
24          is very difficult for us to get them out  
25          of it, short of an arrest. And that, in

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           the long term, creates a cycle for us  
3           that doesn't end. And I said before, we  
4           all know the interconnectivity between  
5           drugs and violence, particularly in many  
6           of our deeply concentrated poverty-ridden  
7           areas. And so we've got to attack it in  
8           a multi-pronged way.

9                         We are committed to doing that,  
10          but we are, as you kind of alluded to, we  
11          are never going to do it by ourselves. I  
12          mean, that's not trying to get away from  
13          our responsibility, but it is never going  
14          to happen. It is a shared responsibility  
15          on the part of not only people in  
16          government, people in neighborhoods, but  
17          also the business community. And so  
18          we're developing and hope that developing  
19          more partnerships with them, because this  
20          is essentially what cities like New York,  
21          LA, and Chicago have been very successful  
22          in doing and establishing those  
23          relationships, even if it's just building  
24          things that the Police Department  
25          couldn't otherwise or the city couldn't

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 otherwise afford.

3 Chicago has these shared data  
4 centers, which we are a long way away  
5 from being able to afford, to the tune of  
6 1.4 million per district, and they have  
7 as many police districts as we have.

8 They did not fund it. The city didn't  
9 fund it. The business community funded  
10 it. So this is what I'm talking about,  
11 shared responsibility, whether it be in  
12 the form of getting some of these young  
13 people jobs, whether it's in the form of  
14 mentorship. We've got a host of those  
15 programs.

16 I mean, you already know and  
17 many people in this body know that  
18 Southwest Division was instrumental in  
19 starting a job program. They now have --  
20 and that's moved across the City where  
21 we've got 60 people employed. I had a  
22 guy when I was walking in West Philly  
23 pull over. I thought he was just trying  
24 to say hello, and he stopped with the  
25 biggest smile to say, I want to say thank

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           you, you got me a job. I didn't get it  
3           for him. Southwest did. But he was  
4           thankful and knew enough to acknowledge  
5           that if it weren't for the actions of the  
6           Police Department and those  
7           community-based organizations that we  
8           partner with, that he probably would not  
9           be working.

10                         But even beyond that, there's a  
11           reality that we all know. Some of these  
12           young guys who either want to get out of  
13           this life don't have the job skills to do  
14           it, and so we've been forced to augment  
15           even our job program, which has moved to  
16           other divisions, and to add that  
17           component, because if you've never  
18           worked, you got to know you got to go to  
19           sleep at night to get up in the morning.  
20           You got to know basic things about what  
21           are you supposed to dress like, what are  
22           you supposed to do with a resume. So all  
23           of these things have to happen.

24                         But I just think we just got to  
25           keep pushing forward, but we cannot do it

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           in silos. That's the bottom line. And  
3           it's a little bit of that going on even  
4           beyond government where people in the  
5           City just, I'll adopt this narrative, I  
6           got that narrative, and what happens in  
7           between is not a lot of work sometimes.

8                        COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: And I  
9           think it's important. I think when you  
10          go back and I know different  
11          administrations have different projects  
12          that they work on, not having curfew  
13          centers, and I don't know the  
14          effectiveness, some variation of places  
15          for young people to go at night, right,  
16          and weekends, whether it's -- I have a  
17          couple of centers that do 11 o'clock at  
18          night basketball and all those types of  
19          things. I feel like we need to go back  
20          to those basics of -- young people are  
21          going to do something. They're either  
22          going to be engaged with us or they're  
23          going to be engaged in trouble.

24                       COMMISSIONER ROSS: You're  
25          right. And, Councilwoman, I told a

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           particular media outlet a couple years  
3           ago that we tend to want to start our  
4           problems, if you use a proverbial  
5           baseball game, on third base and wonder  
6           why we're losing the game, or if you are  
7           a mathematician, which I'm not, trying to  
8           solve a math problem in the middle of the  
9           problem. You got to start at some of the  
10          beginning problems, even the ones that  
11          are hard to talk about, the ones that are  
12          not politically correct to talk about,  
13          and work your way through the whole  
14          issue. Otherwise, you're going to be on  
15          this proverbial treadmill or wheel for a  
16          long, long time, and this city is too  
17          important and got too many great people  
18          in it for that to happen.

19                    Look, if you want to point your  
20                    ire at me, I'm okay with that. We  
21                    live --

22                    COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: That's  
23                    not going to be the answer, though.

24                    COMMISSIONER ROSS: No, but  
25                    that's the world we live in, where you



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           got to blame somebody, and I'm okay with  
3           that. I'm born and raised in  
4           Philadelphia. I'm the only one of the  
5           Ross clan that is still here, and so I  
6           love this city and I want to see it even  
7           beyond me do better than it's doing.

8                         This is not -- again, this has  
9           nothing to do with this Administration or  
10          the two before that or anything like  
11          that. This just has to do with our  
12          ability as a city to move forward to get  
13          it -- it's a lot of great things that  
14          happen here. That is evidenced by the  
15          fact that you get so many people that  
16          visit here and so many large-scale events  
17          that want to come here, but we've got to  
18          get at the core of what is driving some  
19          of these issues, and we've got to roll up  
20          our sleeves and not be afraid to deal  
21          with the real issues. And right now,  
22          quite frankly, there's a little bit of  
23          fear, you know, because of some of the  
24          narratives that -- I'm not saying those  
25          narratives are wrong, but we're a little

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           bit afraid to move forward, and I think  
3           it's more problematic for us than it is  
4           helpful, because it puts in silos and we  
5           retreat to our neutral corners and we  
6           don't get things done.

7                        COUNCILWOMAN SANCHEZ: Thank  
8           you.

9                        Thank you, Council President.  
10          My time is up.

11                       COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:  
12          Thank you, Councilwoman.

13                       The Chair recognizes Councilman  
14          Oh.

15                       COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very  
16          much, Council President.

17                       COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:  
18          You're welcome, sir.

19                       COUNCILMAN OH: Good morning,  
20          Commissioner and Deputy Commissioners.

21                       So I agree with what you're  
22          saying very much so and maybe even more  
23          so. I appreciate the great job that the  
24          Police do in so many areas that are not  
25          really its core mission, and I appreciate

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           how the Police Department tries to do  
3           more. My concern is that the Police are  
4           being demanded and expected to do what  
5           the Police are not built to do. It's not  
6           really your mission. And the political  
7           correctness in policing, the social  
8           justice in policing that is today's  
9           environment is, I think, very wearing on  
10          the Police Department. I think it runs  
11          it thin.

12                        I think the Police are dealing  
13          with the result of politicians and social  
14          engineers and others, but basically the  
15          Police should do its core mission of  
16          policing. That's kind of what I think.

17                        And I think it is very  
18          problematic for our city that the leaders  
19          of our city, myself as an elected  
20          official and others, we cannot agree on  
21          what is the policy of this city when it  
22          comes to public safety and dealing with  
23          crime and lack of jobs and poor  
24          education. And so people want safer  
25          streets without locking up people. They

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           want people to have no bail and be on the  
3           street, but they want it to be safe, and  
4           all of that comes down to, well, at the  
5           end of the day, the Police have got to be  
6           able to handle all of this correctly,  
7           intelligently, with great insight and all  
8           kinds of things. I think that is a very  
9           not only heavy burden for the Police that  
10          it can't do, I think that's the wrong  
11          message, because then the public expects  
12          that we can have all these conflicting  
13          things and then the Police will handle  
14          it.

15                    One of the things that concerns  
16          me is that the Police are very restricted  
17          in doing what their job is, and I think  
18          there's an environment today where people  
19          are afraid. The Police are afraid to do  
20          their job because there's many ways that  
21          you get punished for doing it, and the --  
22          one of the examples when you were talking  
23          about kind of like disrespect of the law,  
24          disrespect of law enforcement, I just got  
25          to say, what's up with these ATVs? I

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           just see them all the time. And this is  
3           a small singular example, because I saw  
4           it just yesterday. I was at Spring  
5           Garden Street. Is there a directive not  
6           to chase them? I understand you don't  
7           want to lose life, but when young people  
8           are driving down the middle of the  
9           street, 15, 18 ATVs, with the belief they  
10          believe that the Police can't arrest  
11          them, can't chase them, can't do  
12          anything, and that may be the City's  
13          policy. I'm not saying it's a Police  
14          policy, but wouldn't that kind of  
15          encourage the idea that I'm going to do  
16          this right in front of the Police? And  
17          so why wouldn't I carry a gun? Why don't  
18          I smoke my marijuana in front of the  
19          Police? They're not going to do  
20          anything. They can't do anything.

21                    So I know I've unloaded a lot.  
22                    It's probably a lot of my frustration.

23                    COMMISSIONER ROSS: No. It's  
24                    more than okay.

25                    COUNCILMAN OH: So with all of

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           that that you got to deal with, maybe you  
3           could tell us politicians what we need to  
4           do to support the Police.

5                        COMMISSIONER ROSS: So, first  
6           of all, again -- and I don't disagree  
7           with much of your characterization. So  
8           let me start with what you started with,  
9           is about some of the things that we do  
10          that perhaps are beyond the scope of our  
11          purview. I said very openly in one of  
12          our crime briefings after giving kudos to  
13          the command staff that developed the job  
14          program, the GED program, that, quite  
15          frankly, that's not our job. I'm happy  
16          we are doing it. I'm elated, and I give  
17          all the props in the world, but think  
18          about it. It demonstrates a couple  
19          things. Clearly, we think there's a need  
20          and that we're willing to try to fill  
21          that gap because we see the connectivity  
22          between all the stuff, not having a high  
23          school diploma, not having a job, and  
24          that if that's a gap, one more gap that  
25          we have to fill -- this is not

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           complaining. This is not woe is us.  
3           It's just anybody who tries to suggest  
4           that the people in this department -- and  
5           I am absolutely astounded by the work  
6           that the men and women, sworn and  
7           civilian, do each and every day. If  
8           people only knew how resilient they are,  
9           what they're able to do.

10                        Are people frustrated? Yes.  
11           Are there some officers who probably  
12           don't work as hard as they could because  
13           they might be afraid of what's going on  
14           in law enforcement nationally? Maybe.  
15           But there are far more who are out there  
16           still working, as evidenced by the number  
17           of gun arrests that we have, but we're  
18           always cognizant of that.

19                        And so what can we do -- well,  
20           let me stop for a second. The ATV thing,  
21           kind of in answer to your question, we do  
22           have a policy not to chase, because it's  
23           a dangerous thing, but we do have some  
24           intel, things that we do to try to gather  
25           as much information to get these guys

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           before they get on the road. So to the  
3           degree that people have that  
4           information -- because you can't operate  
5           them on the streets or in the parts in  
6           Philadelphia, and they do act recklessly,  
7           which drives me crazy and everybody and  
8           every other police officer as well.

9                        So I don't want you to get the  
10          impression we do nothing, and we actually  
11          have multiple ATV operations,  
12          particularly as the weather gets warmer,  
13          and we confiscate many of them.

14                       But it does go to your larger  
15          issue of are we somewhat gun shy -- I  
16          hate to use that term in this city --  
17          about enforcing the messaging that we  
18          have. So I will tell you quite candidly,  
19          there is talk on the street and in other  
20          places that I don't want to get into  
21          where these guys are not afraid to carry  
22          a gun or to take a gun arrest. I don't  
23          think, despite the hard work, that our  
24          doubling of our gun arrests versus 2015  
25          is directly correlated to us working that



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           much better and smarter. It's people  
3           willing to carry them because they're not  
4           afraid of the consequences. And so  
5           that's just a reality.

6                     The reality of it is, there are  
7           lives being lost out here as a result of  
8           people carrying. It is nothing wrong and  
9           we believe in it, as evidenced by what  
10          we've done in collaborative reform -- we  
11          are the largest Police Department in the  
12          nation. We weren't the first, but we're  
13          the largest department in the nation to  
14          voluntarily enter into collaborative  
15          reform and complete it. We're the  
16          largest department in the nation that has  
17          been accredited by an outside body. We  
18          have continued to work with outside  
19          counsel and the ACLU on our pedestrian  
20          stops.

21                     So we are willing to do  
22          reform-oriented things. Our  
23          police-involved shootings are down  
24          precipitously over the last couple years.  
25          So if you park that notion and realize

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           that we're willing to do that kind of  
3           work, but we also have a public safety  
4           responsibility, and so what I am  
5           concerned about -- and it goes right back  
6           to how this conversation started -- is  
7           that this conversation gets so  
8           one-dimensional sometimes that people are  
9           afraid.

10                        It is safe and popular in this  
11           age to beat up on the police. We don't  
12           always get things right, and certainly  
13           there are things across this nation that  
14           have made us cringe that we've watched.  
15           And so we're no different as  
16           professionals. But it is safe and it is  
17           easy to beat up on the police. It's just  
18           the way it goes. And for us, what we've  
19           got to do, as evidenced by the things we  
20           have done in reform, is continue to  
21           improve what we do by virtue of our  
22           training.

23                        Our reality-based training has  
24           done significant things for us under this  
25           Deputy and Chief Inspector Warner at the

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           Training Bureau. We have now doubled  
3           down on our efforts. We have a second  
4           training on 4:00 to 12:00 because the  
5           officers love it, but you know what it  
6           translates into? Fewer shootings, better  
7           tactics, and a whole host of things.

8                        So we're willing to do our  
9           part. Are we perfect? Absolutely not.  
10          We will probably never be perfect, but  
11          Imma tell you what we're going to do.  
12          When we have this issue where officers  
13          may get frustrated, what we tell them is,  
14          just do your job. Just like the  
15          criticism that gets hurled at us and at  
16          me in particular -- it's like kind of an  
17          example someone gave me. It's like an  
18          IndyCar racer driving at 200 miles an  
19          hour. If you let the criticism get you,  
20          just like if you look at the wall, you're  
21          going to crash into the wall, right? So  
22          you just got to put your head down and  
23          keep doing your job and do what you got  
24          to do irrespective of all the other stuff  
25          going on.

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2                    If people don't understand all  
3           the dynamics that are going on in this  
4           city because they're either politically  
5           afraid or whatever the issue may be or  
6           because of some ideology that exists that  
7           doesn't meet with reality, then we're  
8           going to be in this whole thing for a  
9           long time. And so if it makes you feel  
10          better to point your ire at us, then go  
11          for it, but at the end of the day, I  
12          challenge you to bring in any outside  
13          entity and look at anything that we do  
14          and think that they can get it done  
15          better. That's just the bottom line.

16                   COUNCILMAN OH: Well, thank you  
17          very much. And let me just say on my  
18          part and I'm sure for all of Council, we  
19          appreciate the Police, the leadership,  
20          everything you all do, and we appreciate  
21          that you make that sacrifice every day  
22          and you keep doing it.

23                    Thank you.

24                    COMMISSIONER ROSS: Thank you.

25                    COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Thank you, Councilman.

3 Commissioner, what's the law on  
4 the sale of these off-road vehicles in  
5 the City of Philadelphia?

6 COMMISSIONER ROSS: I'll be  
7 honest with you, I don't know the law. I  
8 don't know if you know the law. I just  
9 know you can't operate them. I don't  
10 know about the sale, to be honest with  
11 you. We can get back to you on that.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I  
13 seem to recall -- I recall at one point  
14 Council either passed legislation or  
15 attempted to pass legislation.

16 COMMISSIONER ROSS: Deputy says  
17 he knows. I'm going to let him slip in  
18 here for a second.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:  
20 Outlaw the sale of these vehicles within  
21 the boundaries of the City of  
22 Philadelphia.

23 (Witness approached witness  
24 table.)

25 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILSON:

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Sir, they're completely legal to buy.

3 You just can't ride them on our streets.

4 You can buy a four-wheel quad or a dirt

5 bike --

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: In

7 the City?

8 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILSON: --

9 and own it in the City of Philadelphia.

10 You cannot ride it, unless you're on

11 private property.

12 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I

13 remember us passing a law. It might have

14 been one of those laws that people ignore

15 it.

16 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER WILSON: We

17 actually have dealerships in

18 Philadelphia.

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

20 Matter of fact, I think this goes back

21 some time. For some reason I want to say

22 it was Councilman Mariano. So that was a

23 little ways. Let me find out, because I

24 do recall us addressing that issue.

25 Thank you. Thank you,

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Commissioner.

3 For those of my colleagues that  
4 came in after the start, the Police  
5 Department has to leave to go to the Blue  
6 Flame ceremony at 11:25, 11:30. 11:30.  
7 So if we can keep our questions as  
8 concise as possible, and I'll stop  
9 talking.

10 I'm sorry. I didn't mean to  
11 look at you, Councilman. I'm sorry. I  
12 can't look over here because this big  
13 screen is like kind of blocking me.

14 The Chair recognizes Councilman  
15 Domb.

16 COUNCILMAN DOMB: Thank you,  
17 Council President.

18 Good morning.

19 COMMISSIONER ROSS: Good  
20 morning.

21 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And,  
22 Commissioner, thank you to you and your  
23 full Police Department for everything you  
24 do do. We're very appreciative of it.

25 COMMISSIONER ROSS: Thank you

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 so much.

3 COUNCILMAN DOMB: I also just  
4 wanted to make a few comments and I have  
5 a few questions.

6 I noticed your budget went from  
7 734 to 773 million, which is a very small  
8 increase over two years. It's like 2 and  
9 a quarter percent per year. So I commend  
10 you for that. It's very, very efficient.  
11 And I will say this, that if there was  
12 some sort of gun violence program that  
13 you felt we need to invest in, I think  
14 there's room there for us to invest in  
15 that type of program, because I think  
16 you're managing it very efficiently, the  
17 budget.

18 COMMISSIONER ROSS: Thank you.

19 COUNCILMAN DOMB: And I haven't  
20 said that often.

21 On the area of rallies and  
22 protests, I remember the first two years  
23 we had a tremendous amount of protests  
24 and rallies and it caused a lot of  
25 overtime. And it seems to me that that's



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           been curtailed a bit now, because I did  
3           notice your overtime went down. Your  
4           overtime went down from 68 two years ago  
5           to 66 today, 66 million. So that's good.  
6           So are you seeing less protests?

7                         COMMISSIONER ROSS: So I'll  
8           chime in about the protests and then I'll  
9           let Deputy Coulter just touch a little  
10          bit on the overtime.

11                        So you're right, some of it is  
12          curtailed. I think we have five today,  
13          though, and that's not as unusual as you  
14          would think, but just some short year or  
15          so ago, we had 1,499 protests or  
16          demonstrations. Some of them are smaller  
17          in scale. We still have to staff them,  
18          and so it requires a lot of manpower.  
19          And this is not anything against the  
20          demonstrators or protesters, but if we're  
21          there, we're not somewhere else, and  
22          that's just the way it goes. It's just  
23          the reality. And it costs money, because  
24          what we can't afford to do is to leave  
25          neighborhoods unmanned, because many of

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           them are down here, probably most of  
3           them.

4                        But you think about that,  
5           1,498. That's a lot. And so certainly  
6           there weren't as many last year, but  
7           every day when we start our conference  
8           call, Chief Inspector Singleton actually  
9           starts out with the number of protests  
10          he's handling today, and I think it's  
11          either four or five just for today alone.

12                       And so that's where we are  
13          relative to protests. I don't know if  
14          you want to comment about --

15                       DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:  
16          Just with regards to the overtime --  
17          Deputy Commissioner Christine Coulter.

18                       With regards to the overtime,  
19          it's not always predictable when we will  
20          have the protests and what times they'll  
21          come, but we're obviously gearing up with  
22          a national election coming up and moving  
23          forward. A lot of what was spent two  
24          years ago was as a result of the last  
25          presidential election and candidates and

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2 counter-candidates coming in.

3                   The close proximity of former  
4 Vice President Biden to Philadelphia and  
5 already declaring that the State of  
6 Pennsylvania is a state that's important,  
7 we have to anticipate that there will  
8 obviously be additional protests there.  
9 But we do try to make sure that we keep  
10 that great balance of watching what we  
11 spend, but protecting the neighborhoods  
12 that the cops have to come from.

13                   COUNCILMAN DOMB: I thought the  
14 numbers were good.

15                   One last question, and I hear  
16 this a lot, especially because we're in,  
17 I guess, election season, and the comment  
18 is about -- you made a comment about this  
19 earlier, Commissioner, the stop and  
20 frisk. And we're always asked the  
21 question, should stop and frisk be  
22 stopped or should it continue? And in  
23 your opinion, can you tell me if we stop  
24 stop and frisk, what do you think the  
25 implication would be?

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2                   COMMISSIONER ROSS: Well, I  
3 mean, to be honest with you, I think it  
4 would be a road to disaster. First of  
5 all, you know that pedestrian stops is  
6 what we call it. It is a tool. It is  
7 not a crime strategy approach. It has  
8 never been a strategy. It has always  
9 been a tool for law enforcement.

10                   Certainly there was a  
11 significant amount of improvement that  
12 was needed in our efforts to get them  
13 right constitutionally, to make sure that  
14 we're fair and just in how we do them and  
15 how we treat people. And so those are  
16 endeavors that we're working with others  
17 on, and we will continue to work on it.

18                   However, I think you would have  
19 to look far and wide to any department in  
20 the nation that would dare say that they  
21 would never stop anyone. I mean, that  
22 would suggest that if we saw something  
23 happening where we -- or we believe very  
24 strongly by virtue of reasonable  
25 suspicion that something happened -- I'll

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 give you a very real example.

3 Suppose for the sake of  
4 argument at 3 o'clock in the morning a  
5 cop who patrols your neighborhood sees  
6 somebody running out from the back of  
7 your house, right? Now, he didn't see  
8 that person do anything, right, but his  
9 antenna is going up. If you didn't have  
10 stop and frisk, you don't quite have a  
11 reason to stop him. You didn't see him  
12 break into something, but that's kind of  
13 suspicious, isn't it, running from behind  
14 your house at 3 o'clock in the morning?

15 So that's just one example. It  
16 could be many, many others. And so  
17 there's some dialogue about whether it  
18 should be upgraded to probable cause. At  
19 the end of the day, this is a Supreme  
20 Court caselaw from 1968. It should not  
21 be abused. People should not be unduly  
22 stopped, and they should not be  
23 mistreated. And these are the things  
24 that we have implemented significant  
25 oversight at the Mayor's direction. But

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2           I just think it would be very problematic  
3           if we never stopped anybody, particularly  
4           in a city that is so overrun with guns  
5           and gun violence, because then while,  
6           again, as evidenced by the work we've  
7           done -- and I don't think it can be  
8           denied even though it will never be  
9           applauded by some, the reality of it is  
10          is what is the alternative? What do you  
11          want people to do when you know that  
12          there are multiple people carrying guns  
13          on the street illegally? Illegally.  
14          That doesn't even count the number of  
15          people who are legally licensed to carry  
16          guns who aren't problems. Again, our  
17          only ask to them is to safeguard the  
18          weapon that you are legally licensed to  
19          carry. And we have significantly more  
20          people with gun permits than even New  
21          York City, and I'm talking about real  
22          numbers. I'm not talking about by  
23          percentage.

24                         And so we just need to make  
25          sure that our messaging gets out, but

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           that we have to balance what is public  
3           safety and the rights of everybody. And  
4           that is a balance. Nobody should ever  
5           give up on their rights, their  
6           constitutional rights to say, well, you  
7           can stop me whenever you want. That  
8           should never happen. Nobody should ever  
9           be mistreated when they get stopped.  
10          None of that should ever happen. The  
11          Police Department has an obligation to  
12          make sure that we are doing things the  
13          right way constitutionally and all the  
14          above.

15                         However, I don't know how you  
16          could ever as a city agency, a public  
17          safety agency saying that I'm just never  
18          going to stop anybody because that will  
19          appease a certain group of people. Are  
20          there problems with stops? Absolutely.  
21          Are we working on them? Absolutely.

22                         COUNCILMAN DOMB: Okay. Thank  
23          you. Thank you very much for your  
24          testimony, and thank you for everything  
25          the Police Department does. Thank you.

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Thank you, Mr. President.

3 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

4 Thank you, Councilman.

5 The Chair recognizes Councilman

6 Jones.

7 COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you

8 very much, Mr. President.

9 I want to lead by saying I

10 appreciate everything the Police

11 Department does in the City of

12 Philadelphia. I get to hear both sides

13 of criminal justice reform, new charging

14 standards, and then it's your job to

15 balance all of that out.

16 COMMISSIONER ROSS: That's

17 right.

18 COUNCILMAN JONES: It is not an

19 easy job, and I get it.

20 You were present the other day

21 for a hearing on the reaction by the

22 community to the 100-day strategy for

23 anti-gun violence. So what I hear a lot

24 of is, there is a larger, louder group

25 for reform, but there's a silent, often



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           angry constituency that does not want  
3           victims forgotten.

4                       There is no cry louder than a  
5           mother who prematurely loses her child  
6           due to gun violence. So some of the  
7           things that I know aren't all your  
8           problem in the sense that you did not  
9           create, but are definitely all of our  
10          responsibility to solve, and one of them  
11          is that there is a 40 percent closure  
12          rate, I believe, on murder, which means  
13          60 percent of the time on average people  
14          don't get apprehended. How do we  
15          approach that together? And somebody  
16          said there's a no snitching culture.  
17          Well, that's not true. People are  
18          apprehensive about coming forth with  
19          information to help. How do we deal with  
20          that?

21                      COMMISSIONER ROSS: So, first  
22          of all, thank you for your comments in  
23          the beginning. And, yes, just kind of  
24          working my way through what your comment  
25          was and what your statement is. So I

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           think that there have been a lot of  
3           people who have been silenced out of fear  
4           of being a target by some if they come  
5           out and they don't sound like they're in  
6           lockstep with everyone who is about  
7           reform.

8                         It's nothing wrong with reform.  
9           I'm about reform. I'm just also about  
10          public safety too. And so it can be  
11          one-dimensional. So I think when you  
12          traverse these neighborhoods, as I know  
13          you do, you hear that other conversation  
14          in the barber shop and you hear it in the  
15          many cookouts where you would think  
16          you're in some of the most conservative  
17          areas around. But people aren't  
18          comfortable saying that stuff in a public  
19          space because it is not what's popular.  
20          And it's not, like I said before,  
21          necessarily what's safe for people. And  
22          safe just means -- I don't mean their  
23          physical safety. I mean just nobody  
24          wants to be the subject of that ire, so  
25          they just go along with what people say

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 or do in silence.

3 And with regard to the  
4 clearance rate, it's something we have to  
5 work very hard on. It is not one issue.  
6 Certainly you're absolutely right, for a  
7 grieving family, nothing worse than one  
8 losing a child and then knowing that that  
9 person responsible is now walking around.  
10 In some cases, families feeling like  
11 they're doing so with impunity. And even  
12 if you don't know who it is, you know  
13 somebody is out there and that that has  
14 got to be the worst feeling in the world.  
15 You look in those faces of those families  
16 and even mothers, fathers, and your heart  
17 breaks for them. So we've got to do a  
18 better job -- first we always look inward  
19 before we look outward. So before we go  
20 to stop and frisk, before we go to  
21 snitching and not snitching and this and  
22 that, we look to see whether there is  
23 anything that we're doing that we can  
24 improve upon.

25 So one of the things that we

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           just did, we just called in the Police  
3           Executive Research Forum to look at our  
4           Homicide Unit exclusively, and they're  
5           the think tank of law enforcement, and  
6           they spent several months there, and as a  
7           result, they made multiple  
8           recommendations about how we can improve  
9           that unit, its clearance rate, how they  
10          work, even things about overtime. And so  
11          they came down and gave us a briefing  
12          about what their findings were. So we're  
13          in the process of implementing SOPs,  
14          standard operating procedures, that will  
15          help us.

16                    Look, we've got some dynamic  
17          homicide detectives. Some have been  
18          there and they don't like change, but I  
19          think most understand how you've got to  
20          move with the times. That's looking  
21          inward.

22                    As you look outward, there is a  
23          culture that some -- and I think it's  
24          multi-faceted. You have some people who  
25          don't believe in cooperating with the

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           Police. You could call this no  
3           snitching. You could call it whatever  
4           you want. You got some people who may be  
5           fearful. That is a very real thing.  
6           There is another component that it is not  
7           politically correct to talk about, but  
8           you broached the subject, so I'm going to  
9           answer it.

10                         There are actually people,  
11           upstanding citizens, who are concerned  
12           about X person, Rich Ross, wreaking havoc  
13           in their neighborhood, and now I meet my  
14           demise. Do you think they're running to  
15           us to tell us who did it? No. Some will  
16           actually tell you, that guy was the guy.

17                         I don't personally feel that  
18           way. I'm telling you we have been told  
19           this. We were told actually by one  
20           witness -- he didn't eyewitness -- who  
21           had a camera at his home. Homicide  
22           detectives knocked on the door, we'd like  
23           to get the video footage that may have  
24           captured this murder. And you know what  
25           the gentleman said? And I won't tell you

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           the part of the City, because I'm not  
3           going to give it up, but I am not making  
4           this up: I will burn my system before I  
5           give you that footage that shows what  
6           that guy who ruined my neighborhood did.

7                         Now, that's just the reality  
8           that we never want to accept, but that is  
9           one piece of it, you know. We don't  
10          subscribe to it, but don't think for a  
11          second that -- I know you already know  
12          this -- that there aren't some guys --  
13          and that doesn't fit everybody, but I'm  
14          just saying, we've got to look at  
15          everything when we look at these issues.  
16          We could try to be politically correct  
17          all day. We could try to fit neatly in  
18          one narrative or another, but at the end  
19          of the day, if you really want to solve  
20          the problem, you got to deal with all the  
21          symptoms and all the issues that come  
22          with it, right? And so those are the  
23          things that are happening.

24                        COUNCILMAN JONES: So very  
25          quickly, because I heard the bell --

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Councilman, so I got three people and I  
4 got to do three in ten minutes. The bell  
5 rang.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: Three words?

7 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: No.

8 This is what we need to do,  
9 because we obviously have a lot more  
10 questions. We're going to need you guys  
11 to come back, because this is a very  
12 significant issue. The Police Department  
13 is one of the premier departments in the  
14 City, so we're going to arrange to have  
15 you come back.

16 COMMISSIONER ROSS: I should  
17 have started gambling again, because that  
18 was my bet, but...

19 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: We  
20 got to get you to come back.

21 Let me just try to get a couple  
22 real quick.

23 Councilman Henon.

24 COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,  
25 Council President.

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2                   And I'm going to first make a  
3           statement that I thank you for being  
4           here, knowing that we have to stop the  
5           session, and it's a little bit, I think,  
6           annoying, infuriating that we had to  
7           break up a great conversation, but it's  
8           for an incredible annual tribute for all  
9           first responders and police officers in  
10          the job that they do and the history that  
11          it has and signifies for the City of  
12          Philadelphia, which I will be leaving  
13          along with you guys to pay tribute for  
14          those who sacrifice their lives and serve  
15          every day. So I'll be brief and I'll  
16          catch you on the callbacks or e-mail over  
17          some questions that I've had.

18                   But I first want to say thank  
19          you for being a Ross in the City of  
20          Philadelphia, the last remaining Ross.  
21          And thank you for being straight talk,  
22          and thank you for not avoiding  
23          controversial issues, and addressing and  
24          continuing to try to address some issues  
25          that are adapt in the 2019 through



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           training. So I want to thank you  
3           personally on behalf of the Sixth  
4           District in the City of Philadelphia, and  
5           thank you for your command. I think you  
6           have an outstanding command, who has been  
7           extremely responsive. The captains in my  
8           district and the personnel have been  
9           nothing but what Philadelphia expects.  
10          So I want to say thank you for that.

11                   I also want to mention that  
12          finally in my district, the 15th, which  
13          is the largest and most active police  
14          district when it comes to incidents in  
15          the City of Philadelphia, needs all of  
16          Council's support and the continuing  
17          police presence when it comes to  
18          staffing.

19                   So my few questions that I'm  
20          going to have and I'll stop is, we are  
21          budgeted for fully staffing the  
22          Department, I guess, by the end of this  
23          calendar year. Where are we at with  
24          staffing now and how are the recruiting  
25          efforts going?

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER COULTER:

3 Good morning.

4 Going into this morning, we're  
5 25 officers off our targeted goal. So  
6 our efforts over the last couple years  
7 have really, really improved both in  
8 recruitment and some having to do with  
9 being more inclusive of other City  
10 residents when we changed our hiring  
11 standard to make it open to more people  
12 that live here. More people responded.

13 The two years leading up to  
14 changing our hiring requirements, we  
15 would have about 1,000 people apply. On  
16 average now, we open it up about every  
17 three or four months. We have on average  
18 4,500 people applying. So we're getting  
19 more candidates in the system and  
20 obviously hiring them as a result.

21 So going into our new fiscal  
22 year, we'll have a class going in the end  
23 of June and we will have erased our  
24 deficit and, at that point, be hiring for  
25 attrition and the authorized 50

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 additional officers.

3 COUNCILMAN HENON: That's  
4 fantastic. And every single time I meet  
5 with all the districts and make my rounds  
6 and National Night Out, I mean, the first  
7 thing -- and I think we've had these  
8 frank conversations in the past. More  
9 police officers on the street is a  
10 natural deterrent. And then through your  
11 innovative programs and technology, that  
12 means you're much, much more successful.

13 So I know we're going to do all  
14 we can to help provide that for you so  
15 you can continue to stand up and not be  
16 afraid to protect us, because you should  
17 not.

18 And for those who are  
19 protesting, I believe in the First  
20 Amendment right 1,000 percent. There's a  
21 whole lot of cost to three, four  
22 protestors that are blocking up traffic  
23 during rush hour for whatever reason. So  
24 when we talk about through the budget  
25 process and overtime and everything like

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           that, well, it's not City Council and  
3           it's not the Mayor and it's not the  
4           Police Department that's doing that.  
5           You're there making sure that in  
6           worst-case scenarios, everybody is  
7           protected, people and property. So I  
8           want to thank you for that.

9                        I will defer for callbacks and  
10          send over some questions I have in  
11          advance. I look forward to continued  
12          dialogue and conversations, but thank you  
13          all for all you do.

14                       COMMISSIONER ROSS: Thank you.

15                       COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:  
16          Thank you, Councilman.

17                       The Chair recognizes  
18          Councilwoman Reynolds Brown.

19                       COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,  
20          Mr. President.

21                       Good morning. Good morning,  
22          Police Department.

23                       COMMISSIONER ROSS: Good  
24          morning.

25                       COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Let me

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2           underscore quickly the appreciation that  
3           needs to be said 1,000 times daily for  
4           the important work that you all do, I  
5           call it, nine days a week, 72 hours a  
6           day. You do amazingly good work.

7                         I have five minutes and I want  
8           to get all my questions in.

9                         April 12th, a little over a  
10          year ago, our city was faced with  
11          reckoning with the incident that took  
12          place at Starbucks. In June 2018, your  
13          office issued a new policy for handling  
14          trespassing calls, and you indicated that  
15          officers are now required to attempt to,  
16          quote, de-escalate and mediate the  
17          disturbance and to use discretion with  
18          trespassing allegations on private  
19          property as open to the public. And now  
20          you have what's called a specialist  
21          trained in crisis intervention or a  
22          supervisor that they can call.

23                        So simply give us an update on  
24          the policy, how many specialists do you  
25          have in your organization that are

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           trained in crisis intervention, and how  
3           many people have been arrested for  
4           trespassing since this new policy went  
5           into effect? Do you find it a useful new  
6           alternative to handling those types of  
7           circumstances?

8                         COMMISSIONER ROSS: Well, I  
9           mean, we have about 3,100 people who have  
10          been trained in crisis intervention, and  
11          that number grows monthly. We believe  
12          that helps us. And not just on this  
13          issue; in fact, to a lesser degree this  
14          issue, but mostly in our dealings with  
15          people who are in mental health crisis.

16                        As it relates to the policy, we  
17          put the policy in place. What is  
18          important to underscore is that it  
19          doesn't change the fact that we still get  
20          hundreds of calls every year, where we're  
21          put in a precarious situation to deal  
22          with issues. And many times people want  
23          it to be done perfectly, and that  
24          sometimes is not as easy as everybody  
25          thinks after the fact, but nonetheless,

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           having an obligation to see if we can  
3           always do things better. And that's not  
4           an indictment on anybody that responds to  
5           any particular situation unless that  
6           indictment is warranted. And so in this  
7           case, that policy was put into effect  
8           almost immediately, but it really hasn't  
9           curtailed the number of calls we get from  
10          businesses asking for people to get  
11          removed. And so --

12                    COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And you  
13           say it's --

14                    COMMISSIONER ROSS: I'm sorry.  
15           You asked how many arrests there were.  
16           So we've gone -- we had 151 in 2018. And  
17           many of them are citations probably and  
18           some are arrests.

19                    So please understand that this  
20           is a multi-faceted issue.

21                    COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: For sure.

22                    COMMISSIONER ROSS: And, again,  
23           we always strive to do things different  
24           and better where warranted. But  
25           somebody -- we still get a lot of calls.

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. And  
3 when you say that there are 3,000  
4 specialists trained in crisis  
5 intervention, these are police officers  
6 who are trained in crisis, correct?

7 COMMISSIONER ROSS: These are  
8 police officers.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: All right,  
10 then.

11 The reentry effort, the Office  
12 of Reentry Partnerships, is this a new  
13 office or is this a new division of the  
14 Office of Reentry?

15 COMMISSIONER ROSS: We're going  
16 to have to get clarity on that, because  
17 we don't have that in the Police  
18 Department. Maybe they're talking about  
19 something else. The Prisons maybe.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: In the  
21 Mayor's call to action where he talks  
22 about gun violence -- and I'm sure this  
23 matters to Councilman Kenyatta Johnson --  
24 there's some discussion about this Office  
25 of Reentry Partnerships.



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2                    COMMISSIONER ROSS: We work  
3 with all of the other agencies, but we  
4 don't have an office like that.

5                    COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Okay. All  
6 right. The last question speaks to body  
7 cameras. My understanding is that the  
8 Department allows police officers in some  
9 circumstances to review footage on  
10 cameras before writing an incident  
11 report. I think what needs to be  
12 underscored is "before writing an  
13 incident report." So just speak to that  
14 policy, if you will, and share an update  
15 on the policy for storing camera footage.

16                   COMMISSIONER ROSS: So that  
17 part of the policy has been amended where  
18 when we actually have a use of force  
19 incident, the officer cannot look at it  
20 beforehand.

21                   COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Repeat  
22 that last statement.

23                   COMMISSIONER ROSS: When we  
24 have like an incident involving the use  
25 of force. So then the officer does like

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           a report or gives a statement, and then  
3           subsequent to that, you know, can be --  
4           but they have to produce a statement  
5           without looking at it in use of force  
6           instances.

7                        COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Got it.  
8           Got it. Okay.

9                        COMMISSIONER ROSS: And just so  
10          we're clear, Councilwoman, on body-worn  
11          cameras policies literally, the whole  
12          industry is still building the plane  
13          while we're flying. There is no one  
14          policy across the nation.

15                       COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I'm sure.

16                       COMMISSIONER ROSS: There are  
17          some that individuals believe are better.  
18          We felt the need to make a modification,  
19          but at the end of the day, there is no --  
20          you could go all around this nation.  
21          Deputy Coulter and I sat and watched a  
22          panel two years ago -- actually, three  
23          years ago on body-worn cameras where  
24          there were five resident experts sitting  
25          up there and there were at least three or

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 four different opinions, and these are  
3 the experts.

4 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Yes.  
5 There's no defined best practice.

6 COMMISSIONER ROSS: There's  
7 no -- some will say there are, but, I  
8 mean, when you get down in the weeds, the  
9 reality of it is is that some departments  
10 believe you should do one thing and some  
11 you should do -- you have to figure out  
12 what's best for you and your  
13 constituency, what they can accept and so  
14 forth and so on, as well as your police  
15 officers.

16 COUNCILWOMAN Brown: Well,  
17 thank you again for the intentional  
18 efforts to bring more Philadelphians into  
19 the Police Department.

20 COMMISSIONER ROSS: Thank you.

21 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you  
22 very much.

23 Thank you, Mr. President.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:  
25 Thank you, Councilwoman.

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 This is our last questioner and  
3 then we'll schedule a day for callbacks.

4 The Chair recognizes Councilman  
5 Johnson.

6 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Thank you,  
7 Council President.

8 Similar to my colleague  
9 Councilman Jones, I just want to thank  
10 the Philadelphia Police Department for  
11 all the hard work that you're doing. A  
12 special shout-out to Mr. Myron Patterson,  
13 who also sits on the Special Committee on  
14 Gun Violence, and also my good friend  
15 Inspector Joel Dales.

16 COMMISSIONER ROSS: Chief  
17 Inspector.

18 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Chief  
19 Inspector. He would say that. Kenyatta,  
20 you know I got promoted. Because he's  
21 truly on the ground addressing the issue  
22 of gun violence, particularly in the  
23 South Philadelphia part of my district.  
24 And so it's truly appreciated. And also  
25 your new captain in the 9th, her last

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 name is?

3 COMMISSIONER ROSS: Vales.

4 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yes,

5 exactly. She's helping me with the

6 patrolling around 15th and Locust Street

7 area. So thank you, Commissioner, for

8 stepping up to the plate.

9 Just real simple question.

10 We're probably going to follow up on this

11 when you come back. I just want to get

12 an idea as we move forward just the

13 overall strategy that your team is taking

14 to again tackle the homicide rate. And

15 this is redundant, because Councilman

16 Jones talked about it, but I want to get

17 an idea from your team strategy.

18 I know the Mayor is putting up

19 \$36 million where a significant portion

20 that's going to the Philadelphia Police

21 Department Operation Pinpoint. So really

22 just nailing down how Pinpoint is going

23 to move forward and addressing, you know,

24 the issue that's on everyone's mind. And

25 I hear you loud and clear. We're not

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           just focusing on the Police Department.  
3           That's why I fought to make sure we have  
4           grants for the boots-on-the-ground  
5           organizations to give that additional  
6           support so we're working together, but  
7           from a law enforcement standpoint, my  
8           conservative side says there's some young  
9           men that can care less that I'm having  
10          peace rallies and I'm having community  
11          organizing events. So there's a soft  
12          responsibility part that we have to take.

13                    COMMISSIONER ROSS: That people  
14           don't want to talk about.

15                    COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yeah, but  
16           I'm going to talk about it. That's what  
17           I'm talking about, right? And I want to  
18           know the overall strategy just to  
19           consistently be aggressive in getting  
20           those guys off the street.

21                    COMMISSIONER ROSS: So let me  
22           just say kudos to you for being candid  
23           about that, and I know you're on the  
24           ground. As you know, we've talked and  
25           you've said there are guys who have told

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 you, sorry, I'm about that life.

3 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Yeah. I'm  
4 about that life.

5 COMMISSIONER ROSS: I'm about  
6 that life. And for those who don't know  
7 the vernacular, it means just exactly  
8 what it says. I'm into this thug life,  
9 and I don't care what you say and what  
10 services you offer me, this is what I'm  
11 into right now. That's not the majority,  
12 as you know. The majority are, I think,  
13 trapped in a situation they don't know  
14 how to get out of by virtue of poverty,  
15 inequality, and a whole host of other  
16 issues that they just can't get beyond.  
17 I think that's most.

18 So Operation Pinpoint is the  
19 crime strategy that we're using. It is  
20 largely driven by analytics. We have  
21 just recently, as a result of some  
22 funding, purchased an analytical program  
23 called Infoshare, which will enable us  
24 essentially to gather all the datasets,  
25 and we have multiple, as you might

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           imagine, in one portal, so that almost  
3           like searching in Google, if I asked  
4           about everything I wanted to know about  
5           Kenyatta Johnson as opposed to searching  
6           here, searching here, searching here.

7                        Look, we've got infrastructure  
8           issues in Philadelphia. I don't think  
9           that's a secret. I spoke about that  
10          relative to body-worn cameras. I spoke  
11          about the fact that one of the things  
12          that we've got to do a little bit better  
13          on -- and it's not an indictment -- is  
14          getting even folks outside of government  
15          to support endeavors like technology that  
16          will enable us to do things that some  
17          other places are already doing and have  
18          been doing, because that's a key thing.  
19          So what you don't want to have is two,  
20          three police officers taking 20 minutes  
21          to do something that a computer can do in  
22          ten seconds, right? And so that's part  
23          of it. Boots on the ground is a big part  
24          of it, but working with these groups that  
25          are out there, who you know them very



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           well. Some of them were in here the  
3           other day. Can't say enough about them,  
4           because they're at least for real about  
5           being out there. But we've got to be  
6           vigilant. We've got to say that public  
7           safety is paramount. It's not for the  
8           sake of putting a bunch of people in  
9           jail. It's not for the sake of  
10          disenfranchising groups of people. It's  
11          for the sake of saving lives. You've got  
12          to save lives.

13                        These young guys have so many  
14                        more opportunities available to them.  
15                        Many of them could do so many other  
16                        things. We have a responsibility as a  
17                        city to seriously step up. And that's  
18                        not just on the government. It's a  
19                        shared --

20                                COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Everybody.

21                                COMMISSIONER ROSS: Public  
22                        safety was always meant to be a shared  
23                        responsibility. It was never meant to  
24                        just be the Police Department just do  
25                        this, because then when people close

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           their blinds and just look out and peek  
3           and see what the Police Department is  
4           doing, that's nice to a degree, but then  
5           you don't stave off a cultural thing that  
6           could be stopped in a particular  
7           neighborhood by just by saying what are  
8           you doing and why are you doing that.  
9           Just you having those conversations, you  
10          might get one guy who tells you,  
11          Councilman, I'm about that life, but  
12          somebody else is actually listening to  
13          you when you tell them, no, man, there's  
14          something better here for you than that.  
15          So all those things have to work in  
16          tandem with one another.

17                    COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: And I know  
18           you have to leave. Just one last point.  
19           The District Attorney's Office talked  
20           about when the DA gave his testimony  
21           about the Police Drug Lab and the lack of  
22           capacity to keep up with the volume of  
23           items that are tested. Can you elaborate  
24           on that particular statement?

25                    COMMISSIONER ROSS: Yeah. So

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           one of the issues is, you've got  
3           significant drug issues, even opioids  
4           related to fentanyl, and not having the  
5           ability to do field testing that will  
6           detect that in the timely fashion for the  
7           preliminary hearing. And so I think one  
8           of the things that has been suggested by  
9           him or his office at least once is to  
10          outsource it. That's nice, but give me  
11          the money. I need the money to do it,  
12          number one. And we have to be careful.  
13          If we know that drugs are driving a lot  
14          of our murders and we believe that it is  
15          responsible for an uptick -- clearly is  
16          not the only reason -- then we have to be  
17          careful about not de facto legalizing  
18          drugs in the City. Okay? And so we have  
19          to work together. I'm not saying we  
20          don't, but we got to be careful. All  
21          right?

22                         And so we don't have the  
23          capacity to get those -- if we're getting  
24          in roughly 20-something thousand, 22,000  
25          cases and we have a capacity of 12,000,

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           therein lies the problem. And so we can  
3           come up with a lot of different creative  
4           things.

5                        I mean, I want you to think  
6           about something. When I talked about  
7           some of the things that we're doing in  
8           Pinpoint, this is being built by some of  
9           our civilians that are billing it on a  
10          shoestring budget, when other cities are  
11          getting the help of business communities  
12          and doing it with millions of dollars.

13                       COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: The Mayor  
14          committed 36 million. So how much of  
15          that goes toward the Philadelphia Police  
16          Department, separate from the Office of  
17          Violence Prevention? Because that's like  
18          his hallmark in his budget. He said, I  
19          want 36 million. I'm making violence --  
20          reducing violence as a strategy and my  
21          number one priority during this  
22          administration. So when we start talking  
23          about the need for funding, how much is  
24          that 36 million in his budget he's  
25          requesting is specifically going toward

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 the Philadelphia Police Department?

3 COMMISSIONER ROSS: Well, I

4 don't know what the exact figure is

5 relative to that 36 million, but I can

6 say that the commitment was there, as

7 evidenced by what Deputy Coulter

8 testified to, that we had gone from being

9 woefully understaffed a couple years ago,

10 a couple hundred, down to 25 or 50. So

11 it's not an issue of that. And remember

12 what percentage of our budget goes toward

13 salary and benefits. So it was 97

14 percent or something like that. So it

15 don't leave you a lot of room.

16 COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: 97?

17 COMMISSIONER ROSS: Yeah. 97

18 percent. And that's not uncommon for

19 major police departments. So that's not

20 on the Mayor. That's just the way the

21 budget is and the collective bargaining

22 agreement is structured. So there's no

23 lack of commitment in terms of staffing

24 the Police Department. You have to

25 understand -- and "you" the plural, not

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           "you" the individual -- that what other  
3           cities have been very adept at doing  
4           is -- the things that New York City, and  
5           I know they're an outlier and I usually  
6           hate the comparison, but New York, LA,  
7           and even Chicago, all that money they're  
8           getting, they're not funding that  
9           themselves. They're just not. You know  
10          that I was just in Northern Ireland with  
11          the Commissioner of NYPD. They have  
12          officers stationed all overseas because  
13          of their terrorist issue. The city does  
14          not pay for that. They don't pay for  
15          that.

16                    COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: So would  
17          you support us -- there's a proposal on  
18          the table right now sponsored by Council  
19          President that will -- we will use  
20          civilians to monitor traffic, right?  
21          Because you know I live in South Philly,  
22          and any given week as you go to the game,  
23          got thousands of cops monitoring people  
24          going in and out of the stadium games and  
25          all around, protecting the neighbors in

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           the stadium district area and the block  
3           to make sure the crowd don't go down  
4           their blocks, but we're looking at  
5           transitioning and maybe get those  
6           officers to kind of take another role,  
7           right, and put civilians in a traffic --  
8           have civilians monitor traffic-calming  
9           measures and directing traffic. What's  
10          your perspective on that?

11                    COMMISSIONER ROSS: Well, I'm  
12           on record with Council President  
13           testifying in support of that. I mean,  
14           that is not a novel concept. It is  
15           something that's been done in New York,  
16           Chicago, in DC, and many other major  
17           cities to offset. I mean, I know there  
18           are labor issues. That's something that  
19           is above my pay grade, but I'm already on  
20           record in support of that.

21                    COUNCILMAN JOHNSON: Okay.  
22           That's all I have, but, again, thank you.

23                    COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:  
24           Thank you, Commissioners. Thank you all  
25           very much. We'll schedule the callback.

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Thank you.

3 COMMISSIONER ROSS: Thank you.

4 (Witnesses approached witness  
5 table.)

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

7 Thank you. Next up we'll have the  
8 Prisons Department.

9 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Good  
10 morning --

11 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good  
12 morning.

13 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: --  
14 Council President Clarke and members of  
15 City Council. I am Blanche Carney,  
16 Commissioner of the Philadelphia  
17 Department of Prisons. Joining me today  
18 to my left is Deputy Commissioner Terence  
19 Clark and to my right, Earl Decub (ph),  
20 financial officer. I am pleased to  
21 provide testimony on the Philadelphia  
22 Department of Prisons Fiscal Year 2020  
23 Operating Budget.

24 The mission of the Philadelphia  
25 Department of Prisons, provide a secure



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           correctional environment to detain people  
3           accused or convicted of illegal acts, and  
4           the PDP operates five facilities in the  
5           Greater Northeast. We also provide  
6           programs and services, including job  
7           training, educational services, parenting  
8           classes, substance abuse services,  
9           behavioral therapy, and counseling,  
10          individual and group therapy.

11                    The plan for Fiscal Year 2020:  
12          The Prisons will support the  
13          Administration's goal of criminal justice  
14          reform by continuing to offer programs  
15          and services designed to enable the  
16          successful reentry of returned citizens  
17          into society. This continuity of care  
18          starts while individuals are incarcerated  
19          and links them to services and supports  
20          when they leave the Prison System, with  
21          the ultimate goal of reducing recidivism  
22          and decreasing the number of incarcerated  
23          individuals in Philadelphia.

24                    In further support of the  
25          Administration's goals, the PDP

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           commissioned, as requested, a cost  
3           efficiency analysis conducted by CGL, and  
4           the final report of February 2019  
5           concluded the following: The  
6           Philadelphia Department of Prisons is a  
7           cost-effective user of City of  
8           Philadelphia resources within the context  
9           of its performance objectives and the  
10          constraints under which it must operate.  
11          While potential opportunities are  
12          available to achieve some savings, the  
13          overall PDP budget supports an efficient  
14          approach to management of the City's  
15          correctional system. PDP spending  
16          patterns did not develop in a vacuum.  
17          They largely stem from the policies,  
18          professional standards, and operational  
19          priorities established by Department  
20          leadership. For example, the specific  
21          performance requirements and staffing  
22          levels established by the PDP in its  
23          medical contract drive both the current  
24          level of spending for the program as well  
25          as the high quality of services provided.

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           Constraints and obligations created by  
3           factors such as the system's current  
4           physical plant and current collective  
5           bargaining agreements also shape system  
6           resource needs.

7                         As the PDP was compared to  
8           other jurisdictions from around the  
9           country, we believe that this was an  
10          appropriate assessment of our operations.

11                        The proposed funding request  
12          for Fiscal Year 2020 General Funding  
13          totals \$238,183,523, a decrease of  
14          \$11,968,714 below Fiscal Year 2019  
15          estimated obligation levels. This  
16          reflects a net decrease of 22.7 million  
17          from Fiscal Year '17 high point in  
18          obligations of \$260 million. Factoring  
19          in wage increases in Fiscal Year '18,  
20          '19, and '20 that offset reductions, a  
21          total of 40.1 million in wage increases,  
22          along with the House of Correction  
23          utility savings to -- close to \$900,000,  
24          the true cost reduction in Fiscal Year  
25          '20 as compared to Fiscal Year '17 high

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 point exceeds \$60 million.

3 So we have been diligent in  
4 managing the operations of the  
5 Philadelphia Department of Prisons. The  
6 same folks as indicated and reflected in  
7 Council's Narrowing the Gap report, those  
8 are the same folks that are finding  
9 themselves incarcerated at the prisons.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:  
11 Appreciate that. Okay. Are you done?

12 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes, sir.

13 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:  
14 Thank you. Thank you. Thank you for  
15 your service.

16 Let me get into some budget  
17 issues. So last year at crunch time;  
18 i.e., conclusion of the budget, there was  
19 some shifting of revenues based on and  
20 appropriations based on the need to close  
21 the School District gap. This was prior  
22 to us realizing that we had a much higher  
23 fund balance than anticipated, and it was  
24 a move to take some money from the  
25 Prisons, and from the Councilperson's

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           perspective was that there was a  
3           reduction in the population as it moved  
4           towards, quote/unquote, close the creek,  
5           that we thought that it would be prudent  
6           if any savings materialized as a result  
7           of that reduction, we would put that  
8           money in public education; i.e., front  
9           side versus back side.

10                         With that shift, did you  
11           experience any difficulties with your  
12           ability to run the Department as a result  
13           of that from our, we say, relatively  
14           small incremental shift in funding?

15                         COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes,  
16           Councilman. We did experience some  
17           challenges, but myself and my team  
18           managed extremely well under the  
19           reduction in the budget in that with the  
20           closure of the House of Corrections, we  
21           were very methodical in redeploying staff  
22           to the five remaining facilities to fill  
23           vacancies.

24                         We've been understaffed for a  
25           number of years, and we took a step back

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           and said, okay, with the reduction in  
3           those fundings, you redeploy staff to  
4           fill vacancies. And for the first time  
5           under my appointment, we were able to  
6           create a unit, our Medical Transportation  
7           Unit, which is devoted strictly to  
8           outside open ward details, and that was a  
9           meaningful way. And we had to reduce  
10          posts where we could, and we did reduce  
11          posts to create that unit. That has been  
12          a major driver of our overtime reduction,  
13          because it helps to keep as many uniform  
14          staff inside the facilities as possible.

15                    COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

16          Okay. So you figured out a way to make  
17          it work.

18                    COMMISSIONER CARNEY: We

19          figured out a way under the constraints.

20                    COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

21          That's usually how it works. We never  
22          have enough money in government, but we  
23          figure out a way to make it work.

24                    All right. And I think the  
25          contribution to the School District given

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2           recent upticks in test scores is  
3           important. At the end of the day, if we  
4           can't fix our public school system, then  
5           what's the point? Why are we here?

6                         A couple of other budget  
7           related. So in your testimony, you  
8           project a 9.4 million decrease in  
9           overtime. So what policies are being  
10          enacted to ensure a further reduction in  
11          overtime? And do you believe that this  
12          reduction is enough, given the continual  
13          decline in the prison population? So  
14          there should be, from our perspective --  
15          you're the professionals. We're the lay  
16          people in that aspect, but we believe  
17          that if the population declines, then  
18          there should be a corresponding reduction  
19          in expenditures. Can you talk me through  
20          that?

21                        COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes, I  
22          can. Council President, one of the  
23          hallmarks of our reallocation and  
24          redeployment of staff -- and it was  
25          recently in the PICA report -- and just

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           in for this third quarter, we have  
3           reduced overtime spending considerably,  
4           and one of the policies that we've  
5           implemented is to keep as many uniform  
6           staff inside the facilities and closing  
7           posts that if they're not in operation  
8           for various programs and services, we  
9           close those posts and then redeploy staff  
10          accordingly.

11                         One of the biggest things that  
12          we always have to keep in the forefront,  
13          it is a correctional environment and,  
14          along with industry standards, is to  
15          bring inmates out of their cell to be  
16          engaged in meaningful activity, both  
17          recreational treatment, behavioral  
18          health, substance use, and education.  
19          And so when we're able to have as many  
20          inmates out, the staff are redeployed  
21          accordingly, and that's a major driver of  
22          reducing not only the inmates being able  
23          to come out, but also having the staff  
24          available. And so with the 5 percent  
25          vacancy rate, that's how we're actually



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           managing, because that MTU unit, the  
3           Medical Transportation Unit, has really  
4           taken some of that heavy lift and burden  
5           off of the officers that we have to  
6           remove from the staff, and that's a major  
7           driver, and that's how we've been  
8           managing. We've been very diligent and  
9           cost effective in evaluating posts that  
10          we can safely close or deactivate if  
11          there's no activity.

12                    COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

13          Okay. Thank you.

14                    The medical contract, I think  
15          there's been about 15 years since the  
16          last bid on the medical contract. Is  
17          there any thought about rebidding or is  
18          that number incorrect, rebidding our  
19          medical contract?

20                    COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes. We  
21          will issue that contract through an RFP.  
22          And I'd just like to share, because  
23          that's been a major concern, when you  
24          talk about the numbers and the care, the  
25          same folks that are in the Department of

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           Prisons, if you overlay that on the areas  
3           that have high poverty rates, they're the  
4           same folks. And I'd just like to read as  
5           part of our CGL analysis.

6                        As indicated, language from  
7           Page 28 of the CGL cost efficiency  
8           analysis, February 2019 report. And this  
9           reflects the Corizon - Composition of  
10          Fees section.

11                       Approximately 55 percent of the  
12          annual contract fees relating to physical  
13          medical care services are comprised of  
14          personnel costs. This is consistent with  
15          prior years, with the similar contracts  
16          in comparable systems. As administrative  
17          and corporate fees are fixed (nearly 75  
18          percent of the contract costs are fixed  
19          and not a variable nature), a reduction  
20          in the inmate population will not  
21          translate into a proportional reduction  
22          in either the cost per inmate or overall  
23          costs. The MHM contract has a similar  
24          structure. Both contracts require  
25          payment of incurred expenses only, so

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           that if positions are not filled, 100  
3           percent of the consequent savings accrue  
4           to the City.

5                        On Page 29 of the same report,  
6           providing quality medical and mental  
7           health care is one of the most difficult  
8           challenges facing correctional managers  
9           today. While no system is perfect, the  
10          PDP developed a sound, sustainable system  
11          for delivery of good quality jail care,  
12          with substantial decreases to the City's  
13          potential risk for litigations.

14                       Across the nation, some of my  
15          peers are under litigation because of the  
16          poor quality of healthcare. Those folks  
17          that we bring in, again, a majority of  
18          those contracts are for personnel to  
19          deliver and render the care. We're  
20          getting -- we're receiving people that  
21          are underinsured, have never been treated  
22          or properly diagnosed. So when they come  
23          in, I have a personal responsibility.

24                       I work with human beings. I  
25          don't deal with numbers. And so when we

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           have illness burdens for people with  
3           diabetes, high blood pressure, sickle  
4           cell, dialysis, and behavioral health and  
5           substance use, I have to deal with that.  
6           And so that keeps me up at night, when  
7           people are coming in in poor condition.  
8           The onus is on me to ensure that if they  
9           did not receive the care for whatever  
10          reason, poverty, underemployed, lack of  
11          insurance, when they come to the  
12          Philadelphia Department of Prisons,  
13          that's the right thing to do, and it is  
14          not cheap. And the services that we  
15          receive, you get what you pay for. And I  
16          really try to champion that, because I  
17          don't want to have a grade F in  
18          healthcare and behavioral healthcare,  
19          because we have some of the highest  
20          poverty numbers. Those are the same  
21          folks that are inside the Department, and  
22          they should be better off when they  
23          return back to their communities. And  
24          behavioral health and medical care are  
25          huge drivers of that cost.

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3 Okay. Great. Refreshing approach,  
4 dealing with that population not just  
5 about the numbers but about the total  
6 rehabilitation of individuals, which I'm  
7 glad you referenced the document, the  
8 reducing poverty. Narrowing the Gap is  
9 one of the things that we are focusing  
10 on, is providing family-sustaining career  
11 opportunities for those individuals that  
12 are moving into the general population;  
13 i.e., the City's workforce. And it was  
14 actually a conversation with one of the  
15 labor leaders who recommended that we  
16 work on that in the construction trades,  
17 because we thought that the population  
18 might be well suited to be a participant  
19 in that. So we're going to be working  
20 towards that.

21 The simple reality is is if we  
22 really are genuine about the recidivism  
23 issue, we have to be real about creating  
24 those opportunities, because  
25 unfortunately too often people aren't

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           given a second or a third chance coming  
3           in that population, and ultimately people  
4           will go back or end up unfortunately in a  
5           much worse situation.

6                        We actually were talking  
7           about -- we just met recently with a  
8           group of individuals who represent the  
9           Apartment Owners Association and the  
10          housing, and there were some aspects of  
11          it -- and actually within some components  
12          of the government -- where if individuals  
13          have records, that they're not allowed to  
14          get an apartment. And the simple reality  
15          is, if you don't give a person a place to  
16          live, particularly an affordable place to  
17          live, the likelihood that they will not  
18          have the comprehensive approach to  
19          rehabilitating themselves is limited.

20                       So we will be reaching out to  
21          you. We've had a couple of meetings and  
22          we've laid out our proposal in terms of  
23          what we think should happen, actually  
24          kind of a block the box proposal where  
25          you take an application for an apartment

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           and you can't ask that person about that  
3           at your first opportunity for an  
4           application, because we know how it was  
5           with jobs. You fill it out, check the  
6           box. If that box is there, you got to  
7           tell the truth, but if the box is not  
8           there, it might actually get you a second  
9           opportunity to have a further interview.  
10          So similarly, we think that this should  
11          be the same thing, and at some point --  
12          and I want to say that the response that  
13          we got from the groups that we met with  
14          were somewhat positive. They understood  
15          the need to be supportive, ensuring that  
16          people got affordable places to live, but  
17          they had a couple of issues, like they  
18          were concerned about issues relating  
19          around pedophilia, certain types of  
20          high-profile crimes, but it was not a  
21          direct, no, we're not interested. So  
22          that is positive.

23                        So we'll look forward to  
24          working with you on that and having the  
25          ability to have your input in that very,

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 very important process.

3 I'm going to recognize

4 Councilwoman Reynolds Brown.

5 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Good

6 morning. Good morning.

7 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Good

8 morning.

9 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: First, let

10 me back up to a question I posed to the

11 Police Department regarding the reentry

12 partnerships effort. Are you familiar

13 with that at all?

14 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes, I

15 am.

16 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Can you

17 speak to that and where that effort is,

18 where it lies, where it sits in

19 government?

20 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So,

21 Councilwoman, that's a unified approach

22 for reentry in the newly established

23 Office of Reentry. We are currently --

24 there was a job announcement placed and

25 interviews are underway to have a



1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 director assigned.

3 But stepping back, as part of  
4 the Philadelphia Safer Community  
5 initiative in partnership with  
6 Commissioner Ross and Deputy Managing  
7 Director for Public Safety Vanessa  
8 Garrett Harley and myself, we're all  
9 working collectively, and that Office of  
10 Reentry now really does put us in a  
11 position that for so many years we  
12 operated in silos. That one department  
13 was to shoulder all the responsibility.  
14 That's not the best approach.

15 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Agreed.

16 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: And so  
17 this approach now takes into account  
18 engagement across systems and then  
19 linking people with resources and  
20 services. And I do want to commend City  
21 Council for taking that heavy lift as we  
22 did with the Fair Chance Hiring. Now  
23 it's Fair Chance Housing, because we know  
24 people were marginalized and they were --  
25 that was a life sentence. They could

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           never have a safe place to live. And so  
3           what this Office of Reentry will do, it  
4           will work at the highest level across all  
5           systems, pulling together resources for a  
6           unified approach versus the siloed  
7           approach.

8                        COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Kudos for  
9           what's called coordination when you have  
10          multiple systems serving the same  
11          individual. And even during the Street  
12          Administration, there was a lot of  
13          unhappiness of members of Council,  
14          because it was clear that systems were  
15          not coordinating while focused on the  
16          same family. So there's been progress,  
17          and that's huge. So I commend you and  
18          your team for that.

19                      I also want to speak to the  
20          M/W/DSBE rates and to commend you that  
21          you've exceeded goals. So if you have  
22          indeed exceeded your goals in the last  
23          two years, help us understand why for FY  
24          2020 you set a goal at 35 percent when  
25          you're in the 45 percent, 46 percent

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 range. Help me understand.

3 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: And,

4 Councilwoman, just to be blatantly honest

5 and transparent, I'm keeping it at the

6 goal of 35. We've been exceeding and

7 excelling, and as you've indicated, we've

8 been well above. Okay. We'll always go

9 over that goal of 35. That's the only

10 reason why it hasn't changed and I

11 haven't raised it.

12 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: It's

13 refreshing to see department heads, those

14 who lead major organizations, who set the

15 goals and then don't come back with

16 excuses, but exceed the goals, which

17 means you have to be intentional, because

18 it's not going to happen organically. It

19 just ain't. So hats off to you and the

20 members of your team for recognizing that

21 it matters when we put Philadelphians to

22 work, because then they can feed their

23 families. It's really that simple.

24 What strategies have you

25 implemented to attract or recruit

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 M/W/DSBEs, particularly in the area of  
3 professional services contracts?

4 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So we've  
5 been working closely with not only using  
6 the phila.gov search engine, but really  
7 putting our information out into the  
8 social media atmosphere. So we're not  
9 only relying on phila.gov, but we're  
10 using various search engines to announce  
11 opportunities. And that's to engage and  
12 make sure we're very inclusive, because  
13 often times you just get so dug into  
14 using one platform. Well, if people  
15 don't know how to navigate the City  
16 platform but we can use various search  
17 engines to announce it, we're going to  
18 attract a diverse candidate pool of  
19 applicants.

20 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: And indeed  
21 meet people where they are.

22 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Exactly.

23 COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: So I would  
24 ask that you share that strategy with  
25 some of your colleagues at your level,

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           because there are department heads who  
3           come here and have excuses for why they  
4           have not been able to achieve their  
5           goals. And I live and work in a space  
6           where excuses are the tools of  
7           incompetence, and those who use them  
8           build castles to nowhere. So thank you  
9           very, very much.

10                    COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Thank  
11           you.

12                    COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Employment  
13           levels -- the bell hasn't rung yet -- I  
14           understand that there is a 6.4 decrease  
15           in Class 100 funds primarily due to the  
16           reduction in total employees and  
17           overtime. However, in FY19, your  
18           department budgeted for 2,300 full-time  
19           positions, but only 2,100 were filled as  
20           of December of 2018. Just speak to the  
21           167 positions that are not filled and  
22           maybe the why around that. What  
23           impediments are you facing?

24                    COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So,  
25           Councilwoman, those positions came

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           primarily with the House of Corrections.  
3           And so with the closure of the House of  
4           Corrections, those are those positions.

5                        COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I see.

6                        COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So once  
7           we closed the House of Corrections, those  
8           positions went away and then the staff  
9           were redeployed to the five remaining  
10          facilities to fill vacancies.

11                      COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: I see.  
12          Okay, then. Well, you should know that  
13          some time ago, I had a meeting with the  
14          Mayor, and there's some very redundant  
15          questions that I asked in most sittings,  
16          and one of them was how well are we doing  
17          with regards to having women in position  
18          of leadership and responsibility. You  
19          were one of the first names he called.  
20          So congratulations.

21                      COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Thank  
22          you, Councilwoman.

23                      COUNCILWOMAN BROWN: Thank you,  
24          Mr. Chairman.

25                      COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2           you, Councilwoman.

3                       Councilman Taubenberger,

4           please.

5                       COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER: Thank

6           you very much.

7                       Commissioner Carney, I just

8           want to say a couple of things more than

9           any other kind of questions. I also

10          reviewed the report of PICA, and you are

11          mentioned there as far as getting

12          overtime in order, managing it well, and

13          I appreciate that very much.

14                      I also appreciate very much

15          what you're doing with reentry programs.

16          I ran for the City Council coming from

17          the world of the Chamber of Commerce, and

18          the fact that a city of our size is the

19          poorest city in America, we need jobs,

20          jobs, jobs, and more jobs. So I'm very

21          much business supportive, but I'm also

22          very supportive of ways to get people

23          employed. And what you're doing at the

24          Prisons is, I think, a great thing, and

25          wherever we can even improve that

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 further, please call on me, and I thank  
3 you for your leadership in that.

4 I also want to thank you for  
5 your leadership in having the Prisons  
6 involved in the community. I attended a  
7 number of parades where your color guard  
8 is prominently featured. I think that's  
9 important to show the community that  
10 you're also part of the community and you  
11 celebrate along with us, particularly  
12 certain holidays or ethnic festivals, and  
13 I think it means a lot to everybody. So  
14 I thank you very much, and that's really  
15 all my comment for you.

16 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Thank  
17 you, Councilman.

18 COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:  
19 Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

20 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank  
21 you, Councilman.

22 Councilman Jones.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good  
24 afternoon. How are you? Welcome back.  
25 All of the accolades that were given,



1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 just ditto me.

3 I've been up on State Road many  
4 times and seen the balance that you have  
5 to maintain of being a corrections  
6 facility, but also a life-preparing  
7 facility to entering back into the real  
8 world and as a productive member of a  
9 community. So I applaud you like they  
10 did.

11 A couple of questions by way  
12 of -- give me a sense. Seven prisons,  
13 one closed, House of Correction. What is  
14 the capital plan for the complex, if you  
15 would? And rumor on the street is that  
16 we may be getting a CTE facility up  
17 there. Is that true?

18 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So we had  
19 six major operating facilities. With the  
20 closure of House of Corrections, that  
21 leaves us with five major operating  
22 facilities. We are sitting on a 25-acre  
23 footprint in the Greater Northeast.

24 We have commissioned a space  
25 and planning study that I expect to be

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           completed at the end of June of this  
3           year, and we will have more information.  
4           One of the key points is to make sure  
5           that we were thoughtful and diligent in  
6           really doing a thorough assessment, and  
7           that analysis will be published at the  
8           end of June and then will be released.

9                       Now, the rumor -- it's a lot of  
10           rumors, and a lot of people are speaking  
11           on behalf of the Prison, but no one has  
12           consulted the Commissioner. It's very  
13           interesting. People are --

14                      COUNCILMAN JONES: So you  
15           weren't involved in the rumors?

16                      COMMISSIONER CARNEY: No, sir.  
17           I don't spread rumors. I don't entertain  
18           them, but I engage in the facts, just the  
19           facts. And so that factual report and  
20           analysis I anticipate will be provided at  
21           the end of June, and that's really what I  
22           want.

23                      I know a lot of folks are  
24           re-imagining what the Prisons will be and  
25           what they hope to be, but I believe as

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           the Commissioner, no one has consulted  
3           me, in my recollection, but I'm certainly  
4           open to making and re-imagining Prisons,  
5           and that's coupled with services and  
6           resources to better prepare folks for  
7           reentry. So it's a delicate balance.  
8           Yes, it is corrections, but, again, we're  
9           dealing with human beings, and we want to  
10          make sure we have the best thorough  
11          assessment.

12                    COUNCILMAN JONES: So  
13           hypothetically from your professional  
14           assessment, which I think is better than  
15           most of us who might dream, you have the  
16           reality of making it so. If you had to  
17           think of maybe three CTE programs that  
18           could work within an average stay of six  
19           to 18 months, I would guess is your  
20           timeframe, have you given thought -- and  
21           it's okay if you haven't -- have you  
22           given thought to some programs that you'd  
23           like to see at the facility that a person  
24           who happens to be spending time up there  
25           could take advantage of and maybe come

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 away with a useful skill and also a work  
3 certificate to obtain?

4 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: So we've  
5 given careful consideration. We do have  
6 a CTE program that was funded by a grant  
7 with the School District of Philadelphia,  
8 and that's our CTE program. So we've  
9 implemented that with the Pennypack House  
10 School, and there's a small population at  
11 CFCF. So there's room to explore  
12 expansion of that program. Also  
13 exploring the building trades. So in  
14 partnership with JEVS, if we re-imagine  
15 space, could we then partner with various  
16 unions to provide that type of  
17 construction work.

18 Optics, cable optics, is  
19 another one that we could -- really that  
20 I've given thought about how would we  
21 deliver that in a correctional  
22 environment.

23 COUNCILMAN JONES: I'm sorry.  
24 Cable optics?

25 COMMISSIONER CARNEY:

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 Fiberoptics.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: Fiberoptics,  
4 okay.

5 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: And then  
6 there's CDL. And CDL, yes, there's  
7 simulator programs out there. They are  
8 very costly, but during this process  
9 where we're getting a thorough  
10 assessment, that's my wish list to really  
11 re-imagine what we could do behind the  
12 walls.

13 COUNCILMAN JONES: So on the  
14 record I'm going to ask you to give us  
15 those ideas so that I can share it with  
16 the other rumor people that might be  
17 evolving around you so that at least we  
18 know what you want.

19 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Thank  
20 you, Councilman.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: What you  
22 think could work.

23 Now, one that you didn't  
24 mention, which many people in this  
25 building take advantage of, is the

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           furniture manufacturing piece. My desk,  
3           my conference table, my tree for my coats  
4           were all made by members that were up on  
5           State Road. So is that something you  
6           might want to include in that?

7                         COMMISSIONER CARNEY: We can  
8           expand certainly with the services that  
9           we do provide. It's a valuable resource.  
10          It's a great skill set to attain while  
11          you're there, and that's certainly on the  
12          table.

13                        Now, frankly speaking, I took  
14          it for granted, because I know the great  
15          work that they do. I was putting my wish  
16          list for the new things, but certainly we  
17          can expand that program.

18                        COUNCILMAN JONES: So you also  
19          have the catering --

20                        COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes.

21                        COUNCILMAN JONES: -- that you  
22          guys do, and I want to put that on the  
23          record. All of those skills translate  
24          into the reentry world that people can  
25          get a certificate. You can get a

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 SafeServ certificate. You can learn some  
3 of the things with cable optics that  
4 might get you an entry-level job --

5 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes.

6 COUNCILMAN JONES: -- when you  
7 are released.

8 So I would challenge your think  
9 tank to come up with maybe not more than  
10 ten, because we're not going to do more  
11 than ten, but your top ten in maybe  
12 descending order. Say if I had one trade  
13 that I want to give the mass population,  
14 this would be it. And if you can do  
15 that, we can share that and try to kind  
16 of coordinate ideas.

17 By way of capital, we talked  
18 about the Capital Plan, and you haven't  
19 gotten that, so you're going to give us  
20 that at some date in the future?

21 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Yes.

22 COUNCILMAN JONES:  
23 Programmatic, as you reduce population,  
24 your personnel, are you retraining them  
25 with other skills or are you through

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           attrition letting the workforce contract?  
3           What is your game plan? If we're having  
4           less inmates, how are you going to retool  
5           your staff?

6                         COMMISSIONER CARNEY: I'm glad  
7           you asked. So over the -- since  
8           September of 2018, we implemented crisis  
9           intervention training. We were always  
10          understaffed and outpaced through the  
11          population. So now that the population  
12          has been reduced by 43 percent, it gives  
13          us an opportunity to step back and do  
14          viable training, not just safety care and  
15          control, but now doing more thoughtful,  
16          evidence-based training. Crisis  
17          intervention training in a correctional  
18          environment looks different than other  
19          departments. And so someone not  
20          following an order is not simply they're  
21          not following. Is it that they don't  
22          have the cognitive ability, there's some  
23          impairment, behavioral health, physical  
24          health? So I'm pleased to say we have  
25          our third cohort of staff,



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           multi-disciplinary team, that have been  
3           trained in CIT. They receive a pin. Not  
4           everyone can respond, and those staff are  
5           specifically called to de-escalate and  
6           assess the situation, thus reducing use  
7           of forces.

8                   COUNCILMAN JONES: So I'm going  
9           to yield.

10                   COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: There's  
11           no one to yield to, if you want to  
12           continue.

13                   COUNCILMAN JONES: I would.

14                   COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I thought  
15           you might. That's why I mentioned it.

16                   COUNCILMAN JONES: I'm like  
17           Pavlov, once I hear that bell, paws  
18           start.

19                   COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Okay. If  
20           you say so.

21                   COUNCILMAN JONES: Yeah. So  
22           continue on and then --

23                   COMMISSIONER CARNEY: And so we  
24           also have implemented since last year the  
25           performance excellence training, which is

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           for every correctional or  
3           multi-disciplinary supervisor at the  
4           Department to do more coaching and use  
5           real-life scenarios, so where we can  
6           coach folks for them to gain skill sets,  
7           interact better between labor and  
8           management. That's also underway.

9                         Another proud piece we're  
10           really taking hold of is our MAT program,  
11           our Medication-Assisted Treatment  
12           program. It takes correctional officers,  
13           in addition to our mental health and  
14           physical healthcare providers, to make  
15           services run. It's incumbent upon us  
16           that as we're rolling out initiatives and  
17           new programs, that the uniform staff have  
18           just as much information as possible,  
19           because it really is reshaping  
20           corrections. It's not punitive. It's  
21           very therapeutic, coupled with safety and  
22           security. And so as we deliver these  
23           programs, correctional staff are right  
24           alongside.

25                         In addition to the

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           Medication-Assisted Treatment, we also  
3           have our Time Out of Cell program.  
4           Across the country, the studies have  
5           shown keeping folks in solitary  
6           confinement is the wrong thing to do.  
7           It's been learned much too late. And so  
8           we're at the forefront of that, but also  
9           engaging and educating staff why you  
10          bring people out of the cell. It's not  
11          rewarding them for bad behavior, but it's  
12          really giving them the tools now to  
13          engage with that population and help  
14          people transition that do pose a viable  
15          threat to safety and security of  
16          themselves and other inmates. But now  
17          it's a different linkage, where now  
18          you're educating and giving the uniform  
19          staff the tools that they need to  
20          understand.

21                   For so long, corrections has  
22                   been broken up into two cohorts, civilian  
23                   and uniform, and that's an old siloed  
24                   approach. Now it's a holistic approach.  
25                   This is why we're doing what we're doing.

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 And that benefit translates into  
3 transferable skills beyond the workplace  
4 in our own communities and in our own  
5 families. You can use these same skill  
6 sets to de-escalate and assess a  
7 situation before you go zero to 60 in  
8 your response.

9 COUNCILMAN JONES: Yeah. I had  
10 to learn that with my kids. Don't laugh.  
11 Don't encourage me.

12 So what I would ask, with the  
13 population decrease, have we seen  
14 corresponding stats related to maybe  
15 assaults going down or assaults against  
16 correction officers going down? So what  
17 has been the unintended consequence of  
18 that population decrease?

19 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CLARK:  
20 Good morning, Councilman.

21 COUNCILMAN JONES: Good  
22 morning.

23 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CLARK: I  
24 will not say that --

25 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I'm

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 sorry. Did you state your name for the  
3 record earlier?

4 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CLARK: I'm  
5 sorry. Terence Clark, Deputy  
6 Commissioner.

7 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank  
8 you.

9 DEPUTY COMMISSIONER CLARK: I  
10 will not say that we've seen a decrease  
11 in the incidents, as most of the  
12 reduction in the population have been  
13 community custody-level individuals, who  
14 are not the ones who actually commit most  
15 of the assaults and against other inmates  
16 or correctional officers. We still  
17 maintain the most violent individuals  
18 still in custody. So they still have  
19 those types of problems. However, as the  
20 Commissioner did mention, with the CIT  
21 training, that's another tool for the  
22 correctional officers, and it's actually  
23 working out pretty good. It doesn't mean  
24 that we're not going to have uses of  
25 force, because we will still have it.

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2           It's not going to work every single time,  
3           but it's something that we can -- that  
4           the staff has -- the people who have had  
5           the training, they actually enjoy the  
6           opportunity to use the CIT training, and  
7           we kind of have a little blog within the  
8           Prisons where we kind of report out.

9                        I myself have been through the  
10           training. Multiple supervisors of the  
11           higher level have been through the  
12           training, because if we just train the  
13           correctional officers and their  
14           supervisors don't understand what's going  
15           on, the supervisor will walk up and just  
16           say pepper spray them when they're in the  
17           middle of trying to use the crisis  
18           intervention training. And many times  
19           basically all it is is for the  
20           correctional officer or the staff to stop  
21           and think for a minute before indulging  
22           in the use of force.

23                        Sometimes if a person is  
24           refusing to go into a cell, that's a  
25           problem, but it's not always that we have

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           to get them in the cell right at that  
3           moment. Maybe everybody else is locked  
4           in and maybe that individual has a reason  
5           that he doesn't want -- maybe his  
6           cellmate told him he was going to assault  
7           him if he came in the cell, but if you  
8           don't stop to talk to him, you'll never  
9           know that.

10                        So the reduction in the  
11           population has afforded us with  
12           opportunities for -- new opportunities  
13           for training of staff, more space for  
14           programming, and to basically to redeploy  
15           the staff in a more meaningful way to  
16           reduce our vacancies.

17                        COUNCILMAN JONES: So how do  
18           you compare in deaths while incarcerated  
19           from year to year? Is it declining?  
20           What's going on with that?

21                        COMMISSIONER CARNEY: It is  
22           declining when we compare it to the  
23           national average per 1,000 of residents.

24                        One of the things I do want to  
25           really put on the table here is staff

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           wellness. And so it's not just about the  
3           inmate population and all the programs  
4           and services that we're providing, but  
5           every program that we introduce, there's  
6           a staff wellness component to it, because  
7           working in a correctional environment can  
8           be challenging, to say the least, but  
9           when you take into account staff  
10          wellness, why are we doing what we're  
11          doing, why are we introducing all of  
12          these programs. We have one of the  
13          challenging jobs in keeping people safe  
14          and keeping them properly secured, who if  
15          they had an opportunity, they'd be gone  
16          and just, you know, walk through the  
17          gate.

18                        But one of the thing is staff  
19          wellness, and that's a by-product of  
20          giving the staff the tools to  
21          de-escalate, to engage the population,  
22          and that we can co-exist. Safety,  
23          security, staff wellness, top priorities.  
24          And that's how you run an effective,  
25          efficient correctional department.



1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 When we talk about deaths, we  
3 are low in comparison to other  
4 jurisdictions. We have implemented from  
5 lessons learned. You can't always  
6 prevent, but you can intervene. What is  
7 it that we need to look for?

8 There's this misconception that  
9 you can always recognize someone that  
10 wants to commit suicide, and that's not  
11 true, because people exhibit in very  
12 different ways. Some folks you'll see a  
13 complete change in their affect where you  
14 know if you were a jovial person but now  
15 your affect has changed. But then it's  
16 the reverse. The person was quiet. All  
17 of the sudden they're the happiest person  
18 in the world. Those are things that we  
19 look to educate staff, and that's why you  
20 have to give the correctional uniform  
21 staff those tools, because they're on  
22 those units with those folks and they'll  
23 be able to engage.

24 One death is one too many, but  
25 you're always on alert, being aware,

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           looking at changes in individuals.  
3           Uniform staff, contracted behavioral  
4           health staff, social service staff, it  
5           all has to work in unison to intervene in  
6           decreasing suicides in jail.

7                        I would strongly -- not  
8           definitively say you will eradicate it,  
9           no, because we deal with human beings and  
10          they're multi-faceted, dealing with a  
11          myriad of challenges, but it does put us  
12          in the best position to offer training so  
13          that we further decrease those numbers.

14                      COUNCILMAN JONES: One of  
15          the -- and, finally, Mr. Chairman, I'll  
16          never forget the first budget address of  
17          the Mayor, and you talked about going to  
18          school up on your facility, the high  
19          school, and how the young inmate said to  
20          him that he was finally getting geometry,  
21          understood the difference between some of  
22          the something square that they teach. I  
23          forget. But he said that was the best  
24          school he had ever attended in his life.  
25          And it's a sad statement that some of our

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           young people have to wait until they're  
3           incarcerated to receive that type of  
4           education.

5                       That's the one facility up on  
6           State Road I have not been in, and I want  
7           to take the opportunity to take a tour  
8           maybe this year over the summer, if it's  
9           still open.

10                      COMMISSIONER CARNEY:  
11           Invitation stands.

12                      COUNCILMAN JONES:  But is it  
13           still open?

14                      COMMISSIONER CARNEY:  Yes, it  
15           is open.  We do have -- that Pennypack  
16           House School graduating -- we just  
17           graduated three young men at PICC.

18                      COUNCILMAN JONES:  When is your  
19           next graduation?

20                      COMMISSIONER CARNEY:  I would  
21           have to check for that date, and I'll  
22           invite you.

23                      COUNCILMAN JONES:  Let me know.  
24           But I'd like to come up prior to that  
25           just to see how it works first.

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Okay.

3 COUNCILMAN JONES: It made an  
4 impression upon the Mayor and obviously  
5 it made an impression upon the young man  
6 that was staying there. So thank you  
7 again.

8 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

9 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank  
10 you, Councilman.

11 And thank you all. Thank you  
12 for what you do.

13 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Thank  
14 you.

15 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank you  
16 very much.

17 We're going to take a little  
18 longer break because the Fire Department,  
19 as the Police were leaving to go there,  
20 the Fire Department is there now at the  
21 Blue Flame. So we're going to break  
22 until 2:00 p.m. We will be back at 2:00  
23 p.m.

24 Commissioner, thank you. Thank  
25 you all very much.

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COMMISSIONER CARNEY: Thank  
3 you.

4 (Short recess.)

5 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good  
6 afternoon. How you doing? We're going  
7 to get started. If you can please  
8 proceed with your testimony.

9 COMMISSIONER THIEL: Thank you,  
10 sir.

11 Good afternoon, President  
12 Clarke and members of City Council. I am  
13 Adam Thiel, Fire Commissioner. Joining  
14 me today are Craig Murphy, Deputy  
15 Commissioner, and Tara Mohr, our Chief of  
16 Staff. I'm pleased to provide testimony  
17 on the Fire Department's Fiscal Year 2020  
18 Operating Budget.

19 The mission of the Philadelphia  
20 Fire Department is to serve the public by  
21 providing comprehensive all-hazard  
22 prevention, risk reduction and emergency  
23 response, and to ensure the health and  
24 safety of our members. In Fiscal Year  
25 2020, the PFD anticipates further

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           restoring and strengthening our  
3           capabilities. The Department will  
4           continue to execute nearly \$20 million in  
5           competitive federal grants that will  
6           provide incident command training,  
7           improve shipboard firefighting and water  
8           rescue capabilities, and ultimately  
9           reopen seven fire companies closed during  
10          the Recession.

11                         Also in FY 2020 we have  
12          embraced the Mayor and Council's  
13          commitment to narrowing the gap by  
14          offering EMT courses to City residents  
15          and providing participants with a gateway  
16          into our eds and meds economy.

17                         Subject to your questions, that  
18          concludes my opening statement.

19                         COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Wow,  
20          I like the summarized testimony. Thank  
21          you. Well, thank you and, again, thank  
22          you all for your service. Riveting  
23          ceremony down at the plaza.

24                         Okay. So this is a general  
25          question. PICA released its third

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           quarter City overtime update today. It  
3           states the Fire Department has increased  
4           its overtime spending by 11.5 million  
5           over the same period last year. By far,  
6           the highest increase among City  
7           departments. It appears the Department  
8           has been slow to fill vacant positions,  
9           requiring overtime to maintain minimum  
10          staffing levels and train new hires.

11                    Can you explain that to me,  
12           particularly since it appears you have  
13           around 283 vacancies.

14                    COMMISSIONER THIEL: Right.  
15           Mr. President, I think there are a lot of  
16           issues that go into filling those vacant  
17           positions. Of course, the time to train  
18           a firefighter is about nine months. So  
19           it takes nine months. We have  
20           approximately 200 firefighter cadets who  
21           are in the Training Academy right now.  
22           Our Training Academy is severely  
23           constrained by its size and our ability,  
24           basically space there. It hasn't been  
25           updated in decades. So we're actually

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           having to take those firefighter cadets  
3           to Lower Bucks County to do some of their  
4           training. As you can imagine, that  
5           causes us some logistical challenges.

6                        So it is, despite our best  
7           efforts -- and I think you can rest  
8           assure that we are training firefighter  
9           cadets and paramedics as fast as we  
10          possibly can. We are hiring paramedics  
11          now every quarter. We continue to be  
12          challenged. A number of those vacancies  
13          are paramedic vacancies. About half of  
14          those vacancies are for paramedics.  
15          We're challenged to compete in the market  
16          for paramedics. There's a state shortage  
17          of paramedics, there's a regional  
18          shortage of paramedics, and of course  
19          there's a citywide shortage of  
20          paramedics.

21                        So we're really challenged  
22          to -- and paramedics are pre-certified.  
23          So they really do have to do that  
24          essentially six months to a year  
25          depending on how they do a training



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           course on their own. One of the reasons  
3           we've embraced this idea of providing EMT  
4           training, the first reason is really just  
5           to help out with the broader workforce  
6           development initiatives, but the second  
7           reason is to help our own pipeline and  
8           create a pathway for folks to basically  
9           become EMTs and then eventually become  
10          paramedics. We think we're going to have  
11          to do some things very differently to be  
12          able to recruit, hire, and retain  
13          paramedics, and that accounts for a lot  
14          of our shortages right now.

15                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

16          Okay. So can you give me some  
17          recommendations on how we deal with this  
18          issue, understanding -- and I know we've  
19          had some prior discussions about the  
20          facility -- starting with the facility,  
21          its limitations and starting with the  
22          challenges associated with identifying  
23          candidates. What are we going to do or  
24          what would you recommend that we do in  
25          all aspects of being able to identify?

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COMMISSIONER THIEL: So I think  
3 we are doing everything that we can do  
4 within the limits of our current  
5 resources and, again, we do have --

6 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: When  
7 I say "we," I mean the collective "we."  
8 We're not asking just you.

9 COMMISSIONER THIEL: I  
10 appreciate that.

11 We're working with the  
12 Department of Public Property on the next  
13 phase of the master plan for the Fire  
14 Academy, and we think or we hope that  
15 we're going to be able to accomplish some  
16 phasing so we can move across that site  
17 in a way that's going to give us some  
18 additional capacity and let us train our  
19 own without having to go elsewhere. So  
20 that's one thing we're doing.

21 We're also continuing to work  
22 with Public Property on the site of our  
23 new Logistics Hub, which again Council  
24 supported last year. So far, we have not  
25 been able to secure a site and get that

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           project actually moving forward, but I  
3           think we're very close with a potential  
4           site, and once we have that, that will  
5           give us another place to do training and  
6           do the field training component so we can  
7           really devote the Academy entirely to  
8           training cadets, new firefighters, new  
9           paramedics, new EMTs.

10                         We're also looking at a spot  
11           elsewhere in the City. We're in the  
12           beginning of negotiations to hold these  
13           training courses for residents for EMT,  
14           and we think that will take a little bit  
15           of the pressure off of the Academy as  
16           well. But, again, that's another  
17           cooperative effort with the Department of  
18           Public Property.

19                         Our recruiting efforts for  
20           firefighters have continued unabated.  
21           Firefighter applications open on May 6th  
22           and will close on July 26th. We've had  
23           some great success with OHR now in that  
24           process. And, again, we've actually  
25           added recruitment resources to our

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           recruiting unit. We have a full-time  
3           paramedic lieutenant in our recruiting  
4           unit, a battalion chief, and a new  
5           captain position there, because while the  
6           process overall is managed under the  
7           auspices of the Civil Service Commission,  
8           by OHR, the recruitment piece is  
9           something we're putting a lot of  
10          investment into so we can at least keep  
11          our pipeline full of both firefighters  
12          where we're not having an issue -- the  
13          issue with firefighters is simply the  
14          time it takes to train somebody from  
15          start to finish to be a firefighter  
16          EMT -- remember that all our firefighters  
17          are also emergency medical technicians --  
18          and the resources that we have around  
19          that. That's also what's driving some of  
20          our overtime.

21                    The good news is, we have 200  
22          firefighter cadets. The bad news is,  
23          despite continued investment and support  
24          from Mayor and Council over the past  
25          couple of years, when we train

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           firefighter cadets, we have to bring  
3           people out of the field, pay overtime to  
4           fill their spots and minimum staffing,  
5           and again pay for them to train the  
6           cadets. So this is again going to be a  
7           little bit -- we're still going to be in  
8           this bubble until we're able to sort of  
9           catch up and get ahead of the curve.

10                         Paramedics is a little bit more  
11           intractable. It's been good that we've  
12           been able to recruit quarterly. Again,  
13           we're just having real challenges  
14           competing. And it's not so much -- if  
15           you look at it on paper, some of it is  
16           wages and hours. We're probably  
17           competitive with a lot of our peer  
18           jurisdictions in the area. The challenge  
19           is those hours during their assigned  
20           shift, our paramedics are working  
21           essentially 100 percent of the time,  
22           because our system is so busy. So the  
23           five peak time medic units that are  
24           proposed in this budget will help us  
25           change our supply and demand profile for

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           having the service out there. And,  
3           again, that, however, since EMS demand  
4           continues to rise, we're not sure that's  
5           going to meaningfully change the number  
6           of -- the amount of time that our medics  
7           are actually providing hands-on patient  
8           care.

9                         So long story short, someone  
10          who is certified as a paramedic can come  
11          work here and be working literally every  
12          minute of their 12-hour shift, without  
13          having time for a break, without having  
14          time to eat, or they can go work in one  
15          of our peer jurisdictions where they'll  
16          work essentially 25 to 50 percent of the  
17          time that they're on shift and have time  
18          to do all of those sort of normal things  
19          that people do at work.

20                        COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:  
21          Okay. So let's talk about the facility.  
22          So you have one site that you're  
23          currently -- that the City is currently  
24          under negotiations with acquiring the  
25          site. Is that my understanding?

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COMMISSIONER THIEL: Those are  
3 all, frankly, Mr. President, questions  
4 for the Department of Public Property.  
5 We work with the Department of Public  
6 Property to do that. We're sort of a  
7 tenant or a prospective tenant in some  
8 cases, and the ins and outs are really  
9 something that they do.

10 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So  
11 we need to -- okay. And I understand  
12 that. Your role is to fight fires and  
13 provide services to individuals, not to  
14 build facilities, because if that  
15 directly relates to our staffing issues,  
16 then clearly we want to figure that out.

17 In terms of the recruiting  
18 process, so you say that we're comparable  
19 in pay, I'm assuming?

20 COMMISSIONER THIEL: Well, it  
21 depends on the jurisdiction. I think the  
22 challenge is regardless of the  
23 hour-for-hour pay, the challenge is in  
24 the course of that 12-hour period of  
25 time, our paramedics are -- the term of

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 art that we have is unit hour  
3 utilization. That ranges from zero to  
4 one. One is 100 percent.

5 So the time that our paramedics  
6 are on duty, they are committed to an  
7 incident for 100 percent of the time.  
8 It's a range, but most of our units are  
9 100 percent utilized. In other  
10 jurisdictions, jurisdictions that have  
11 higher supply than demand -- so we're  
12 actually under our -- our ability to  
13 service the EMS demand every day, we  
14 don't have enough units to supply that.  
15 So that is really what creates the  
16 hundred percent utilization. If you go  
17 to jurisdiction X, they have twice as  
18 many medic units as they have incidents.  
19 So then that would be 50 percent  
20 utilization, where we're at 100, and as a  
21 result, those providers are doing other  
22 things during their time. They're doing  
23 training on duty. They're eating while  
24 they're on standby, again, just like us.  
25 They're doing physical fitness things.



1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 They're de-stressing. Again, it's a very  
3 stressful job.

4 So it's difficult for us to  
5 compete with that kind of -- so even if  
6 wages and hours are comparable, the  
7 working conditions are very different  
8 and, again, that's a testament to our EMS  
9 providers. I mean, they're the most  
10 dedicated folks in this business I've  
11 ever seen, because they are out there  
12 literally rendering care 24/7/365.

13 There's this misconception about down  
14 time, and that's just not something that  
15 is a reality for our Philadelphia  
16 paramedics. And many of our EMS units  
17 are staffed by firefighter EMTs, who are  
18 either detailed from the normal  
19 assignment or working overtime. That's  
20 the only way that we can meet the demand  
21 right now.

22 Again, we're looking at a lot  
23 of things. First and foremost, doing  
24 whatever we can to create a better  
25 pipeline here in the City. I don't think

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           when you look at the context of a  
3           statewide and a regional paramedic  
4           shortage, I still think we're going to  
5           have to think a little bit differently,  
6           so we've also invested more in our  
7           Randolph Skills Academy program, our  
8           Explorers. Another thing we're going to  
9           do with some additional space in the City  
10          is be able to hopefully expand our  
11          Explorers program and do whatever we can  
12          to kind of grow our own, first emergency  
13          medical technicians and ultimately  
14          paramedics or firefighter EMTs and  
15          firefighter paramedics. That's another  
16          thing we're looking at.

17                    We also have a program that  
18                    just started this year. It's been  
19                    something we've been working on to take  
20                    our own fire service EMTs, our  
21                    single-role EMTs, and bridge them up to  
22                    being full-fledged paramedics. Now, that  
23                    process takes 12 to 18 months, because  
24                    they're working while they're learning.  
25                    And I think, again, given additional

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           space and facilities and, frankly,  
3           additional overtime to use the  
4           instructors, it's possible we can bridge  
5           some more of our folks up, even if  
6           they're fire EMTs, to becoming  
7           paramedics, which is another thing that  
8           some of our peer jurisdictions do.

9                         So we're leaving no stone  
10           unturned. The reality is, it's a very  
11           challenging position to fill and, again,  
12           it's an absolute credit to the men and  
13           women who work in the Philadelphia Fire  
14           Department now that we're keeping those  
15           units out there rolling. When you have  
16           folks who basically are saying that  
17           there's too much overtime, that's a  
18           signal that -- because they're working so  
19           much. This is not something they're  
20           going in and sitting around, playing  
21           checkers at the firehouse. They're out  
22           there running calls 24/7/365, and it's a  
23           tougher place than anywhere else in the  
24           country that I've seen.

25                         COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: All

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           right. Okay. In the budget detail on  
3           Page 20, in your testimony there's a \$4  
4           million contract described as EMS Billing  
5           and Collections. Can you describe, one,  
6           the purpose of the contract, what  
7           percentage of EMS services are for  
8           uninsured Philadelphia citizens and how  
9           many uninsured Philadelphians are in  
10          collections for EMS services?

11                    COMMISSIONER THIEL: So,  
12          Mr. President, the contract is  
13          actually -- we outsource our billing. We  
14          bill for EMS transports, and that's  
15          outsourced to a contract or a private  
16          vendor, and they take a percentage of  
17          what they collect.

18                    Historically we've collected  
19          about 25 percent or a quarter of what we  
20          bill. The specifics for percentage of  
21          uninsured residents, we would have to get  
22          back to you with those specific data.

23                    COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So  
24          you say you collect, what, 25 percent?

25                    COMMISSIONER THIEL:

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           20-some-odd percent of what we bill,  
3           which, again, is roughly between \$40 and  
4           \$50 million. So we actually bill a lot  
5           and we collect, you know, much less than  
6           we bill. And, again, we don't -- the way  
7           that we bill is different than some  
8           creditors. It's sort of a -- it's a soft  
9           billing approach, because, again, we see  
10          our public policy direction as being a  
11          public good versus operating something as  
12          a business. So we do whatever we can in  
13          a business-like fashion. However, we're  
14          not asking people for insurance cards.  
15          We're not asking them for willingness or  
16          ability to pay when they're having a  
17          medical emergency.

18                    COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

19          Right. Okay. You have an \$8.3 million  
20          budget on the Airport as part of the  
21          Aviation Fund. Can you tell me what your  
22          relationship is with the Airport and what  
23          the Fire department's role is? I think I  
24          have a sense, but just can you give me  
25          specifics on what it is.

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COMMISSIONER THIEL: Yes, sir.

3 The Philadelphia Fire Department provides  
4 the FAA-mandated fire protection to  
5 Philadelphia International Airport. So  
6 we are the provider of the mandated fire  
7 protection to keep that airport open. If  
8 it were not for the Philadelphia  
9 firefighters who are there, the Airport  
10 would literally not operate. They would  
11 be out of compliance with FAA  
12 regulations.

13 We also -- while it's not  
14 regulated by the FAA, we also provide the  
15 service to give fire protection and  
16 emergency medical care in the terminals.  
17 And, again, that's an activity that we  
18 perform as part of an arrangement with  
19 the Airport where they cover the cost of  
20 those services out of the Aviation Fund.

21 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: So  
22 that's funded out of the Aviation.

23 COMMISSIONER THIEL: Yes, sir.

24 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Are  
25 you the sole responder for the Airport or

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 do they have -- I understand --

3 COMMISSIONER THIEL: We are the  
4 sole provider of the FAA-mandated  
5 services. We're generally the sole  
6 provider in the terminals. It is  
7 possible because of course the way that  
8 Tinicum Township has part of the airport  
9 in Cargo City, we may or may not be the  
10 only responder, although we are obviously  
11 the closest and we have the most depth of  
12 any response agency to protect the  
13 Airport.

14 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:  
15 We're better, right? I know you can't  
16 say that, but...

17 COMMISSIONER THIEL: We've had  
18 a great relationship with Chellie  
19 Cameron. We've had a great relationship  
20 with Aviation, and they're continuing to  
21 reinvest in the airport rescue and  
22 firefighting component at the Airport.

23 COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:  
24 Right. Let me ask you this. You may or  
25 may not know this. So the City of

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           Philadelphia owns the Airport. If the  
3           Airport was private, would the City of  
4           Philadelphia's Fire Department still be  
5           required as an FAA mandate or would the  
6           Airport have to have its own private --

7                        COMMISSIONER THIEL: The  
8           mandate has nothing to do with who  
9           provides the service. So for the Airport  
10          to remain open, the FAA requires a  
11          certain level of aircraft rescue and  
12          firefighting protection. Hypothetically,  
13          a private entity could choose to do that  
14          by contracting with the Philadelphia Fire  
15          Department, by creating their own fire  
16          department, by contracting with somebody  
17          else. And around the world or around the  
18          U.S., it's done in all of those different  
19          ways. Every way you could possibly  
20          imagine is a way that's done.

21                       The good thing about the way  
22          that it's done here, in places where they  
23          simply provide -- they create an entity  
24          to provide just the FAA-mandated  
25          component, as you can imagine, in a



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           worst-case scenario, the surrounding  
3           jurisdictions end up subsidizing the  
4           larger response. And really not even in  
5           the worst-case scenario. If you have any  
6           type of incident besides being on  
7           standby, then the surrounding  
8           jurisdictions will get pulled in. I  
9           mean, you can imagine the magnitude of an  
10          aircraft incident. So for us, this  
11          arrangement gives the Airport the depth  
12          of coverage, reaching all the way back  
13          into the Fire Department and the Office  
14          of Emergency Management and all the other  
15          supporting entities that are part of the  
16          broader City government.

17                    COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

18          Okay. All right. Thank you.

19                    The Chair recognizes Councilman  
20          Greenlee.

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

23                    Good afternoon, everyone. I  
24          wanted to raise one question. The  
25          Council President brought it up. I'm

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           coming at it from a slightly different  
3           angle. On the billing for emergency  
4           services, when policy was first  
5           instituted, there was concern raised that  
6           there would be certain individuals  
7           because they knew now they might have to  
8           pay, that they would be hesitant to call  
9           and maybe, well, the chest pain may be  
10          indigestion instead of a heart attack,  
11          that kind of thing. That was well before  
12          you were here, but has that been an  
13          issue? I haven't heard it raised  
14          recently. Is that still a concern out  
15          there, that there might be some residents  
16          reluctant to call for services because of  
17          the billing issue?

18                    COMMISSIONER THIEL:

19          Councilmember, while it's hard to know  
20          what's going on in everybody's mind when  
21          they make those kinds of decisions, our  
22          demand for emergency medical services  
23          continues to rise around 2 to 3 percent  
24          per year.

25                    COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: That was

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 going to be my next question.

3 COMMISSIONER THIEL: So  
4 certainly people are calling. It's a  
5 very legitimate concern, and I share it  
6 actually. Over the years, there have  
7 been these ideas that we could somehow --  
8 and I'll put this in air quotes --  
9 discourage -- or inverted commas --  
10 discourage people from calling 9-1-1, and  
11 I've been -- I have not really been on  
12 board with those efforts, because I don't  
13 want people -- we don't want people to  
14 have any reason if they feel like they're  
15 having -- remember, a heart attack can  
16 masquerade as a lot of different types of  
17 pain, so we want people to call 9-1-1 if  
18 they ever think they're having a medical  
19 emergency, certainly if they ever see any  
20 kind of injury. We don't want them to be  
21 thinking about whether or not it's a  
22 legitimate complaint and whether or not  
23 they're able to pay.

24 COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: And,  
25 again, I know it's hard to determine, as

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           you said. I was just wondering, and you  
3           kind of answered the question by saying  
4           they have increased a little bit, which I  
5           guess indicates that maybe there isn't  
6           that hesitancy.

7                         COMMISSIONER THIEL: I'm sure  
8           there are people. My sense is there are.  
9           Certainly I think our data suggests there  
10          are folks who because they're not able to  
11          access primary care because of their  
12          ability to pay or they have challenges  
13          getting the primary care, we tend to  
14          think we are seeing higher acuity  
15          patients. So remember that we are part  
16          of the broader healthcare system, so to  
17          the extent the broader healthcare system  
18          is strong, that changes our demand  
19          profile for the better. To the extent  
20          that it's not, we're sort of the safety  
21          net.

22                        I will say also as we close out  
23          Fiscal Year 2019, we have finally been  
24          able to -- again, great partnership with  
25          Budget, great partnership with

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           Philadelphia Public Health. We now have  
3           a full-time analytics shop, including an  
4           epidemiologist to look at opioid-related  
5           incidents, but also look at how that fits  
6           in the broader healthcare system. So I  
7           think we're going to be able to get some  
8           better answers to those questions over  
9           time, and we're looking forward to that.

10                   COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Great.  
11           Thanks.

12                   And as far as response time --  
13           and, again, something I haven't heard  
14           complaints about recently, so I guess  
15           that's good. But how much has that  
16           changed in your response time, up, down,  
17           whatever?

18                   COMMISSIONER THIEL: Well, our  
19           response times are still, Councilmember,  
20           not what we would want them to be, not  
21           what our goals are, and that's really a  
22           consequence of the increasing service  
23           demand and the challenges that we have  
24           adding resources. Again, keeping up with  
25           that is one of the reasons that you see

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           the proposed five peak time medic units.  
3           That will give us a total of 60 during  
4           the day, 50 at night, and that really is  
5           about -- that's all about response time.  
6           So to the extent that we have -- all  
7           other things being equal, so if demand  
8           doesn't go down, which it does not appear  
9           to be doing, we have to have additional  
10          units to supply that demand.

11                     The other thing we're doing,  
12           though, we've had some great success with  
13           alternative response units. We had a  
14           pilot program with Penn that's taken --  
15           and Councilwoman Blackwell is familiar  
16           with this. We've taken 100 transports  
17           offline thanks to that agreement with  
18           Penn. We just rolled out our second unit  
19           in the Kensington area, and in its very  
20           first day, really during the soft  
21           rollout, we took four ambulance  
22           transports that didn't happen. That  
23           leaves those units available for other  
24           calls.

25                     COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: I wasn't

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           aware of that, but obviously working with  
3           private entities helps.

4                        One last thing. You mentioned  
5           the reopening of the fire companies that  
6           closed during the Recession. Is the plan  
7           to reopen all of them or is there still  
8           some that are not or are there some that  
9           you don't see reopening for whatever  
10          reason?

11                      COMMISSIONER THIEL: The Five  
12          Year Plan contemplates reopening all  
13          seven of those companies. They're  
14          located in different neighborhoods across  
15          the City.

16                      COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Right.

17                      COMMISSIONER THIEL: The  
18          original grant that we wrote was to  
19          reopen all of those companies at one  
20          time. We're currently working with our  
21          Budget Office and FEMA to identify if  
22          there's another way to phase in those  
23          companies because of our constraints  
24          around the facilities and the apparatus  
25          to provide that. So that's an ongoing

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           negotiation with FEMA and our Budget  
3           Office.

4                        That said, roughly 125 of those  
5           200 firefighter cadets that are in the  
6           Academy now were provided through that  
7           grant. So the personnel to reopen all  
8           seven companies are actually in our  
9           Academy right now.

10                      COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Great.  
11           Okay. Thank you. And, again, I think  
12           the Fire Department does a great job.  
13           Thank you all for the work you do.

14                      COMMISSIONER THIEL: Thank you.

15                      COUNCILMAN GREENLEE: Thank  
16           you, Mr. President.

17                      COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:  
18           Thank you, Councilman.

19                      The Chair recognizes  
20           Councilwoman Blackwell.

21                      COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL: Thank  
22           you, Mr. President.

23                      I want to say thank you as  
24           well. I've been around there long enough  
25           and remember when a mentally ill young



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           lady climbed up on a roof when there was  
3           a fire and it was one of those times  
4           where we had a fire station a block away  
5           closed and she died, and some things you  
6           can't forget. So I am especially  
7           appreciative of the commitment to try to  
8           get them all open and try to do what we  
9           can always and being available for all  
10          the social service aspects of your  
11          position as well. It means everything.

12                         Thank you very much.

13                         COMMISSIONER THIEL: Thank you.

14                         COUNCILWOMAN BLACKWELL:

15          Mr. President, I'm finished.

16                         COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

17          Thank you, Councilwoman.

18                         The Chair recognizes Councilman  
19          Henon.

20                         COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you,  
21          Mr. President.

22                         Commissioner, thank you and  
23          thank you to your team for being here.  
24          Working with the Philadelphia Fire  
25          Department over the past couple of years

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           and going through the budget, I'm happy  
3           to see that the Fire Department is  
4           getting the resources that it has long  
5           waited for, and it's been a long time. I  
6           don't think we've seen an increase in the  
7           Fire budget as we've seen over the past  
8           two, two and a half years in over two  
9           decades. So it's a significant  
10          investment and priority to the City, from  
11          your submittal and the Mayor's  
12          commitment, along with Council, ensuring  
13          that our response times are cut down and  
14          minimized and people and property remain  
15          to be safe in the most efficient way. So  
16          I'm happy to hear that.

17                    Before I get into -- I have  
18                    more of my questioning today on EMS,  
19                    because I think fire, I think you got a  
20                    pretty good grapple on some of the --  
21                    with the Department and changing shifts  
22                    with EMS.

23                    Councilman Greenlee just  
24                    mentioned about, and I wasn't sure, about  
25                    opening closed firehouses or engines or

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 the brownouts. So we ended the  
3 brownouts; is that correct?

4 COMMISSIONER THIEL: Yes, sir.

5 COUNCILMAN HENON: So the  
6 brownout policy has ended, I think, in  
7 the beginning of --

8 COMMISSIONER THIEL: Actually,  
9 the administration before I arrived. So  
10 the brownout policy --

11 COUNCILMAN HENON: So in the  
12 beginning of this administration, one of  
13 the first things we did was we ended the  
14 brownouts, which unfortunately, from  
15 Councilwoman Blackwell's account, may  
16 have been a tragedy as a result of it.

17 You had mentioned that in this  
18 proposed budget, that seven houses are  
19 going to reopen. I thought it was like  
20 five, with three and two, two ladders,  
21 three houses or companies. It's a little  
22 complicated for me. I get confused. And  
23 we started the process, I thought, in  
24 February in reopening an engine or a  
25 ladder or a house or a company. Did we

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           not start the process of opening up a  
3           closed house or company?

4                        COMMISSIONER THIEL:

5           Councilman, it's a great question. The  
6           start of the process -- this sort of  
7           circles back to what President Clarke was  
8           asking. The start of the process is  
9           hiring those 135-some-odd firefighters  
10          who at the end of nine months will be  
11          able to allow us to open the first of  
12          those fire companies. So the start of  
13          the process and the start of the grant  
14          performance period was in February, and  
15          that's when they were hired and we  
16          started that cadet academy. So those  
17          firefighters will become available, new  
18          firefighters, will become available to go  
19          into our minimum staffing in the November  
20          timeframe.

21                      COUNCILMAN HENON: All 212 or a  
22          majority of them?

23                      COMMISSIONER THIEL: We need  
24          120 at minimum to reopen the seven fire  
25          companies, five engines and two ladders.

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           Keep in mind that all of our fire  
3           companies also provide emergency medical  
4           services. So all of those folks who  
5           graduate are firefighter EMTs. They're  
6           all emergency medical technicians as  
7           well. So restoring those companies,  
8           those all-hazard fire companies, gives us  
9           both fire and EMS capability. But the  
10          next step in the process is when they  
11          graduate, how are they deployed, and the  
12          phasing of that is what we're again  
13          currently discussing with FEMA and the  
14          Budget Office.

15                    COUNCILMAN HENON: So I think  
16           the Council President had mentioned about  
17           staffing, like I guess a reduction of  
18           staff. Is that because we haven't  
19           actually gone through the Academy yet or  
20           with the reduction of over 300 staff?  
21           Because I have here on the budget like  
22           neighborhood fire protection, is that --  
23           what is that?

24                    COMMISSIONER THIEL: When you  
25           see it in the budget, that means the

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           position has been added. It doesn't  
3           necessarily mean that that position is  
4           available to provide service on a minimum  
5           staffed emergency response unit.

6                        So, for instance, we have 200  
7           what would appear to be vacancies, but  
8           they're vacancies in our minimum  
9           staffing, so they're not available to  
10          staff a unit on any given day, which  
11          means we have to use overtime to fill  
12          those vacancies, but they are actually on  
13          our books and in the Academy for nine  
14          months or if they're paramedics, if we're  
15          fortunate enough to hire those  
16          paramedics --

17                      COUNCILMAN HENON: So you just  
18          get a line item for your Class 100 then,  
19          is basically what it is for personnel  
20          until they are able to fill the position  
21          upon graduating from the Academy?

22                      COMMISSIONER THIEL: Right.  
23          And that really covers us for the  
24          firefighter EMTs. The challenge we still  
25          have is in recruiting, hiring, and

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           retaining single-role paramedics. That's  
3           what the statewide shortage, regional  
4           shortage, and the discussion that we had  
5           earlier.

6                   COUNCILMAN HENON: So what is  
7           the difficulty recruiting paramedics?  
8           Are you considering -- so, one, I guess  
9           they work a lot, right, and there's a lot  
10          of overtime. And we corrected some of  
11          that with the rotations, right, when City  
12          Council -- you proposed a change in the  
13          schedule to mirror the firefighters?

14                   COMMISSIONER THIEL: Right,  
15          Councilmember. We put everybody back on  
16          the same shift schedule, which  
17          qualitatively helped -- is helping to  
18          unify the Department and hopefully helps  
19          with some of those intangible reasons  
20          that we've had challenges recruiting  
21          paramedics.

22                   At the end of the day, however,  
23          the workload profile hasn't changed, so  
24          those paramedics for their duration of  
25          their 12-hour shift, they are doing

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           hands-on patient care or in the hospital  
3           for the entire 12-hour shift, where in a  
4           lot of our peer jurisdictions, they are  
5           only doing that for four hours in a  
6           12-hour period or at most five hours in a  
7           12-hour period.

8                   COUNCILMAN HENON: What's the  
9           salary benefit package comparable to some  
10          of the out-of-county paramedics?

11                   COMMISSIONER THIEL: Well, I  
12          think if you just look at what the --  
13          and, again, everybody is hiring because  
14          there's a hiring shortage. If you look  
15          at it simply in terms of pay and  
16          benefits, we are as or more attractive on  
17          simply a pay and benefits standpoint.  
18          But you're going to come here and work  
19          and during that 12-hour shift you're  
20          going to be doing hands-on patient care,  
21          the most challenging aspect of our job,  
22          for the entire shift, where in other  
23          jurisdictions you might be doing that at  
24          most for 50 percent of your time at work.

25                   COUNCILMAN HENON: How many EMS



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           runs do we average in a year or have  
3           you --

4                        COMMISSIONER THIEL: Right now  
5           we average 700 to 800 EMS incidents every  
6           24 hours. And in the summer, actually we  
7           had 1,000 -- we'll do 1,000 EMS incidents  
8           a day, every 24 hours, over the summer.  
9           And when I say that to people who are not  
10          from -- who are either from Philadelphia  
11          or who are in the fire and EMS service  
12          and not from Philadelphia, they gasp.

13                       COUNCILMAN HENON:  
14          Understandably.

15                       And so we're having a little  
16          bit of an issue trying to recruit, but  
17          it's the first time we've had open class  
18          for paramedics in some time, is that  
19          correct, or has it just been --

20                       COMMISSIONER THIEL: No, sir.  
21          We continue. We're hoping the shift  
22          schedule change will bear fruit. We've  
23          again put a full-time paramedic  
24          lieutenant in our recruiting unit. At  
25          the end of the day, though, I mean, I

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           think our sense is until the workload  
3           meaningfully changes to be on par with  
4           some of those competitors, then I tend to  
5           think it's going to be a challenge, all  
6           other things being equal.

7                        COUNCILMAN HENON: Is the  
8           Department or the City having any  
9           discussions about a temporary lift of  
10          residency requirement for paramedics to  
11          recruit?

12                       COMMISSIONER THIEL: So as we  
13          look --

14                       COUNCILMAN HENON: Or could we?

15                       COMMISSIONER THIEL: As we look  
16          around the region, we see other agencies  
17          in the same boat that we are as far as  
18          recruiting and retaining. They're all  
19          hiring, and there is a statewide report  
20          that the Bureau of Emergency Medical  
21          Services in Harrisburg developed on the  
22          statewide shortage of paramedics.  
23          There's also a regional shortage of  
24          paramedics. So I'm not -- this isn't  
25          something that's simply confined to the

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           City and County of Philadelphia, that  
3           shortage. Again, I think our challenge  
4           is the workload, which is one of the  
5           reasons why, again, as I think the  
6           Council President said earlier,  
7           everything is connected.

8                         So the five peak time medic  
9           units that are in the budget will  
10          hopefully, provided demand doesn't rise  
11          too much, will hopefully help us start to  
12          lower that unit hour utilization. Some  
13          of our alternative response unit pilots,  
14          the two I mentioned, will hopefully start  
15          to lower that unit hour utilization, and  
16          that's really the final component that we  
17          would need to be on par with other  
18          jurisdictions.

19                        COUNCILMAN HENON: So in the  
20          vein of increased load and more houses or  
21          stations or ladders and companies coming  
22          online, do we have enough supervisors and  
23          battalion chiefs to cover the EMS  
24          incidents that we have? So if you have a  
25          deputy commissioner or a deputy chief and

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           a battalion chief that's responsible for  
3           X amount of ratio, whatever the ratios  
4           are that's required per EMS run or  
5           vehicles, I think it's -- what is it, you  
6           have to, what is it, one to seven for  
7           some sort of supervision?

8                        COMMISSIONER THIEL: Well,  
9           that's the outer limit for effective span  
10          of control in a high-risk setting.

11                      COUNCILMAN HENON: So do we  
12          have enough, does the Fire Department  
13          have enough for multiple incidents to  
14          have battalion chiefs or those types of  
15          command that they'll be able to cover the  
16          City at one time?

17                      COMMISSIONER THIEL:  
18          Councilmember, that's one I can happily  
19          say that during Fiscal Year '19, we were  
20          able to restore one division and two  
21          battalions that were also cut in years  
22          past, as well as bring online finally our  
23          assistant chiefs that were funded a  
24          couple years ago. So we now do have --  
25          we're much closer to an effective span of

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           control than we've ever been before, and  
3           we've actually needed those supervisors,  
4           those additional -- we had a four-alarm  
5           fire that many of you saw in Port  
6           Richmond, and if it were not for those  
7           additional battalion chiefs that we had  
8           on the street, we would have had to call  
9           people back using overtime to help give  
10          us the right capacity.

11                   COUNCILMAN HENON: Do we  
12          have -- how many battalion chiefs do we  
13          have on EMS, in EMS battalion chiefs?

14                   COMMISSIONER THIEL: Well, the  
15          supervisor deployment is a little bit  
16          different. So, again, part of the shift  
17          schedule change was to reunify the chains  
18          of command. So we are no longer  
19          operating under two parallel chains of  
20          command, which was very inefficient. The  
21          EMS chain of command was very  
22          underresourced. So now, again, we  
23          provide fire EMS and all the other  
24          services. So now it's one chain of  
25          command where we've added in just the

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           past year four assistant chiefs, so  
3           that's one on each platoon; four deputy  
4           chiefs, that's an additional division;  
5           and another eight battalion chiefs, which  
6           is a battalion chief on each platoon, and  
7           we also have --

8                        COUNCILMAN HENON: That's on  
9           the fire side, right?

10                       COMMISSIONER THIEL:  
11          Councilmember, that's what I'm trying to  
12          get across. We don't have sides anymore.  
13          On any given day, 25 to 50 percent of our  
14          ambulances are actually staffed by  
15          firefighter EMTs who are either detailed  
16          or working on overtime. If we have a  
17          mass casualty incident, the incident  
18          commander will be a deputy chief, period,  
19          full stop. So we do have some EMS deputy  
20          chiefs. Again, that's something we did  
21          over the past three years. We have one  
22          EMS deputy chief on each platoon to sort  
23          of manage the administrative aspects.

24                        I think the bigger question  
25          about supervisors is -- it's really

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           related to our overall footprint. As we  
3           add those seven companies, again, we feel  
4           we're ready for that with the supervisors  
5           we added last year. The challenge with  
6           adding additional EMS supervisors is,  
7           everybody we take out of a medic unit and  
8           create as an EMS supervisor means one  
9           more position that we have to fill in  
10          that medic unit to provide hands-on  
11          patient care.

12                    COUNCILMAN HENON: We're  
13           growing our EMS unit.

14                    COMMISSIONER THIEL: Well,  
15           that's what's proposed, is that we grow  
16           another five peak time units.

17                    COUNCILMAN HENON: Right. So  
18           what do we have, 55 and we're going to  
19           grow to 60?

20                    COMMISSIONER THIEL: That will  
21           bring us to 60. Again, keep in mind that  
22           what that will look like on July 1st  
23           given our continued challenges recruiting  
24           paramedics is another ten firefighter  
25           EMTs staffing those units on overtime so

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 we don't run out of medic units on that  
3 day. It's all related.

4 COUNCILMAN HENON: I just want  
5 to make sure for the record, only because  
6 I've been working a little closer with  
7 EMS, and I certainly am no means a part  
8 of your system and have the expertise. I  
9 just want to make sure that we have the  
10 proper supervisors citywide, as you call  
11 it. Maybe it's just old-school battalion  
12 chief kind of how things used to be, but  
13 when the EMS department -- when we grow  
14 up to 60 apparatus and our runs increase  
15 and we decrease the response time, that  
16 at any given time we have the proper  
17 level at the battalion level kind of  
18 supervision. And I'm not talking about  
19 even if it's adding a supervisor. I just  
20 think that the EMS part of the department  
21 that you say you're kind of merging into  
22 one has been neglected for a long time.  
23 So I'm happy that you're addressing and  
24 that the Department is focusing its  
25 priority on EMS. So that I think is



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           very, very good news. We haven't seen it  
3           in a long time. I just want to make sure  
4           that everything kind of grows together.

5                        COMMISSIONER THIEL:

6           Councilman, it's a great point, and one  
7           of the real benefits from a management  
8           standpoint of that shift schedule change  
9           is, it allows the units to be staffed and  
10          managed with a much better span of  
11          control and it allows our single-role EMS  
12          supervisors to really be focused on  
13          clinical care and clinical excellence and  
14          will help us retain the EMS license that  
15          we just had restored last year.

16                      COUNCILMAN HENON: And, again,  
17          forgive me for not being correct and  
18          knowledgeable on all the rank and the  
19          protocols, but you have deputy chiefs  
20          that have assistant chiefs or you have --  
21          you have new assistant supervisors,  
22          right?

23                      COMMISSIONER THIEL: Right.  
24          Assistant chief is the highest --

25                      COUNCILMAN HENON: On the fire

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 side, but on the EMS side, you don't,  
3 right?

4 COMMISSIONER THIEL: It's the  
5 same. It's a shift schedule change.

6 COUNCILMAN HENON: I know it's  
7 the same, but you don't have assistants,  
8 right, for people who are supervising the  
9 paramedics or EMS?

10 COMMISSIONER THIEL: The  
11 assistant chiefs supervise the entire  
12 Fire Department workforce that is on duty  
13 at any given time.

14 COUNCILMAN HENON: And that  
15 includes EMS?

16 COMMISSIONER THIEL: That  
17 includes fire and EMS providers. Again,  
18 keep in mind that what we historically  
19 have thought of as being, quote/unquote,  
20 EMS actually right now is being provided  
21 25 to 50 percent, depending on the day,  
22 by firefighter emergency medical  
23 technicians.

24 COUNCILMAN HENON: Do we have  
25 data on runs, incidents? What would you

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           describe as an incident? Just a run to a  
3           house?

4                        COMMISSIONER THIEL: That's a  
5           great point. Actually, a run is a  
6           vehicle movement. So we have more runs  
7           than incidents. An incident is actually  
8           for an EMT job what we will call a shoe  
9           run. An EMS incident is one patient, but  
10          that one incident, that one patient may  
11          generate three vehicle runs.

12                      So, for instance, we send the  
13          nearest fire engine staffed by  
14          firefighter EMTs. Then we send the  
15          nearest ambulance staffed either by a  
16          combination of a single-role paramedic or  
17          EMT and/or a firefighter EMT, and we  
18          might send the nearest EMS supervisor,  
19          who basically is by themselves in a  
20          vehicle. So that's three runs for one  
21          incident.

22                      COUNCILMAN HENON: Do we have a  
23          breakdown on how many runs to a home that  
24          led into a transport to a hospital and  
25          for those who do not?

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COMMISSIONER THIEL: We can get  
3 back to you on the percentage of  
4 incidents that generate a transport.

5 COUNCILMAN HENON: Right.  
6 Okay. That will be good.

7 So you start off talking about  
8 EMT courses to residents. I know we have  
9 partnered and it's been extremely  
10 successful as partners creating a program  
11 called Act Now, and I'm going to put it  
12 into layman's terms. Act Now is the  
13 action of somebody acting at that moment  
14 as a competent and informed good  
15 samaritan, if that's a good way to put  
16 it. That is the only way that I could  
17 describe it.

18 So we trained in partners over  
19 1,000 people in my district alone with  
20 CPR certifications. We've also to date  
21 gone into our schools with a modified  
22 version with just introductory to EMS or  
23 CPR, AED, stop the bleed, some of the  
24 community risk reduction the  
25 Department -- that you have in its

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           outreach and programs. So we're able to  
3           utilize that together. We've reached to  
4           date in 6th, 7th, and 8th graders in my  
5           district over 3,500 children, students,  
6           and also another 5,000 residents since  
7           last year just on the modified  
8           introductory course. So that's going  
9           real well.

10                        Is the EMT course to residents,  
11           is that something separate that your  
12           community risk reduction department is  
13           engaged in or is that something that  
14           we -- is that the program that we  
15           partnered with?

16                        COMMISSIONER THIEL: That's  
17           actually -- what we're talking about  
18           doing is and talking with a number of  
19           different partners about doing is a full  
20           emergency medical technician course,  
21           which generally full time takes one to  
22           two months to be a full-fledged emergency  
23           medical technician, like the EMTs that  
24           are also firefighters who are --

25                        COUNCILMAN HENON: Are they the

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 national EMT?

3 COMMISSIONER THIEL: Right.

4 There's a -- it's really a state -- it's  
5 regulated by the State Bureau of EMS, but  
6 they use the National Registry of  
7 Emergency Medical Technicians. So it is  
8 a national certification.

9 To your point, we know that's  
10 going to benefit Philadelphia, but those  
11 folks are going to end up with a  
12 credential that they can use around the  
13 country.

14 COUNCILMAN HENON: Okay. Well,  
15 we want them to stay here and try to  
16 recruit them.

17 COMMISSIONER THIEL:  
18 Absolutely. Absolutely.

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: What kind of  
20 training do we do for paramedics? I know  
21 we don't have our own paramedics school.

22 COMMISSIONER THIEL: Well, now  
23 we sort of -- again, another one of the  
24 things that we've accomplished in the  
25 past year that we worked on for a couple

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           years is, we do have an arrangement with  
3           Tower Health at Chestnut Hill Hospital  
4           where we work with them to create a  
5           bridge program from EMT to paramedic.  
6           Right now enrollment in that program is  
7           limited to our own fire service EMTs who  
8           we're bridging up to being paramedics.  
9           That's, again, a 12- to 18-month process.

10                   I actually do hope that  
11           eventually the EMT training that we're  
12           doing as part of the broader efforts to  
13           address workforce gaps in the City will  
14           get us to a place where we're able to  
15           train paramedics. Right now we only hire  
16           pre-certified paramedics. So you have to  
17           go somewhere else to get that paramedic  
18           training.

19                   COUNCILMAN HENON: What is the  
20           cost for that kind of training?

21                   COMMISSIONER THIEL: That cost  
22           varies so widely, Councilman.

23                   COUNCILMAN HENON: On the low  
24           end, \$10,000, \$12,000?

25                   COMMISSIONER THIEL: I couldn't

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           even speculate. I was trained as a  
3           paramedic at George Washington University  
4           and I can only imagine how many zeroes  
5           were after that, and there are private  
6           providers that do it something less than  
7           that.

8                    COUNCILMAN HENON: So it's  
9           expensive.

10                   COMMISSIONER THIEL: It can be  
11           expensive, yes.

12                   COUNCILMAN HENON: But it also  
13           might be a way to ensure the proper -- or  
14           the amount of recruits that we're looking  
15           for to fill the need so we can --

16                   COMMISSIONER THIEL:  
17           Councilmember, you're exactly right. In  
18           the long run, I would love for us to --  
19           and, again, we're working on the two ends  
20           of the pipeline first and then we'll  
21           build out the middle.

22                   I would love for a kid who has  
23           never thought of being in the Fire  
24           Department or being an emergency medical  
25           services provider to take one of our EMT



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           classes and then we're able to hire that  
3           person. And, again, it doesn't  
4           necessarily have to be a younger person.  
5           I mean, this is a profession that  
6           certainly there's no age limit. So  
7           somebody could become an emergency  
8           medical technician through one of our  
9           programs, and then instead of now having  
10          to hire pre-certified paramedics, we're  
11          able to take that person and move them  
12          through the full spectrum of EMS  
13          training. And actually that's what we're  
14          looking at too, whether that's through an  
15          apprenticeship type program or whatever  
16          that might be, however we can make that  
17          work. I absolutely agree with you that  
18          part of this is going to be building our  
19          own paramedics from start to finish.

20                   COUNCILMAN HENON: I think it's  
21                   a good opportunity for like workforce  
22                   training and diversity to really hire and  
23                   recruit. We're trying to recruit from  
24                   Philadelphians in all our neighborhoods  
25                   to reflect, and they may not have the

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           opportunity for a pricey school, however  
3           they do their financing, but it might be  
4           an opportunity to work four days, go to  
5           school one day, go one day two nights one  
6           day and have a rotation and then put  
7           Philadelphians -- instead of recruiting  
8           from all around where there's a shortage,  
9           we can draw from our own pool. It's just  
10          something going -- the community risk  
11          reduction part of the department and EMS,  
12          what are they tasked with now? What is  
13          their responsibility? I've worked and  
14          continue to work with them on the Act Now  
15          program. How do you see them evolving in  
16          the next couple years under your  
17          leadership or where do they fit in to the  
18          Fire Department?

19                    COMMISSIONER THIEL:

20          Councilmember, I think that's a great  
21          question. The Philadelphia Fire  
22          Department has a long history, which is a  
23          testament to my predecessors, of  
24          community risk reduction. A lot of that  
25          has been around fire prevention, and

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 we've continued that tradition. We've  
3 installed in the past 15 or 16 months,  
4 we've installed more than 25,000 smoke  
5 alarms.

6 The other aspect of community  
7 risk reduction that's salient for us --  
8 and, again, you've been talking about  
9 it -- is emergency medical services  
10 community risk reduction. So we've been  
11 doing a lot of the things that you've  
12 been talking about, whether it's CPR  
13 training. We're part of the Ready CPR  
14 Coalition here in the City with a number  
15 of other partners. We are actually  
16 staffing or operating our alternative  
17 response units out of EMS community risk  
18 reduction. We've done bicycle helmet  
19 giveaways with different partners. We've  
20 talked with a number of folks about doing  
21 some drowning prevention activities as we  
22 get into the summer months.

23 So in the long run, I think EMS  
24 community risk reduction is something we  
25 need to continue to build, and building

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           capability for us means more staff. The  
3           challenge right now is, everybody we take  
4           out of a paramedic unit in the street, we  
5           have to fill that spot with overtime with  
6           somebody who, again, probably is one of  
7           our incredibly dedicated firefighter EMTs  
8           or one of our incredibly dedicated  
9           paramedics who is picking up this  
10          overtime. But, remember, they're  
11          working. Every minute of that overtime,  
12          they're working. And if anybody is  
13          interested in doing a ride-along with any  
14          of our dedicated paramedics, we can  
15          certainly make that happen so you'll see  
16          that.

17                        But in the long run, I think we  
18          really do want to continue to invest in  
19          risk reduction. I think these  
20          alternative response units with the  
21          little bit of time we've had with them  
22          already, I think we're really seeing --  
23          saving 100 transports or 110 transports  
24          in the course of three months may not  
25          sound like a lot when we're doing a

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 couple hundred thousand.

3 COUNCILMAN HENON: With the new  
4 units?

5 COMMISSIONER THIEL: Yeah.  
6 We're offsetting some of those transports  
7 that otherwise would have used up  
8 ambulance capability.

9 COUNCILMAN HENON: I know what  
10 they are, but -- and you had mentioned  
11 it, but I'm not sure for those who are  
12 watching this hearing knows what they are  
13 and what their responsibilities are. Can  
14 you explain that?

15 COMMISSIONER THIEL: So those  
16 are the two units I mentioned earlier,  
17 the alternative response unit that we've  
18 done as a partnership with Penn that's  
19 basically taking lower acuity patients  
20 and taking care of them in a different  
21 way so we don't have to commit an  
22 ambulance to transport them.

23 The second unit is the one that  
24 I mentioned that is currently working in  
25 the Kensington area where on its first

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 day, it was able to avert four  
3 transports, and we also got somebody on  
4 the first day -- really even before the  
5 first day -- into treatment.

6 COUNCILMAN HENON: Who staffs  
7 those?

8 COMMISSIONER THIEL: Those are  
9 staffed by firefighter -- well, they're  
10 staffed by paramedics -- combination of  
11 paramedics, EMTs. And then the AR-2, the  
12 one that's working in the Kensington area  
13 as part of the Resilience Project, is  
14 actually also staffed with a nurse case  
15 manager. And I don't know what the  
16 specific job -- I'll say a social worker,  
17 for lack of a better word.

18 COUNCILMAN HENON: Exactly.  
19 That's what I want you to say. You're  
20 using I guess the best resources that you  
21 can to actually have the positive outcome  
22 of an unfortunate situation when you're  
23 responding to, I'm going to call it, an  
24 incident, right, or --

25 COMMISSIONER THIEL: Having a

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           better outcome and also making sure we're  
3           providing the right resource for that  
4           incident instead of basically everybody  
5           goes to the emergency room, which is not  
6           good for the broader healthcare system  
7           and not good for us.

8                    COUNCILMAN HENON:   Just a  
9           couple last fire questions, if I could.  
10          So two things.  One, your SOC unit  
11          command, we're increasing the personnel  
12          there, but we're decreasing what is the  
13          marine unit or boat unit?

14                   COMMISSIONER THIEL:  We're not  
15          decreasing.  I'm not sure what -- we're  
16          actually --

17                   COUNCILMAN HENON:  There are  
18          jobs eliminated from the boat.  So I  
19          wrote a letter before.  I live and I  
20          represent Engine 46, right?  So we were  
21          disappointed that the one marine unit or  
22          boat had left.  Now we're getting real  
23          high-quality type of boats.  Can you  
24          explain that and how the SOC unit -- I  
25          know that's not its only responsibility,

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           but can you explain the increase in the  
3           SOC unit and the new boats for marine  
4           deployment and response?

5                        COMMISSIONER THIEL: Right. We  
6           actually competed twice for two different  
7           federal port security grants out of the  
8           Port Security Grant program, and we're  
9           buying two additional vessels that are  
10          identical, one for our Marine Unit 1, one  
11          for our Marine Unit 2, and those will  
12          allow us to augment the capability --  
13          both of those units have circa 1948  
14          fireboat as their primary vessel. We  
15          have a newer vessel at Marine Unit 1.  
16          However, that vessel may be proven less  
17          capable than we had hoped when it was  
18          purchased years ago. So the two new  
19          vessels or fast rescue boats that we're  
20          purchasing are going to allow us to get  
21          to areas, including the area you're  
22          talking about, much faster than waiting  
23          for the large boats to work their way up  
24          the river. Because of the additional  
25          vessels and because of our continued



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           full-time staffing commitment, 24/7  
3           staffing commitment, we didn't have the  
4           right, to your earlier point, span of  
5           control for those marine units. So we  
6           have a position now to provide the right  
7           span of control for that.

8                        The other thing we're doing for  
9           the first time ever, again, thanks to the  
10          federal government and these port  
11          security grants is providing shipboard  
12          firefighter training. We do have  
13          incidents aboard ship, whether it's at  
14          the Navy Yard or elsewhere on the  
15          waterfront. We've never had folks  
16          trained to do that. That's a highly  
17          specialized and extremely dangerous type  
18          of firefighting. We've just completed  
19          the second round of that training, again,  
20          thanks to a federal port security grant.  
21          That's something the Philadelphia Fire  
22          Department has been trying to do since  
23          1976. So I'm happy that we're able to do  
24          that.

25                       I think in the long run, as we

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           look at our overall marine deployment and  
3           capability and we take non-seaworthy  
4           vessels out of service, which is the one  
5           that was at Engine 46 was not seaworthy,  
6           I think we'll continue to look at --

7                        COUNCILMAN HENON: I just want  
8           to say for the record, I think it was  
9           seaworthy, who knows nothing about boats,  
10          and I was sad to see it leave.

11                       COMMISSIONER THIEL: For a fire  
12          rescue boat --

13                       COUNCILMAN HENON: And it's not  
14          a criticism. I'm just -- it's what  
15          Engine 46 had for such a long time. The  
16          community was -- they felt a sense of  
17          comfort knowing that whatever kind of  
18          Boston Whaler or whatever boat model it  
19          was, even though it could have been a  
20          little dingy or something, it was within  
21          a half a mile from the water.

22                       COMMISSIONER THIEL: So I think  
23          that's a great point, is having something  
24          that is old does not a capability make.  
25          We also didn't necessarily have the right

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           level of training for the folks there.  
3           As we've gotten these grants, we've  
4           gotten these trainings, and we continue  
5           to look at our overall deployment, we'll  
6           have to look at where to put the current  
7           assets for marine firefighting and  
8           rescue.

9                        COUNCILMAN HENON: I'm going to  
10           put my number in for 46, if that means  
11           anything.

12                        Last, the increase, which is  
13           fantastic, of our Fire Academy. And so,  
14           I mean, I'm sure everybody is extremely  
15           happy about that, and I know we're  
16           challenged with space for the Academy and  
17           their trainings. Are we looking at more  
18           of a permanent type of -- if we're going  
19           to be recruiting over the next couple of  
20           years, what are our more permanent  
21           solutions for expanding the Academy? And  
22           I'll get to my second question after that  
23           regarding training.

24                        COMMISSIONER THIEL:  
25           Councilman, that's a great point. The

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           Academy, the current space, we can't  
3           really expand the space. There's nowhere  
4           to go. The Water Department is  
5           completely around and then the Police  
6           firing range is -- the footprint we have  
7           on Pennypack Street is the footprint  
8           we're always going to have.

9                        So the first round of our  
10           master plan that was performed actually  
11           and delivered right when I got here  
12           basically supports what we believe, which  
13           is on that site we will only ever be able  
14           to do 50 percent of the required  
15           training. That site will only  
16           accommodate that 50 percent. So the  
17           balance of the training we need to do,  
18           we're looking at other places to  
19           accomplish that. The Logistics Hub is  
20           one of those. So I think about another  
21           25 percent of the training that we need  
22           to do will be accomplished at the  
23           Logistics Hub when that's built, and then  
24           the other 25 percent we're looking at --  
25           the other way we're trying to do this is

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           to geographically distribute our training  
3           locations so we don't have to have  
4           companies going all the way up to  
5           Pennypack Street to do training. The  
6           Logistics Hub we anticipate will be more  
7           centrally located, and then we're looking  
8           for space in the southern part of the  
9           City where we can accomplish that other  
10          25 percent. And this goes right back  
11          into, again, to the Council President's  
12          point, it's all connected. We have been  
13          talking with Budget and DPP about a  
14          facility, I'll say, in the vicinity of  
15          the Navy Yard where we could have some  
16          additional support space for the southern  
17          part the City, potentially combine our  
18          marine units. Our Marine Unit 2 is  
19          actually located in a corner of the  
20          refinery and not the best circumstances.  
21          And also get that other 25 percent. So  
22          that way, the companies that are further  
23          south don't have to drive all the way  
24          across the City to get their training.  
25                    So we're looking at all those

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           options right now, which goes right back  
3           into your question about the marine unit  
4           deployments, and whether or not that  
5           happens and when it happens affects the  
6           broader footprint of those resources.

7                    COUNCILMAN HENON: And the  
8           training tower at the Academy now, I know  
9           it was not in the best shape and could  
10          have been dangerous. I know L&I a few  
11          years had been out there. Has Public  
12          Property -- has there been any work  
13          focused in on that tower so we can -- is  
14          it up and running and utilized for  
15          training now or is that part of the  
16          training that we're doing in --

17                    COMMISSIONER THIEL: That's  
18          part of what we're having to do at Lower  
19          Bucks.

20                    COUNCILMAN HENON: Is there a  
21          capital investment? Do they have a  
22          number? Do they know what it will take  
23          to bring it up to code for proper  
24          training safety?

25                    COMMISSIONER THIEL: Well, the

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 number to -- so that's part of the  
3 broader Academy rebuild, and that number  
4 is --

5 COUNCILMAN HENON: And I don't  
6 want a number. It's been looked at; is  
7 that correct?

8 COMMISSIONER THIEL: It's been  
9 looked at. We've done what we can do.  
10 So the challenge is to make that existing  
11 building functional for the future, we  
12 would put more money into it than  
13 building a new one. And of course where  
14 it is now, it's not on the site, where we  
15 need to basically redo that entire site  
16 to accomplish that 50 percent of the  
17 training. So, again, it's a matter of  
18 not putting a lot of money into a  
19 building that really needs to be  
20 demolished and rebuilt elsewhere on the  
21 site as part of the broader Fire Academy  
22 master plan.

23 COUNCILMAN HENON: As long as  
24 it's in the master plan and we're working  
25 towards a resolve.

1 5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2 COMMISSIONER THIEL: I'm  
3 confident that working with Budget,  
4 working with DPP and over the next year  
5 with the planning dollars that we have  
6 available, we can come up with a way to  
7 phase across that site. So we're  
8 building some of the props that we need,  
9 including a burn building, and then  
10 working across the site to having the  
11 space that we need to maintain the right  
12 throughput of cadets, both fire and  
13 paramedic, and do all the other training  
14 that we need to do, along with the field  
15 training component to the Logistics Hub  
16 and then somewhere down south that we'll  
17 be able to create basically a sustainable  
18 workforce.

19 COUNCILMAN HENON: What's the  
20 timeline for the Logistics Hub, in a  
21 perfect world?

22 COMMISSIONER THIEL: That,  
23 Councilman, would really be a question  
24 for the Department of Public Property.

25 COUNCILMAN HENON: That will be



1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.  
2           a question for Public Property. Thank  
3           you.

4                       I have no further questions.

5                       COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

6           Thank you, Councilman.

7                       The Chair recognizes Councilman  
8           Taubenberger.

9                       COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:

10          Mr. President, thank you.

11                      Just really a comment.

12          Commissioner Thiel and your staff, thank  
13          you very much for your service. I only  
14          see great things. I had the opportunity  
15          to tour some of your facilities. I liked  
16          everything I saw. When my staff calls,  
17          your staff is always very attentive. And  
18          thank you and your officers for putting  
19          themselves on the line every single day  
20          to protect our safety and our property  
21          and our city as a whole.

22                      So thank you so much.

23                      COMMISSIONER THIEL: Thank you.

24                      COUNCILMAN TAUBENBERGER:

25          Mr. President, thank you.

1           5/1/19 - WHOLE - BILL 190152, ETC.

2                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE:

3           Thank you, Councilman.

4                   That is all the questions for  
5           today. I want to thank you very much for  
6           your testimony and, again, thank you for  
7           your service.

8                   COMMISSIONER THIEL: Thank you  
9           all for your support.

10                   COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: This  
11           Committee will stand in recess until  
12           Tuesday, May 7th, 2019 at 10:00 a.m., at  
13           which time we will reconvene in Room 400,  
14           City Hall.

15                   Thank you all very much.

16                   (Committee of the Whole  
17           adjourned at 3:21 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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