COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Room 400, City Hall
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Wednesday, April 8, 2026
10:27 a.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT KENYATTA JOHNSON
COUNCILWOMAN NINA AHMAD
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS
COUNCILWOMAN KENDRA BROOKS
COUNCILMAN MICHAEL DRISCOLL
COUNCILWOMAN JAMIE GAUTHIER
COUNCILWOMAN KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILMAN JIM HARRITY
COUNCILMAN CURTIS JONES, JR.
COUNCILWOMAN RUE LANDAU
COUNCILWOMAN QUETCY M. LOZADA
COUNCILMAN BRIAN J. O'NEILL
COUNCILMAN NICOLAS O'ROURKE
COUNCILMAN ANTHONY PHILLIPS
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA
COUNCILMAN JEFFREY YOUNG, JR.

BILLS: 260199, 260200, 260201, 260202, 260203, 260204, 260205, 260206, 260208, 260209
RESOLUTION: 260227

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT

JOHNSON: Good morning, everyone.

(Good morning.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT

JOHNSON: Good morning, everyone.

(Good morning.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT

JOHNSON: This is the public hearing and public meeting of the Committee of the Whole regarding Bill Nos. 260199, 260200, 260201, 260202, 260203, 260204, 260205, 260206, 260208, 260209 and Resolution No. 260227.

Ms. Loughead, will you please call the roll.

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Squilla.

(No response.)

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Gauthier.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

Present.

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES:

Present.

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Young.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG:

Present.

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Driscoll.

COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL:

Present.

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Lozada.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Present.

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Bass.

(No response.)

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Phillips.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

Present.

THE CLERK:

Councilmember O'Neill.

(No response.)

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Gilmore Richardson.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Present.

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Thomas.

(No response.)

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Harrity.

(No response.)

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Ahmad.

COUNCILWOMAN AHMAD: Present.

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Landau.

(No response.)

THE CLERK:

Councilmember Brooks.

(No response.)

THE CLERK:

Councilmember O'Rourke.

(No response.)

THE CLERK: Council President Johnson.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Present. A quorum of the committee is present. This hearing is now officially called to order.

Ms. Loughead, will you please read the titles of the bills and resolution.

THE CLERK: Bill No. 260199, an Ordinance adopting the Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2027.

Bill No. 260200, an Ordinance to adopt a Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Budget.

Bill No. 260201, an Ordinance to adopt a Capital Program for the six Fiscal Years, 2027-2032 inclusive.

Bill No. 260202, an Ordinance amending Chapter 19-2400 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled

"Hotel Room Rental Tax," by providing for an additional excise tax on hotel room rentals, all under certain terms and conditions.

Bill No. 260203, an Ordinance amending Subcode "A" (The Philadelphia Administrative Code) of Title 4 of The Philadelphia Code (The Building, Construction and Occupancy Code), by adding and revising Zoning Board of Adjustment fees and provisions regarding hearing scheduling, all under certain terms and conditions.

Bill No. 260204, an Ordinance amending Title 3 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Air Management Code" to modify the amounts of license and permit fees, under certain terms and conditions.

Bill No. 2602055, an Ordinance amending Section 19-1806 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Authorization of Realty Use and

Occupancy Tax," to clarify the imposition of the tax on the use or occupancy of real estate with respect to cell towers, all under certain terms and conditions.

Bill No. 260206, an Ordinance amending Chapter 6-600 of The Philadelphia Code ("Asbestos"), by adding and providing provisions related to various fees, all under certain terms and conditions.

Bill No. 260208, an Ordinance amending Chapter 19-1800 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "School Tax Authorization," to a add a new Section 19-1808, entitled "Authorization of Rideshare Use Tax," to authorize the Board of the School District of Philadelphia to levy a tax upon the use by a passenger of a transportation network company for a prearranged ride that originates in Philadelphia; all under certain

terms and conditions.

Bill No. 260209, an Ordinance amending Title 19 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Finances, Taxes and Collections," to add a new Chapter 19-4800, entitled "Retail Delivery Tax," to establish a tax on orders for the delivery in Philadelphia of retail consumer and other tangible goods, all under certain terms and conditions.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much. Today we will hold the public hearing of the Committee of the Whole to consider the bills read by the Clerk that constitute proposed operating and capital spending measures for Fiscal Year 2027, a Capital Program and a Forward-looking Capital Plan for Fiscal Year 2027 through Fiscal Year 2032.

This morning we have

scheduled testimony from the Department of Aviation and the Philadelphia Water Department. Ms. Loughead, will you please call the first panel to testify from the Administration.

THE CLERK: The first panel to testify from the Administration is Benjamin Jewell, Water Commissioner and Tracy Borda, Interim Chief Executive Officer for the Department of Aviation.

(Witnesses approached witness table.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Good morning. We're going to go with ladies first. And so, I'm going to ask for Tracy to just state your name for the record and please begin your testimony.

MS. BORDA: Good morning. Tracy Borda. I am the Chief Financial Officer and Interim Chief Executive Officer for the

Department of Aviation. Good morning, Council President and members of City Council. I've just introduced myself so I won't say that. As some of you know, I'm a lifelong Philadelphian and have served our city and airports for most of my career. It's an honor to be here today leading the airports during this monumental time for our city.

I'm pleased to present testimony on the Department of Aviation's Fiscal Year '27 operating budget. The City of Philadelphia Department of Aviation owns and operates Philadelphia International Airport and Northeast Philadelphia Airport. We are an enterprise fund operating efficiently with no local tax dollars, independent of the city's General Fund. Both airports are self-sustaining, earning revenue

through operations onsite.

We're on the tail-end of the busy spring break season and about to enter the busiest summer in our history. As our city's gateway, we are ready, not just to move people, but to make every interaction a reflection of Philadelphia's energy, pride and heart. As many of you are aware, federal employees at our airports have continued their hard work during the budget impasse. We applaud these dedicated employees for their service to the PHL Airport community and for doing an outstanding job keeping PHL's wait times below the national average.

Our strategic plan has guided our airport-wide preparations in advance of the exciting events of this year, some of which are already underway. Key focus areas include: Improving our

facilities through more than 500 million in upgrades at PHL. I'm confident you will be proud of the work our team has done. Elevating the guest experience by providing passengers with first-class amenities and a taste of Philadelphia.

Our concessions program has a unique, founded-in-Philly focus in order to bring local flavors, iconic brands and uniquely Philly experiences to the terminals. And finally, engaging local small businesses. Last year we completed our third PHL Concessions Academy in alignment with the Mayor's goal of creating economic opportunities for all to engage local, small businesses and prospective vendors around the ins-and-outs of operating in a unique environment like PHL.

We're also committed to

building a strong customer-focused culture. Behind the hard work of keeping both of our airports operating smoothly is the dedicated team at the Department of Aviation. The Department holds an 8% vacancy rate, one of the lowest in my history at the airport. Staffing levels have now surpassed 900 individuals in total for the first time, and we launched workforce development programs to provide training and advancement opportunities for our employees.

We're proud of the role in creating good-paying, family-sustaining jobs for the residents of Philadelphia. Over 17,000-badged employees work within the full PHL and PNE Airport community and help our team maintain an important economic asset for the region. As our team continues to grow, so is our

connectivity around the world.

Last year American Airlines started direct service from Philadelphia to Milan and Edinburgh. You can now connect directly to 17 different destinations in Europe, a number which will grow to 19 this summer when routes to Budapest and Prague commence. To support this important work, our Fiscal Year '27 budget request is $599,000,535,576, an increase of over 30 million or 5.4% over our Fiscal Year '26 estimated obligations.

This budget reflects our commitments as we focus on building for the future with modernization updates to our terminals and facilities, advancing sustainability, furthering our air service development efforts towards connecting Philadelphia with more global destinations and key markets

in South America, Africa and Asia, and continued efforts to develop a premier workforce that will lead our efforts towards future progress. Thank you for the opportunity to deliver testimony here today. I'm happy to take any questions that you may have.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much. Please state your name for the record and please begin your testimony.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: Good morning, President Johnson and members of City Council. My name is Ben Jewell. I'm Commissioner for the Philadelphia Water Department. Joining me here today are members of PWD leadership team, and I'm pleased to provide testimony on Philadelphia Water Department's Fiscal Year 2027 operating budget.

As you're aware, the Water Fund is an enterprise fund of the city and is supported by revenues generated through charges to our customers. The Water Department's operating budget is a component of the Water Fund, and it's the operating budget for which this testimony is provided. As the Commissioner, I have the honor of working beside over 2100 of the best Water professionals in the nation, including nearly 1500 members of District Council 33, nearly 500 members of District Council 47 who all worked diligently to protect the health and safety of our community. They do so by ensuring the delivery of safe, high-quality and reliable drinking water and treatment of wastewater and stormwater to protect our rivers and streams.

I'm proud to report that

the Water Department has been publicly recognized for leadership on a variety of programs during the last year including, but not limited to, successfully completing our 27th consecutive year of voluntarily complying with enhanced drinking water quality standards under the Partnership for Safe Water Program and receiving multiple awards for the completion of our Flat Rock Dam Renewal Project, which has delivered water quality and quality-of-life benefits to the Manayunk Canal.

The proposed Fiscal Year 2027 Water Fund budget totals 619.9 million, an increase of 12.4 million or 2% over the Fiscal Year 2026 estimated obligation levels. This increase is primarily due to Class 100 or personnel costs to provide for, among other things, labor rate increases, movement of

staff from capital to operating and hiring of critical positions to support operations and regulatory compliance as well as Class 300 expenses for chemicals, for the treatment of water and wastewater.

These increases under Classes 100 and 300 were partially offset by a reduction in Class 200 due to reclassification of grant funding from operating to capital. The Water Department's operating budget supports our three core services, treatment and delivery of top quality drinking water, collection and treatment of wastewater for the health and safety of our population and the environment, and management of stormwater to reduce pollution.

Proper maintenance of our massive system of infrastructure is critical. Our system includes three drinking

water treatment plants, three water pollution control plants, dozens of pumping stations, over 3000 miles of water mains, almost 4000 miles of sewers and 25,000 fire hydrants.

The Water Department must comply with existing laws and regulations set by state and federal governments, and we anticipate additional regulations in the future. Furthermore, future challenges such as climate change and (inaudible) level rise complicate planning. The department embraces integrated planning as a means of prioritizing limited funds for the most beneficial and cost-effective projects. This allows reasonable and affordable schedules for making progress towards long-term goals consistent with the department's mission and vision.

The department remains

fully committed to water affordability and access. The city has been successful in increasing enrollment in the Tiered Assistance Program or TAP, with roughly 65,000 customers now enrolled in TAP. In addition, more than 23,000 customers are enrolled in our Senior Citizen Discount Program.

In 2022, new policies were introduced that greatly reduced the number of customers eligible for payment-related water shutoffs and we are continuing to work collaboratively with the Revenue Department and the Managing Director's Office to finetune those policies and increase outreach to customers facing shutoff or who have growing debt.

To help keep debt service manageable, the department has been actively pursuing available state and federal

infrastructure, low-interest loan funding. I'm glad to report that between 2021 to December 2025, the department has applied for $1.158 billion in state and federal funding, and thus far has been approved for $1.147 billion in low-interest loans and 10.6 million in forgivable loans.

The department has also submitted $283 million in grant applications and has been awarded $120 million thus far. Furthermore, the department is prepared to submit additional applications for state and federal funding in the next few months. In closing, I'd like to thank the Philadelphia Water Department's workforce, whose efforts 24 hours a day, seven days a week keep the water running, the sewers clear and our waterways clean.

Our workforce is

dedicated to improving quality of life for everyone in the Philadelphia region and showed exceptional resilience during the extreme, prolonged cold of this past winter. PWD is consistently working hard to operate in a manner that is cost-efficient, operationally effective and thoughtful of our environment and economic impacts in the present and the future.

This budget will allow us to meet our essential charge of providing the water, wastewater and stormwater services that are the cornerstone of public health in Philadelphia and foundational to making Philadelphia the safest, cleanest, greenest, big city with economic opportunity for all. This concludes my testimony. Thank you for your time and I'm happy to answer any questions.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much. I want to start off by acknowledging the work that Tracy Borda has been doing as Interim Chief Executive Officer. I know you have been a part of the Airport operations for a significant period of time. And I'm a big fan of the Airport since I became a Councilperson.

And although I enjoy being the City Council President, over 16 other bosses that I have, as a District Councilman, I'm proud to represent the Philadelphia International Airport and also being a frequent flyer, I'm a firm believer that we continue to improve and make progress of moving the Philadelphia International Airport forward. And thank you for being part of the overall operation and being at the helm at this particular point at such a time as

this.

MS. BORDA: Thank you, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: I want to talk about the Department of Homeland Security shutdown, where they closed multiple TSA checkpoints, particularly Terminal C closing on March 12, and Terminals A West and F closing shortly after. Now, we know they are back open. Give us an idea of the operational and financial impacts that took place during those closures. We also know that the morale of TSA workers dropped during that period and how individuals resigned. Some individuals called out how those types of issues have been addressed.

MS. BORDA: Yes. Thank you for your question, Council President. Sadly, we've had to do

this twice in the last year. And I want to say that in Philadelphia we've been really fortunate compared to other parts of the country where you saw incredibly long wait times elsewhere.

Our team -- what I'll talk about first is internally as soon as we see this happening, we mobilize many of the folks you're familiar with. Shane Doud has helped lead the efforts. So kudos to that team for the --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: I want to add an additional aspect as well. We also know we have ICE working at the Philadelphia International Airport, and I have a strong immigrant population, actually that comes from Southwest Philadelphia that work at the Philadelphia International Airport. So can you also address what are we doing to

make sure individuals feel safe or the immigrant population that work at the Philadelphia International Airport and if ICE is following all protocols, but also not creating an atmosphere of intimidation, fear and confusion?

MS. BORDA: Yes, I can address that as well. But dealing specifically with TSA and the checkpoints first, I was just starting to say the team here I know had mobilized to reopen our pantry, once again which we were able to accept donations. Many of us gave from our hearts to help that.

I know both times TSA was really appreciative. They were able to take full use of the pantry that we had set up to supply, you know, fresh and dry foods for them to take. I think our relationship with TSA has been really positive.

We've had some of the lowest call-out rates that were experienced across the country, so we never saw some of the wait times that were being witnessed around the country.

And in fact, I want to say one of the highest I saw one day was maybe 50 minutes, which was long, right, than what you would expect, but clearly during that time was not nearly as long as some other places. We really were hovering for the most part around 20 minutes. It was really good. And now, our wait times are back to normal at this point with all the, as you pointed out, all the checkpoints are reopened.

We were also able to work with TSA to operationally divert the 17,000 badge holders that we have, so that's a lot of employees that have to go to work. So we were able to move them to one

specific checkpoint so that they weren't also part of the lines where passengers needed to be processed. So there was a couple of good things that many on this team behind me were able to help execute.

And with that said, we saw passengers thanking folks. We thanked them for being here. And I think all of that just lends itself to having people show up to work even in a time where they're not being paid. So that was one issue that we've worked through. And I'm hoping we don't have to do that again, but we would be prepared if we had to go there again.

Separately, with regard to your question with ICE, we recognize --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Before we get to ICE, were any financial impacts with the

closing of Terminal A-West and F and C?

MS. BORDA: Nothing material on our end to the Department of Aviation. So we did not incur -- I'm not aware of any material impacts that came to us, other than things we had to set up to close those checkpoints and possibly station folks at exit lanes and things like that. It wasn't material is what I would say.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Okay. Continue regarding the ICE operations at the Philadelphia International Airport.

MS. BORDA: So when we became notified that we were one of the airports selected that would have ICE deployed there to assist with queue management and other things just related to the passengers being backed up in many

airports, first and foremost, I had sent a letter out to all of the badge holders at the airport, so that's 17,000-plus, to just say, they're here, we're going to continue to do the job that we do every day and we're going to continue to do it really well and we're here for you.

So I heard back from quite a few folks that they were glad to have gotten something, so we were happy to get that out there. The officers that were sent to Philadelphia were, from what I understand, really well-trained officers. Our view of them in the terminals where they were being very supportive of queue management, handling some of the exit lanes, advising people -- it's called divestiture, like, you know, the folks that remind you to take off this or take the jacket off or

make sure you put your laptop in a bin. We really had no issues.

We made sure our Chief Operating Officer and others here were in the terminals pretty much full-time during that time, chatting with passengers, chatting with the agents themselves, chatting with TSA, chatting with our various vendors that work there just to make sure that everybody knew we were okay.

And right now, I mean, the good news is we're at a point where we're told that as of tomorrow we won't have any more ICE officers at the airport. They should be gone. There may be other parts of the country that are still seeing lines. We're not sure. I know the call-out rates are dropping for TSA pretty quickly. We never really suffered with a tremendous amount of call-out. We

had some, but again not compared to other parts of the country where they may still be needed. They're not needed in Philadelphia. And my understanding at this point is they'll be gone tomorrow.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: I want to clap.

(Applause.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: I want to talk about DEI, right, diversity, equity and inclusion. From my understanding, on a federal level we can no longer -- from the Philadelphia International Airport's standpoint use that type of language as well regarding our contracts and procurement; is that correct?

MS. BORDA: Well, at the federal level we still do have a DBE and an ACDBE program. The issue is people have to go through an evaluation process, which I do

have a person here who can speak to that even more --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Can we please? Because we want to still continue to make sure, even with the current climate, still making sure local businesses --

MS. BORDA: What I will point out while Deatrice comes up, I'll say this out loud, it's a part of our DNA at the airport.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you for saying that. Appreciate it. In the meanwhile, I want to give a shout-out to Shane for all his hard work and dedication and making sure the lines of communication between Council and the Airport is open. Always good to see you.

Good morning.

MS. ISAAC: Good morning. My name is Deatrice

Isaac, and I'm the Vice-President for Procurement at the Philadelphia and Northeast Airports. Question?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Good morning. Just the diversity, equity and inclusion number and I want to see how we are making sure irregardless whatever changes have taken place in terms of on a federal level and the reevaluation of individuals having a chance to participate in the procurement process, how we're still making it a priority for local, small businesses to participate, but also that process is still diverse and inclusive in terms of people of color and women?

MS. ISAAC: So as Tracy began to say, we are going through a reevaluation process, which is going on throughout the country for all UCPs. The DBE, ACDBE program is still going on, but people have

to go through a reevaluation. They have to resubmit where it's race and gender-neutral to prove that they are disadvantaged.

We are reviewing those applications as quickly as we can. The Philadelphia International Airport had about 100 applications that we had to re-evaluate. We're in that process. We held outreach events to help them understand the process because a lot of people were obviously confused about what was going on, what was needed. So we held three virtual sessions to help move them through, help them to understand what was needed. And again, we're re-evaluating currently.

Until that reevaluation process is concluded for everyone in the state, we are unable to assign goals to any contracts. So it's not just the airport. Every

certifying agency in the state has to go through the same process. I will say that in spite of us not having an up-and-running DBE program where we're able to assign goals, our intent at the Airport is the same, right. Economic opportunity for all means everyone. And so, we are looking for opportunities to issue contracts that can be awarded to small and local firms, looking to rightsize contracts as opposed to debundling, because once you have a large contract, it's difficult to take it apart, right. But if you start it right, then you'll end right.

So our hope is that we're able to look at contracts where we can rightsize and find those smaller contracts for firms to be able to participate.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Has this had an impact on

the highly successful business economic opportunity forum that you host every year? You have hundreds of businesses that show up that want to do business with the airport. I've known we had a track record of actually hitting some specific targets and goals. I call it being a model for other city agencies as well to show that we can get it done. Have these new changes impacted that process and those particular businesses that normally participate?

MS. ISAAC: So right now, we can't really see the impact. We know that the economic opportunity forum or business opportunity forum as we call it every year, it's still planned for this year. We think that we have good content that we'll be able to present. Hopefully, we'll be able to talk about the federal SBE

program at that time. We know that local programs are supposed to be coming up as well. So there are still things happening in spite of us not having that DBE, ACDBE opportunity right now.

So where we are at the airport is looking at our federal small business program and trying to ramp that up, hoping to increase the pool of vendors within that space so that we'll be able to have SBE goals assigned while we're not able to assign the DBE goals. We still have contracts where we have firms that are subcontracted and that participation is still going on, on most of those contracts, not all. We can't say all because some people are pulling back. But for the most part, our vendors are still utilizing those subcontractors and we're encouraging them to do so.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

Chair recognizes Councilmember Majority Leader Katherine Gilmore Richardson, then Councilmember Dr. Anthony Phillips, then Councilmember Curtis Jones, Jr.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you so much, Council President.

And thank you to each of you for your presentations. As always, wanted to quickly begin with our thank-yous starting with the Airport. Tracy Borda, thank you for your years of service and congratulations on your new leadership role. We know that you are built for this task as you are a Girls' High girl. Shane Doud -- I had to add that in, Prez. Shane Dowd, thank you so much for all of your help and hard work on behalf

of the entire airport team. You are just amazing and really help us to stay connected to the work at the airport, and particularly for the TSA workers over the last several months. It's been an honor to work with you.

Delicsha Wilds, thank you for your continued commitment. We appreciate the presentations, the information, everything that you do on our behalf. And Api, thank you so much for your continued sustainability work at the airport.

And for the Water Department, to our new Commissioner, Commissioner Jewell, thank you for your help on the emergency complex cases that we have. Even as late as this Friday, thank you for all of your help. Sarah Stevenson, Laura Copeland, Glenn Abrams, Brendan Riley,

Dave -- I'm messing this up, he helped us on the Main Street -- Pandya. Thank you for all your help with the water leak for those businesses over that eight-month period. It was a very complex issue and we appreciate all the work that you all did on that particular constituent case that was very hard and complex.

And I also have to thank Michelle and Renee from the Water Department team. We truly appreciate them being at every single community event. Even as late as this Saturday, we were at an event together. So thank you all very much for being in the community and being willing to just be there to help our community.

I wanted to start very quickly with the airport. And so, Prez talked about our local vendors and we appreciate you all

continuing to prioritize our local businesses here in the city for the concessions program for the airport. And you have referenced in your testimony the PHL Concessions Academy as well as the work that you all are doing to ensure that we're having local vendors open up shops across terminals in the airport.

We know and recognize that things in this space are everchanging, as you discussed with Council President. So what are you all doing from the perspective of helping and assisting our local businesses to stay at the airport, right? That's one thing to get there, but to stay.

And then also, to identify additional new local vendor opportunities. And secondly for the Airport -- and I'll come back for Water -- I recall that the

Department of Aviation came before Council about a solar farm proposal, and I think it was at PNE, not for PHL. And so, if you could just give us an update on that project, if it's been completed and has it helped you all to achieve your carbon neutrality goals?

MS. BORDA: Thank you for all those questions and thank you for the thank-yous. So first, we're going to talk about the concessions that you just asked about. Again, we have a great team behind me who handles a lot of the outreach. We do outreach pretty much year-round. Many of you are familiar with our Business Opportunity Forum, which is kind of the mega event we do in the fall. And many of you have attended and/or possibly spoken at it, where we try to make sure that as many

vendors can attend so people can partner on contracts.

They get to hear about our upcoming opportunities. They get to learn more about how to do business at the airport. We have a lot of smaller outreach programs we do where it might be a very specific topic. Deatrice, who was up here just a little while ago, her team really spearheads that outreach. So it can be as little as meeting with just a handful of vendors or a large room of vendors where they're speaking about something specific.

It could be something on sustainability. It could be something on concessions. It could be all different types of things. Because again, we're a city within a city. So everything you need at the city level, we kind of need at our level, at a smaller level at

the airport. If you need anything more specific than that, let me know and clearly we'll provide information.

I do want to get to your question though about the solar farm.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Yes.

MS. BORDA: So if I could pivot there real quick. And I'll have Api come up and speak a little bit to it. But, yes, we have achieved our Level 3 accreditation at PNE and PHL, and solar farm is part of that.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: That's awesome. So while Api is coming up, I cannot neglect to say thank you to Deatrice. Deatrice, I see you there. Thank you. I didn't see you behind the chair initially, but I do see you there. Thank you so

much for all of your hard work on our behalf. We appreciate you.

MS. APPULINGAM: Good morning. My name is Api Appulingam. I'm the Chief Development Officer for the Department of Aviation. Great question, Councilmember. And, yes, we released an RFP for the solar farm at Northeast Philadelphia Airport last November, and we had a handful of vendors that proposed and we selected a company called Reactivate LLC. They're going to be entering into a Power Purchase Agreement with us to build, operate and maintain a 1.5 megawatt solar farm in a 10-acre space at Northeast Philadelphia Airport.

So we just selected that vendor. There's a few months still of work to do with them to negotiate those terms. Our goal is to begin construction January of

2027 and complete the construction by December of 2027 so that we can actually get some tax credits along with that or the vendor will get some tax credits. And as a result of building the solar farm, it's going to help us move forward with our carbon accreditation goals.

And As Tracy mentioned, we did go up a level for Northeast Philadelphia Airport to Level 3, joining PHL at Level 3, the only two airports in the state of Pennsylvania to achieve Level 3, our airport carbon accreditation which is optimization, which is where we're starting to look at Scope 3 emissions. I'm incredibly proud of the DOA team and our commitment to sustainability in meeting the city's goals.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Thank you. Well, thank you very much for your work.

I heard the bell and I'll honor the clock and I'll come back on the second round.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you for honoring the clock, Majority Leader.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Thank you, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Such a strong example of leadership.

I have a question in the spirit of my Chairperson of Public Safety, Member Jones. What are we doing as it relates to the 250th celebration as it relates to heightened security? We know as a country we're in war, right. And it was a specific statement saying we're going to target key places in America, right. What is our preparation plan to make sure our customers, workers and overall

Philadelphia International Airport is safe during this time?

MS. BORDA: Well, I'll start off by -- that's a great question, and I'll start off by saying just in general whether it's this time or other times, in order to get a badge at the airport, we all go through safety training, and we're all aware that our facilities care workers, who are sometimes a line of first defense, right, they're out there walking the terminals, cleaning the terminals and they keep their eyes and ears well-trained to notice anything abnormal, right, and how to report it very quickly.

Our Chief Operating Officer who is here today, Greg Phillips, and his team from operations, safety is their number one priority at the airport. So again, it's ingrained in us.

Because being an airport, that has to be what we think about. So as we prepare for this year and expecting the highest levels of traffic --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Yeah. I wanted to push a little more because you said we do this regardless. However, this year, especially with FIFA, more than anything else folks will be coming internationally to our country and will be coming through that airport.

MS. BORDA: So our operations folks, led by Greg, they --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Is Greg here?

MS. BORDA: Greg is here.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Can Greg come on up and talk about are we working with FBI,

DEA?

MS. BORDA: I'll keep talking while he's on his way up. But I mean, their job is to be part of the FIFA operations plan. So there's work being done on that end. Of course, we also have the Philadelphia Police Department and the Fire Department assigned down at the airport that work there and they're a part of that plan as well. So, yeah, we're on it.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: From the Administration's side, what's the role of FEMA and the Managing Director in terms of the operations and partnership with the leadership team at the Philadelphia International Airport to just monitor operations, just in general? And are we on high alert, moderate alert or low alert?

MS. BORDA: I'd have to get back to you on that. I don't

know that we're on a different alert, but we are definitely all being trained and working closely with city officials as well as we prepare for a wonderful thing of an onslaught of people. And hopefully everybody is here obviously safe and secure. That's our main goal.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Greg, can I put you on the spot, sir, to get your perspective?

MR. PHILLIPS: Thank you, Council President. Greg Phillips, Chief Operating Officer for the Department of Aviation. What an important question and something we absolutely view as critical as we prepare for these summer events, and particularly for FIFA when we welcome the world here.

So we're working closely with the police department to

ensure that we are training, that we are preparing and that we will be prepared for these events here. We recently, within the last month, held an active shooter drill. We put together an operational plan that addresses security for the airport and we will continue to prepare, working with TSA, working with the Customs and Border Protection Service, CBP, and also with our own operations department and the police department to ensure that we're providing a safe facility for these operations. We recognize the potential for bad actors during this period and we want to be prepared.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Do we have a plan to educate staff to pay attention, is there a focus around human trafficking, especially during this time?

MR. PHILLIPS: So we recently -- and, Tracy, I don't know if you want to speak to this here. But we recently initiated a human trafficking education program, and that is an ongoing effort that we will continue to highlight. We highlight it on our website. We highlight it across and through the airport, and we will continue to recognize that as an important effort as we move towards summer events and really beyond that at all times.

MS. BORDA: I will add, again, when we go for badging, we go through human trafficking training, so again all 17,000-plus badge holders understand what to look for and how to act upon that if something is noticed. We have signage everywhere throughout our airport so that we're pretty much alerted to that just being an

airport. And again, I would say to your point, on a higher alert now that we know we have a ton of traffic coming our way this summer.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: I want to thank Member Dr. Nina Ahmad for her leadership on it. Brief point of information.

COUNCILWOMAN AHMAD: Thank you, Council President, for highlighting this. And I want to thank the Airport for -- I was at the press conference when you announced this campaign. And as you know, our campaign here in the city is just going to be rolled out. We have awarded the RFP to the three firms that are going to work on it, and we're connecting you to them to make sure we are all consistent in the messaging across the City of Philadelphia, including for those who are visiting.

So I just wanted to say

that that is ongoing. And I thank the Council President for making sure I got that allocation.

MS. BORDA: Thank you for your support at the airport. Very much appreciated.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Critically important issues.

Chair recognizes Councilmember Dr. Anthony Phillips and Councilmember Curtis Jones.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank you, Council President.

Madam Mayor, if you're listening, really appreciate the work that you're doing. I really want to help you with the support that's needed to help the Water Department's leadership continue to grow.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Member Phillips, could you speak into the microphone?

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

Oh, can you hear me now? All right.

Commissioner, I've met with your team to address ongoing concerns around customer service and communication with our neighbors. And I want to be direct about what we're seeing in the 9th District and also what I'm hearing from colleagues across the city. And just the last four months, I can point to at least two serious breakdowns and there are more. One on Rodney and Wister in West Oak Lane. There was a sinkhole that developed in December. The department was aware. Yet it was not addressed until weeks later in January. During that time, residents had their water shut off without notice, families were left scrambling rely to on our relatives and my office and community

partners just to access basic water.

Then on Michener Avenue, we saw another case of a broken lateral that limited communication, and there was limited communication from the department. And again, water service disrupted. And despite all of this, the neighbors are still receiving bills. The question that I have is, when you have -- and you can take note of this because I'm about to give another one. When you have a water main break, why isn't there a credit that can be given back to the neighbors for their disruption for weeks on when it comes to water?

And then also another question that I have is that we have a public affairs team with the Philadelphia Water Department, but I don't see anything reflected in

this budget that says we're going to do a couple things, we're going to go walk neighborhoods and help people understand what they're responsible for, from laterals and so forth, and maybe they can get insurance on this if something happens. And then number two, with the public affairs team we don't see a sense of understanding like let's Councilmembers know on a weekly basis when disruptions are happening in the neighborhood.

I was just driving by Sedgwick and Rodney today, didn't know anything about this whole Water Department construction that was taking place. A lot of the public affairs team members should be there to make sure that individuals understand exactly what is going on for the timeline for water disputes.

Also, I appreciate the

groundwork ladened by this body and then former Councilmember Parker, including efforts to connect residents with American Water Resources. But let's be honest, that's not enough if people are still left paying out of their pockets for issues they did not cause or being billed during periods when they didn't even have access to water.

Now, I want to be clear. I appreciate the hard-working men and women of D.C. 33 and 47. I know you stepped into this role, Commissioner, but leadership is really important during moments like this. So given the reality of our agent infrastructure, I just have the first couple questions. Can you provide clear, proactive communication when service disruptions occur? Are you working on addressing that?

What are the immediate support systems, including access to water, for residents impacted by shut-offs due to emergencies like sinkholes? And most importantly, can we provide real financial relief so neighbors are not billed or burdened for circumstances completely outside of their control?

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: Thank you, Councilmember. I know we've had a couple of meetings. I appreciate the challenge and the push to move this department to do better and steps forward and really try to reach all of the Councilmembers here and all of our residents. I do think I met with Councilmember Thomas a couple of weeks ago and kind of talked about how we can help people understand right.

Government is

complicated and sometimes government is hidden, and that is fine if government is working effectively and efficiently to serve our residents. And at the times when it's not, it's incumbent upon us, it's coming upon me as a leader to set the tone for our department that is customer-focused and service-oriented.

To your points and your questions, we have done a couple things recently to try to address communications around emergency disruptions. I will note that with the Rodney and Wister situation, we were working for a prolonged period of time to try to understand exactly what the issues were there in the effort to try to prevent what happened. It was an unfortunate incident. I appreciate you being out onsite in the neighborhood talking to your

constituents at that time while our employees were working to repair that water main as quickly as possible.

And so, our standard operating procedure for water disruption is for the staff that are onsite to go door to door and knock to notify folks that water will be turned off. There are times when it cannot be avoided, and that is a part of our business. And our goals are to restore water as quickly as possible. Our service level goal in our five year plan is less than eight hours. I think we exceeded that goal this past fiscal year. But the expectation from us, from my leadership level and down is that our crews that are in the field are making notifications.

To that end, we've been working recently to update leave

behind that we also have. So first, step 1 is knock on the door and try to talk to someone. The only way you know your message is received is if you talk to a human being and they understand, you receive the message. In the event that we can't do that, which is fairly normal because we're all at work -- something happened at our house, we wouldn't be there either -- we have a leave-behind that notifies folks of what we're doing, why we're there, that it's the Water Department who's here and that we're working in the neighborhood to resolve the issue.

We very recently just went through a process of our operations team working with our public relations team to update those leave-behinds. I think I just approved the bid award for the new print for those, so we should

have updated content to deliver to our customers in the field. I have had unequivocal conversations with my field superintendents, that every time we get on the phone and they say, water main break at this location, water shut-off, my first question is did we knock on doors, did we leave them behind.

We're trying to change culture a little bit here on a customer-focused, service-oriented organization. It's going to take a little bit of time, but we are actively working to ensure that we are stepping forward in the instances when we are inconveniencing --

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Is it possible to have a dedicated phone number for water main shut-offs when they can -- or a contact person, an individual that is their friendly Water Department

representative that they can contact to get all the information necessary needed during that troubling time of a water main shut-off?

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: So in emergency instances, we have our emergency phone number 215-685-6300. It's where our call center is. It's where folks are to call when they have an issue. That is staffed with a very robust staff during the business day. It extends a little bit before, a little bit after the work day and then overnight we pivot over to our emergency support services.

Those folks have access to our operational information and so should be able to see what kind of work is happening and provide some kind of expectation. We already provide that service. I'm happy to -- and I know we're going

to meet in a couple of weeks. I'm happy to continue this conversation and figure out what more we could do. On the capital side, if we're doing planned work and there are planned shutdowns, they should have a dedicated phone number to a direct person, not our call center, that is provided well in advance of projects happening and reiterated regularly during the course of the project in order to ensure that there is a connection between someone who is physically present managing the contractors who are delivering the services for us and the customers, should they have issues.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: That's incredibly important because we have people who are unclear on the timelines. So is part of your plan to help residents be more clear on timelines whereas, yeah,

there's being work done, but you're like what work is being done, what's step 1, what's step 2, what's step 3 and 4? That's never been communicated to a lot of our residents, and they're just thinking you're not doing anything. They just see the debris and they don't see anything else happening.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: Sure. So again, differentiating a little bit between emergency work and planned work, I think on the planned work side we've done some efforts internally to try to establish real, measurable standards for when we're going to contact folks, at what phases, before construction, during construction, and we should be able to set those expectations.

We have a planned meeting with Better Services Philadelphia coming up later this

month to make sure that our practices are aligned with best practices around the city. So I think to answer your question simply, certainly for planned work we can and should be able to do that. For emergency work, it's a little more fluid because it's, like, we open up the street, we see what's there and then we have to respond in realtime. And so, our goal is really to as quickly as possible deploy folks who are prepared to do the work so that we can restore services.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: I'll have to come back for another round. But I just want to get this in for 20 seconds. If I could say, think about this as well. I just learned about a resident that's not even in our district that has a $65,000 water bill that is from a previous owner. And so, $65,000

and now it's attached to the property. We need to get to a point where we reach the person that caused it as opposed to you're putting people more in debt.

Yes, you're inheriting this property, but why should they be responsible for a $65,000 bill that a previous owner didn't do. And I still need a response on getting a credit, if I can quickly, a credit basically back for the water disruption. If they didn't have no water because of disruption, why are they still paying their water bill? So go ahead. You can answer. I'll wait for my second round after that.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: No. The Chair extends additional time to Councilmember Dr. Anthony Phillips.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: All right. Go ahead, Commissioner.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: The Chair recognizes the Water Commissioner.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: So I've got Susan Crosby, Deputy Commissioner in Revenue for Water Revenue Bureau, who can provide some context on real estate transfer and how we handle transitioning meters.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: And don't forget the credit question.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: Of course.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: That's really important.

MS. CROSBY: Good morning, Councilmember. In regards to the real estate transfers, we deal very closely with --

COUNCILMAN JONES: State your name for the record.

MS. CROSBY: My

apologies. Thank you. Susan Crosby, Deputy Revenue Commissioner for Water. We work very closely in revenue with our law department to work with the title insurance agency to educate them on how to get the total amount that is due on water bills as part of the real estate closing process.

We've actually created a special process where they can request a payoff amount that would clear any outstanding liens or court judgments associated with a project. And as part of that, we also let them know if there is an active meter reading. In many cases where you get those large bills, those surprise bills, there may not have been a meter reading for a period of time because they have not been upgraded to the new meters. We let the title insurance agents know that so that they can

make sure --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Excuse me, ma'am. Councilmember Kendra Brooks has a point of information.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: I just want to add a similar situation that I want clarity about. We had a constituent who inherited a $3,000 water bill from the builders of a brand new home. They went through the process of the department to contest the bill to try to find answers for it. And eventually, what led was that the builders ended up getting a $2,000 discount. So theirs was dismissed, but the new homeowner, a new build, had to pay $1,000 which was the portion that was left.

So I would like to understand also to Councilmember -- who decides what gets dropped off, what doesn't get dropped off, who

has to pay, who doesn't have to pay? Because I was thinking it was a one-off thing, but his situation that he mentioned is very similar to mine and the lack of communication between the two departments between all of this is concerning.

MS. CROSBY: Yes. Thank you, Councilmember. So to continue with the title insurance industry, we work very closely with them to try to let them know if there is going to be a situation where the bill might change and you might have a new meter reading that would give a new higher bill amount as part of the closing. And so, we work very closely with them to try to get these issues resolved at the closing table so that when the new owner takes possession of the property, they start with a zero bill and the prior owner pays what

they're responsible for and the new owner starts fresh.

The issue comes in is when people are not dealing with a title insurance company and they're dealing at arm's length. In those cases, we see those transfers. We do encounter many of those problems, and we work with both sides of the transaction to try to resolve the issue to determine who is responsible for that water bill.

Inevitably, the person who owns the property takes responsibility for that water bill. If that person believes that they are not responsible and it does belong to the prior owner, there are several levels of review to challenge the responsibility of that water bill. We have an account analysis unit within the Water Revenue Bureau that will review the title transfers, the

timing of the transfers and who is responsible and if an adjustment needs to be made from one account to another. There's also an informal hearing unit where they can speak to a hearing officer to determine who is responsible for that bill.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: How long does this normally take?

MS. CROSBY: The account analysis unit is usually between three to six weeks. The informal hearing is the next level. I believe we're scheduling out a month to two months for a hearing, and we hold those multiple times a week. And then the next level is with the Tax Review Board. And the Tax Review Board, I'm not certain of their scheduling, but I do know that they schedule Water hearings several times a month at both the master's level and the full Board

level. So there's a robust review process.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: So the same way that the Register of Wills Department advertises tangled titles, I believe you all should be advertising this process as well, because homeowners are buying these new properties and they're inheriting water bills of this magnitude that they're probably like, oh, well, I guess I got to figure this out, and they also don't have the support. And it'll be helpful for our Council offices to give that support.

And then also, Commissioner, if you can answer the question about the credit line?

MS. CROSBY: Just one more thing briefly, Councilmember. If there are specific situations of customers who have experienced this issue, please do let our office

know. Let me know and we will work with them to help untangle the water bill issue or help guide them through the dispute resolution process.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: No, I just think it's something that the public affairs team should be doing. I think we need a stronger leadership team that has experience with public connection and outreach. I feel like it should be reflected in this budget, someone who's going to come in and change customer service relations as a deputy that we can work with, because that's more proactive communication, including I saw reflected in the budget FY27 you're going to be doing more social media outreach about the laterals. But why don't you have a public affairs team just going door to door or making sure to tell Council

offices, every neighbor you see, let them know to be more aware about how who's responsible for what in the city of Philadelphia. But I just don't think that's happening.

But I want to know are you looking into expanding that operation and being proactive when it comes to communication about these things? And please answer the question about the credit.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: I promise I will. But on this communication question, I think the simple answer is, yes. We are here to push out an understanding of how things work into these neighborhoods. And also, I know y'all are real, trusted messengers for your constituents. And so, we also want to kind of invest in you. I know one of my Assistant Deputy Commissioners came back from a

meeting with Councilmember Bass just two weeks ago where we talked through our capital program and how it works. And she came back and was like, it was fantastic. We had a dialogue. We exchanged information. It felt like there was understanding. I had a meeting with Councilmember Thomas just a couple weeks ago, same thing.

So we are committed, one, to helping everyone in this room understand how we work. And also my hope is by kind of like solidifying those working relationships and coming to a common understanding, that we can walk out into the neighborhood with you all side-by-side, lift each other up and help make sure that our customers, your constituents, the residents of the city of Philadelphia, the friends, families and neighbors of our employees, all

understand what we do, how we do it, what kind of assistance is available, what our capital program looks like when it's coming into the neighborhood.

We heard some of this in the Streets Department budget hearing yesterday. I think we're here for it. And it might not be reflected in an increase in funding in our budget request, but it will be reflected in the actions that our employees are taking as we try to figure out how we can work together to try to reach those folks in the neighborhood.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: And that's why I'm relatively -- the $12.3 million that's been reflected as an increase for funding, I'm all for it going to our D.C. 33 and D.C. 47 workers Class 100. That needs to happen, if not more. However, that Class

300 and Class 200, I think that needs to be reconsidered because we have other departments in the City of Philadelphia that are doing a great job or trying to do a good job but they are lacking. They're being sustained through the typical funding they normally always get, including our Parks & Rec, including our Libraries. They need that boost. So even if it's that 12, you take 5 and you put it somewhere else.

We need to do something and your projects need to wait until you get customer service together, you know what I mean. I need to have a better understanding of why that 300 is so needed as well? So that's another question.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: So we're an enterprise fund fee-for-service, right. So the exchange of money across the General Fund

boundaries is not something that drives our services. I did want to get back to your question about credits just because you want an answer and that's why I'm here.

So our bills are based upon a rate structure. That rate structure is based upon findings of the Water and Sewer Rate Board, and it fits into a larger legal context that governs how we collect the fees for the services that we provide. In an instance where -- so they comprise of a couple of different components, but one of them is the amount of water that you're using. And so, during water outage obviously the water flowing stops. And so, there is a nominal savings there, not the kind of savings we want.

But the reality is right now today the way that our rates are applied in the city does not

allow for a credit to be given during water service interruption. All of the bills are calculated based upon the rate structures that are put forward in our rates and charges that have been put before the Water and Sewer Rate Board in a public process that was passed by referendum 10 years ago.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS:

Yeah, that's -- wow. I mean, you could at the very least put in your budget give bottles -- Rep Carroll and I were out here giving out bottles of water to people when they didn't have any water. I mean, that should be your team walking and giving water when their water is disrupted and they have no control over. And you can't give them a credit back on their bill? I don't know. I think that needs to be investigated. It just doesn't -- it's just not public-

friendly. So thank you. I have more, but I'll wait. To my other colleagues, I want to be respectful.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you. Member Dr. Anthony Phillips.

Councilmember Curtis Jones.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Mr. President.

Let me start by saying thank you to the Parker Administration. Maybe not on taxation, but at least on operations. This has been in my history in Council one of the least contentious back-and-forth about operational issues. So thank you for that.

I want to start with the Water Department -- let me start with Aviation and say thank you for the experience. Many of us who

travel throughout the airport feel proud of the appearance, the welcoming nature of the airport. My staff over there has been to 41 nations and ranks you very high by way of ambiance and importance and efficiency. Istanbul and Dubai and Atlanta, you need to work on getting up there with them. But those are high, high marks.

Two things: One, thank you, Mr. President, for asking about security. But I'd like to switch to the air traffic controllers. How are we keeping up? We took a tour, our staff went to the airport and we actually went up in the towers to see the incredible job they are asked to do. How are we keeping up compared to other airports with keeping those personnel in there, refreshed and not overworked to the point of exhaustion?

And then number two, I'd like you to talk to, you know, the 250th birthday of this nation. We're going to a lot of visitors and some of them have visual impairments. How are we accommodating those individuals who may have issues with signage? Overbrook School for the Blind is producing signs that actually have Braille on them. And are we going to incorporate that? And can they be asked to assess the airport like they've done SEPTA?

SEPTA does a really good job with the audio, you know, bus is turning or this is your stop, kind of audible prompts that help people that are visually impaired. So those are your two questions. And then I'll run over to the Water Department.

MS. BORDA: I'll start with the last part first because

it's top of mind right now, with making sure how we're prepared to receive all types of guests who may have visual impairments, hearing impairments, physical impairments of some sort. I mean, as a public facility we do our best to make sure that, first of all, as we do new builds or we refresh parts of the terminal, we're incorporating all the standards that are required of today, right. So there could be city, state and federal standards that we have to incorporate.

We do have Braille in certain places in the facility. We do have audio announcements that you'll hear made to have multiple ways to reach our passengers and our employees that are located throughout the terminals. And we also have language assistance lines dedicated at our informational booths that are manned by both

staff and volunteers. So we have a wonderful volunteer program that's present there and they're well-equipped to handle the different needs that may be associated.

We also have a full communication center so that if we have to refer them down to somebody who has more capabilities, we can get to somebody who can help with individual passenger needs. So --

COUNCILMAN JONES: Would you be willing to let the Overbrook School for the Blind come down and give you an opinion on how you are doing with the Braille and other amenities for people with --

MR. BORDA: That's a great idea. Yeah.

COUNCILMAN JONES: All right. Good enough for me.

MS. BORDA: Yeah, we'll talk about it.

COUNCILMAN JONES: All

right.

MS. BORDA: And then you asked about air traffic --

COUNCILMAN JONES: Traffic controllers.

MS. BORDA: Yeah, this is obviously a nationwide issue that we have to deal with our federal partners on that because they're not our employees. Again, I think in Philly at least we do -- again, through the teams here we do a great outreach. And working with our various federal partners, including the air traffic controllers that are here. In fact, if you recall, I want to say it was last year, I might be mistaken, because of the problems in kind of the New York air service area, we've even had to take on some work -- I don't think it's happening currently, but about a year or so ago we were taking some

of that -- I don't think the traffic, but the air traffic controllers were handling some of the air traffic there.

So I don't have anything specific on that, but I'm happy to look into it. And we can get back to you with what we know. But we're well aware that we need more air traffic controllers around the country. So, yeah.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Same thing for the Northeast Airport in light of what we went through with Driscoll?

MS. BORDA: Yeah. I mean, the air traffic controllers were very responsive there and on top of that issue. I mean, that was a horrible situation, but also wonderful in its outcome because it could have been much worse, right. So we were thrilled, you know, they worked very closely with the flight

school, with the fire department, with police department, all who were there, along with some of our electeds here and others who were present, and our Chief Operating Officer, myself and the Northeast airport management were all there. So we're really supportive of our air traffic controllers.

COUNCILMAN JONES: So I'm going to switch because my time is up. Thank you for those responses.

Commissioner, first of all, thank you as well. Some of your dedicated employees have worked under tremendously harsh conditions in the weather. I remember a water main break in my district where I was riding by and there was a man with a jackhammer in the 52nd Ward actually with a water main break, and the ice crystals had frozen around his

beard. And he continued to work. And he was out of the 29th and Chalmers Street depot. We went out and recognized him because of that.

Question I would have simply is -- and thank you for when we have water emergencies because sometimes we harp on the things you don't do and don't memorialize the things that you do. When we had water threats that your sensors picked up along the Schuylkill, you were quick to respond to that and scared to bejesus out of us. Everybody made a run to Walmart to get water. But it's better to know than not know when we have an issue. So thank you for that.

There is a project in the 4th District I'd like you to update us on. There is a drill from the City Avenue Water Treatment Plant that is going to go under the Schuylkill River and up

to East Falls. Can you tell us where we are with that?

COMMISSIONER JEWELL:

Yes, and thank you for the kind words. Greatly appreciated. I constantly try to remind myself that 99% of what we do isn't seen. And so, it's nice to know that people appreciate all the work that's done. The project that you're specifically asking for is referred to as our Schuylkill River Crossing. This is part of our water revitalization plan and is one of the phases necessary for us to be able to upgrade water treatment facilities in the Northwest and also a phase of an interconnection or the ability to supply the City of Philadelphia from either the Schuylkill River or the Delaware River should something happen that prevents us from accessing water from one of them.

That project kicks off its design phase during this winter. And so, the design is started. The work as currently scoped will be kind of like two shafts that are connected by a tunnel that runs under the Schuylkill River. It leaves one of our properties at the City Ave -- the Belmont Water Treatment Plant and the other shaft is at our Queen Lane Water Treatment Plant.

So we're probably five to six years of design into a very complicated project that is just a long tunnel in rock that will eventually have a water main run through it and a pump station at one end and storage on the other that allows us to move water effectively, efficiently from one side of the Schuylkill River to the other side of the Schuylkill River. It also provides redundancy for us

for some infrastructure that we don't currently have redundancy for. So we're five to six years of design. Once design is complete, you're talking bid, construct. So 10 years probably at least.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Okay. We can wait. 50% of our water -- Mr. President, I'm turning over the mic. If you live on the west side of the city, it comes from the Schuylkill River. If you live on the east side of the city, it comes from the Delaware and that's two different water sources. So upgrading this infrastructure that is 3000 miles you mentioned and some of the actual infrastructure is still made of wood from the ancient days of water treatment, so thank you. And real quickly, how much water pipe do we replace every year? And that's it.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL:

Our goal is 32 miles a year. Last fiscal year I think we accomplished -- Fiscal Year 2025 I think we accomplished 42. But it is a balance between cost and capacity. So our current goal is 32 miles. I don't know if I'm allowed to do a point of information, but there are no water mains in the city of Philadelphia carrying water that are made of wood. But there is a long history of public water in the city of Philadelphia that at a time included wooden water mains. Those were all taken out of service and replaced with cast iron pipe.

We are about to do a project, I think it's going to kick off after the events of 2026, on South Street. The last time we did South Street work, we found wooden water mains. Because what they did when they replaced them or when

they took them out of service was they simply laid a cast iron pipe next to it and switched the service over and abandoned those pipes in place.

So as we're going through doing a necessary project to upgrade some old infrastructure in order to do it, we're excited about the possibility of finding some of the history that has been in a city full of history. Finding a wooden water main is still pretty special. But no wooden water mains in service today.

COUNCILMAN JONES: Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much. Jeffrey stepped out. Councilmember Jamie Gauthier, Jim Harrity, Kendra Brooks and Lozada.

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT

JOHNSON: Oh, I didn't even see that. Councilmember Jim Harrity.

COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Hallelujah. Look at that. God is good.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: All the time.

COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Amen, amen. Look, I have a ton of questions for the Water Department. More after Phillips' line of questioning. I too am kind of trying to figure out all this stuff. We're going to get a raise in our electric bill. They're saying it's going to come out to about $35 a month. And now, water supposedly another $20 a month going up, and then we're imposing taxes on rideshare and other things. So my people, I don't know how much more they can handle. So let me just get the questions on the record that way for the sake of

time, get them out of the way.

When was the last time the Water Department underwent a management audit to find operating inefficiencies? Which services and operations does the Water Department combined with other municipal-owned utilities such as PECO to cut costs down, like when they're digging up streets and stuff like that?

How much cash is in the Water Stabilization Fund as we sit here today? How are these funds invested, as in are they invested in local banks that give loans to local people or are we investing it in outside state banks? What happens to the interest those funds earn?

And some contractors have complained that their work has been delayed because of a backlog in water sample testing that is

required to complete projects. Are there any plans to streamline the process and is this a staffing issue or procedural issue? Got them all out.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: Thank you, Councilmember. So the first question was about a management audit. The last management audit was done around 10 years ago. We are constantly looking at the work that we're doing and looking for efficiencies and trying to find some effective strategies.

If you get really way into the weeds in our budget this year, there is a type of project that we have been funding for about the last eight or nine years to the scope of a couple million dollars a year to perform some maintenance at our wastewater treatment plants. And over the course of the last

three years, we've had a really strong leader in our department step forward and be like, we can do this differently, give me a chance to try.

And so, we've allowed him some latitude to work with his co-workers and try an inhouse maintenance practice that we've seen success on multiple occasions with. So this year in our budget, there is not $2.5 million to $3.5 million in services as a result of the work that he has done. A really great benefit of that has also been a recognition that maybe sometimes the way we think about who's qualified to do jobs is a little outdated. And so, because of his leadership, we've taken a new look at how we provide promotional opportunities to folks and opened up some career paths that were traditionally closed off.

So specifically, the management audit 10 years ago. More generally, this is the work that we do. Combination of services, again we are a fee-for-service utility that has requirements on how we're allowed to spend our money. We do work regularly and routinely in coordination and communication with other utilities.

There are regular operational meetings to make sure that we understand what's happening in the field, that if there are interdependencies, we're able to effectively communicate at the working level, supervisors in the field getting work done, like picking up the phone, talking about it, getting things to happen.

And then on our capital improvement program, we are submitting our engineering drawings

to other utilities to identify conflicts in order to make sure that if this work can be coordinated, those utilities are provided the opportunity to do so. So in my neighborhood, there's a water main relay project that people probably thought of as a PGW project because they just came through and relayed all their gas mains. But the reason they did that is because we're going to come through and do our water mains, and it makes sense to do it in a coordinated effort.

COUNCILMAN HARRITY:

Yeah, that's kind of what I was getting at. While you had the hole open, as a highway guy it would be easier to do it all at one time rather than do the others. How about the funds? How are our funds invested in the Water Stabilization Fund and where is the money put?

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: So I'm going to ask my Deputy Commissioner of Finance Lawrence Yangalay to come up and take that question.

MR. YANGALAY: Thank you so much. I'm Lawrence Yangalay, Deputy Commissioner of Finance, Philadelphia Water Department. The first question I remember was how much we have in our Restabilization Fund. As of June of 2025, Fiscal Year 2025, we have somewhere around 140-something million in the Restabilization Fund.

COUNCILMAN HARRITY: How much was that?

MR. YANGALAY: About 145 million.

COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Okay. Thank you.

MR. YANGALAY: How the fund's invested, we do it through the collaboration of the City

Treasurer's Office. We have fund managers that manage the fund for us. And whatever interests accrue to the fund is going to support our capital project, and that helped to defray some of our capital cost to help reduce the burden of our (inaudible) repair.

COUNCILMAN HARRITY: I know you said through the Treasurer's Office and it's invested. Where is it invested? Who does the investing? What is the company? What is the bank? Just trying to see if we're putting our money into local businesses, local banks that are going to then lend that money to local people.

MR. YANGALAY: I don't have that detail. We can work with the City Treasurer's Office to provide you the detail of banks and financial managers that handle these funds.

COUNCILMAN HARRITY:

Okay. So currently, right now about 145 million in the Stabilization Fund. You don't know what banks they're in right now. And most of the interest earned goes to the capital costs. That's a right rundown?

MR. YANGALAY: Let me just make a quick comment on the Restabilization Fund. The purpose of that fund is to provide some funds in case there are difficulty in meeting revenue targets or in meeting our debt coverage requirements. As we know now, anything could happen. And because the Water Department is self-funded, if anything were to happen, any emergency, it is in that fund that we go to be able to settle the emergency.

Just before the COVID hit, we have 217 million in that

fund. Because of the COVID and the difficulty in meeting our revenue target, we drew that fund all the way down to 121 million. So now that we are seeing good light, we are trying to build on that fund to prepare for any other event that might come, and that is a way of building resilience in our financial management and operational system of the Philadelphia Water Department.

COUNCILMAN HARRITY:

That's very interesting. So why during COVID did we have to go into the Stabilization Fund? Wasn't much going on then. That's a lot of money. It was 200-something million, and we bought it down to 105 million or something like that. Listen, I get it. It was a pandemic and stuff has to still be done. But for a good while there wasn't anything being done. So

just trying to figure out where the money went. Follow the money, right.

MR. YANGALAY: I didn't get part of your question. But if I understand why we went into the fund during COVID, of course -- I don't know the exact year, because of the COVID and the hardship it brought to the ratepayers, rate increases were minimized and in one year it was suspended. So because we didn't have all the revenue to operate, we have to go to Restabilization Fund to draw down on it.

COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Okay. So that was because there was no water bills at that time, so you had to make up for the loss of revenue from people not paying their water bills; is that what we're saying?

MR. YANGALAY: Yes. If

people are not paying their water bill or the rate that is approved is not sufficient to cover cost, then the Restabilization Fund is the reserve that we count on to be able to meet cost increases.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: Can I -- it's a combination of factors, right. It's a decrease in revenue coming in the door. It's also --

COUNCILMAN JONES: Speak in the mic.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: My apologies. It's a combination of factors. It's a decrease in revenue coming in the door, but also an increase in operational costs. I mean --

COUNCILMAN HARRITY: That's what I'm trying to get at --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: We're going to move on. But go ahead, sir.

COUNCILMAN HARRITY:

Yeah. What the operational cost was because people weren't working, but okay.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: So can you clarify that just for the record? The member is saying there wasn't a significant -- can you clarify what operational costs that determined why you went to the Water Stabilization Fund? I do understand the rate question because this came up before, I actually remember, as to why we want to support for going into the Water Stabilization Fund so we don't have to have increased rates. But he's also asking about what operations were taking place during that period of COVID that warranted you to go into the Water Stabilization Fund?

And it's coughing.

Anybody got any Halls?

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Mr. Michael Carroll, just state your name for the record please as part of the response to Councilmember Jim Harrity.

MR. CARROLL: Michael Carroll, Deputy Managing Director for the Office of Transportation Infrastructure Systems. Good morning. And, Councilmember, I just want to be clear, there was a lot going on during the pandemic, especially in the area of costs. Commissioner was not in his role then, but I do have some direct knowledge of some of the things driving costs.

One of the big things was the cost of treatment chemicals skyrocketed and because the supply chains were all breaking down around that kind of thing, but also

some of the materials and equipment for construction projects. Those projects were suspended for about three or four months, but the impact lasted for several years and we're just getting past those impacts and costs. So the fact is that these things were in the field. So even though we had shut down a lot of what was going on indoors, a lot of this field work, this construction work, had to move forward, but had to move forward in an environment where it was hard to get people to show up, so you had to pay them more. The supply chains were breaking down, like I'm saying. And then the day-to-day operation when people turn their tap on to make sure that that water was safe was much more expensive than it was previous to the pandemic. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT

JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

Chair recognizes Councilmember Jamie Gauthier, Brooks, Lozada.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you, Council President.

Good morning to all of you and thank you so much for the work that you do on behalf of the City of Philadelphia every day. My questions are for the Water Department. Last November, based on direct feedback, my Constituent Services team heard from West and Southwest Philadelphians. I introduced a legislative package that strengthens water equity by expanding eligibility to the Tiered Assistance Program protecting residents from extremely expensive water bills caused by long-term meter failures and calling on the Administration to explore ways to give rental tenants more control

over their water bills.

I started this conversation with the Administration during the first week of budget hearings and I'd like to continue that conversation with you today. I'm still working on understanding the inputs that the Administration used to come up with the $23.5 million cost estimate for my bill.

Your FY27 testimony projects an average monthly discount of $63 per current TAP participant for a total projected program cost of $53 million covering roughly 70,000 households. Current participants are at or below 150% of the federal poverty line. Newly eligible households between 150% and 200% of the federal poverty line earn more so their discounts under the income-based formula would be smaller than

$63.

So my questions are, can you outline all of the factors you used to arrive at the cost estimate of $23.5 million in additional expansion cost? And can you confirm if your calculations relied on the average discount of $63 for the population that would become newly eligible under this Act or did you use a different number?

And then finally, I wanted to see what enrollment numbers or enrollment percentages you are using to estimate the $23.5 million cost estimate for the expansion?

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: Thank you, Councilmember Gauthier. When preparing for this budget hearing, I went back to last year's budget hearing which I was a participant in and appreciate your dedication to this effort and your

consistency and as an advocate. It was informative for me.

The fiscal note that the city put out has been published. I know that we have a meeting scheduled coming up in a couple weeks. Unfortunately, I was thinking this morning I don't know exactly when it is. But I think if we can in that context have this conversation about cost estimates and formulas, we rely on some financial specialists to help us both through our rate cases and for a budget process. And I think having those specialists in the room would be helpful. Also because we are currently in a rate case and have just provided formal notice on our TAP, our reconciliation process, I think we have a legal responsibility to be careful and delicate with the kind of information we're putting

forward, especially in light of the fact that Community Legal Services is a legal participant in that process as well. So if we can, I'd be happy to provide information in that scheduled meeting so that we can discuss this in more detail.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Understood, and I'll give you that space. But I will say if the Administration is going to continue to use fiscal notes as a means of discouraging legislation from City Council, then the Administration should be at the ready to give us details on the fiscal note and what calculations you used to come up with it. And so, I know that is not just for you. But if we're going to go forward with this process, you all should be able to back up your assumptions, but we can wait for the meeting.

My next question, PWD's

FY26 budget testimony stated that the September 2025 and September 2026 rate increases are needed in part to pay for the increased enrollment of participants in the Tiered Assistance Program. Every water customer in this city is already paying for TAP expansion through their bills. And so, I just want your thoughts on if expanding eligibility is too expensive, then what are the ratepayers, what are they paying for, what are the taxpayers paying for?

COMMISSIONER JEWELL:

Thank you for the question and I'm going to try to do my best to respond here. So the department, through the Water and Sewer Rate Board -- Water, Sewer and Stormwater Rate Board engages in kind of two independent deliberative processes for rate

increases. One is our standard-based water and sewer stormwater rates and the second one is the TAP reconciliation process.

And the TAP reconciliation, which is what we're currently engaged in, is looking back at the previous year and assessing the amount of revenue that was lost when people who had need and were eligible for this program were afforded the opportunity to move into that program. We've done a lot of really great work to really grow the number of participants that are in that program. And then through the TAP reconciliation process, we through this again deliberative process with community advocates and the Water Department and community stakeholders involved, what we do is we take the lost revenue, the revenue that was not

brought in through bills, through delinquency, forgiveness, through penalty forgiveness, and we then distribute that burden, because we have an obligation, to pay for our services through the fees that we charge to our customers across the rest of the rate base.

So 400,000 accounts, 65,000 people in the TAP program, it's an amazing thing that we're allowed to do. It's not something that is common around the country. My understanding is the state of Pennsylvania has a specific legal enabling legislation that allows us to do that and it also protects our revenue. It helps us have a stable revenue source.

So for the folks who are incurring this nominal increase, and I appreciate nominal is perspective-based --

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

We're a very poor city, yes.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: I think what they can take pride in paying for is that I think, 2.8%, is directly supporting people in need in this community and providing stabilization to this department so that we can continue to deliver services to everyone regardless of their abilities.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I think I understand the methodology and I commend you and Revenue for the expansion that you've already done of TAP. But we also have been raising rates pretty significantly annually. And so, before we say no to helping more people in a time where they're just under siege by the federal government, by other factors, I think we have to look at how much we're raising rates, how much we're asking people to pay and increase

bills and then truly consider whether we can do an expansion of relief programs. And again, I don't think it can just be sort of a knee jerk no or that you all can say it's too expensive, it's $24 million, without really backing that up.

I think we have to have a strong case for saying no to people in this moment where so many people need relief. So I look forward to continuing the conversation with you all.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you.

Thank you, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

Councilmember Kendra Brooks, Councilmembers Quetcy

Lozada, Mike Driscoll and Rue Landau.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you, Council President.

I think I'm going to start with the follow-up for the water question. So I know you said we can get back to it, but I think the question that we have is we were trying to understand who makes a decision to prioritize which portion of a bill gets dropped off. So they went through the preliminary hearing. The $2,000 that was supposed to go to the $2,000 of the bill from the builder was completely eliminated. The new homeowner was still responsible for $1,000 of this $3,000 preexisting bill. So we're just trying to determine, because you said we could follow up, but even after it went through preliminary hearing and it's already in litigation or

is it a done deal?

MS. CROSBY: Thank you. Susan Crosby, Deputy Revenue Commissioner for Water. Without knowing the specific facts of that case and at which level of review it was at, there are different people who make those decisions. And at the end of each level, the customer, if they are not satisfied with the outcome, does have the ability to appeal and move on to the next level. So if it is at the first level of the account analysis, it is the accounting staff of the Water Revenue Bureau who is reviewing the file and making the decision. If it is at the informal hearing level, it is a Department of Revenue hearing officer. We basically split the house so that the person who is hearing the case is an informal hearing officer, so they're from

the tax side, not the Water side. And that informal hearing officer is the person who is making the decision on the matter. If it goes to the TRB, then it is the Tax Review Board Master or the Tax Review Board as a whole who makes the decision.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Okay. So I will have them follow back up, because I'm not understanding how we would let the builder go scot-free on the bill and the new homeowner gets tagged with $1,000 bill. That just does not make sense to me at all. So I'll make sure to have my constituent services reconnect them back to the office to figure out how did we get to that decision. Because if we're going to eliminate the bill, we should have just eliminated for everyone.

My other questions are

for Aviation. Hi. So you guys know I'm with the ICE situation and I do appreciate the fact that they're gone, but we do have a hearing coming up and I just have a few things I want to get on the record that could be supportive in our hearing.

So, one, I know you said that they are gone, but the question is what authority did they have to enter the Philadelphia International Airport and is it through a contract or Department of Homeland Security or express permission under federal law? And if so, what law that is?

And have ICE or any federal officers made any arrests in the Philadelphia Airport? And if so, how many? Council President asked about the presence of ICE and our immigrant workers that are at the airport. We were wondering,

was it an uptick in people missing work because of the presence of ICE when they were at the airport?

And the last question is, we've seen the videos of violent ICE arrests throughout airports in the country. Was there any training for airport workers about interacting with ICE or federal agents around their rights? Those are my questions.

MS. BORDA: Okay. I'll try to get to them all as quickly as possible. If not, we can get back to you. So obviously, being an airport and a federally-regulated agency in a sense, we have Department of Homeland Security working throughout our airport on a regular basis, you know, Customs and Border Patrol when you're coming back from an international trip, TSA agents right there, as we've talked about

frequently, so we're very familiar just with their presence naturally.

Obviously, we got selected as one of the airports that was going to have ICE present, and I apologize for it because I'm probably going to have to have you help me with some of the questions again. But firstly, I do know one of the questions was you asked about arrests. I'm not aware. I don't think my staff and I have not been told of any arrests that were made at Philadelphia International Airport. So we're not aware that anything like that took place. If you could, I would appreciate you telling me again, just to make sure I'm answering them.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Were people still showing up to work with ICE being present at the airport or was there a degree of change in people --

MS. BORDA: We did not see a significant change in people working -- not showing up for the airport or calling out. On our own staff, we did not have a tremendous call-out. And for our own vendors that work like concessionaires and stuff like that, again I did send out a letter to the whole airport community just trying to calm everybody's fears. And we did not get feedback from our various partners at the airport that there was a huge uptick in any sort of call-out. So operationally, we were well, we operated well during that time.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Okay. And some of these, I can send them in writing. And I've been to the airport several times and I can honestly say Philadelphia was not the worst airport I've been in. It was not bad.

MS. BORDA: So, you know, I understood their concerns. They had to let people -- we had to let you all know to come earlier, but it might have in some ways made it worse because we were operating pretty well. People were getting through the security checkpoint lines in Philadelphia.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: That's why -- a big shout-out to TSA. I have not had a problem getting through TSA and the service at the airport has been amazing. But I'll put them in writing so you can follow up. And if we can get them before Monday, it would be helpful.

MS. BORDA: Okay.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Okay. Thank you very much.

Councilmember Quetcy Lozada and the Chair of

Transportation and Public Utilities Councilmember Mike Driscoll.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you, Council President.

Councilmember Brooks asked very specifically the question that I was asking or I was going to ask about as it relates to ICE in our airports. But I will add to that how grateful I am for the TSA teams at the airport. I also was traveling during that time. And I have to tell you that while there was tension and you could feel the tension, the TSA workers were very intentional about making sure that people were kind of getting through. And I think that being in that situation is a difficult one. So I just wanted to express gratitude to all the TSA workers --

MS. BORDA: Thank you and we'll pass on these good words

to them.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Thanks. My questions are more for the Water Department. I appreciate the work that we've been doing together over the course of the last few months and I can see that the frustrations that we are experiencing in the 7th that I'm going to assume are being experienced across the city just through the line of questioning that my colleagues have made, I want to change a little bit from the residents' frustration and kind of shift to the businesses along the commercial corridors in the 7th Council District and their frustration as it relates to service work interrupting their businesses because of the same type of lack of communication that they're experiencing from the department or from the contractors.

And so, my question to you is how do we better improve the lines of communication for our business commercial corridors across the City of Philadelphia, but in particular in the 7th Council District, many of whom have lost revenue as a result of work that has been performed along the commercial corridor without notice?

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: Thank you, Councilmember Lozada, for the question. Thank you for your continued advocacy, for your Councilmanic district, and I truly appreciate the really open communications coming our direction. You've got us thinking differently about how we deliver services and striving to look for opportunities to change for the better in a way that are responsive to some of the issues that have been seen in your district and

others, but also are financially responsible and timely.

As it relates to commercial corridors, again there's planned work and there's emergency work and those two things are different. But it is from my seat looking down, and I have in the past specifically overruled operational decision-making in order to be attentive to our commercial businesses in the city of Philadelphia, that if we have an opportunity to make a choice about when we're performing work that will interrupt services or we have an opportunity to choose to deliver that work in a way that is thoughtfully considering the needs of these commercial businesses, that is our obligation.

So I would love to talk through specific commercial corridors with you so we can get a

better sense of whether this is planned work for which we are, again and as I mentioned with Councilmember Phillips earlier, we're working with Better Services Philadelphia to try to improve our communication practices and ensure we're meeting standards, there's a real opportunity to look forwards and ask questions before we move in and do work.

It's my expectation particularly for planned work, we have the opportunity to reach out to our customers, right, like we are the only place they're going to get water from. But our mentality should be we are providing a service and we are here to help do that in the most amenable way possible. There will be times when we cannot. But if we have the opportunity to do so, we should be reaching out to our commercial

businesses. We should be talking to them. We should be notifying them in advance. We should be providing them with a contact to express their concerns about timing.

The specific example a couple years ago was right before the Super Bowl. We were going to replace a fire hydrant that was leaking and it was going to take out a hoagie shop. And they were like, hey, this day is my busiest day of the year. And should we have been in that space and had that conversation before and never planned that work? Absolutely, we should and that will be our goal moving forwards. But also, when we had that conversation, my first question was do we need to do this on Friday. And the answer was no. And I was like, good, then we're not, have a conversation with them,

talk to all their neighbors. And that's my expectation, that we're a part of this community, like the community isn't there in spite of us.

And so, I think as we move forwards with future conversations and again happy to sit down with your office and talk through any particulars. Happy to learn lessons from any district. We're here for all of it. If we can do better, we're here for it.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: I appreciate that. I guess my follow-up question would be how do we better send that message down from leadership to those who are working on the ground, right. Because I believe that folks, whether it be residents or commercial businesses, consistently reach out and follow up when there are issues on the ground, and

there's all of these excuses around why we can't do something and then it gets escalated to the commissioner. And all of a sudden, there are boots on the ground and things are being resolved.

I'll use Lesher Street as an example. Those residents on the 4600 have been struggling for months, months around not just one pothole, but multiple potholes on their block that prevented cars from coming in and out. It prevented a mother with a handicapped child from being able to park in front of her home. It caused a lot of issues and there were many excuses around the why we could not do the work until you and higher levels of the Streets Department actually got them out. And then it was resolved within days and probably resolved because we had news cameras out there,

right.

So what are we doing to prevent that? How do we prevent the press from having to get involved? How do we prevent stress from residents who have family members who are disabled, who depend on the block to be clear for their handicapped children to be brought in and out without it having to be escalated to the higher levels, right?

There should be a process. And what is that process? And what do people do in order to get their services responded to without having to go to the media?

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: And thank you. Lesher Street is a great example because I was involved and we're doing things because of it. Lesher Street was an example of water repair work that was completed and then street

restoration work that was delayed, and it did cause significant issues in the neighborhood and I recognize that. And for that, we're trying to do better.

So one of the tasks we've taken up is I had kind of the privilege of watching PGW work for eight days on my block, 24 hours a day and it was hard for the neighbors to deal with emergency work, and many neighbors had them coming in and out of their house every hour taking gas readings to ensure they were safe.

But when PGW was done, the street got closed up in 48 hours. And so -- and Councilmember Phillips asked a little bit about cooperation lately. Because we do coordinate in the field, we've got working relationships with folks in the Gas Works. And so, I tasked my Director of Field Operations

Brendan Riley, who's in the back of the room, with contacting PGW and figuring out how they did it. And we are moving forwards with pursuing some new procurement tools to allow us to contract for services for street restoration in a way that we hope will yield the same kinds of results.

We have some opportunity -- the way that government works in the City of Philadelphia, we are in the public right-of-way if the Streets Department is the operator and maintainer of the roads. And so, in our normal business process today when we're done, we're responsible for temporarily restoring the street and we make a referral and we pay the Streets Department for that work.

And so, what I'm hoping is we can find kind of like a

revenue neutral or some way to just take some of that workload off, not impact our rates and provide a higher level of service. So we're in conversations right now trying to understand how they specify those procurement documents so we can start working on trying to implement some of that ourselves so we can provide a better level of service, because it is my belief that many of the issues on Lesher Street would not have happened if we had simply been able to quickly close that street and move on, so we are working on it.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: I appreciate that. And like Lesher, there are many other situations like that in the 7th and I'm sure across the city of Philadelphia. I guess my last question will be American Water Resource.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT

JOHNSON: Briefly.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

Every time we turn around American Water Resource -- we are encouraging residents to sign up to the insurance like American Water Resource, but it is such a confusing process sometimes and we're depending on residents to just reach out directly. Is there a process where the Water Department takes a more active role in encouraging residents who we know infrastructure is really old and is within that I guess assessment that you all talked about during the hearing that is done where you can tell what needs to be repaired based on the data that you're collecting, is there a way for you to proactively encourage residents to enroll in American Water Resources?

Is there a way for you

to support and help them get enrolled in that? And if so, how do we support that process as well?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: And I want to give a point of information. They send me -- two, three times I may get a letter to actually make sure I'm signing up. And then when I remember it was time for me to resign up, they -- and it's just a form. You just check a box and return it to American Resource.

But for all those listening, it's a great resource, right. When that lateral break outside your house, you just assume it's the Water Department, the Water Department has nothing to do with it. You need to bring in a private contractor/plumber to address the issue. So I encourage more individuals to sign up.

But your response to

Member Lozada, sir.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: Sure, and thank you. I also am a customer of American Water Resources --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: I think we all are.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: -- who repaired my water service when there was a leak in front of my house in a very timely manner at no cost other than my monthly fee. I think we can help. We do provide literature as it relates to customer assistance programs and American Water Resources is one of those. We'd be happy to meet, to attend community meetings and help push that message out. We also are pretty tightly coordinated with the Energy Authority, which is actually the entity that put that contract out. I believe they're getting ready to put out another RFP for

the next generation of that contract. It is a really beneficial program. I think we'd be happy to have a conversation about whether there's a role for us or the Energy Authority or all of us to be at the table.

And also, as a city we should be able to push American Water Resources forwards in a way that brings them into this room, and we've done that in the past. We've had community meetings with Councilmember Driscoll's district where we brought AWR into the room to speak directly to the customers, and I'm sure that we can help facilitate something like that for your district.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Yeah, there has to be a way. If we're doing an assessment and we know that people's infrastructure, their pipes are extremely old, I

mean, we said the housing stock here is 80 years old, right, and we know that the infrastructure underneath those structures are just as old, if not older, then there has to be a way for us to proactively reach out to those residents to say, you may want to do X, right, and not wait until there's an emergency that not just causes a problem for their own home, but for everyone else on the block.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you, Member Lozada.

I want to ask this as a follow-up to her line of questioning: Can it be a part of the actual water bill where people receive the water bill, and this is an option, that they can enroll into the program? Because I know in the other departments, the Mayor's team has a one-stop shop

for all things related to tax relief for individuals who are homeowners. So if you want to be in LOOP, if you want to be in Homestead, if you want to take advantage of the various Senior Citizen Tax Freeze, now, there's a one-stop shop for that type of resources for individuals, for those types of resources for individuals. So could that be an option to add this service to our actual water bill?

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: So thank you for the question. And I'll be perfectly honest, I don't know the answer to it. But Susan Crosby just tapped me on the shoulder so I got the feeling she does. But I will point out that I think some utilities and some insurance providers are providing services directly to the customers through that organization and this

is a little bit different. This is a separate contract with a separate entity.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: You're talking about American Water Resources, correct?

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: Yeah, American Water Resources. But I'll let Susan continue the conversation.

MS. CROSBY: Thank you, Council President. Susan Crosby, Deputy Revenue Commissioner for Water. Because it is a separate company and we only bill for the services that we provide, we cannot include it as a line item on our bill. However, in the past we have included literature in our bills as a bill stuffer and we had been in discussions with American Water Resources to undertake that again. And that is definitely something --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT

JOHNSON: Well, a bill stuffer is good. You get your bill -- you hear that, Member Lozada. You also have the option to see when you get your bill information, if you want to sign up for American Water Resources. And honestly, that's the most you can ask. Because if it comes with your bill and you're reading your bill, and you say, oh, okay, maybe I'll sign up for this particular program as well.

What about anything digitally? Because we live in a digital society now and most people also are technology savvy. How is that as an option, maybe a QR code that goes directly to American Water Resources as a way to inform people if they want to sign up or not? Are we going in that direction?

MS. CROSBY: My apologies. As part of our ebilling

platform that we have, any bill stuffer that comes in your regular paper bill is also available when you view your bill online.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Okay.

MS. CROSBY: And so, any type of collateral that American Water Resources would work with us to provide into the bill, if they wanted to provide a QR code or something of that manner within that piece of collateral to go in as a bill stuffer, that would also be transferred directly into the ebilling platform for those electronic customers to see.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

Chair recognizes -- does that satisfy your response, Member Lozada?

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Yes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

Chair recognizes Councilmember Chair of Transportation and Public Utilities Councilmember Mike Driscoll. Then Councilmember Rue Landau and then that would be -- then Councilmember Bass.

COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. President.

I want to thank Tracy, your team for the rapid response last Wednesday. You guys were onsite right away and can't thank you enough. And you're right, that could have been a lot worse so we appreciate that. Now, Shane -- not to take time today, but Shane's going to set up a meeting for the increased traffic up there in the Northeast and safety concerns. We'll have a separate meeting on that one.

And I want to add to that meeting, Shane, when I was on site that day, the fire department had said they unsuccessfully in the past had talked to the Northeast Airport about getting some space for rapid response in times of tragedy up there somehow. It wasn't the time to get in depth about that, but maybe we can chat about that when we meet.

So I just have one question and a couple for Ben and the Water Department. It's great that your team is doing all the work to bring the local concessions to the airport and we appreciate that. Have any thoughts been given to expanding the academy to include other business sectors? There are plenty of local businesses out there looking to do business at the airport.

MS. BORDA: Yeah. So

again, I might ask Dee to come up and talk in more detail about it. But we are pivoting this year from the Concessions Academy to actually a Construction Academy, especially in light of the construction program that Api's team is leading. We've done a lot of rehab throughout the terminals really to brighten up the place, have everything look fabulous for the visitors that are expected this year. And we continue to plow through our capital program, almost $2 billion capital program. So the Concession Academy, that Dee's team who will be leading that. Dee, if you want to step up and tell a little bit about it so you can give you some information.

MS. ISAAC: Good afternoon. Again, Deatrice Isaac, Vice-President for Procurement. Thank you for the question,

Councilmember. Yes, as Tracy mentioned, we are pivoting to construction this year. A lot of thought was given to the fact that with all of the activities happening for 2026 in the city, some of those concessionaires may not be able to commit the time to coming into an academy. They're out trying to take advantage of the opportunities that will be available to them.

So in the past, about a couple years ago, we actually had a construction workshop that was a one-day workshop. It was very well received. And so, we thought it was a good time for us to pivot back to that topic and form a three module academy around construction. It will be free to participants and it will delve into not just construction specifically at the airport, but also construction

opportunities throughout the city. So we're partnering with some other departments to come in and talk about their opportunities as well as our concessionaires' construction projects as well. So we are definitely focusing on other topics in the academy format, and we're looking forward to this academy starting in April.

COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: Thank you.

MS. ISAAC: You're welcome.

COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: And your whole team, thank you. We had our committee down there, the Transportation Committee, a couple months back and we were very impressed with all the improvements coming, not only for 2026 for the days ahead. So thank you for that.

So let me pivot to Ben, and thank you for your efforts

during the deep freeze. I know that was a challenge, believe me. And I want to add, I guess you were talking to Councilmember Lozada about that Super Bowl shop. Add Irish bars to your list for St. Patrick's Day, March 17th. That might be a good idea.

Quickly, can the department provide the City Council with a month-by-month breakdown of the average turnaround time for constituent inquiries made via the email over the last 12 months? And again, you don't have to go today. Specifically what percentage of these inquiries were resolved within the department's stated internal service level agreements? And then how does this turnaround time vary for concerns that are elevated from our Council offices, because we seem to get the real urgent ones? So you don't have to

answer that today.

Two, you may be able to answer today. With the second half of 2025 general rate increase scheduled to take effect on September 1, 2026, what specific steps is the department taking to ensure that middle-income residents who may not qualify for TAP but are still facing the rising cost of living are protected from these compounding annual increases?

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: Thank you, Councilmember. And we can certainly get back to your first question in writing after the hearing. As far as how -- I will restate the question to make sure I understand it. So your question is, how are we helping middle-income customers with their ability to pay their bills as we're raising rates. So I think we spoke a little bit about operational

efficiency earlier. It's something that we're working on right now and actively seeing some benefits for.

I think from our seat the way that we provide relief is by trying to do everything we can to control costs. We had a lot of -- and Deputy Manager Director Carroll spoke about it a little bit earlier. We had a lot of costs that were outside of our control, right, like, we are all living in a world where affordability is a buzzword and we all buy groceries in that world.

The Water Department buys ductile iron pipe and reinforced concrete pipe and treatment chemicals in that world, to the tune of well over $40 million. We've seen some of those costs start to stabilize a little bit. But we're also kind of taking a look internally at what we're

doing and how we're doing it to try to see if we can make sure that we're making the best investments at the time to provide, one, the best return on those dollars, but, two, getting ahead of issues that haven't happened yet.

And so, we launched our strategic plan. You can see it on our web page. And one of my focuses for a strategic plan is a real kind of capital improvement program back to basics, so we are working through all the way down how many pipes do we have, how many valves do we have, what is our asset inventory, what are our condition assessments, what's our risk profile as it relates to those things, so that we can be confident that when we are taking the money that is entrusted in us as operators of the system and investing it in our infrastructure,

that we feel like that investment is going to yield the maximum benefit. So it's a process.

We are in year 1 of the strategic plan. For our facilities, we are literally going through pipe by pipe, valve by valve, performing condition assessments, looking at architectural assessments to create that baseline from which we'll launch the next phase of our capital improvement program.

And then for our linear assets, and we talked about this a couple months ago in this chamber, we have a really long history of utilizing data to inform decision-making, and this winter was a really difficult winter for the department in a lot of ways. It was difficult for the city in a lot of ways, right. I said the other day every Philadelphian was

traumatized this winter by winter, but we're kind of like going back and looking at the assessments that are baked in. So we in the Water Department wake up every morning if you're in operations or connected operations and you see a list of all the water mains that broke overnight. It's used to prioritize work during the day.

In the winter, those lists are very large. And I spent a period of time looking at our risk scores for those water mains when I got that (inaudible) sheet in. And it was good. We do really understand where our risks are. But what I'm trying to do is kind of create -- we're a very large organization that on an org chart is siloed in a lot of different ways.

And one of the things that I'm really trying to work on

is creating like connective tissue that has someone who says this water main is going to be a risk in 20 years. I'm going to program this through the process that is design, bid, build that needs communication along the way to make sure that the residents who are impacted are going to understand.

And so, that's part of this program right now that we're working on, is really a self-assessment to make sure that we're investing these dollars in the best way so that we don't have emergencies, so I don't have to bid a job that -- and we will always have emergencies. It comes with the 6000 miles of pipe, but trying to minimize those because those things come at a cost to us. And if we can be preventative with how we're investing those dollars and avoid the reactive work, it should

over time dampen in -- these are the things we control, right. The internal things we control should hopefully yield financial benefits to the city of Philadelphia.

We don't control the globe and what's happening in the world. And so, as costs of gasoline goes up, cost of materials goes up, cost of chemicals, everything. So I think we need to do what we can to make sure that we're being as efficient, effective and making the right decisions, because that will help in the world where supply chains break down and chemical costs go up.

COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: Mr. President, just one last question.

My last question, I just was really trying to highlight that your TAP program is wonderful, but those that are just outside of

that, the anxiety level is high, very high and getting worse. So all those efficiencies, you know, as you speak to your workers every day, let them know that this is real and that what they are doing is changing lives.

So the Water Department has cited the Water Revitalization Plan and aging infrastructure as primary drivers for the current rate hikes. Can the department provide a breakdown of how these specific fee increases will accelerate the replacement of water mains and the improvement of stormwater management in the neighborhoods that have seen the highest frequency of surface disruptions?

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: I think we can surely provide kind of like a map of that information. If we can do that in writing after the

hearing, I think that would be great. I think it's our responsibility to be able to communicate that, so thank you.

COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much. So we have a hard stop at 1:00. So it's going to be Landau, Young O'Rourke. Member Bass has stepped out.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Thank you, Chair.

Thank you so much for being here. A lot has been covered. So in general, two questions for Water and two questions for Aviation.

Water -- first of all, thanks, Commissioner. You bring in a fresh new light to this work. I don't know every Water Commissioner in the past, but you seem to be

very, very involved and invested in change, so I appreciate that. But I wanted to talk about something fun to start, which is your Mussels Project, your Aquatic Research and Restoration Center.

My son had the amazing opportunity of being an intern under the brilliant Lance Butler, working on your Mussels Project, which is a comprehensive project through so many disciplines of introducing mussels into the waterway to clean them naturally, and it's working and it's so exciting. And at some point, I'm going to actually bring a tour of all the Councilpeople down to the project because it's such an amazing sight to see.

So I'm excited about that, but I wanted to ask you about what measurable improvements in water quality are expected from

mussel restoration. Could this reduce long-term infrastructure or treatment costs? And how does mussel-based filtration compare in cost and effectiveness to traditional water treatment measures? And also, is the Water Department pursuing any creative approaches to improve critical infrastructure throughout the Water Department as well?

COMMISSIONER JEWELL:

Thank you for your son's service. And I have had the privilege of hearing Lance speak about his project and his enthusiasm is his. He's great. So, yes, we've been involved in the Mussel Project for almost a decade now and are kind of working on a scaling presently. When we do the tour, which we would love to have you all down at the Fairmount Waterworks, we can certainly jump on some history of

the Water Department content while we're there and then drive up to the Manayunk Canal and see these stations that are present.

I think what we're working on right now is kind of bolstering the research surrounding the reintroduction of these mollusks to our waterways in order to understand what the environmental impact of them is. We're really excited because we're hopeful that at some point we may be able to actually create a regulatory connection between mussel reintroduction and best management practices for pollutant control in our waterways in a way that can help us with a regulatory compliance need, improve the water quality on these rivers and streams that are the sources of our drinking water and potentially reduce our costs for treatment.

But I think we've proved that we can grow them. We've proved that we can make them reproduce. We are in a lab now. We're proving we can do it out in the field and at the same time working with researchers to try to understand the real impacts and quantify those benefits on the environment in a way that we hope we can leverage in the future.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Excellent. Thank you. Appreciate that. I also wanted to talk to you about tech and procurement because I think last year there was a discussion about the Opal Project, which we know that the city is still working on creating. I think you just testified that you're working on a new procurement tool. Is that outside of Opal? And how can we use technology to increase the work that you're doing? What

are you working on?

And yesterday I asked the Streets Department about StreetSmartPHL. Curious as you've been answering the questions of my colleagues today, whether or not you're uploading information about the street closures and the emergencies in realtime to StreetSmartPHL. I still have two Aviation questions too.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Quickly, if you could respond to Councilmember Landau since the bell did ring. We have a hard stop at 1:00. We only have 10 minutes, colleagues, after this brief response. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: So thank you for the questions. I think as far as Opal is concerned, we're a city department working under the city umbrella. We are a participant in the Opal Project.

We will be prepared to utilize that system once it comes online and are hopeful that it will create some additional transparency for our staff to understand what kind of contracting resources are available for them.

We have been having some conversations with Commissioner Hovey in Procurement and the Law Department about some different kind of procurement tools that we're hopeful will yield some efficiencies for the Procurement Department and some efficiencies for the Water Department and create some quicker access to contract resources on an oncall basis, and we are hopeful that we can actually kind of create dual benefits, both on the operating side and on the capital side with the same kind of contracting mechanism.

It's a work in progress.

We're kind of defining what the boundaries are within which we have to work from a legal perspective so that we can push forward with some -- not necessarily unique contracting tools, but things we haven't done before as a department and learn from the experience of other departments. L&I has done it to a small scale for kind of simple projects.

We're looking at real maintenance work and our plants like large scale maintenance work, and even as far as water and sewer relay is trying to create some different kind of contractual agreements that allow us to access those services in a more casual way.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Just to be clear, it's an addition to Opal. Will it always be an addition to Opal?

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: It's really not a procurement system as much as it is the procurement tool that we're using. So the legal document with which we're soliciting folks in order to provide us services and get them under contract with specifications, both expectations for us and them.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Okay. That's helpful. Thank you so much.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you so much, Councilmember Landau.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Real quick, Airport?

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Can you just put these two on the record because we have two other colleagues in the queue and we have nine minutes?

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Okay. Thank you. So adding my

voice to the chorus of very happy that ICE is out of the airport. Let's make sure that we're training our TSA staff and all of our airport staff enough of what to do when ICE is there. But I wanted to ask about the solar project. I know that there is a -- and I think there's an RFP out for a solar project right now?

MS. BORDA: Api when she was up here earlier, you may not have been present but she did talk about the RFP that's out there --

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: I'll follow up with you and get some more information and I'll stop right there. Thank you.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you so much, Councilmember Landau.

The Chair now recognizes Councilmember Young and then Councilmember O'Rourke, and then

we'll officially close this round. Thank you.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank you, Madam Chair.

First, I want to give a shout-out to Local 394 and Local 1510. I have family members who are longtime members of those Locals at the airport and in the Water Department, right, longtime family members, workers. So first question I have is regarding of course the TAP program, right, and the rate increases.

So how does the TAP driven pressures, right, for these increases interact with other pending cost drivers like the PFAs, the lead service line, compliance, labor growth, debt service? How much of that is also tied into this number here? And what is the affordability outlook for customers who are not TAP-enrolled, as

Councilmember Driscoll was talking about?

What's the outlook for customers who are not TAP-enrolled and how do you ensure that these programs do not become financially fragile on its own due to resilience of just different cross-subsidies and other factors that are happening?

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: So I'm going to pass it to my Deputy Commissioner of Finance in a moment. So we have two rate-setting processes. One is our base rates. It's like cost of service, the things that are fundamental to how we do things, paying our people, paying for services, buying equipment, funding our capital program. All of that is kind of our base rate case. And then we have the TAP rate case. That happens independently of it. And

as I explained earlier, it is how we recover the revenue that is lost by discounting the cost of service for people in the TAP program. Those two things are definitely related to each other, but they're independent processes that happen independently of each other.

MR. YANGALAY: I just wanted to add one thing quickly.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: They're related, but independent. I don't understand that. Can you describe that a little bit more?

MR. YANGALAY: Let me just briefly -- I will be very brief. How we set our rate looks at all of the cost incurred in running the utility. And that cost increase operating investment, capital investment elsewhere and payment on debt services. We take that cost and break it out into customer class, residential,

commercial and so on. That's how we factor in the rate on how much customers can pay.

Now, the second question which I thought to elaborate a little bit, there are customers who are on the borderline of affordability. They are not too low. They are not too high. And (inaudible), if I may talk for you, they have other programs like payment arrangement where if you cannot afford your bill, you can enter into some payment arrangement. PWD also has for other customer what we call the HELP program, which is if you have some financial challenges and you got to replace your lateral, we give you interest-free room until you pay over five years to be able to ease the financial burden. So that's what I wanted answer the rate-setting process, a complicated

process.

Now, the TAP rate is how much we've paid for people who cannot afford, so those processes are different, as the Commissioner said from the base rate which is decided and the TAP rate. For instance, in the last assessment we have estimated that 60,000 people will be enrolled in the TAP program. Our actual experience came to 65,000. Now, we are projecting 70,000 to be enrolled by FY27, so that's the increase in the rate for TAP program to cover those who cannot, for economic reasoning to afford to pay the regular bill.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: All right. Madam Chair, I heard the bell, but just one statement or one question rather.

So there are programs that PWD has that are interest-free programs already, right? I just

want to put that on the record. You just mentioned a program that you have that is interest-free?

MR. YANGALAY: Yes, the HELP program, for instance, if you cannot afford to replace your service line.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Okay. I just want to put that on record because we put a bill in that would essentially prohibit interest and penalties on our water bills. And so, there's already programs that the City of Philadelphia has regarding Water that is an interest-free program. So it's not a new idea. I just want to put that out there on the record.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: I apologize, but the last two minutes will be for Councilmember O'Rourke. So if you could follow up with Councilmember Young on that question, that would

be helpful. Thank you so much, Councilmember Young.

The Chair recognizes Councilmember O'Rourke. Thank you. Two minutes.

COUNCILMAN O'ROURKE: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good morning, Commissioner Jewell. Thank you to you and your team for being here today and for the work that you all do to keep our city running and congratulations on your relatively new appointment. I would welcome the chance to connect one-on-one soon to talk more about your vision and how Council can be in partnership or what have you.

But let me get in -- I got two minutes. I want to focus my questions on affordability. Some of the stuff may have been grazed by some passing blows through other questions. I'll just

try to get them out there. Hopefully you can answer them as concisely as possible. What's driving the rate increases?

Philadelphians have been feeling the rate increases for a while, nearly 10% jump last September. Another one expected this year from what we're told. For a lot of folks, that's about a $7 more per bill kind of situation in terms of what it comes out to, which really adds up alongside the other rising utility costs. We have a campaign Affordable Philly Now to address some of this.

Can you break down in quick and plain terms what's actually driving the increases the most right now? And where, if anywhere, you see opportunities to slow the growth moving forward?

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: As quickly as possible if I can

describe the trajectory of the Water Department in very large context: Cost of paying people, cost of supplies, cost of services, and then we are in a world where the infrastructure is aging so we're seeing the need for investment increasing. And also what may surprise people, we are in a world with emerging regulatory requirements that continue to push the department to make additional capital investments. And it's kind of like all of those things are stacked up on top of each other. It's a large part of why I'm so focused on the capital program right now is because a lot of it needs to invest in tanks and pipes and motors that's driving this. But people, services, equipment and capital, infrastructure investments for new and for existing and emerging regulation.

COUNCILMAN O'ROURKE:
Real quick, any opportunities that you see to slow that growth, that kind of ballooning --
COMMISSIONER JEWELL:
It's a double-edged sword, right. It's like if we slow investment, do we increase -- so if you take water mains, if we go back from 32 miles to 22 miles, and I'm not saying we're doing, you know, we monitor the number of breaks per 100 miles. That probably will yield an increase in that. So we are trying to work with our regulators to try to see if there are some sensible --
COUNCILMAN O'ROURKE:
You're looking into it?
COMMISSIONER JEWELL: --
that we can implement.
COUNCILMAN O'ROURKE:
All right. I want to cut across the field because the bell went and

I only had two minutes. I appreciated the expansion on TAP. Lot of discussion from Member Driscoll and Member Gauthier on that, especially the move to auto-enroll folks. That's a big step forward. At the same time, we know there are still eligible residents who aren't enrolled, especially renters or folks who might not show up in existing data.

What else can we be doing to reach out to those households? And how much are we currently investing in outreach and enrollment to make sure people actually get connected to the program? Let me get my other question on the record too. Maybe you can try to get all this together so that way I don't get --

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: 30 seconds.

COUNCILMAN O'ROURKE:

Yes, ma'am. We've seen across -- this is the one I really want to get out. We've seen across Pennsylvania that Act 12 has led to privatization of over two dozen municipal water and sewer systems. Those sales also drive up costs with really dramatic rate hikes, to my earlier question, some as high as 167%.

For example, in Exeter Township, average monthly water bills jumped from $43 to $114. The Pennsylvania Office of Consumer Advocate estimates that because of Act 12, Pennsylvanians are now paying an additional $85 million annually more for water and wastewater services. That's a problem for us. In fact, I've introduced legislation to prevent the privatization of Philadelphia's water system in perpetuity with a Charter change a part of that

Affordability Now initiative.

So here's the question: I wanted to ask, has the department received any outreach from private companies in the past year expressing interest in acquiring all or part of the Water Department? And if so, has the Water Department responded? And have you been in conversation with other municipalities that have gone through privatization to understand the risks and how we can better safeguard our system?

I believe deeply that public water ought to remain public. And I think there's some issues around privatization. So I really wanted to hear on that one. That's the end of my stuff. If you can get it on record, I'd appreciate it.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

COMMISSIONER JEWELL:

The simple answer is no. And then to go a little bit further, I don't own the Water Department. I am a caretaker of the Water Department. We are here for the public service.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you so much. Thank you, Commissioner -- pardon me?

COUNCILMAN O'ROURKE: What about the other questions? I'd like him to put them on the record.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Yes. Are you able to give a 30-second response to Councilmember O'Rourke's additional questions?

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: I'm sorry. I was --

COUNCILMAN O'ROURKE: The question was about looking for opportunities to get folks like renters and those who may not be

enrolled to get them into TAP in outreach efforts to make sure that we're not losing folks on that program?

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: Susan Crosby is here to talk about public outreach --

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: So --

COMMISSIONER JEWELL: -- quickly as she possibly can.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Yes. We need a 30-second response. I must, must comply with the Council President's request. So 30 seconds to respond please.

MS. CROSBY: Yes. Tenants who are our customers are eligible for all of our assistance programs, including TAP. We do, do outreach with Community Legal Services and other organizations to help renters become our customers.

Tonight I'm going to be speaking at HAPCO, which is an investment and landlord, to let them know and to encourage them to let their renters become our customers so that they, themselves, can take advantage of our programs and to let them know of all of the benefits that they can reap if they allow their tenants to become our customers.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you so much, Councilmember O'Rourke. And thank you, Commissioner Jewell and to your team, and also to Tracy Borda and the Department of Aviation.

Prior to the committee standing in recess until 2:15, I will quickly recognize Councilmember O'Neill to welcome guests to Council chambers. And after that time, the Committee will stand in recess until 2:15.

COUNCILMAN O'NEILL:

Thank you, Madam Chair.

We have in our presence a group of students from California, Northern California, North Star Academy. They're 8th graders who are on spring break, and we're going to New York and then Washington. And No. 6 over here is my grandson, Declan. And Declan apparently convinced the group that they -- without much convincing apparently, that they could do a stopover from New York to Washington in the city where it all started, the birthplace of America. And I want to thank them.

They have several parent escorts. There's grandparents who have come today. And in total, there's probably 60 to 65 people, but 49 students are actually on the trip. And I just want to welcome them, thank the Council. They've

seen the Mayor's Reception room. They've seen the Conversation Hall. They've seen the Caucus room. And we're heading to the Supreme Courtroom, where some not so prominent Councilmember is going to give them some local government history and civics lessons. Okay.

So I thank you and we are just thrilled to have them here. And I know they will remember 250 the rest of their lives. They did the Rocky Steps and the Liberty Bell already. And so, they will have seen all the biggies in City Hall, the six great rooms. So we'll be there very shortly. Thank you.

(Applause.)

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Thank you, Councilmember O'Neill. Welcome to Philadelphia.

And now, the committee

will officially stand in recess until 2:15. Thank you. Welcome to Philadelphia.

(Lunch recess.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you, members. It's always good to see all of you here.

Ms. Loughead, please call the panel as we resume the Committee of the Whole on the FY2027 budget.

THE CLERK: The next panel is Bridget Greenwald, Commissioner for Licenses and Inspections, Quality of Life Division and Basil Miranda, Commissioner for Licenses and Inspections, Inspection, Safety and Compliance.

(Witnesses approached witness table.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Before we get started, I want to acknowledge Basil Miranda

and the work that you're doing with L&I as well as Bridget Greenwald, and thank you for both of your teams just being on the case regarding the variety of different things my office may call you to address. And so, I just wanted to set the tone and just thank you for your hard work and your dedication to move the City of Philadelphia forward in a safe manner as well as we approve the quality of life of all of our neighborhoods.

And so, Bridget, I want to ask you to state your name for the record and please begin your testimony.

MS. COLLINS-GREENWALD: Sure. Good afternoon, Council President Johnson and members of City Council. I am Bridget Collins-Greenwald, the Commissioner of the Department of Licenses and Inspections, Quality of Life. It

is a pleasure to be appear before City Council today in support of L&I's QOL FY27 budget request. As you have our written testimony which highlights the many accomplishments and plans of the department in front of you, I will not belabor them.

I would like to mention one thing that is not in the written testimony about the QOL team. The QOL team has many outstanding employees, both long-term and those who have started recently as two weeks ago. They are dedicated and care about improving the quality of life for the citizens of Philadelphia. I would like to acknowledge them publicly for their commitment to public service. They are out in every neighborhood every single day, providing education and enforcement. They want to see this

city thrive.

I say it all the time. I am very proud to work in a place where the employees show such a genuine sense of care and commitment to their profession by following our core mission of responsibly and respectively serving the community of Philadelphia by providing quality code, education and enforcement services.

The QOL team is transparent, approachable and we embrace positivity to make the city the safest, cleanest and greenest large city in the country, with economic opportunity for all. Thank you for indulging me and I'm happy to answer any questions you may have.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

Mr. Miranda, please

state your name for the record and please begin your testimony for the record.

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: My name is Basil Miranda. I'm responsible for the construction side of L&I, better known as Inspection, Safety and Compliance. I will be submitting testimony on behalf of L&I ISC. City Council President Johnson, Councilmembers, thank you for this opportunity. I would just ask for your indulgence so that I can briefly highlight four initiatives that we've successfully pursued since we last met.

First, our Audits and Investigation Unit has put together an effective investigative plan that connects the dots when contractors try to game the system and evade L&I violations by creating alter-ego construction

companies. It successfully resulted in an order from the L&I Board of Review giving us legal precedent to revoke the license of both the contractor and the alter-ego entity as well as authority to impose stop-work orders on all their projects.

Also on the enforcement front, L&I ISC has now begun to enforce a construction code provision, enacted back in 2006, which gives the city authority to deny the renewal of contractors licenses and to deny contractors' construction permits if they owe the city unpaid fines and fees. For some unknown reason, this provision targeting scofflaw contractors, passed by the Council many years ago, was never enforced until the Parker Administration came into office and took the bill by the horns.

Third, in addition to conducting inspections with new vigor and proactively working with contractors, through its five district offices, our Construction Inspection staff has instituted a remote inspection unit, which has taken virtual inspections to the next level, conducting inspections by smartphones on a list of specific permit types that may be appropriate for this new technology. So I'm proud to report that our remote inspections unit received national recognition when it was invited to make a presentation in January at the annual conference of the National Institute for Building Sciences held in Anaheim, California, about all the good work ISC's remote inspection unit is doing right in our own backyard.

Last but not least, on

March 30th we welcomed a new class of seven inspectors recruits, reducing our vacancy rate to 20%. As part of that effort, we will be implementing a long-awaited, entirely new training protocol with a training syllabus that is comparable to something that you would find in a college-level course. In addition to building code construction coursework, our new training protocol includes instructional report writing, learning how to put together more effective cases when going to court to enforce construction site and OVs and having recruits spend additional time in the districts to get a practical feel for the job much earlier in their training.

In conclusion, I respectfully ask for the continued support of Council. With your partnership and the tireless work

of our ISC staff, our inspectors, plan reviewers, code officials, clerks and enforcement officers, we can deliver on our mission. They are the best and have earned our respect and gratitude. As a result, I can confidently say that the historic, reorganized, reinvigorated L&I can indeed bring Mayor Parker's vision and agenda for a city government that you can see, feel and touch to construction projects in every neighborhood of the city. Thank you for your attention and consideration. I look forward to answering any questions you might have.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

Chair recognizes Councilmember Katherine Gilmore Richardson, then Councilmember Dr. Anthony Phillips and Councilmember Jamie Gauthier.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Thank you. Thank you so much, Council President.

And thank you to the L&I team. Starting with both Commissioners, I'm going to get used to this at one point, I'll email the right office or call the right office at some point but, Commissioner Greenwald and also Commissioner Miranda and to your teams, Lisa Adams and Diane Lucidi, they're always a great resource to get information out on L&I services and cases. I mean, particularly when the cases need extra attention.

Jennifer, Jennifer, Jennifer, thank you, thank you. Jennifer, I hope you can hear me. I hope you're watching. Thank you so much for all of your extra special help on the complex cases, the nuisance businesses, the

nuisance properties, the stores fixing cars on the street, the locations with no rental licenses. Thank you so much, Renee Reinhardt, drug paraphernalia reporting, working with my team, and also Sarah Adamo and to all the inspectors out there and all the team members, thank you very, very much.

I quickly just wanted to get a few questions on the record relative to some of the staffing vacancies, your vacancy rate, and we know we go up and down. Can you just tell us what your vacancy rates are and your vacancy allowance request? And how many positions have been vacant for 12 months? How many have been vacant for 18 months? And even if you can't tell us today, if you could provide a list to City Council of the vacancies by position and by

unit.

And I ask that because we know that some of the more complex cases, you need to have trained inspectors who have a certain amount of time in L&I in order to do that work. And so, if you could just talk a little bit about your vacancy rate and the vacancy allowance, and also which positions have been vacant for more than a year?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Sure. So we have two different divisions, as you know the QOL and ISC. On the QOL side, we're at a 5% vacancy rate, which is the lowest it's been in quite some time. Now, that being said, we just hired eight inspectors. We have four more starting next Monday, and that will get us to only having one inspector vacancy. The requirements are different

though, so ours don't need as much as Commissioner Miranda's do with regard to the field inspection training and things like that from the trade.

So we were able to staff up. We worked with OHR to get new lists that we've actually got the L&I code inspector, enforcement inspector on the critical list, so there will always be a list for us. So we're making a lot of progress.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Okay. Now for Inspection, Safety and Compliance, that's on Miranda's side, you all have 250 General Fund-budgeted positions, but you've had 40 positions unfilled for the last two fiscal years. And you can sort of read and follow in the detail that you all are adjusting the positions and titles in that particular unit, so if you could just explain the

reasons for those shifts and how this will help you to increase your staffing and/or achieve the staffing necessary to handle the case load?

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: Yes. We're at, I think, a 20% vacancy rate now. Our folks have to go through an extensive state-required certification process, and that takes about four, six months to a year to kind of complete that process. So that kind of limits us to a certain extent. However, we're out there trying to make do with what we have and hopefully, we could respond by using, what I call, strategic use of OT to follow up on complaints that need to be addressed. And in that regard, I think we're doing a pretty good job.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Okay. I'm asking

because it seems as if when you read the detail, that you all are trying to rightsize the positions that you have specifically in Inspection, Safety and Compliance, but it also showcases reduction in the building inspectors, building inspector-budgeted positions in that particular unit. And so, I wasn't sure if that was an attempt to sort of rightsize your budget a bit to be more accurate around the positions that you need or if I'm just not following it correctly relative to the vacancies in your unit?

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: No, we weren't trying to downsize with regard to inspectors. We're just trying to fill the vacancies that we have. That's the challenge.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Received. Okay. And

I heard the bell and I'll honor the clock, but I just wanted to notate this for the record, for the CVNs and all of the sort of fines that are coming into L&I, 4.5 million at FY25, estimated at 4.7 million at FY26, projecting a slight increase to 4.8 million in FY27, I just wanted to know if that total is inclusive of all the nuisance business code violation fines that are issued under Section 9-4400 of the code?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: It's a combination of all the fines, code enforcement fines, so all the ones that will be on the construction side and all the Title 9 ones, so it's both.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Okay. You all are keeping a record of the amount of revenue that's lost to the unpaid code violation fines every year?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: We have a record of the fines that were put out and then the fines that are collected. We do coordinate with Revenue on a regular basis.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Okay. And then if we can just make sure -- and I have this more so for PPD more than anything, that we're also coordinating with them. I mean, you know, we all work together with the Nuisance Business Task Force. But particularly for the businesses that have the critical violations that need to be closed immediately, I just want to make sure that partnership is working.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Partnership's been fantastic. Actually, I just double checked this morning, we have 43 active chronic nuisance ceases

right now, and that's a subset of the 448 that are out there right now. So that's just that recent combination, a coordination of doing the 9-4400s with us. Police issue, they do intent to cease, it comes to us and then we cease it. So it's been wonderful, a great partnership.

COUNCILWOMAN GILMORE RICHARDSON: Okay. That'll be great. Okay. Thank you so much and I'll reserve the other questions on that for PPD.

Thank you, Council President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Phillips and Councilmember Jamie Gauthier and Councilmember Bass.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Thank you, Council President.

Commissioner Bridget and also Matt(sic) Basil, I just want to say, Commissioners, thank you so much for your work with us over the past several years in our office as we try to improve the quality of life of Philadelphia. Recently, we came to the department to talk about a real problem that we were seeing in our neighborhoods, landlords who failed to respond to violations and failed to respond to unsafe conditions. We engaged with your team early before the legislation that we introduced called the Non-resident Landlord Accountability bill was introduced.

However, we provided recommendations to address the problem. We tried to work with the team. We did not come to any conclusion. So now, we have this bill in place and the goal for me is to figure out how we're going to

make sure that this bill becomes really enacted in a way that we can see it being put in place.

So for the record, I just want to ask a couple of questions: How would a department verify and ensure that property owners are providing a real physical address rather than the P.O. Box as well as utilizing a real phone number and they also will have an agent in place through this Non-resident Landlord bill?

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: Yes. They submit their application to eCLIPSE and that process kind of processes the whole application. And at that point, we get the information and decide whether or not it's a past muster, so to speak, and then we either issue the license or inform the applicant that the license won't be issued.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: So

if you could describe to me what is the department's enforcement timeline? Because what I'm trying to ask about is we're going to have to enforce this bill, right, that is now going to be in the books. So I just want to get a better sense of is there going to be enforced -- are you going to work on the enforcement after the 30 days is noted or 60 days or 90 days? Because if the landlord is not being responsive, right, there's supposed to be a violation of $500 for not being responsive and then a potential rental license, suspension or revocation.

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: Councilmember, that's an enforcement issue. That would fall on the Quality Of Life side of L&I.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: So from what I understand from when the team met

with your staff on that piece of legislation, it was you needed the local managing partner or managing agent, right, to be on the license, so that part would fall on Basil's side to make sure they're collecting that information, which I believe they said they can do. It's already collected in some part. I think they have to tweak the system a little bit so that will take a little bit of time just to do an enhancement. But I don't think it's a major enhancement.

Then if for some reason a person applies for a rental license and they don't provide that information, we could do an automatic violation, like it could come out of the system, you know what I'm saying. So the enforcement piece could live in the system. Then if they don't continue to not comply with the

violations, then we could physically go out and start, you know what I mean, go through the other enforcement end. But I think it could be automatic right through the system, because it's just a matter of flagging whether the information was provided or not.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Right, so -- and I heard the bell. So I just want to say what I was looking for is what's going to be your threshold now? So --

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: I didn't hear that.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: What's going to be your thresh -- basically what's going to be the point where you're going to begin the enforcement? Is it going to be -- if you have a violation and they're not responsive, after 30 days or 60 days, have you looked into that? And then you're going to

say, okay, we're going to give you the $500 fine or potentially send them a letter saying we're going to revoke your license or when is going to be the point of --

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: We would follow our normal enforcement process, which whatever you got out of eCLIPSE, the letter telling you needed to provide this information, we didn't get it within a 30-day, so our inspection SLA is 35 days, we would do an inspection. If you don't comply with that upon a reinspection, it's another 35 days. Usually you would send it to court or do a fine. So it will depend on this issue what else we find on that property.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Okay. Thank you, Council President. I'll follow up later.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT

JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

Councilmember Jamie Gauthier and Councilmember Cindy Bass.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you, Council President.

Good afternoon, Commissioners. Thanks to both of you and to your teams for the work that you do on behalf of the city every day. My questions are about vacant buildings, which I believe touches both Quality Of Life and Inspection, Safety and Compliance. I'm going to get my first two questions on record, allow you to answer and then get to more if I can or if I have time.

There was some attention given last summer to the fact that the city stopped proactively collecting and publishing data updates as it relates to vacant properties, which we know are major

contributors to issues like illegal dumping and gun violence. So keeping this baseline data current is a crucial way for a variety of government initiatives to be effective.

And so, my first question is, why was this decision made and is there any plan for the city to resume updating and publishing this data? And then next, I know that we've seen quicker response times to vacant property service requests this year and we're grateful, especially to Quality Of Life, for engaging in a specific partnership with one of our community organizations, One PA West Southwest Rising, in order to inspect a series of dangerous properties in our district. So thank you for that.

One area that has still been a bit of a black box for my

office is which properties end up getting referred to the Law Department for court action and why. From the outside, there doesn't seem to be a consistent set of criteria that we can identify that determines this, and many properties can pile up violations for years with no court action.

And so, my second question is or a challenge is, I want to find a way to speed this process up to get faster action on these nuisance properties, so can you walk us through what those criteria are and if they're written down somewhere? And what suggestions do you have to try to get court action on these properties on a faster timeline?

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: Unsafe and ID'd properties, what we'll do is go out, send an inspector, make an evaluation and

issue a violation. And then that in turn has the -- we have to track down the property owner. A lot of times a lot of these properties are involved in tangled titles and it's difficult to track down the responsible person, but we send out notices of violations, then they have 30, 35 days to respond, and then we do a follow-up to see if there was any compliance. If there's no compliance, then we will go back and I think we're required to do a second violation, as per the whole department, and then the same process applies. And then after that, then it's ripe for legal action.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: I don't think we're mystified about that part of the process. In fact, many of these properties have violation after violation after violation. They are past the first

and the second part of that review. What I'm asking is once a property gets to a certain point, is there a standard set of criteria for what moves through court action and what doesn't? We have not been able to identify that, so I'm trying to get to that with you. What criteria your department uses? And is there a way to be more transparent about that and to move this process along more quickly when legal action is clearly needed to get a result?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: I can take that part. So there is a court flow process and it actually identifies what cases you would send to municipal court, what ones you would send the CCP. As Commissioner Miranda already had stated, unsafe or something like that, if you want to demolish a building, that would go to CCP, right.

So there's a flow. So for example, like sign permits, you would send that to Municipal Court. You wouldn't send it to Common Pleas Court. But if there was an unlawful use of a thing, you would send it to Common Pleas. So what happens is it goes from L&I, after they do exactly what Commissioner Miranda said, you do both sides. You do the inspection, the reinspection, then the third inspection and then you decide to send it to court. But it goes to the Law Department. And then either side bundles all of those violations, all the information up for the Law Department. The Law Department makes a final determination of whether it goes to court or not.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay. I think that's what I'm asking. I'm not asking about what

makes something eligible, right, for court action or I'm not asking about how we determine which court. I'm assuming that out of all the properties eligible to move forward for some kind of legal action, we're not sending 100% of them forward.

What I'm asking you is, with the percentage that we are moving forward, what criteria are we making to make that determination, to select them? And if it's the Law Department that does that, that's fine. But what is the set of criteria that they are using I assume in partnership with you?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: So you would have to ask the Law Department when they determine what they send and what they don't send to court. But like I said, we have a standard where we

do those three inspections and then we would process it to court.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay. It would seem like everyone should kind of be abreast of how those decisions are made and should weigh in. So maybe I'll ask for a conversation with you guys and the Law Department to try to just hone in on that a little more.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Sure.

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: Councilmember, what we're doing now is we established a new court district unit which is focused on making better and stronger cases and trying to address some of these obstacles that we're faced with. And that court district unit just came within the last couple of months, and it's just getting ready -- we have plans to maybe expand and it's being led by a

fellow by the name of Gene Stallworth, who is a rising star at L&I. So we have complete confidence that Gene might be able to answer some of these issues. So we have a plan.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Yes, I would love to talk to Gene about that. Thank you. And then can you briefly answer the first question. I think it's important that we're being transparent about the data about these vacant properties, but we saw that we are not updating that information. Why was that decision made? And then can we go back to publishing it?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: I know there was an article in the Inquirer that talked about this and then we did some research into it. So that vacant property index has not been discontinued. It does continue.

L&I is only one department that feeds into that indicator. So like, PGW does, PWD, it isn't owned by the Department of L&I. From what we've been told by OIT, Central OIT, it still exists and it's still out there. And they did actually send us a link so we could probably send everyone a link. We did respond to the reporter that way, but I don't know if it ever made --

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA:

And just to add, our OIT people were very upset with that article because they did not stop compiling that information. So the reporter did not have her facts straight or his facts straight.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

So we are updating the information?

MS. COLLINS-GREENWALD:

Yes.

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA:

Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER:

Okay. Thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

Councilmember Cindy Bass, Councilmember Brooks, then Dr. Nina Ahmad.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

Okay. Thank you, Mr. President.

Good afternoon. How's everybody doing? Good to see you guys. I want to start out saying thank you for all of your hard work and for always accepting my calls no matter what time of day or night or middle of the night. You all have been just really accessible and responsive and I appreciate that. And I just want you to know that because I know that L&I is probably one of the most, if not the most, challenging departments in the City of Philadelphia to

operate.

And so, I had a couple of questions. And most of these questions we probably have talked about in some capacity before. I wanted to speak specifically, Commissioner Miranda, you mentioned revoking licenses and I'm trying to figure out under what circumstances are licenses revoked because it seems as if when we try to, you know, point out that someone is a really bad actor, that we don't get the enforcement that we're looking for.

And I'm just going to give you an example, one we've been working on lately in which there was a developer who's building a building and the building itself is a whole other issue. But they didn't make the One PA call. And the One PA call is where the markings will determine where your

gas lines and your other lines are so that you don't hit anything. It's very, very important.

And so, this development started with no call to have those markings done and designated. It then resulted in a gas leak. It then resulted in -- well, also resulting from the contractor and developers, you know, bad business policies in my opinion. Electrical wires were left exposed and they were sparking and then they were cited for stealing electricity. And then there's the fact that there was no sock drain and permits were not displayed properly. They were posted on the house. And yet there's a fence that's maybe 30 feet away from the house, so you can't see what's posted because you're so far away, so the neighbors are not informed and not included.

And we've talked about these things. And I'm trying to understand and I'm really struggling with understanding why it has been so hard to get someone who is a bad actor and who also incidentally when they started out doing this project, the house that they were demolishing, they did the demo and it was so destructive that it actually put a hole in the next door neighbor's wall. They could see into the construction site from their property. And so, it just feels as if we just can't get the level of enforcement that we would like to see on a site like this, which is really just, you know, quite egregious. So that's the first thing, why is it so incredibly difficult?

And the other thing I wanted to talk about was nuisance businesses, which has been an issue

of mine for a long time and enforcement around businesses that are just bad actors. And part of it made me -- just recently, part of all of this thinking around all of the enforcement issues made me think are we expecting things of L&I that we should be expecting from someone else or from a different department or should there be another department that does some of the things that we expect from L&I? Are we unfairly targeting L&I as the end-all-be-all to help us fix with these enforcement matters? Because it just doesn't feel like we are making the level of progress that we would like to make.

And I remember a few years ago we were here and we were talking about window coverings. And I forget who it was. It wasn't -- neither of you were the

commissioners at that time. But I remember whoever was here, we were talking about windows and businesses are only supposed to be covered. Do you remember what the number is, Bridget?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: 50%. They should have no more than 50, yes.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: And it is so common now to see a business that is completely, totally wrapped in advertisement for their business. You have no idea what's going on. Whether it's the front door, the side door, the windows, everything is wrapped up, so you have no idea. And it's a little disconcerting and really, in my opinion, inappropriate for a neighborhood business to be so wrapped up and you walk in and you have no idea what you're walking into. But those are just a few of

my questions. So I don't know if you want to talk about any of those.

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: Well, we discussed that one property with your staff and with you also, Councilmember. First on the utility markings, believe it or not that is not reported to L&I. That's reported to Harrisburg.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: It's not L&I's responsibility, but I guess what I'm wondering is, is this something that, you know, should it be reported? Is that something legislatively that we need to do to make sure that you all know because I think it's so important that you all should know this. And I think if someone doesn't have the knowledge to know that, to make a PA One call and you call yourself a developer, that's a problem. It's a big red flag.

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: That's a good idea. Let's kind of explore that. Also, we've sent out inspectors to that site number of times and we determined that they do have their licenses and they do have their permits. So at this point we really have no basis to issue a stop-work order. However, be that as it may, it all boils down to proof. And I would urge the neighbors to make a 311 complaint so that something is on the record so it can't be construed that we're focusing and harassing this particular contractor, so something's on the record. And based on that, then we can send out our audits and investigation unit as a follow-up and hopefully, there's stronger proofs.

And I would also suggest that the neighbors also follow up their 311 complaints with photos

and other documentation, you know what I mean. And I would also suggest that they can kind of supplement what they file to 311, by filing a -- it's addinfoli@phila.gov. It's our email address, and they can supplement what they provided the 311 and that will give us a factual basis, stronger proofs to maybe take action against some of these bad actors.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

Okay. I think that this is going to be a much longer conversation, I think. And I don't want to hog up any more time, but I do think that trying to get a level of enforcement for those of us who have been here for more than five minutes, like it's hard to get the level of enforcement that you're trying to get to make the quality of life for your neighbors

acceptable. And so, that's why I'm wondering is it all L&I or should we be looking at a different vehicle to get where we're going? It's just a thought.

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA:

Well, what we're doing on our side is, I call it, a cat and mouse game with these bad actors. And we have two specific units, Saturday Patrols and Clean Sites Initiatives, that we kind of increase our presence off hours at the end of the work day on Saturday, when these bad actors think that they could get away with stuff. So we can certainly put that particular property on our Saturday patrols to see if they can eyewitness some of this bad activity, this bad conduct.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS:

Okay. I'll come back.

Thank you,

Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

Councilmember Kendra Brooks, Councilmember Dr. Nina Ahmad, Councilmember Quetcy Lozada.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Thank you, Council President.

One of the topics that we are starting to hear about more in the city is data centers. And my question is, has L&I done any preliminary work on data centers? We have heard rumors that there are plans being drawn up and I would like to understand better how you're approaching this issue.

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: No, we haven't --

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: No, we have not been involved in any discussions about data centers, either side.

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA:

That would come under construction part, more likely than not. We haven't heard anything in that regard.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Okay. The next question, LLCs are often used with landlords. One of the issues my constituent services team has been having challenges tracking down bad landlords who shield their identity behind LLCs. Has L&I thought through the LLC disclosure? And what advice would you have for tenants who have this problem?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: So we've been working closely with the Philly Stat 360 team on a lot of these issues with LLCs and combining them. They have a great research team that's been working with us on a variety of issues, nuisance issues, to kind of link people, LLCs, the different --

like it's spelled a different way, if it's in a different name or whatever. They've been doing a great job for us. So I plan on continuing that relationship with them and getting to a point where it just comes more routine.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: My next question is, what percentage of landlords in Philadelphia have a rental license? And what is the goal for raising this number over the next several years? And how do you plan on achieving this?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: So we do not have a clear indication. I know that different reports have given different numbers of how many unlicensed landlords there are. We do know how many units we have and we think with this new proactive approach, we're going to capture that number. I can't say honestly

that we have it right now though, how many are unlicensed. But I do think we will get there.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS: Okay. And through the constituent services issues in our office, they frequently discover landlords that improperly have the Homestead Exemption. Typically landlords apply and receive this exemption but do not live in that home. Do you have an estimate on a percentage of improper Homestead Exemptions that exist in our city? And have you had a conversation with the Revenue Department about how to approach this problem?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: We have not been involved in anything to do with the Homestead issue, but I would imagine that the Revenue Department would have an idea if they coordinated with our license

information. So it might be a better question for Revenue.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS:

Okay. So is there any way between Revenue and L&I to help determine the number of unlicensed landlords, because it will show that someone is a landlord based on some of the data that we're collecting and other services in the city to prevent disappearing landlords, we can't find a landlord, crumbling properties and then we can't figure out who owns it or they live in New York or Florida? Usually Florida, that's been like the -- yeah.

MS. COLLINS-GREENWALD:

We coordinate with the Revenue Department quite often and that is something I can bring to the table the next time I'm with the Commissioner and see what we can find out.

COUNCILWOMAN BROOKS:

Thank you so much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

Councilmember Dr. Nina Ahmad and Councilmember Quetcy Lozada, then Councilmember Rue Landau.

COUNCILWOMAN AHMAD: Thank you, Council President.

Good afternoon. Good to see you both. I wanted to ask about something. You were very helpful to us, Commissioner Greenwald, when we passed Bill 250774 about including a link to registration information. I have to commend you and tell my colleagues and the public how smoothly that process went, how easily we worked together and how quickly you responded and put that required link into the material that a renter gets when they rent from a landlord.

My question is -- thank you very much for that. My question is, how do you keep track whether the landlords are actually giving that information to their renters? I did an informal polling right in my own office. People who had just recently rented, it was not uniform, meaning somebody did get it and somebody didn't. It seemed it could be just not because they didn't want to, they might not -- smaller landlords with smaller, fewer number of units may or may not know about this. So I just wondered how we can be helpful, one, to make sure this packet gets out to them and they are actually doing that because it's no skin off their nose? You're making everything available for them, and maybe you have a tracking system to do that already that I just don't know about.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: So we do not have a tracking system, but we're doing a big public push for that. And, yes, we would love to partner with the Council offices, the neighborhood, the Mayor's Office, everyone. That booklet Partners for Good Housing, if no one's ever seen it, go on to our website and look at it. Sarah Adamo, who works for us, did -- and I know you all know because she testifies all the time --

COUNCILWOMAN AHMAD: Yes. I wanted to shout her out too.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: She's amazing and she put that together. And in actuality, she thought of something she was doing when doing a rental thing a few years ago and said, this is what I'll add to that.

There's QR codes in there, there's how you vote. We're looking if there's other pertinent information when someone's moving into a rental property that would help them, we're more than happy to do that. We have it in six different languages. It's in Korean, it's in Chinese, it's in Spanish. We're always looking to improve getting things out to the public.

So I think we're also going to start staffing some of the Neighborhood Action Centers for the Mayor, so we will make sure to have them on hand. They're phenomenal even if you don't have a rental property. There's so much good information in them.

COUNCILWOMAN AHMAD: And to the point of good landlords, bad landlords, this actually is protection for landlords. Because if they didn't hand that packet to

a renter, they're liable. So I think this would allow landlords to pay attention to this, that if you want to protect yourself, make sure you're following the law that requires you to hand this packet, which has an enormous amount of information. And I once again want to say thank you to Sarah Adamo, thank you to all of you, because this was intergovernmental cooperation at its best.

Thank you, Council President.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

Councilmember Quetcy Lozada, Rue Landau, then Nicolas O'Rourke.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Thank you, Council President.

Good afternoon. Thank

you for being with us this afternoon. I just want to continue the conversation about convenience stores and the enforcement or the lack thereof enforcement that occurs across the City of Philadelphia, but specifically I want to speak about the lack of enforcement that I see in the 7th Council District, particularly around our commercial corridors.

We passed legislation some time last year to prevent some of these businesses from opening past 11 o'clock. And I think that it was part of the tools that were necessary by the Philadelphia Police Department to improve public safety, but quality of life as well in that neighborhood. I think we've done a good job as it relates to reducing crime, but we really are struggling to hold these nuisance businesses accountable.

I've done several drive-throughs between 12:00 a.m. and 3:30 a.m. around the 7th Council District to see for myself what many residents complain about. And I know that if I'm seeing it, so is everybody else. And so, my question to you is, how do we better improve enforcement as it relates to some of these convenience stores?

Councilmember Bass mentioned some of the frustrations that she's experiencing and I'm experiencing the same. So I'm just trying to figure out how do we do that better?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Sure. So on the curfew issue first, and then I'll answer your question and Councilwoman Bass' too as well as about the nuisance businesses. So we have an a memorandum of understanding with

Philadelphia Police Department because they're out there at night, so they're the enforcement agency for that. And I know in your Council District, because we're tracking what they did, so they have a total of 360 they've issued so far to date, curfew violations. So this will go back to all general nuisance businesses. That's that 9-4400, that legislation.

So here's how we can curb nuisance businesses. So the police department goes out, they write a violation. The police department goes out again, they write another one, a CVN, a ticket. They write a third. That business is now a chronic nuisance. If that business gets three tickets within a 12-month period, it is a chronic nuisance. Okay. So then the police department issues an intent to cease with us, with L&I.

So the business owner has to go to the local police captain, I mean, district, yeah, and come up with a nuisance abatement agreement. Those agreements are different. It could be your store needs lighting or you need a security guard or you can't have -- whatever it is, it's different, you know what I mean. It's different to the areas of the city. It's different to the store, what the issue is of that store.

If that business does not come to the police captain and make a nuisance abatement agreement, that is forwarded to us immediately. We go out and do the cease operations. We do the poster, we close it. The police department then enforces that. So we don't do the enforcement on the cease. The police department does. That's for everything. So it is a

really good process that if used more frequently, it can work. We have over 400 businesses that are closed right now, ceases that are there right now.

So if that process really works, and we have that really in sync with the police department, that Neighborhood Services Unit under D.C. Massey is amazing, we've been doing a lot of good work, so I think expanding that -- I've had some conversations with Councilwoman Bass about maybe we go out in conjunction with the police captains and the different districts and we talk through it with your team and everyone else to make it maybe more known out there.

Because I think there's a disconnect that you should call L&I if some things are happening when it's really the police department. And I think that maybe

we need to do a better job, us and the police department of communicating that out to everyone within the department, boots on the ground, and to you guys.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: We for sure have to do something different. I can speak to, you know -- unintentionally, some of these food trucks got caught up in this curfew bill. I can speak to one food truck that has over 200 of these CVNs.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Okay. Then that --

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: And I don't understand what the problem is, right. I can drive by and the same convenience store is open every single day. And so, there obviously is some break in communication between L&I or the police department. We talked to the police department. The police

department says L&I has all of the paperwork. I talked to L&I and L&I says, well, we didn't get anything from the police department. So I want us to figure out a way where we're not doing this, right, and we're really holding people accountable, because we're not just sitting here to legislate, to legislate, right.

There was a very serious problem in the 7th Council District, where three of the five most violent police districts were in the 7th, and we made a commitment to the people that we were going to prioritize public safety. And part of what we worked with the Administration, the Law Department, Health Department, we all came together to agree that this was the legislation that was going to help us put that tool in the toolbox, and we need to figure

out how we enforce and how we do a better job at that and how do we do that consistently, right.

We can't come and do a sweep in April and then not come back for six months, right. Because, you know as well as I do that they tear those signs down and they continue to conduct business as usual. So I'm just trying to figure out who is the Office of Administrative Review. Where does that land, because from what I understand you all send that to Office of Administrative Review.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: The Office of Administrative Review is where you would go to appeal something. So that's Melissa Andre's group. I think they're under the CAO now. I'm fairly certain. And that's where --

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA:

And is that where you all send the CVNs or the police send the CVNs?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: We don't really issue that many CVNs. We're more notices of violation, so I'm sure that they probably wind up in the Office of Administrative Review. I don't want to say definitely, but probably I think that is the process.

COUNCILWOMAN LOZADA: Okay. Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

Councilmember Rue Landau, Nicolas O'Rourke and Brian O'Neill.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Hi. Thank you so much, Council President.

Thank you guys for being here. Just want to follow up a couple of clarifying questions

about the nuisance businesses just to make sure we're all super clear with the process. You said you have an MOU with the police department, that they do nighttime patrol and that the police department writes the violations, the CVNs. Do they do that during the day also?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Yeah, they can do it during the day or at night.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Are there two pads? Sometimes you write a notice of violation and sometimes that police department writes a CVN or is it always the police department?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: So the police department can do it based on a behavioral thing that they see. We do it based on a code thing that we'll see, so a code violation. So

if we see you don't have fire extinguishers or we see that you have your windows covered, you know what I mean, we would write a notice of violation.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Okay. And even when you do it, if you get three in 12 months, they're considered a chronic nuisance and they have to go to the police department to enter into a nuisance abatement agreement in person?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Yes. The police district captain, yes. And then it goes up through the Deputy Commissioner to get approved. But, yes, you have to make the agreement specific to that nuisance business.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Who follows up with the agreement to make sure they're following it?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: So it goes to the

police department and it goes to L&I QOL. So the police department does the enforcement. If there's a nuisance agreement, the police department does the enforcement. If there's a cease, they do the enforcement.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: If there's a cease, who does it?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: The police department. Did I say the opposite? Sorry.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: So they do both. They're doing the enforcement --

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Yes.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: If you go out and you issue your cease and desist and you put up the sticker, what happens next?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: If we put up a sticker and that business opens, it is

enforced by the police department, we can then process that to court because now we know, okay, well, they violated everything, we will process it to court. We hope that the cease is what stops you from doing the activity. Sometimes we know that that doesn't have that so we will process you to court. You could eventually have your license revoked through the court process, but you should stay ceased. I mean, that's the ultimate goal, right.

So the police department does the actual enforcement. If we were out there and saw it, we would say wait a minute, this is happening, we will call the police department immediately and have them come out.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Okay. That was helpful. Thank you. Do you ever contact the

District Councilperson when somebody has gotten as far as being a nuisance business in an agreement with the police department or does the police department ever do that?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: I'm not sure if the police department does, but it's not a bad idea to do that because it probably makes more sense for everyone to know what's going on in their district. Probably makes a lot of sense. So I will take that back up to the police department.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Thank you. And my second question just has to do with again data and rental licenses. We have so many ways in which you can determine that a place is probably a rental property, whether or not they have a rental license when they got the rental license. Is L&I working on any way of bringing this to the

forefront? You could sit back and look at municipal court filings, see that someone filed a complaint. There's already been a lease someone's been in for five years, but they just got the rental license two months ago, that could be a way.

There's got to be, you know, we keep talking about technology, AI, ways in which we could use it that's going through various databases of ours, why aren't we doing that? We know when there's multiple meters on a building. Do you know that? When there's multiple meters on a building, are you looking to see if there's a rental license?

If the Water Department is sending multiple monthly bills, do you know that there's a rental license there? Who's doing this work? There's got to be a way in

which we're finding the landlords who aren't licensed to get them licensed.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: So if the funding comes through to start this proactive rental inspection program, a big piece of that, if you look into the positions that we want, there is a code administrator in there and that person will be looking at all different ways in which we can identify folks that are not licensed.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Okay. Thank you. I also think there's technology that can do this.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Oh, God, in conjunction with technology, yes.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Thank you so much for putting this at the forefront.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

Councilmember Nicolas O'Rourke and Councilmember Brian O'Neill, Councilmember Jeffrey Jay Young.

MS. COLLINS-GREENWALD: Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCILMAN O'ROURKE: Commissioner Greenwald.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Councilmember O'Rourke.

COUNCILMAN O'ROURKE: Good to see you. I want to thank you and I want to thank your entire team for all the work that you've done to stand up the proactive rental inspection program that you just finished referencing. As Member Bass mentioned, I am not aloof to the fact that one of the biggest most difficult tasks, probably in city government, the City of Philadelphia is running

this particular department, and this thing that you have begun to stand up is a very, very, very big deal and you know that.

I want to remind us all how much of a gamechanger that it will be for all the renters in the city as a result of that. This is a fundamental shift in how Philadelphia approaches housing safety from a complaint-driven system to one that prevents harm before we get there, before it happens. And I know this didn't happen by accident. It's the direct result of years of work by L&I, by this Administration and by tenants across the city who organize tirelessly with the Safe Healthy Homes campaign to demand a proactive system that protects tenants and in turn holds bad actors accountable.

And while I don't want

to spend too much time on my soapbox, I could, I don't want to, I want to be clear about something in particular. The proactive rental inspection program will only reach its full potential if our city's laws match the ambition of the program. The program will identify risk and find unsafe conditions earlier, but identification alone doesn't keep people or make people actually safe.

What protects tenants is what happens after that, what happens next, whether there are clear, enforceable consequences, whether there are strong incentives to comply quickly and whether tenants have real remedies when unsafe conditions aren't fixed. That's exactly what the Safe Healthy Homes Act is designed to do. It is the enforcement backbone

that allows a proactive inspection system to work as it's intended to work.

So for me, these efforts are deeply dependent upon each other. They hold each other up. Proactive inspections are on the front end and the Safe Healthy Homes Act, the balance of that package brings up the rear. Without passing these bills, I think that we risk building a system that finds problems but doesn't resolve them, finds problems but doesn't at least consistently resolve them.

But when we do pass them, we create a system that actually keeps people safe and preserves our housing stock for years to come. So again, thank you, thank you, thank you. Thank you for this work. Thank you for your support for the Safe Healthy

Homes Act. I've said it before and I'll say it again. L&I is our first line of defense at the intersection of health and safety in this city.

Police and Fire respond to disasters. L&I is the proactive, preventive line of defense that prevents these disasters from ever happening in the first place. The folks at L&I deserve a huge round of applause for their work here. And if there's anybody that works for L&I, you should clap for yourselves, absolutely.

And I think I speak for all of council when I say that we want to ensure that your team is fully resourced as a public safety department should be resourced. To that end, here's my questions: First on staffing, the budget references 13 new positions. Are

those inclusive of the five positions created for the pilot or are they in addition? And with these hires, what is the total number of L&I inspectors and support staff dedicated to residential code enforcement? That one you probably can answer pretty quickly. Let me get the other one on record because I heard the bell.

Second, in reference to Safe Healthy Homes, I've been doing my due diligence, my team has as well, to speak with many stakeholders, and one question that we've received from landlords is "What happens if I can't renew my license because L&I hasn't signed off on an inspection or reinspection?" It comes up all the time. We've heard concerns from some landlords that they may struggle to stay in compliance because of delays in inspections or

reinspections by L&I.

My staff has spoken with your team, and our understanding is that when an owner escalates an issue related to license renewal, L&I is typically able to turn around that particular complaint or that issue within about five days. Can you confirm that timeline for the record and clarify how that process works in practice?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Sure. So I'm going to answer the question on the inspectors first. So hopefully, there'll be eight new additional inspectors added to the five we have now. So there'll be 13 inspectors. There'll be a director, there'll be two supervisors, there'll be the code administrator that I just mentioned who is going to be looking at ways to come up with unlicensed rentals

through technology, so not just one person just doing that, and a service rep who will probably keep it all together. That will be that. So that's what the team will look like. So the existing five will stay. And this is in addition, what we're talking about there.

We did talk about during the hearing and prepping for the hearing, if there is a problem where we on either side of L&I is holding something up, we would absolutely have an escalation process for someone that's caught in the system. If they had their violation, it's been -- we wrote a violation and then we didn't get back out, we would ensure that we will get back out there if it's holding up someone from getting their license and not collecting rent. We certainly do not want to

punish anyone, you know what I mean, that's trying to do the right thing at all that's coming into code compliance. So, yes, we can stick to that escalation process, absolutely.

COUNCILMAN O'ROURKE: Okay. That five days though, that is the timeline that you typically get these things turned around in?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: That's the timeline we're saying now. I mean, hopefully it could be quicker.

COUNCILMAN O'ROURKE: Okay. But so far --

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: So far we're saying five, but it could be quicker. Hopefully, we always want to improve our times where they drop.

COUNCILMAN O'ROURKE: Okay. I don't know if there will be another round. I got a couple

more questions I'd like to ask. Do we have another round, Mr. President?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: (Gestured to continue).

COUNCILMAN O'ROURKE: Okay. Let me get my questions out. Thank you, sir.

On implementation, the goal of inspecting all licensed rental units on a rotating five year cycle is very encouraging. So again, hat tip to you on that one. Very encouraged by that. You've indicated there will be a weighted system to prioritize properties that are based on violation history and risk.

Will this require a new inhouse software or a new contracting system to manage? Can you walk us through the plan for this? And then let me just say these other two as well so you can

try to respond so I don't eat up the clock. Can you also share how the Administration is developing direct pipelines for Philadelphians to take roles as L&I inspectors? How long is the training process? How are you making it more accessible for young Philadelphians to be trained for these positions? How are we building this in so we can just get a pipeline running and going? I think it'll be a great benefit of the city.

And I know there's a constant concern that inspectors will take the training that they have, I think we talked about this, and then leave the city for higher-paying jobs out in the county, elsewhere. So what new efforts have you taken to retain trained inspectors? Because I want to be mindful about that as well as we try to ramp this up. So those are

all my questions. I can repeat them again if you need me to.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: I'll start with the first two and then I'll turn it over to Basil for the last one. So we plan on working within our current system, our eCLIPSE system. We can pull a lot of data out of there, pull a lot of reports out of there, we can figure out how to weight things. So we don't need a new system. We have some great analysts on our team that have been able to actually pull some great data out and some reports. So that's how we're going to figure out how to weight everything. So we will not need a new system, no new contract. So it'll be business as usual there.

As for a pipeline, I think it might be easier for our group to have a pipeline than

Basil's, who does need more of the construction experience on the side. But I'll let him speak to his inspectors. Our inspectors don't need to come in with the trades backgrounds. So what we have been talking about with our HR team is working with the Mayor, the Community College Municipal college of actually having folks come in that way. We can pull folks that way.

We hire temps into our Clean and Seal program so --

COUNCILMAN O'ROURKE: Say that again.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: We hire temporary workers in our Clean and Seal program, so we have a pipeline. What we do is right now we ask our employees, is there anyone you know that's struggling, needs a job, we'll put you through this program.

You go through the L&I temporary program. If you get through a year, you come off probation, we hire you as a full-time city employee as an abatement worker, D.C. 33-represented and all that. So we have a pipeline there for Clean and Seal. We can absolutely start a pipeline with CCMI to actually get those folks on our L&I inspector list because it actually would flow very nicely for us.

COUNCILMAN O'ROURKE: The Community College for Municipal Employment you're talking about?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Yes.

COUNCILMAN O'ROURKE: 1,000% big fan. Let everyone in the Administration know, a big fan. Please make that a thing. That'll be good.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: We absolutely have had

conversations within our HR. We have a brand new list out, so we have to figure out when we can do that, but we have it as a critical list. So once we hire some more, we'll actually start to have the next list announced and that's where we can start that partnership with Carol and her gang. So I think it's going to be really good.

COUNCILMAN O'ROURKE: Wonderful. Commissioner Miranda, do you want to --

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: Councilmember, we are all on the same page. We want to re-outreach to bring young people into construction trades at L&I. Number one, we formed a new position at L&I. It's called the investigative position, which means that you don't need the extensive construction experience that an inspector needs. And we're looking

at that as a potential for an entry-level position where a young person can come in graduating high school or whatever, get some experience in construction trades and then take the step up to the inspector position.

We also have had a concerted effort to reach out to the vo-tech programs throughout the city. Every year I bring a group of L&I inspectors to St. Gabriel's down in Grays Ferry. They have an excellent program down there. I think it's guns down and tools up. And it explained to the kids what needs to be done for construction trades, the experience that they could get and also the potential to really develop a career.

And I often mention to the kids when I go out there and speak, that the Mayor herself at these neighborhood budget town hall

meetings says that -- did you know -- she says to me as an attorney, did you know that doctors and electricians, carpenters can make more money today than a doctor or an attorney. So there is huge potential in construction trades. And I explain it to the young people that the stars are aligned. The Mayor wants to do a concerted effort to build 30,000 new affordable housing units. So you're going to need more carpenters, you're going to need more electricians, you're going to need skilled trades folks. So the stars are aligned. And I can't emphasize more to these young folks that they need to focus on construction trades. And so, we're on the same page on that.

And the final piece of that is perhaps you folks in your Council offices can get the word

out to young people in your district as well as older folks who have some construction experience that L&I on the construction site is a heck of a place to work.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you. And provide members of Council with the new description and we can also be able to promote it to help build the pipeline for L&I.

COUNCILMAN O'ROURKE: Exactly. Thank you, Mr. Miranda. Thank you, Commissioner Greenwald, again for your work. In conclusion, I absolutely believe hearing from other members ask questions to you all agreeing that this is one of the hardest departments to run, we desperately need to fund you all, get you staffed up to be able to do all the work that needs to be done. This seems like one of the most crucial

departments to be able to function the city well. And I think all of us as members would be grateful if you guys were well-funded and well-staffed. I think it'll be for the glory of the city.

Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

Councilmember Brian O'Neill, Councilmember Young.

COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Thank you.

Commissioners, it wasn't that long ago where we only had one Commissioner. I congratulate the Mayor, not for splitting the department which makes perfect sense, but for who we picked to be the two commissioners because that makes all the difference in the world. When you combine both of you, knowledge, deep knowledge and

accessibility, some of which we've never had on either one of those with the L&I Commissioner or you have one or the other, but always lacking. We always need more L&I workers.

The two of you seem to be doing better at getting the L&I staff where it should be. And everybody's always agreed that it's too small, that we need more, more people, and I think you both have credibility within the administration and that is probably what's helping with it.

Basil, the fact that both of you have been referred to by not just in this room at these hearings, as Commissioner Basil and Commissioner Bridget, because I find myself doing the same thing. For me, it's a term of endearment or a badge of honor in the City Council at least, because that's

the accessibility part, it's personalized and we don't have to find the person who is somewhere in the department if we could just find them to do this, because we know you're going to find them for us, and we go direct, which is unusual to say the least, within your department.

Bridget, -- Commissioner Bridget, I want also thank you because of the creativity, and just as you were talking about hirings, it's creative, it's tackling a problem with common sense and some guts because you're trying something new. But, Bridget, what you did with combining L&I, instead of L&I being out there by themselves, doing enforcement, Police, CLIP, Parking Authority, whoever thought they'd be part of something --

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-

GREENWALD: Shout-out to Richie.

COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: -- and, you know, productive. I mean, the Parking Authority has gone under its current leadership from Richie Lazer from an F to an A+ in a very short period of time. So the Clean and Green, Sanitation, you bring that, it's like our armies are out there and they're all syncing together. But to see that and hear that and not have any of that left out, it's all thought out ahead of time. It's teamwork within the departments, intergovernmental within the same government.

It's just been a pleasure to be part of and to know that the L&I has our citizens, our neighbors' backs and it's so important and it's been so short-changed for so long, that I just want to thank both of you.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: I'll pass that along to everyone. Thank you.

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: Appreciate that. It's our pleasure.

COUNCILMAN O'NEILL: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

Councilmember Jeffrey Jay Young, and we will have a brief second round of Councilmember Phillips.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank you, Mr. President.

And I also want to get on the bandwagon of thank you to both of you, because your departments are very critical to what we do here in the City of Philadelphia. We have a lot of nuisance properties, a lot of nuisance businesses. And whenever

we call your office, you're right on it, particularly on my own block. Whenever we call, there's this one house that folks seem to keep getting into. But whenever we call, L&I is right out there ensuring that it gets sealed back up. So we want to thank you for that.

But one question that I have. The first question is regarding the split. So it seems like some things may not be fully split or what operational problems remain unsolved because of the split? And when can Council see a fully stabilized management structure? I guess we want to be able to fund you all at a full capacity for each of your departments. And so, when do you think we'll be able to see that?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: We already have that,

Councilmember. What we're splitting right now, sharing right now is administrative services. And we're actually starting to peel that back in IT, which actually reports to OIT in the first place. So we could send you -- we have an updated org chart. We can send you that. It's like color-coded, shows where everyone's at. We can absolutely give you that. So we're there. We're still operating under the Mayor's executive order for the split. And Basil and I took it, hit the ground running as soon as the executive order was signed. So we're pretty much there.

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA:

Yeah. I have to say that Bridget and I worked together, and we kind of sat down and worked out what should go on the Quality Of Life side, what should go on the Construction side. And folks

marveled at the way we were able to work together. So what I would often say is that it's very simple. It's a Philly thing. Bridget and I both -- I'm a third-generation Philadelphian, and Bridget fourth-generation. We know the importance of L&I and we are dedicated to public service. So that's the driving force on why we've been able to work so effectively.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank you. In the testimony it says, beginning in 2026 the permit applications will not be issued for license holders of outstanding fees, fines or delinquent taxes. Can you tell us if this were in effect right now, how many applicants will be affected by it and what guardrails will prevent the policy from unintentionally slowing lawful construction activity or small business

compliance?

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA:

Yeah, it's a good question. Currently, if a contractor wants to renew their license and they owe the city fines and fees, right now that is in effect. We plan on implementing the other part of that come July. So everyone has notice that this provision, which like I said was enacted in 2006, now everyone is on notice that this will take effect.

So starting in July, if a contractor owes the city fees and fines and applies for a permit, that will be denied. And it'll be up to the contractor to come in and work out, pay the fines and fees that are owed or work out some sort of payment schedule, whatever, with Revenue and the appropriate parties.

COUNCILMAN YOUNG: Thank

you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

So we're in a brief second round because we're wrapping up. So we have Councilmember Dr. Anthony Phillips, Councilmember Jamie Gauthier. Let me go back for -- Mark left? Okay.

Councilmember Dr. Anthony Phillips, Councilmember Jamie Gauthier. He probably wanted to give a South Philly shout-out. But also Councilmember Rue Landau and Mr. Driscoll and we are done. So y'all have to be very, very brief because we are hard-stopping at 4:00.

So, Dr. Phillips, just be direct with your line of questioning and please be direct with your response.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: I'll be really quick. I just want

to say, can we get a commitment to service level agreements that can be publicized to residents, that we can have a one-pager for all the service level agreements when it comes to violation, follow-up, inspections, unsafe property response, permit, review, all that and more?

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: Yeah, I think we can do that.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Yes.

COUNCILMAN PHILLIPS: Okay.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Chair recognizes Councilmember Jamie Gauthier.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you, Council President.

We've talked about this before, but I just want to get it on record, what is stopping the city from actually making a

stabilization repair on a nuisance property when it isn't imminently dangerous? Just by way of context, it seems like our main course of action for non-imminently dangerous properties is to issue violations, and then the property gets worse and worse and worse. But sometimes with limited and targeted repairs, we can stabilize these properties such as like patching up a roof or making some other type of minor repair. What would it take to get a pilot like this really up and operating?

And I know that it doesn't happen often, but we have in the past made some small repairs to stabilize a property. And so, I'm trying to understand what needs to happen to get us to do this as an established sort of way of operating?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-

GREENWALD: That shouldn't live in the department of L&I. L&I is the enforcement end of that and I think that's what our conversation has been. If there was to be a stabilization fund somewhere, it should be within a department or some entity that has the resources, that has contractors that do construction management. We don't do that. We don't have roofers. We don't have contractors. We wouldn't have them on line. So that would have to live in a different department or a different entity altogether.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Okay. And I'll wrap up quickly. But you all are charged with the significant job of making sure that neighborhoods are safe, right, and that buildings and neighborhoods are safe. And so, I don't think it's kind of enough to say that it

shouldn't live with you. I think we have to have a -- I'm hopeful that we can have an intentional conversation with whatever partners need to be at the table. That could be L&I, PHDC, whatever.

But in a district or a community like West Philly, this is a real big problem. We just have many, many properties that are not safe and are just sitting there getting worse and worse and worse. So I hope we can talk more.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Yeah, we definitely could. We definitely refer things to PHDC all the time that has that mechanism, that has those resources. I'm not saying that they have enough resources. I don't know their situation. But we do work with them all the time because they're actually an entity that has those types of resources,

shall I say.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Hope to talk more.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Sure.

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: And in the interest of knocking down silos on the construction side, we are more than interested in sitting down with the appropriate agencies and talking about maybe expediting the permit process or the inspection process more directly. So we're on board.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: Thank you so much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you.

Councilmember Rue Landau, then Councilmember Mike Driscoll.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Thank you. I have one question, but a statement first that also

might be helpful in this process. Would you consider having a quarterly meeting with your most serious nuisance properties that are falling apart? And that way you can come up with, you know, group decision-making as to what can happen there, whether it's PHDC or others, maybe bring that to the District Councilperson --

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Sure. We're open to -- I say it all the time, we collaborate with anyone. So we are --

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Excellent. I threw that out --

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Yep, absolutely.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: Okay. My question's about outdoor dining. Thank you very much for your work that you've done to help us expand this. But I wanted to

just ask you if you could explain your role in the process for restaurants applying to operate a sidewalk cafe or streetery? And we often hear that small businesses lack a central point of communication as they navigate this process, which can take up to 18 months just to put tables and chairs outside.

How do you communicate with Commerce, Health and Streets and how can this be improved from your area? And I'm asking everybody this.

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: This would be more of a Streets Department issue because they have to make that initial determination. Then they come to L&I and then we can issue whatever they think is appropriate.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU: We've gathered you all together,

which is great, and we're making progress. And Streets is definitely -- everybody I feel like is rowing in the right direction again. But there's been issues when people are being held up in eCLIPSE and other areas that we're looking for as many points of contact for people to move the applications along. And is there any way in which you see that you can improve that process?

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA:

Sure, we can work on that. Absolutely. I can maybe designate someone to kind of spearhead that, and hopefully we can get things back on track and get these licenses issued as soon as possible.

COUNCILWOMAN LANDAU:

Excellent. 2026 is here. We love that. I would love to talk to you more about having one point person

who can help. Thank you so much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

And wrapping us up will be Councilmember Mike Driscoll.

COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: Thank you, Mr. President.

And I just want to thank both Commissioners for your -- you're both on speed dial with my office. I apologize for the volume of requests, not only on behalf of the 6th Councilmanic District but all 10 Districts.

Commissioner Greenwald, I know you've been analyzing utility bills, water bills to find the landlords that might not have licenses to rent. How far along are you on that?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Like I was saying earlier, we have a unit which is going to be looking at all

different kinds of data points to see where we can find those unlicensed rental properties.

COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: What's your time frame on that?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: So I would think -- God, I would think we could have something by the end of the year in place.

COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: End of this year?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Mm-hmm.

COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: Because I think that that is going to be really important in the future. So thank you for that.

Commissioner Miranda, I know it's tough, but you can hire easier than you can in terms of the training and those sorts of things. And once you get them in place, one or two, three years down the road,

they get poached by our neighboring counties. Are there any tools that we can provide or encourage the Administration to give you the tools to keep them here, whether it be -- not violating, you know, policies or --

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: Yeah, that's a challenge, Councilman. That's the bane of our existence. We're concerned. We train these folks, get them experience and boom, they go to a third-party inspection agency. We're in the process of working with OHR to maybe increase salaries and anything that needs to be done to adjust the civil service provisions and requirements. And we'll try to make the best of a bad situation.

COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: If there's any legislative fix, just let us know, if there's anything we

can encourage the Administration.

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: I don't know of anything off the top of my head, but that's a good point. Let me huddle up with my folks and see if there are some specific provisions that we can come back to.

COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: Yeah, just offering it and just want to publicly thank both your departments.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Thank you.

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: Like I said, we have a new training unit leader and we have a lot of confidence in him. And he may have some ideas, you know.

COUNCILMAN DRISCOLL: Okay. Very good.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Thank you very much.

Any other questions or

comments from members of the committee?

(No response.)

Hearing none --

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I have a question.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: What an entrance.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Ayyy, South Philly smooth, slide right in there. Chair recognizes Councilmember Squilla.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Mr. President.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Chair recognizes Chair of Appropriations.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Commissioners. I know you have to go and I'm not going to belabor this point. But I do want to say one thing, I appreciate that possible policy change in that when

working with Clean and Seals, that we normally board up the properties. But then when there's police involved, for people breaking down the boarded-up properties and things like that, is it possible to have a policy where they do use masonry to seal these buildings so that people don't continue to go back in?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Yes. Actually, in conjunction with the police department we just really recently created this policy where, if we're working with the police department on a property on a block, that they consider a nuisance for whatever behavior, legal activity, whatever's going on, we're going directly with the police department to do the masonry seal, so that people don't keep breaking into the same property over and over and

over again.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: And do we have an estimated cost of what it costs to seal these properties, then reseal over the years?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: I don't have that off the top my head. I can get that to you.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Because I mean, it's a major cost to the City of Philadelphia.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: I don't think it's a major cost because we've been doing it pretty successfully in different areas. And it's not like anyone told me stop spending money on all the brick-and-mortars. I think we're okay. I think --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Excuse me one second, Commissioner.

Councilmember Jim Harrity for a point of information.

COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Point of information. Why do we not use the same as the -- have you seen the Housing Authority ones, dog or whatever, it's a d-a-w-g? They have them in my neighborhood on their properties. You can't get in them things. I haven't seen the backs of the houses, what they do back in the back, but -- yeah, it's called dawg. When they put it together, them things are over the door frame. You can't even get the door frame out. I mean, them things are fantastic. I imagine they're expensive --

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: So we've looked into them. You have to rent them and they are super expensive.

COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Why can't you just buy them?

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: This brick-and-mortar was the solution we came up with and it's actually been successful so far. But we looked into that immediately because we thought, you know, why not, and it just wasn't feasible. Yeah, I'm with you. They're --

COUNCILMAN HARRITY: Yeah, I was just thinking that they would be better for emergencies. Like when you brick and mortar them up, if there's a fire in there anyway --

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: Oh, I cleared this with Fire, trust me, before we did this. I absolutely got the okay from Fire.

COUNCILMAN HARRITY: All right. That's all.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Chair recognizes

Councilmember Squilla.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And the last thing is on permitting with the eCLIPSE. And I know the process, everything is online now to apply. When there is specific concerns and complaints, you guys are great with our office. But is there a representative at L&I or somebody that basic individuals can just call to walk through that process when they're trying to get a permit?

Because if you do call Council office, they could help you and guide you and you guys are great. But it's hard for some people to navigate through that process. And I just thought if there was somebody --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Even an Ivy League

graduate such as myself. It's rough sometimes.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA:

Right, it's a challenge. I mean, I don't know if we could create a position or somebody who could help folks walk through that process and guide them. Because L&I is not there to give advice or to tell you what you need, but they are there to say, hey, this didn't work, I can't get this, I can't get through. Because then sometimes you can't get a permit because maybe there's not a tax clearance or you have a violation you didn't know about, and then we can't find out what that violation is, where that person could just guide them and say, oh, this is your problem, this is what you need to fix.

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA:

Councilman, we have our remote support folks down in the concourse

that are accessible and can be very responsive when it comes to issues like that. And of course, if all else fails, just reach out to our office and --

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: I mean, you're great when we reach out. I mean, but if they don't go to that site, there's no play -- can you call and talk to somebody?

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: I think you go online, you make an appointment and remote support will be in touch with you to kind of work out your issues.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: All right. I was thinking maybe we could talk about it and find a way to just make it more accessible.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: There's also a chat function that they use for those issues. There's a chat --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT

JOHNSON: I think you got to read the room on this one. You're talking about bridging the digital divide, right, and everybody may not be savvy to navigate the eCLIPSE system, right. I'm thinking about Mr. Wilson, who owned like four or five, maybe six properties, right, long-term resident in the neighborhood. He's not technically savvy, right, because he grew up in an age where the internet or computers weren't a thing. It was you would go and talk to your committee person, right.

Mr. Bill Barrett, and Mr. Bill Barrett is the Congress person, but he would make it work through Anna Verna, right. And so now, in a different day and age where everything is automated and is online so just building that bridge and --

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: (Inaudible).

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: -- digital divide. If they do go to somebody -- you understand I'm saying, right?

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: Yes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: And somebody to just walking them through -- and that was a great point where Mark said, well, you can have a tax issue, you can have a violation, you may not even know about it, but when you go through that process, that human person can still say, hey, let me walk you through and find out what exactly it is and go from there. And that's something I think this body would fund if y'all accept the money this time around.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: I will say we do have

field offices too that people do walk into --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: You have a couple of them.

COMMISSIONER COLLINS-GREENWALD: -- quite often. Yeah, we have a few field offices. Some for Basil's side, some for our side, people walk in. We do have a physical presence in the Neighborhood Action Centers, the Mayor's thing. So we do have some folks there. But I totally get what you're saying.

COMMISSIONER MIRANDA: Lisa Adams, who's our liaison with Council, goes out on a regular basis to the city's town halls.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: We just want to push on just that one last part, humbly that one person that could say --

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: A

liaison with Council.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: I like that, a liaison for Councilmembers to say -- no, we're dead serious about that. That might be the next level of how we continue to make sure we're improving that customer service.

And so, Mr. Appropriations Chair, how about you put that on part of negotiations with the Administration and see how we could be supportive, if you would sign off on it --

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: He's got to go talk to them first.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Well, after you have a conversation with them. Listen, we're wrapping up and thank you for your time, the two of you.

Any other questions or comments from members of the

committee?

(No response.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: Okay. Hearing none, the Chair recognizes Councilmember Jamie Gauthier for a motion that the public hearing and the meeting on the bills and resolutions before the committee today stand in recess until Tuesday, April 14, 2026 at 10:00 a.m.

COUNCILWOMAN GAUTHIER: So moved.

(Duly seconded.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT JOHNSON: It has been moved and properly seconded that the public hearing and meeting on the bills and resolution before the committee today stand in recess until Tuesday, April 14th at 10:00 a.m.

All those in favor signify by saying aye.

(Aye.)

COUNCIL PRESIDENT
JOHNSON: Anybody opposed?
(No response.)
COUNCIL PRESIDENT
JOHNSON: The ayes have it and the motion carries.
The committee will stand in recess until Tuesday, April 14th at 10:00 a.m., which we will reconvene. Thank you.
(Committee of the Whole concluded at 4:05 p.m.)

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

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



TANEHA CARROLL
Court Reporter - Notary Public

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City of Philadelphia

City Council
Chief Clerk's Office
402 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Meeting Agenda

Wednesday, April 8, 2026

10:00 AM

BUDGET

Room 400, City Hall

Committee of the Whole

260199 An Ordinance Adopting the Operating Budget for Fiscal Year 2027.

Attachments: Bill No. 26019900

260200 An Ordinance To adopt a Fiscal Year 2027 Capital Budget.

Attachments: Bill No. 26020000

260201 An Ordinance To adopt a Capital Program for the six Fiscal Years 2027-2032 inclusive.

Attachments: Bill No. 26020100, As Introduced
L260201, Exhibit A, As Introduced

260202 An Ordinance Amending Chapter 19-2400 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Hotel Room Rental Tax," by providing for an additional excise tax on hotel room rentals, all under certain terms and conditions.

Attachments: Bill No. 26020200

260203 An Ordinance Amending Subcode "A" (The Philadelphia Administrative Code) of Title 4 of The Philadelphia Code (The Building, Construction and Occupancy Code), by adding and revising Zoning Board of Adjustment fees and provisions regarding hearing scheduling, all under certain terms and conditions.

Attachments: Bill No. 26020300

260204 An Ordinance Amending Title 3 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Air Management Code," to modify the amounts of license and permit fees, under certain terms and conditions.

Attachments: Bill No. 26020400

260205 An Ordinance Amending Section 19-1806 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Authorization of Realty Use and Occupancy Tax," to clarify the imposition of the tax on the use or occupancy of real estate with respect to cell towers; all under certain terms and conditions.

Attachments: Bill No. 26020500

260206 An Ordinance Amending Chapter 6-600 of The Philadelphia Code ("Asbestos"), by adding and revising provisions related to various fees, all under certain terms and conditions.

Attachments: Bill No. 26020600

260208 An Ordinance Amending Chapter 19-1800 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "School Tax Authorization," to a add a new Section 19-1808, entitled "Authorization of Rideshare Use Tax," to authorize the Board of the School District of Philadelphia to levy a tax upon the use by a passenger of a transportation network company for a prearranged ride that originates in Philadelphia; all under certain terms and conditions.

Attachments: Bill No. 26020800

260209 An Ordinance Amending Title 19 of The Philadelphia Code, entitled "Finance, Taxes and Collections," to add a new Chapter 19-4800, entitled "Retail Delivery Tax," to establish a tax on orders for the delivery in Philadelphia of retail consumer and other tangible goods, all under certain terms and conditions.

Attachments: Bill No. 26020900

260227 Resolution Providing for the approval by the Council of the City of Philadelphia of a Revised Five Year Financial Plan for the City of Philadelphia covering Fiscal Years 2027 through 2031, and incorporating revisions with respect to Fiscal Year 2026, which is to be submitted by the Mayor to the Pennsylvania Intergovernmental Cooperation Authority pursuant to an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement by and between the City and the Authority.

Attachments: Resolution No. 26022700

Budget hearings will be held in person at Philadelphia City Council Chambers, Room 400 (Fourth Floor), City Hall. Speakers interested in making public testimony should call 215-686-3407 or email Budget.Hearings@phila.gov by 3 p.m. on the day prior to the public testimony session at which they wish to speak and submit the following information:

Date you will be testifying
Full name
Callback telephone number where you can be reached
Street Address
Identify the bill number or resolution number or numbers that will be addressed and whether you support or oppose them.

Dates for Public Testimony:
Tuesday, April 21st, 1:00 PM, Tax Bills
Wednesday, April 22nd, 1:00 PM, School District
Wednesday, May 6th, 10:00 AM- 4:00 PM