COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Abraham Lincoln High School
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
Monday, April 29, 2013
6:52 p.m.

PRESENT:

COUNCIL PRESIDENT DARRELL L. CLARKE
COUNCILMAN BOBBY HENON
COUNCILMAN DENNIS O'BRIEN
COUNCILMAN DAVID OH
COUNCILMAN MARK SQUILLA
COUNCILWOMAN CINDY BASS

BILLS: 120338, 120339, 120651, 130141, 130142, 130150, 130163, 130178, 130179, 130180, 130181, 130182, 130183, 130254

RESOLUTIONS: 130191

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good evening, everyone. We're going to start now. Okay. If I could just have your attention.

Thank you all very much for your cooperation. Thank you all.

First again, good evening.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Good evening.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: This is a Public Hearing of the Committee of the Whole regarding Bills No. 120338, 120339, 120651, 130141, 130142, 130150, 130163, 130178, 130179, 130180, 130181, 130182, 130183 and 130254 and Resolutions No. 130191.

This evening, I would just like to briefly say that, first of all, I would like to thank all of your very much for showing an interest in your government and being here this evening. This is a continuation of the Committee of the Whole.

What we have decided to do as of last year as a part of the budget process, the official budget process, we thought it was appropriate and beneficial to the citizens to actually have budget hearings in neighborhoods. I know often you all

see us on TV. You turn on that little Channel 64. For those that have nothing else to do, that's the public access TV channel. I don't know why you all look at Channel 64. But if you do, you may see us on that public TV channel. We thought it was important to be out here in the neighborhood to get an access to see your government at work first hand.

One of the things that we are going to do, the information in your testimony we are going to ask that it deal with the FY14 Budget. That is essentially our budget that talks about the City Council's spending, the City of Philadelphia spending, tax bills and all things relating to city government. The numbers that I read off represents particular bills. Most of those bills relate to AVI, some proposal by Members of Council and somebody in Administration. So as we go through this process, you may receive questions in terms of what you think about particular issues relating to your government services and all the things associated with that.

I would like to take a moment and thank our host for this evening, Dr. Donald J. Anticoli, the

principal of Abraham Lincoln High School. I was marveling at this wonderful facility. Back in the old days, when they had the old Lincoln, I actually played football. And I walked up, I said, wow, it's been a long time since I been in here. It's an awesome, awesome building. I just want to thank the principal for hosting us.

At this time, I would like to turn this over to your District Councilperson, my hero, Councilman Bobby Henon.

COUNCILMAN HENON: I can be hero for a night, right?

Hello?

(Momentary brief microphone issues.)

COUNCILMAN HENON: Well, I guess timing is everything when you are adding humor to something.

But I want to thank Council President for asking the 6th District to have a public hearing. And as the Council President had stated, this is a great opportunity for the community and the public to get involved in the process of our budget and city government, so I want to welcome you all. I thank you for coming in and taking the time out this evening. I want to thank my colleagues as

well for coming up here to another public hearing as we are grilling the departments and many of the agencies that the City has on a daily basis. So, I want to thank you all for being here.

In the essence of time, as Council President has said, we do have to get out -- we have to leave the facilities at 8:30. For those who signed up to testify, and I believe that there are many, we would like to keep the comments to two minutes just for the sake of time so we can make sure that everybody has the opportunity to come up and voice their opinion here in a public forum.

So again, thank you. Thank you for attending. And about to start our Public Hearing.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

For the record, to my left we have Councilman Mark Squilla who represents the First Councilmatic District. Councilman David Oh, Councilman At Large. And another homegrown son to my right, Councilman Denny O'Brien.

At this time, I would like to call up the first individuals who are interested in

testifying.

Ms. Lewis, would you please call them up. And we would ask that, you know, you go to two mics so we can facilitate movement.

MS. LEWIS: Mark Cohen and John McNesby.

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(Witnesses approach microphones.)

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good evening Representative.

MR. COHEN: Good evening, District Council President. Good evening, Councilman O'Brien and Councilman Henon. I appreciate you brought this hearing to this location. Councilman Oh, Councilman Squilla, it's a pleasure to be here today.

Let me -- I don't have a prepared statement, but I would like to make quick points emulating the guy for whom this building is named and writing down points on the back of an envelope.

There is no money. There is not adequate money in this budget proposal for labor contracts. The $28 million is inadequate to meet the

outstanding labor needs of AFSCME and the firefighters. We know it's inadequate because there's been no resolution of the issue. The $28 million is inadequate to meet those needs. That would be quickly resolved. I think it's important that those needs be resolved as quickly as possible. That would require more money in the budget and more good faith being shown by the Mayor's Office in conducting the negotiations.

Secondly, I think the criminal justice has to be seen as a system and a priority, and it can't just be treated as each agency does its own things. I am puzzled by the increase in the Police Department which will lead inevitably to more arrests and among smaller increase in the District Attorney's Office, which will have to prosecute the extra arrests. And if caught in the First Judicial District, which will have to have the -- the First Judicial District will have to deal with whatever additional arrests there are and if you cut your budget, which will only seem to slow down the process.

I think the system, the people have to work together. And while everybody might be doing a

good job now and certainly everybody is doing a defensible job, the system as a whole is not working well enough and that ought to change.

House -- City Council ordinance proposed 130183 makes a lot of small, microscopic cuts in the budget. I understand the goal is to send a message that we are cutting taxes. But I think we have urgent spending needs that have to be met. We have the labor contracts. We have the School District. We have many programs. $18 million in new initiatives is welcome, but it probably is not adequate with all the needs. Certainly, the School District needs more money. Than -- there is nothing specifically in the School District for the new initiatives. If you put $1 million or $2 million in, that will not be adequate.

Governor Corbett has insisted on dramatically cutting the budget. Philadelphia delegation has no power to force him to change his mind. Unfortunately, City Council has to act.

Finally, we need to build up the Northeast as a distinct location. The great growth in Center City over the past decade plus has been in large part due to massive infusions of state and

local money in Center City. There has not been such an infusion of money in Northeast Philadelphia. If we can get money, more money for Northeast Philadelphia, that would be a positive thing. Every little expenditure of city money has an impact. I know even legislative district offices which are pretty small operations, amazingly lead to growth on the blocks on which they are located. We need real attractions for Northeast Philadelphia. And I don't see anything in the budget that has that.

The City has to focus on tax revenue. I think that -- I am glad to see that the Revenue Department is going to get extra money, but the amount of extra revenue projected is very little. This is a budget that projects that the extra money for the Revenue Department isn't going to have much of an impact. We have to have programs that actually produce significantly more revenue. That includes not cutting taxes unnecessarily and that includes being more vigorous in enforcing the taxes that already exist.

Finally, the City is not going to balance its budget by cutting corners. Today I visited

the recreation centers in that small slice of land that Councilman Henon and I share in common if the House Legislative District plan goes into effect. And I visited several recreation centers. All had needs for more money. The needs range from $14,000 for needs for a new generator at the Mayfair Community Center to probably a hundred thousand dollars of the -- of needs at the Max Myers Playground, first one in 62nd Ward. The second is in the 54th Ward. For probably all the problems with the recreation centers could be dealt -- those three for $200,000. But it's small in the budget, but I realize if every recreational center that extra money would add up.

I think the priority ought to be on spending money to meet urgent city needs, but ought not to be cutting meaningless --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

MR. COHEN: -- taxes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much, Representative.

MR. COHEN: Thank you.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Were any of you listening?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thanks -- sir, hold on. Hold on one second.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: How can you even --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Sir. Sir, this is an actual Budget Hearing.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: No one up there was --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Sir.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: No one is listening to what this man was just saying. You're talking -- did anybody make a note of any recommendations he said? You all were doing something different. You are not listening to what this poor man just said.

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(Applause)

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Sir -- sir, hold on one second, please. All due respect, sir, this is what we do for a living.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Pardon me?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: This is what we do for a living. We can actually hear -- we heard everything that the representative said, all right?

We are going to give everybody who wants to have an opportunity to speak, time to speak.

AUDIENCE MEMBERS: Are you listening?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: If you want to come up to the mic and say for three minutes or two minutes that we're not listening, you have that opportunity. Ask people please not holler out from the audience. Please bear with me. Give everybody the opportunity. We do hear what's being said up here. Trust me.

Thank you.

MR. MCNESBY: Council President, thank you. John McNesby, President of the Fraternal Order Of Police. First, I would like to thank every -- (audience applauds) -- like to thank every member on stage today for their support of the Philadelphia Police Department and the men and women on the streets right now, although very few.

The funding is there for additional classes. We are currently over 500 police officers down in the City of Philadelphia. The 15th District is one of the largest in Councilman Henon's district at -- it's over five square miles and it leads the City in district control numbers

at this time. Yesterday there were six cars and one wagon on a Sunday for the 15th District. That's unheard of. Somebody is going to get hurt.

The funding is there thanks to Council, but the fact of the matter is the hiring practices today need to be readdressed. I think we have to look at the State NPO Commission, talk to our legislatures such as Representative Cohen and Representative Neilson.

We are currently abiding by the rules of the State Police. The State Police chair and run the Municipal Police Training Act, yet don't have to abide by it. We are a Class One city. I think Council should look into more powers being turned over to Commissioner Ramsey and the hiring practices and to make sure that we get some of our local people in. Because right now, we are getting 1 out of every 18 applicants into the police academy. They are burning through the list at a record pace.

With your support, I think we can get that done.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Mr. McNesby, could you clarify that a little more. You have 1

out of every 18 is from --

MR. MCNESBY: Out of every 18 people that are called for the interview process, they are getting 1 to enter the Academy. The days of putting 100/120 in the Academy are now down. The last class we put in was 29.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: What do you attribute that to?

MR. MCNESBY: The rigorousness of the actual standards that we are being held to by the Municipal Police Officers Training Act and the State Police that don't have to abide by it.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Okay. I do recall the standards in terms of requirements, educational requirements, and a lot of other things were enhanced.

MR. MCNESBY: Currently, you are sending us out and giving us the money to get the job done. It's like giving the carpenter the ability to go out and build a house with no tools. We need some help out there. It's at a dangerous level.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

Chair recognizes Councilman Squilla.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Mr. McNesby, what

would you recommend? I mean, obviously on a City Council level is us to change it around.

MR. MCNESBY: What we have right now, say, we have on Saturday morning they bring out 25 to 30 applicants to take a physical training test. Twenty years ago you would be able to take that test. If you were short, you had six months in the Academy to make up and pass then they let you go. Right now they are failing you right from the beginning.

If you get 20 of those -- last class in South Philly in your district, 30 people came out. Only 3 passed. You say goodbye to 27 right off the top. If they have the ability to go in and work through the time, which they would in six, seven months in the Academy, they would have the ability to put more people on the street.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Is that something we can change as far as city regulation?

MR. MCNESBY: I think we can hold a hearing and maybe put the -- they could probably hire Ballard Spahr since they hire him for everything else to go outside and maybe go up to Harrisburg, change the legislature a little bit and make sure

we are safe here in the city. Most of those people that are making those laws are from Scranton, Harrisburg. They don't know what a Class One City needs. They have no idea. They are calling about a deer in their backyard while we are calling for gunshots in our backyard.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you. I know we could -- we have been working with our state representatives and legislatures in Harrisburg on other issues with AVI. I can't see why not we wouldn't be able to do that. I look forward to coming up with something that calls for hearings to see how we can go about changing these rules and regulations to make people more eligible.

MR. MCNESBY: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman. Thank you, Mr. Nesby.

Before we proceed, I would like to recognize State Representative Neilson. I know I saw him earlier. He is no longer here. I just want to acknowledge that he was here and thank him for participating.

Ms. Lewis.

MS. LEWIS: Billy Gault and Karen Lash and

then Tim Burke.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good evening.

MS. LASH: Good evening, Members of City Council. Is this on?

Good evening, Members of City Council. My name is Karen Lash. I'm a lifelong resident of Philadelphia of the 6th District and a volunteer President of the Friends of Holmesburg Library with is an affiliate of the Friends of Free Library.

I come before you today for the third time speaking about the free library system; back in 2005 when cuts resulted in express branches; in 2008, when eleven of our libraries, including our Holmesburg branch were threatened with permanent closure but, fortunately, thankfully saved to the efforts of Philadelphia citizens and City Council and today in an effort to advocate for the restoration of six-day weekly service or equitable service delivery for all of our neighborhood branches.

The Free Library with 54 neighborhood branches is one of the most treasured institutions in our city and provides unequaled value and

services to Philadelphia citizens including access to knowledge, information, books, DVDs, afterschool homework help, educational programs, job research, career information and computer and internet access which is especially needed for the 48 percent of our citizens on the wrong side of the digital divide. Since 1973, Friends of the Free Library and its volunteer groups throughout the City of Philadelphia have become stewards of our City's Free Library system and ambassadors to lifelong learning.

Our groups raise community awareness and visibility of our libraries, we promote our programs and services, we raise money for collections, and we advocate for State and City funding.

As you already know from last week's testimony given by Amy Dougherty, who is the Director of the Friends off Free Library, Mayor Nutter's Fiscal Year 14 budget requests $35,143,328 for the Free Library's general fund. This represents a $1 million increase from the Fiscal Year 13 and the first restoration of the 7.4 million or 27 percent cut to the Free Library

made five years ago. This will certainly stabilize five-day per week service at 37 of our branches and end any disruptive unscheduled closures.

In addition, twelve neighborhood libraries would receive increased service back to six days per week. Ironically, none of the eleven, including Holmesburg, that were slated for closure happened to be on this list of the twelve that are randomly being selected. For some, having to travel outside of one's neighborhood to find a library with the extra day of service could pose financial and safety hardships for young children crossing hazardous streets, seniors on fixed incomes and adults without access to public transportation and cars.

The $1 million is a good first step, but for us it doesn't go far enough. The amount of materials that are borrowed and the computer usage at our public libraries has increased. However, the downward spirals of service hours is at odds with the needs and demands of Philadelphia citizens, which is spiraling upwards.

For many impacted by the economic

recession, the increased availability and access to computers and job resources and performing educational programs provided by our neighborhood libraries is not a luxury but a necessity. Our groups continue to raise money and supplement the Library for neighborhood programs. For some, it's all the more challenging for groups to reduced to five days a week service.

To stabilize the Free Library system, Mayor Nutter's library budget would essentially creates inequities throughout our city. There would be neighborhood haves versus neighborhood have nots with only twelve branches selected to be open six days a week. The Friends are advocating for equal access to libraries and their services. The idea of selecting on twelve branches for six day per week service we feel is not fair, certainly not equal and not good policy.

Instead Library patrons and friends are proposing a general fund of Free Library Budget of 37,103,328 which gives every Philadelphia neighborhood and every Philadelphian fair and equal access to six day per week service. We are asking for Members of City Council to put

$3 million restoration of the Free Library at the top of your list of priorities and make six day a week service a reality. More Library service, staff and more Philly jobs.

Libraries foster lifelong learning. They provide free access to knowledge and to information and to education. Libraries change lives. $3 million is a small investment in ensuring that every citizen in every Philadelphia neighborhood has the same level of services and resources to be productive and educate its citizens. Equitable delivery of library services and staff ensures that every Philadelphian is a have.

We ask City Council to please make this commitment to our libraries, to our neighborhoods and to all Philadelphians.

Thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you. Thank you so much for your testimony.

I would like to ask -- I hate doing this, but we have a really long list of individuals. So, we've extended two minutes to three minutes. If at all possible, please try and keep your

comments at three minutes. We really want everybody to be able to speak. We have when 8:30 comes and there are ten people that didn't have a chance to speak. If at all possible, please keep your comments to three minutes, please.

Proceed, sir.

MR. BURKE: Good evening, Members of City Council. I promise I will be less than two. I just got off the bus with 40 kids from the high school.

My name is Tim Burke. I am President of Lansing Youth Organization. What I am here for tonight is basically trying to get permission to use the fields that you see in this facility. Currently, the neighborhood is not allowed to use the fields because of the permit situation. I believe after to two different areas, it's between the Parks and Rec and the School Board. We need somebody to step in and say, look, stop the feuding between each other.

Our organization is all volunteers. We have insurance. We have people that are willing to go out there to seed and narrate the fields. We just need the grass cut so our kids can come up

here and play. It's that simple.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much, sir.

MR. BURKE: Thank you very much.

COUNCILMAN HENON: Tim, I appreciate you coming out and informing not just me and my colleagues, but the rest of this body. If you could continue, you know, we're in the process of negotiation right now with the Department of Parks and Rec. If you can stay in touch with Chris from my office, I am sure we can come to a conclusion on that very soon.

MR. BURKE: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, sir. Thanks for your testimony.

MS. LEWIS: Marty Balnerick and Rich Frizell.

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(Witnesses approach microphones)

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MR. BALNERICK: Good evening, Members of Council.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good evening, sir.

MR. BALNERICK: I just want to say real quickly, I can speak about a lot of topics, but one of my passions is recreation. I just want to focus on that. And I want to ask Council to be sensitive to recreations budget. And hopefully, they can restore the dollar amounts to the budget that were there previously a couple years ago.

Because as many of you know, when the budget numbers got tight last year, right away they went after the number of hours that the gymnasiums were able to be used throughout the city. And up here in the Northeast, we don't have a lot of facilities that are controlled by the Department of Recreation. They are controlled by the School District. We have to use the School District's building.

There is an arrangement between the City and the School District that they come up with each other. Either pays some type of rent or exchange some type of use of facilities or something like that. It's like an exchange program. That is why you got to be out at 8:30 tonight because otherwise you have to pay overtime to the person that is the building engineer. That

is the reason we got to be done by 8:30. I am asking if things could be restored. That you are allowed in the building to 9:30 like it used to be.

Up here in the Northeast, a gym hasn't been built in the 6th Councilmatic District, I don't know if you're aware of this, in over 50 years. You are the only district that has not had a gym in over 50 years built by the City. So, I think it's time now that, you know, we should have something like that built up here.

I am just asking Council to be sensitive to that and not to cut anymore from hours from the kids up here or anywhere in the City. And that we continue with this 8:30 or maybe we can expand it to the hours that it used to be.

Thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much. Very, very important issue.

Chair recognizes Councilman Henon.

COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you, Council President. I will be quick on that note there.

Gym time and the amenities that the Parks and Recs offer to our kids and our programs is

extremely sensitive. It's a priority to this Council. As a matter of fact, I am proud to announce, you know, if you haven't heard already, but last year or mid year, you know, couple months ago Council President was able to negotiate $8 million more for our Parks and Recs to help with things, you know, such as that.

So I believe, I believe -- I am pretty sure on this with Council President's authority to say yes -- I think we have uninterrupted gym time for the Northeast and for the entire City from the hours that we had last year. I'm not sure it goes to 9:30, but it certainly goes to 8:30 uninterrupted time. So, the kids schedules and the games on Saturdays and after hours will not be interrupted.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman. You are being a little modest because you are one of the first phone calls I got and might have been one of the first phone calls I got last year when there was a suggestion that there was going to be interruption of service. Thank you for being right on time. Right on the spot. Again, good work.

Chair recognizes Councilman O'Brien.

COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: I would like to point out that if there is a disruption in the center section of the auditorium this evening, it's because Representative Neilson has come back into the room.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman. I'd like to recognize Councilwoman Cindy Bass from 8th Councilmatic District has just joined us. Thank you.

Please proceed, sir.

MR. FRIZELL: Council President, thank you very much for having this here. My name is Richard Frizell, President of the Holmesburg Civic Association. You know us civic members, we try to work as a liaison between the elected officials in different departments in the city and our community. And most of the time the city works well for us. Sometimes, like last week when a methadone clinic was approved on a state road, it doesn't work so well for us. That has not to do with the budget. I am hear to talk about the budget.

Principally, our park at the Pennypack

Street Bridge is severely neglected by Parks and Recreation. I don't know if it's a budget thing. I talked with Councilman Henon. I know that he's working on it. I want all of Council to know about it. It's a very important park. William Penn ordered a bridge to be built there. We have the community support. We have 75 volunteers that come out and take 225 bags of trash there last Saturday.

I own a couple little rentals in the city. My taxes in Northern Liberty are going way up, Councilman Squilla. I don't have a homestead rebate there. I would have ten years ago. My taxes are going up on all four of my properties. My home that I live in, it's going up a little bit. With the homestead rebate, it will be about even. Going up in Tacony and Kensington. My taxes have gone up 18.25 percent across the board in the last three years on all my properties.

I'm not sure where the budget is going, but it's not going to Parks and Rec or it's not going to our park and it's not coming up to Holmesburg. I'm here for our park. I'm here for our community. I want all the city -- Councilman Oh,

you came up to our meeting. You are At Large. Councilman O'Brien, you were at our meeting. You are At Large. You grew up right around the corner.

We have a beautiful recreation center in Holmesburg. We have Pennypack on the Delaware and we have Ramp playground, which is wonderful. We are missing a little piece. Thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much for your testimony, sir.

MS. LEWIS: Daniel Adair and Carol Rogers. Daniel Adair and Carol Rogers.

MS. ROGERS: Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak about the urgent need for new healthcare services in Northeast Philadelphia. My name is Carol Rogers. I'm the Director of Healthy Philadelphia, a nonprofit organization working for decent healthcare for all in Philadelphia by bringing together different segments of the Philadelphia community, including community residents, healthcare providers, business, labor, academia and religious communities working together to solve longstanding healthcare problems that no one entity can solve alone.

While people in every Philadelphia neighborhood suffer from lack of affordable healthcare, we are increasingly concerned about this crisis in lower Northeast Philadelphia. We have spent a lot of time and energy learning from Northeast residents what their healthcare experiences and needs are.

Our September 2011 report examined the number and locations of public and private primary healthcare practices, measured primary care capacity and determined unmet need by evaluating the experiences of people living in the area. We found that among the population in the Northeast, 72,000 people have chronic diseases, mostly concentrated in ZIP codes 19111, 19120, 19124 and 19149.

In addition, 18,000 Northeast residents or 5 percent of the population are at high risk of having unmet healthcare need. For example, going without medical exam in the previous one year. And the mix of chronic diseases and unmet healthcare needs is disastrous.

For people living with chronic health conditions like high blood pressure and diabetes,

the consequences of going without healthcare are great and serious.

For example, stroke, heart attack, kidney failure, blindness, all more tragic because they are preventable.

I will speak a little faster and finish up. I think that's my bell.

Our primary recommendation is the establishment of a new comprehensive primary healthcare center that would serve all without regard to insurance status or ability to pay. The Northeast is currently home to three safety net health providers, but the need for care greatly outstrips the availability. At Health Center 10, operated by the Philadelphia Department of Public Health which is the City's busiest safety net clinic, the first available appointment for new patients is in December 2013, nine months away.

While almost every neighborhood in Philadelphia can benefit from a new health center in times of scarcity like now, new resources must be strategically used to make sure they offer the most benefit. We strongly urge a new healthcare center be established in a place that is easy to

get to for the Northeast residents without other option. We at Healthy Philadelphia will continue to mobilize people in our support of new healthcare services to meet this demand. With healthcare reform on the horizon, we optimistically look forward to the future. We urge you to work with us to establish new healthcare services in the Northeast. All Philadelphians deserve decent healthcare.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to speak about the dire need for healthcare services in the Northeast.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much for your testimony.

Chair recognizes Councilman Henon.

COUNCILMAN HENON: Carol, thank you for coming here tonight and testifying. And I know that Healthcare Center 10 which is in the 6th District is a problem. And eager to look over some -- go over some issues and come to some resolve.

MS. ROGERS: I don't think Health Center 10 is a problem. It's a great resource. The problem is that there is just not enough to care for all

the people that need care.

COUNCILMAN HENON: Right. There is a demand. There is a waiting list and everything.

MS. ROGERS: Health Center 10, I think if you pole most people that go there, other than the wait, people are very happy with the care.

COUNCILMAN HENON: Right. I didn't intend it to come off that way as a real problem. I understand the issue of waiting and the amount of people.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

Please proceed, sir.

MR. ADAIR: My name is Daniel Adair. I'm from the 6th District. One of the residents who are not afraid of change. I'm here to talk about my assessment on my property.

I am a resident of the Philadelphia area of River Board District, first Port Richmond and now Bridesburg. Seen my house go from $40,000 assessment to 125,000 while a partial land behind me sits 60 acres that has seen no increase in their property taxes.

I am under the impression that State

regulates its law of real estate in the Commonwealth; is that correct?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Yes.

MR. ADAIR: Would it be fair to say that --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Certain laws.

MR. ADAIR: The Uniformity Law is the state regulation?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Yes.

MR. ADAIR: That's the biggest hurdle of the City of Philadelphia. It's going to come upon the residents of this city to pay the taxes for the AVI while businesses and large corporations get a flat rate or decrease in their property taxes.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: No. It's the same -- part of the challenge that we have, you mentioned it briefly, it's uniformity. When we apply a rate to the residential property, we have to also apply that rate to a commercial property. We don't have the flexibility.

Say, for instance, if we wanted to have a higher rate for commercial and a lower rate for residential and be in a position to give businesses other tax incentives to allow them to

create more jobs, we can't do that in the city. Most other municipalities have that flexibility. But in the state of Pennsylvania, we don't have that.

One of the things we're asking -- one of the bills that actually the state representatives have been -- and Representative Cohen knows -- we are trying to get a change in the constitutional amendment that will allow us to have flexibility to more fairly apply taxes. We may want to reduce residential and raise commercial a little bit. At the same token, we may want to lower the business taxes for businesses. So, we don't have that flexibility.

MR. ADAIR: Safe to say the AVI, if it does goes through, does get passed by the body at end of this fiscal year or your assessment this year, it will not have that uniformity law or that uniformity clause?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: It does not look like, in all honesty, like we are going to get that bill passed. I am not even going to say that. I don't know. The bill is currently in Harrisburg. It's in committee. It's being

discussed. I don't want to say that by the time you actually have to pay your tax bill, which would be next February, that we won't have flexibility in the clause.

Once we go past, the budget is adopted, we can't go back and adjust the budget after June 30. But in the event that we can do that -- actually, you know, because the constitutional amendment requires two years as the former speaker knows. Two sessions. So, we won't be able to do that short term. But hopefully, long term we will be able to get in a position to have some flexibility.

MR. ADAIR: So, safe to say that the AVI should never have been implemented unless state laws were changed prior to the AVI being implemented.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: That's been a conversation that we have been having for the last year and a half about going to AVI without having all the necessary tools. The unfortunate thing, that train has already left the station.

What we are trying to do is make sure we minimize any negative impact on the citizens of

the City of Philadelphia.

MR. ADAIR: I got one more question. The only department or agency that's never been under scrutiny of the Council for budget is Council itself. Council has not put its 15 million annual budget under public scrutiny. The arm of the government has 90-plus employees whose total cost of operations, which is 26 million when you include such items as fringe benefits. It has been suggested that -- hearing was held that senior staff would outline major categories of spending and members of the public or other interested would ask comments or questions just as they do at the end of each council session.

Is that ever going to happen?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Sounds like a Daily News article.

Sir, in all honesty -- then we are going to move on. In all honesty, if anybody in this room can tell me when they have ever seen the department heads with all of its members come out to Lincoln High School or any other school in the City of Philadelphia and travel around the city -- we were in South Philly last week. We have had

four public testimonies in Council at night traveling all around, open ourselves. I don't know what more level of scrutiny you can have other than sitting before all of you here in a room like this taking your questions and responding to your issues.

So, this whole notion that we are not open and transparent, frankly speaking, is most ridiculous.

MR. ADAIR: It's not just to be open and transparent. It should be as other departments and agencies come under the gun, so does Council.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I hear you. But that's the structure that has been established across the free world. You have a legislative body. You have an executive branch. It's executive branch that submits its budget. It's legislative branch, that we are, responsibility to approve a budget and question departments.

With respect to our budget, it is public information. We have put that information out there. The Daily News who keeps talking about this, has asked for our budget on a monthly basis. We provide that information. For some reason,

they think that they should be on the other side of the table asking us questions in a public format. That is just the way it works. I didn't create it. None of us created it. That's the format. The legislative branch.

Any information that you want to know from us, please feel free to call and we will forward it to you.

MR. ADAIR: Is the BRT ever going to go away?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: In all honesty, sir, at this point, I am glad the BRT is there. Because reality is, the last entity you had before you to appeal if you don't agree with your tax assessments, subsequently your tax bill, is the Board of Revision of Taxes.

I'm actually glad it's currently there because the Office of Property Assessments, in a lot of people's minds, haven't done the appropriate thing as it relates to assessment. I am glad they are there right now.

MR. ADAIR: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, sir.

Chair recognizes Councilman Squilla.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Yes. Thank you, Mr. President. I just want to reiterate what you had just stated. It's important to have the BRT, another entity available to us during this AVI process. A lot of people believe that the assessments haven't been done fairly. There's plenty of properties believe to be overassessed, some underassessed. The land values are way off.

So, without the ability to go to BRT, we would be stuck with the assessments done by OPA. I believe, and I think most Members of Council believe that it's very important to have that ability to go to an agency or go to a department that didn't actually do the assessments. I think that leaves us in a better direction moving forward. Will actually hear our case fairly knowing that they didn't do the assessments but what actually you can prove what your assessments should be worth.

So, I do think that the BRT is necessary. Hopefully, it will stay amongst one of the departements of the City of Philadelphia.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

MS. LEWIS: Sue Rosenthal and Tre Alexander. Sue Rosenthal and Tre Alexander.

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(Witness approaches microphones.)

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MS. ROSENTHAL: Good evening. Thank you for allowing me to speak here. I'm Sue Rosenthal, Chair of the Judge Edward B Rosenberg Health Center known also as Health Center 10 Community Board. It is located on Cottman Avenue in Philadelphia's Northeast.

Here I am again. I think this is the 40th year to urge City Council to support all of our eight public health centers. And I always speak for that, for all eight of them. You have understood their need in the past for which I thank you. Because of the present poor economy, the need for these services is even more urgent today.

As only an example, an initial appointment to the Judge Rosenberg Health Center even when increase in staff with the extra funding you provided last year, it still takes eight to ten months till you get your first interview. People

line up for emergency services starting at seven o'clock a.m. We don't open till eight o'clock. The line stretches around the block with many not being cared for until the late afternoon. And by the way, we also have people who already have appointments so this is in addition.

This is emergency care that is needed. All our health centers are in similar or worse dire circumstances. There has been a steady annual increase of 6 percent over the entire system. Your health centers are, to many Philadelphians, their only choice for quality medical care. There are about a hundred thousand patients in Philadelphia and in all eight health centers. And 339,000 visits are made to city health centers each year.

At the Rosenberg Health Center, there are 60,000 visits. And this year, hello, we have a thousand new patients. So you can see, I recognize Council's dilemma in fashioning a budget during this time of decreased dollars. But the need for funding, yes increased funding, for our health centers to provide for the medical needs of our citizens, I respectfully say to you should be

high on your list.

Thank you for this.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you for your testimony and your continued commitment.

Thank you.

MR. ALEXANDER: Good evening, President Clarke. My name is Tre Alexander. I am with the Institute for Community Justice downtown at 12th and Market. I also represent health in Philadelphia. I do social work, so I serve a large demographic of persons that have medical needs. It starts from even the jail experience until they reenter society again.

And my question tonight became, what price do we put on life?

And the reason why I ask that question is because even our declaration said we had the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of our happiness. But I'm watching people on a daily basis die right before my eyes. Some of them are waiting so long with chronic illnesses and problems that they are resorting to herbal remedies and unsound practices to try and maintain their life. I have some working persons that the jobs do not offer

healthcare, but they are doing the best that they can.

The goal is to not see them die by the wayside. They do have the right to life. Health Center 10 is doing the best job they can. They are like a levy under tons of water and weight. And the only way to really help them out is to strengthen. We need to build some more. We need to do some more for the people.

These are taxpaying citizens. These are voters. These are people that have families and need the help. I came tonight for just that express purpose to say they have the right to life. And we are asking you, our representatives, to fight for their lives.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, sir.

MS. LEWIS: Vivian Lowenstein and Stephanie Morello. Stephanie Morello?

Therese Garvin.

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(Witnesses approaches microphones.)

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MS. LOWENSTEIN: Good evening. I want to

thank City Council for coming out to the Northeast and also giving me this opportunity to speak. Thank you very much. My name is Vivian Lowenstein. I am a nurse, midwife and President of Women Care, a nonprofit with a mission to approve maternity care options for women.

I have worked in Philadelphia for over 27 years starting at Booth Maternity Center, in the city health centers, in hospitals in Philadelphia and more recently at Frankford Avenue Health Center. I'm here to speak for the need for a new health center in Northeast Philadelphia but also a maternity center.

In the Northeast 5,000 women will give birth every year, but there is no where to birth in this community. There is a void. So, they have to go out of their communities to birth. Between 1997 and 1999, five hospitals serving women in Philadelphia closed their maternity departments. And over the past decade we witnessed twelve more closures in Philadelphia and Montgomery County. A total of twenty-one maternity units have closed in this region, so we now have a void of maternity departments and

hospitals in the Northeast.

And I believe that we are not providing access to maternity care. The overall infant maternity rate in Philadelphia is almost double the national average. And our low birth weight and preterm birth weight is higher than the national average. What we need in the Northeast is preventive high quality, safe and evidenced based maternity care.

What we ask when considering the planning of a new health center is the development of a maternity center which provides women and their families care in their communities. Let's make Northeast Philadelphia a model of how healthcare should be with access to care to the families and the community.

I'd also like to mention that when families look at communities and neighborhoods to move to, they look at healthcare, number one. Where they are going to birth their babies, where they will get pediatric care and also where they are going to get healthcare. To bring families into the Northeast we need to show that we do have the support and the access to care that we need.

Thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you very much for your testimony, ma'am.

You can proceed.

MS. GARVIN: Hello. Thanks for having this tonight. My name is Theresa Garvin. I'm the President of the Family Association. I am here tonight to make taxpaying citizens aware of how dangerous and fatal brownouts can be.

I don't know if you're aware of this, but every day two fire houses are randomly closed and two at night, too. This is called the Brownout Policy. I have to explain it a little bit because fire is a science.

There is an engine truck and a ladder truck. The engine truck carries the water. The ladder comes to ventilate, search and rescue. If one shows up without the other, they can't do their job. You are in danger, the firefighters are in danger. They could be at a house that could have been contained in a kitchen but because they had to wait three to four extra minutes, now they're lives are in more danger and so are yours.

This Mayor and the Fire Administration

claimed to be about fire safety and people having smoke alarms, yet they randomly closed two fire houses every day. This doesn't make any sense. We agree with this Administration about smoke alarms being a necessity. When a smoke alarm activates, that means your house is already full of smoke. That is when you need a firefighter to get you to safety and extinguish the fire. Smoke alarm can do neither.

There were several deaths in the city when brownouts were a factor. We can only speculate that these deaths could have been prevented. Logic says the outcome would have been different. This Mayor and Fire Administration have no regard for our firefighters either. It's so sad to see that the very people who ask my husband and his brother and sister firefighters to protect the city and their families are doing absolutely nothing to protect them.

It sickens me to think that my family future could be ruined and destroyed like the families of the fallen firefighter Sweeney, Neary and Goodwin just to save some money. Our own Fire Commissioner has admitted on two separate

hearings that brownouts are dangerous. He also said if he was given the money by City Council, he would use it to end the dangerous policy.

I also know that much of City Council agree with me that they are dangerous. I need to know what we the citizens of Philadelphia are left to do? What power do we have to make Mayor Nutter listen and prevent any more deaths in the city. I have a petition going around tonight to get you the citizens to sign so together as a city we can fight this.

Mayor Nutter has made it loud and clear that he doesn't care about firefighters or the families, but can he not care for anyone in Philadelphia? We will utilize all of you who sign our petition to make a difference and demand that we are protected. Our taxes didn't decrease, why should our protection? I will not let one man, Mayor Nutter, decide my fate and neither should any of you.

Please help us know how to change this dangerous policy and make sure no more firefighters and citizens die.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much. Chair recognizes Councilman Henon.

COUNCILMAN HENON: Theresa, thank you for coming out. It's unfortunate that we have been running into each other more often than we should have. And I agree with you. I think the Administration has shown a lack of respect for our first responders. I admire what you are doing for the wives and the families of our first responders, our firefighters.

Thank you for coming out. You have a friend in every council member of this legislative body. Thank you for coming in.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you. Chair recognizes Councilwoman Bass.

COUNCILWOMAN BASS: Thank you. I just wanted to echo what Councilman Henon just said. Also, it takes an incredible amount of courage to run into a burning building when everyone else is running out. Since we have been in City Council just since January of 2012, unfortunately we have been to three funerals for firefighters. That is three way too many.

I just wanted to echo what Councilman Henon

said. I also wanted to make a comment about maternity care in the Northeast. Because when I gave birth to my daughter three years ago, it was incredibly difficult to find quality maternity care in Philadelphia. And so when we speak about the need for maternity care, I certainly understand that. Thank you for bringing that to the forefront. It's a very important issue here in the city.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you Councilwoman.

Chair recognizes Councilman O'Brien.

COUNCILMAN O'BRIEN: Thank you, Mr. President. I also would like to respond.

I have taking copious notes, so have all the other the members. I can recite everything that Mark Cohen talked about. I will say to Patrice that you do have the support of Council -- Theresa. I'm sorry. My ears are bad. But I am sorry for that.

The contracts have to be settled for our labor unions. The fire department is in total disarray. There is going to be very shortly, imminently an NIOSH report. You know what that

is? In the death of Sweeney and Neary. There will be another NIOSH report, unfortunately, for Goodwin. That is going to be followed by a grand jury report that is going to be scathing.

And I would hope that we as city officials will get ahead of that curve so we can make not only the citizens of Philadelphia safe by the courageous men and women on the fire department.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you Councilman.

Chair recognizes Councilman Squilla.

COUNCILMAN SQUILLA: Thank you, Mr. President. And I know we're jumping on the fireman band wagon, but it's really not a band wagon. We've been fighting with the Administration as far as we've been here as freshman Council members since we got in about the importance of the firefighters and the brownouts.

We made statements to Commissioner Ayers during our hearing process where we asked them, you know, if somehow we were able to get you $3.8 million, would you end brownouts? He says, well, if the Administration would let us end it he would be happy to end brownouts. And the problem is our

Administration, who will go on the record as saying it's a policy decision. Well, when you make a policy decision that affects the lives of our members, the firefighters and the lives of the residents in our city, to me something is wrong. When you lose one life, it's too many. We have lost three firefighters. We have lost this year fourteen fire deaths at least.

We're not doing the right thing. As a city, we are trying to put pressure -- as Council, trying to put pressure on the Administration to do this. The firefighters themselves have been up to City Council protesting. You have our support. The City has our support. We are going to constantly keep at it.

We are having hearings May 4 on the practices of promotions in the fire department. Why are they left empty. These are very serious considerations that we have, as Council, knowing to make sure we are out there protecting our citizens. We have the issues of taxes that are being increased, AVI that is happening now. We are asking people to go out there and pay more. There is other areas that need more. But do you

expect less services when you pay more?

These are the things that we are running through as Council. It's heartbreaking when we see people like yourselves and firefighters that are in council that are out there and actually come up there. We know if we had a problem, that individual, that guy or that girl, is going to run into that house and hopefully save one of our family members or save our property. There is no cost and no expense that we can say is too much in order to protect that.

So thank you for coming out here tonight. And you have our support.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

Chair recognizes Councilman Oh.

COUNCILMAN OH: Thank you very much, Mr. President. I will say that on Thursday, May 2, at two o'clock in City Council chambers we will hear a bill that I introduced to set aside $66 million from the Positive Fund Balance to pay the firefighters. That is in a committee hearing.

If it is voted for with a positive -- it is voted for with positive endorsement, then that

will go to the floor. If we pass that, that is a law. Now the Mayor may veto that. If it passes, if it gets vetoed, we will have another crack at overriding the veto. Whether or not that is exactly legal, I'm not sure. I believe it is legal, but there is a short window for us to be able to get the money, so that's one thing.

The second things, as Councilman Squilla and all the Council Members here know is that basically we would have to provide $3.8 million to the Fire Department to end browns. We are willing to do so. The issue has been that the Administration has said that regardless of the fact that we appropriate that money, they will not spend it to end the brownouts.

What I hope will happen is that we will take them to the test. We will take them to task. We will pass that 3.8 million and then we will see what the Mayor does. I think we are ever growing closer to this push and shove. And we will have a showdown.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, Councilman.

MS. LEWIS: Stephen Jacquindo and Stan Cywinski.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Good evening, sir.

MR. JACQUINDO: Thank you for having me here. I was actually just notified this afternoon about this hearing. And it's more on a personal note, but I think it affects a lot of people in the area and the refuse collection fees.

I have been dealing with this. I live in a duplex that my brother and I own. And we've been dealing with this for five years now. We filed for an exemption. We filed paperwork on many occasions. Never hear anything. Now I am getting fees for like $1,200 for penalties and everything for this.

I am sure there is other people that are dealing with this issue now that aren't exactly sure how to go about it. First off, I would like to thank Paul from Councilman Henon's office. For the first time in five years, I'm starting to get a little bit of headway on how to do deal with this. It's actually dealing with the Departments of License and Street Inspection. I've been

filing paperwork for years with very little resolve.

Like I said, I am sure other people are aware of this. I'm not even sure where this refuse fee came from, but that is one of the priorities. And I know that, again, I'm not prepared on certain things. But I know there is a lot of delinquent taxes that are still not being collected from people that know it. And then they are coming after people trying to pay their fair share.

I would like to just find out a better way to deal with this and see how Council will deal with this, also. Thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, sir, for your testimony.

MR. CYWINSKI: Good evening. My name is Stan Cywinski. I am President of Upper Holmesburg Civic Association. I'm here to talk about two items. Pennypack Park, which I view as a debit item on the ledger; and Lindenfield, which I view as a credit item on the budget ledger.

First, let me talk about Pennypack Park. Over the decades, Pennypack Park has gone from

city treasure to basically a slum. We have on any warm weekend, we have -- I call it the trash brigades that come there with picnic stuff, dirty diapers, defecate. They are drinking. They leave their beer bottles there.

Bottom line is, we need some help there. Prostitution, drug use to -- just to name a couple other elicit activities that go on in the park. I mean, this park is -- basically, it's a national treasure. We have a stark market that has recently gone up as resolved from our Holmesburg Civic. Last week, they were down there and took over 200 bags of trash just from that one area.

I walk down there all the time with my grandson and the trash is incredible. We pick up what we can. No trash cans anymore especially on the north side of the park. So, any help that we can get in patrolling that park, especially on the weekends when they are coming in with the cases of beer, cases of wine, you know, would help.

Let's fine them. They may help finance the officers that are needed to enforce the laws that we put in place.

Second thing I want to talk about is

Lindenfield. Lindenfield, as you know, where the projects were went through a bid process. That was over a year ago. Here we are a year later. My understanding is that we may not be able to break ground there for a another year. This is an area that will generate a significant amount of income for the City of Philadelphia.

Why aren't we moving forward with this? What is going on with PHA and HUD? How come they are sitting on their hands? It's time to move here. It will bring the construction workers in. You will generate city wage tax revenue. And the pull through revenue alone has to be incredible. I am asking for some help with this.

Do we need to contact state or federal officials to get these guys to move off the dime?

Again, this is a revenue generator for us.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you. I think Councilman Henon wants to respond to that.

COUNCILMAN HENON: Thanks, Stan. In regards to Lindenfield, the formal site of PHA development for those that don't know, it's a 33-acre development that has been totally demolished now. It has been awarded to a private

owner. So right now, PHA does not have control over the site. It's in control of a private developer who is in the process of going over development plans with Holy Family University.

It's my understanding -- and I can get further details to you this week. It's my understanding that they are looking to possibly break ground in the fall some time. So out of that 33 acres, I believe 20 acres is going to be open space and open to the community. So, we should have an update on the status on it tomorrow or later this week.

MR. CYWINSKI: Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, sir.

Ms. Lewis.

MS. LEWIS: Kelli Moragne and Jim Mcgee.

MS. MORAGNE: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen of City Council. My name is Kelly Moragne. I'm a juvenile probation officer in Philadelphia. I currently supervise children in the North Philadelphia area. And I've been a probation officer for thirteen years.

You guys may not know, but juvenile probation officers wear a lot of hats. Sometimes

it's mother, father, big sister, aunt, social worker, therapist, life coach, confidant. We wear these hats because we found that so many of our children on probation have become probationers because of lack of positive and influential role models that listen and provide positive support consistency and encouragement. Little things mean a lot.

Recently, I had a young man come into my office that's on probation. He had to be drug screened. He's generally a good kid. He's 16. He's bright. He's articulate. But he has a temper and he likes to fight a lot. He's at risk but he's doing the best that he can to turn things around now that he's on probation.

He's admitted to me that he struggles with abstaining from smoking marijuana. He does it to keep him calm. I admonished him as he explained all the reasons he can't stop. He says he is stressed, nobody cares about him, he feels like he has no family. Currently, lives with a family friend. His mother is in and out of addiction and his father is deceased. He has a little sister he's been providing for and caring for since he

was nine.

He admitted to me that he sold drugs all his life. He's robbed and stolen from people. He has done these things to take care of his family. He is currently on probation for selling drugs. He has no support. It's already 4:30 p.m. that day and he had not eaten. He was in tears explaining all of this to me that' he's hungry.

It's in these moments that you realize how important your job is. All he needed was some support. I listened to him. I encouraged him to stop smoking. I referred him for outpatient services to help him with his habit. I took him to Subway to get a sandwich. Just something that simple. There he continued to share his burdens.

He was so grateful that I had taken time to listen to him and most of all support him. And he appreciated being able to talk to someone that cared and take a break from his own life. He thanked me.

Now he comes in all the time on his own just to say hi. His drug tests have been negative. He's been staying out of fights, doing much better in school instead of committing more

crimes. Just think, one person showing that they care for an hour or two may have kept one of you from becoming his next victim.

What we do for the City of Philadelphia is vital and it's a matter of public safety. We do our best to deter these children from a life of crime and provide supervision and support to get them on track now so they'll become productive citizens instead of prisoners costing taxpayers money. What we do saves the city and the states millions of dollars.

It saddens me to think that we would not be properly funded to provide those services. It saddens me to think of the number of adults that are currently incarcerated who would have made a different choice had juvenile probation officer had the time and/or the resources available to help them. It saddens me to think the number of probation officers lost each year to surrounding counties because those counties properly fund their department while having significantly lower case loads. It saddens me to know that our city has not placed a priority on properly funded services that we provide so that you can be safer

in your community. Ladies and gentlemen, it takes a village to raise a child and we need your help.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

MS. MORAGNE: We respectfully ask that you fund our services --

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

MS. MORAGNE: -- as a matter of public safety, principle and responsibility to our citizens.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much. We have a slight, slight dilemma. We have twelve people left and we have twenty minutes.

MS. MORAGNE: I apologize.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I am going to ask folks, if at all possible, to kind of summarize. I really want everybody to have a chance who came here to speak, to speak, please.

Yes, sir.

MR. MCGEE: Good evening. My name is Jim McGee. I am an employee and probation officer for the Philadelphia Adult Probation Officer for 14 years. For the last 7 years, I supervised offenders on house arrest with electronic monitors. The offenders I supervise are typically

serving a sentence anywhere from 6 to 23 months of incarceration with the condition of parole to house arrest. Once a civil residence has been approved, they are released directly from county prison to electronic monitor placed on their ankle, then they are placed on house arrest.

Many of these offenders return to the same neighborhoods. I face many obstacles on a daily supervision such as computers that have been slow and outdated for years, urinalysis testing labs closed, probation officers being short by 50-plus officers. The supervision of these offenders is very challenging because of the accountability I must have of these offenders whereabouts.

Yes, they are confined to their homes but it's not 24/7. Many of them gain employment, get back in school, attend the program, perform community service. These are all positive things which I encourage them to do from day one. On the other hand, I must also consider the safety of the community. Not every case is a success story. House arrest is a good deterrent but it's not perfect.

Every day probation officers like myself

struggle with the issue of how to maximize goodness and minimize social harm. Can't meet the challenge at times, but it can work.

A particular case that comes to mind is a Philadelphia judge that would have periodic status hearings regarding offenders status on house arrest. An offender was on house arrest for approximately one year. Over the course of that year, the offender took the steps to get his life back on track. Receiving counseling for his substance abuse issues, eventually gaining employment and reconnecting with his family. The judge was so impressed, she applauded him in open court. This is a fairly simple story but gives meaning and importance to the job a probation officer provides in the City of Philadelphia.

So in closing, I ask City Council to fully fund services to the jobs that provide important services to the citizens of Philadelphia that will not only continue but will also improve the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

Thank you for your time.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, sir.

MS. LEWIS: Margaret Weber and Cathy Scott.

MS. WEBER: Good evening, City Council. My name is Margaret Weber. I'm a probation officer at 1801 Vine Street. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you this evening.

I deal with youth between the age of 11 and 21. I have one particular story where a youth touched my life. And I had the opportunity to supervise this young man named Andrew.

I met him for the first time when he was in placement and was 15 and was about having difficulty adjusting to the program. That particular day he was having an asthma attack. And as an asthmatic myself, I understood the urgency in getting attention. I called the staff and they took care of his medication.

Andrew then was on oppositional defiant young man. But because I took the time and effort to stop and talk to this young man and find out what was going on, his attitude in the institution changed and he became a much more productive youth. Upon his discharge, this young man and I built a special relationship. He and I had nice conversations.

I found out that he's moving from home to

home. He has no particular place to stay. I left envelopes in my desks with cash so this young man could eat on occasion. I left instructions with my coworkers that if this young man came in, to please give him an envelope out of my desk.

The young man never abused the issue. He came in when he was hungry. He decided he wanted to go onto college. He did well. Matter of fact, he graduates on June 1. But most importantly, this young man came to me and said to me one afternoon, would you put this on your car. And I looked at it. It is a bumper sticker that says proud parent of a sailor.

This young man entered the Navy and was on a nuclear sub. We are much unfunded for this probation department. We have 70 fewer probation officers in the juvenile division than we should have. Without the proper funding, we will continue to lose young men. And hopefully, if you give us the money, we would have more people -- more probation officers such as myself that would have the opportunity to work with these young men and young women and give them proper guidance.

Thank you very much.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

MS. SCOTT: Good evening. My name is Catherine Scott. I am President of AFSCME District Council 47. I came before you last week to suggest revenue enhancements for the Fiscal Year 2014 Budget and to highlight how Mayor Nutter's policies have hurt our city. I return tonight in light of a new study released last week by Temple University Associate Professor of Economics, Michael Bagnano which demonstrates the urgency of the situation faced by city workers.

According to the study, almost 42 percent of AFSCME City workers are living below the poverty line. This number has doubled since Michael Nutter took office and is a direct result of his punitive policies toward city workers and his refusal to negotiate with AFSCME District Councils 47 and 33. These are people who keep our libraries and recreational centers operating, pick up our trash and keep our streets clean and waters safe to drink. They work all day keeping our city running and go home to live in poverty.

Not only has Mayor Nutter forced city workers into poverty, his proposals at the table

and in his current budget will force even more into poverty. By freezing wages, refusing to fund increases in healthcare and ignoring 40 years of collective bargaining history, the number of workers that struggle to get from paycheck to paycheck has multiplied. It only promises to get worse the longer he refuses to negotiate a contract.

This Mayor has decided to make his attack on working men and women of Philadelphia the cornerstone of his legacy. Will this be your legacy as well City Council? Now is the time to act. Our members, your constituents, are suffering. This Mayor egregiously fails to collect taxes, pushes policies that benefit the top 1 percent of Philadelphia and ignores the needs of communities by cutting city services all the while attacking the very people you were elected to protect.

If this Mayor is not going to do his job, you need to ensure that city workers do not continue to fall into poverty.

I provided each of you with a copy of the professor's study.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

MS. LEWIS: Joseph Barr and Orlando Acosta. Meg Sharp Walton.

MR. BARR: Good evening, Council Members. My name is Joseph Barr. I'm a tax analyst for 23 and a half years wherein I collect all forms of taxes, which are crucial to the operation of city services. I want to take a moment to describe what I realize is providing public services.

The Rendell Administration understood the need to fully fund city services by fulling staffing both Revenue Department and the Tax Unit. During that time, the then city solicitor complimented me on having located $36 million in assets from Department of License and Distribution. Currently, the thrice merged Law/Revenue Department/Tax Unit is short staffed due to its underfunding.

For example, just last week I was responsible to cover five desks in regards to telephone calls, walk ins and issue troubleshooting. Time away from prosecuting tax manages for customer service or tax collection efforts by diverting resource of tax professionals

to perform clerical function sacrifices revenue to the city which directly affects operations to city services.

As members of City Council, you have power to fully fund city services so please do.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, sir.

MS. WALTON: Good evening. I'd like to thank City Council for having this budget hearing tonight. I am going to address arts and cultural funding. My name is Meg Sharp Walton. I am Executive Director of Glen Foerd on the Delaware located in the 6th District in the Village of Torresdale.

Glen Foerd is Philadelphia's only historic estate along the Delaware River that is open to the public. Our mission is to promote the historical legacy of Glen Foerd through programs in the art, nature and history and to preserve and protect the collections, buildings and grounds for the community and future generations.

Our educational programs include hands-on workshops, classes, concerts, lectures and tours. Community partners include the Arts Academy at

Benjamin Rush High School, Friends of Cobbossee Watershed, Settlement Music School and the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

In addition, Glen Foerd is a more determinist of the Delaware River Greenway which comprises 11 miles of multiuse trail and trail hit parks along the Delaware in Northeast Philadelphia. In short, Glen Foerd is an important cultural asset for the Northeast and the greater Philadelphia area.

Aside from the educational and quality of life benefits, residents and visitors gain through arts and cultural organizations, there is the economic value. Four out of five jobs generated by arts and culture are in other industries. Glen Foerd hires plumbers, roofers, painters, security services and printing services to name a few. We hire locally and support surrounding businesses. An therefore, act as an important neighborhood anchor.

Dollars spent by our visitors average $30. Most is spent outside of Glen Foerd in restaurants such as Three Monkeys and the Dining Cart to name just two. Let's just take a look at Glen Foerd's

economic impact alone.

We have one full time person and three part time and a total budget of $280,000. But in combined dollars spent by Glen Foerd and our visitors, the total comes close to 450,000. This equals in total -- 450,000 is equal to eleven full time equivalent jobs. Dollars paid to community residents in salary and wages is 257,000. Total dollars received by local community and licensed taxes and fees is 21, 000. And dollars received by state government is also over 21,000. This is just for Glen Foerd, a very small organization.

In total, economic value generated by arts and culture in the far Northeast Philadelphia is $32.6 million. Glen Foerd's 450,000 results in eleven full-time jobs, over 275,000 in wages to community residents, and over 21,000 in revenue to local governments. Imagine what 32.6 million can do. I know you face difficult budget choices. I encourage you to think about art and culture when making your decisions.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, ma'am.

MS. LEWIS: Mike Walsh and Jacqueline Marshall. Jessica Brown, Peggy Devine.

MR. WALSH: Thank you, City Council, President. Thank you Council President Clarke for this opportunity.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, sir.

MR. WALSH: My name is Michael Walsh. I'm a lifelong proud resident of City of Philadelphia Port Richmond. I am also President of AFSCME Local 2186. I am here today to talk briefly about a tactic that the Nutter Administration is using under his ability to claim economic disaster and demonizing the city workforce.

He has imposed on my union furlough language, unilateral unchecked furlough language. But I'm not here to talk about how the union is going to handle it. We are going to fight it in another forum. I am here today to say that it's deceitful attack on the coalition that has fought to maintain city and community services, City Council, the community and my union AFSCME.

As was testified here earlier from the President of the Holmesburg Free library, the Nutter Administration was defeated when they tried

to close libraries. Their response was to have rolling closures where there isn't enough staff and people don't know when they go to their libraries whether it's going to be open or not. In the interest of time, I want to show the impact of furlough days by using an example from Parks and Recreation.

At a previous City Council hearing on the budget, Parks and Rec alliance testified that there were 38 rec centers/facilities that only had one staff person there. Under the furlough option as Mayor Nutter has put in the civil service regulation, the finance director can unilaterally without any review furlough anybody at whim. And that way, that will disrupt any funding that you provide for any community service such as the rec centers.

If there is only one person at a rec center and they furlough them, who is going to provide service for that community. I would love to continue talking about this. I respect everybody's time. And hopefully, I beat the two minutes.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you, sir. Thank you.

MS. DEVINE: My name is Peggy Devine. I'm the certified school nurse here at Lincoln High School. I am very happy to be here. I appreciate your time to hear what I have to say. And I thank you for being here.

I am deeply concerned about the budget for the School District. I understand that Superintendent Hite spoke with you yesterday in reference to the dire straights that he claims that we have. I can't say what I would like to say about our Governor and our Mayor because I would probably be taken out of the room for using language that's not appropriate. Their disregard for the needs of our students and the City of Philadelphia make me sick.

Children deserve much better than what they are being given. They need librarians. They need nurses. A budget that proposes to have no secretaries in a building is comical. They have -- they want to cut the school operations officers. They want to have the nurses at a ratio of 1 to 1,500.

I'm at this building every day. I don't take a lunch break and I very rarely leave at dismissal because I have so much work to do. And I can say the same for many of my coworkers. We give and give and give and we are expected to do more and more with less, and it's not fair.

The other point I want to make is the charter schools receive more money, and they are supposed to be public schools. And the children of the city don't deserve to be treated any less than the children in the charter schools. One advantage that the charter schools have is when they don't like their students, they counsel them out and guess where they land? Back in the Philadelphia public schools. When you are comparing test scores and when you are comparing environment, it's not a fair playing field because we don't have the option of saying, you know, you are no longer welcome here.

And another point that happens is the money that they continue to take when they let the kids leave at the end of the month in March and come to us and then deplete our test scores even further. The children of Philadelphia deserve better.

Thank you.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

MS. BROWN: Good evening. My name is Jessica Brown. I'm the Principal of the Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush. I am really here to advocate for funding all public schools properly. However, I want to explain how this budget directly affects the school. I know that all the schools have their own scenarios.

We recently received our budgets as you are aware. I was currently budgeted for 23 teachers. This year we run the school with 27 teachers. Who of course we were budgeted for counselors, secretary, school ops, support staff, a nurse twice a week. The class of 2013 will have a 96 percent college attendance rate. And that 96 percent college attendance rate is because we have courses that support those students.

For example, we have a rigorous arts program. We have a rigorous academic program. We run advanced classes. We run SAT classes. We run career and college readiness programs that our counselors teach. Nobody would be rostering the school next year because as many of us are aware,

teachers need to be released or you had a special position that actually rosters your entire school. With all the students that you have, high schools based on credit. That is a very large task. We would not have afterschool tutoring programs or any kind of events after school. Of course, performances and events like that would no longer exist.

This certainly is a Doomsday budget. I've been in the School District for 16 years. Both my parents retired from the School District, over 35 years of service. It's disheartening to me to see such a state like this. You really need to fund the schools properly.

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(Applause)

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you. I think we have our last two.

MS. LEWIS: Ninoska Wong-Shing and Shannon Hauser.

MS. WONG-SHING: I want to echo a lot of what this principal at Rush was talking about. I specifically want to talk about school counselors

where there is no money for us. We were eliminated at $0 in allotment. I just want to rattle off very quickly all the things that school counselors do district wide that the School District would have to find people to do.

Individual group counseling, meet with parents, teachers, DHS workers, probation, officers, procure funds and transportations for homeless students and students experiencing economic hardship, serve as a liaison with the foster care children, their workers, go shopping when we get time, funds for those needy students, do middle school and high school applications, college applications, scholarship, distribute transpasses, facilitate and coordinate interagency meetings, serve as interpreters and translators, serve as prep teachers or cover preps, administer medication, supervise morning and afternoon admissions and dismissal, coordinate and make truancy referrals, write EA-21 or discipline referrals, write behavior plans, do suicidal and homicidal assessments, escort students to the Germantown CRC when we do an involuntary hospitalization on a 302. There is probably many,

many more.

That is what they would have to find somebody to do all those jobs if they eliminate us.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much for your testimony.

MS. HAUSER: Thank you. My name is Shannon Hauser. I am a teacher for the School District of Philadelphia. I just wanted to make sure everyone is aware in the community, Council member of the summary for the 2014 budget. Basically, we got a list of positions and other activities that were eliminated.

Fore example, extra curricular allotment, eliminated; counselors, eliminated; librarians, eliminated; teacher allotment of a hundred dollars, that's all we get, that was eliminated. We no longer have our own individual supplies.

Let me continue. Additional counselors, eliminated, which are the academic guidance counselors; operations requirements, the assistant principals are eliminated; the office staff, eliminated; the noninstructional staff, your noon-time aide or SSA aids, eliminated; books and

supplies, eliminated; summer reorganization, eliminated; noninstructional EC, eliminated; release time, eliminated; itinerant music, eliminated; gifted support, eliminated; desegregation support, eliminated; vocational/educational training, eliminated; overcrowding, eliminated; promise academies, eliminated; accelerated learning, eliminated; school-age parents, eliminated; and in-school suspensions, eliminated.

How do we function and provide for these students when our funding is eliminated?

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you.

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(Applause)

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COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: I want to thank you all very much. Before we conclude our neighborhood budget hearings, I would like to recognize Councilman Henon.

COUNCILMAN HENON: Thank you, Council President and thank you colleagues. And most important, thank you all for attending here. I think we got a broad view across, you know, our

city as far as it comes to the concerns from arts and cultures to probations to our teachers and to all our municipal workers and our first responders or firefighters.

I want to thank everybody for taking the time out to come here and join us and be a part of the public process of our budget. It is unique here to the 6th District. It's the first time that we were able to have it here in many, many years. I am proud of that. And I thank you all for coming.

And last but not least, I want to just remind everybody that if you have not filled out your Homestead Exemption forms, please fill them out. If you need assistance or guidance or interpretation or if you need the form themselves, please contact my district office -- the district office or the office downtown. We will be glad to help you through the process.

So thank you all for coming.

COUNCIL PRESIDENT CLARKE: Thank you so much, Councilman.

This concludes the Neighborhood Budget Hearing for this evening. The Committee will

stand at recess until Tuesday, April 30, 2013 at 10 a.m. We will be reconvening in City Chambers, Room 400, City Hall. Thank you all so very much.

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(Neighborhood Public Hearing Meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.)

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

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

Court Reporter - Notary Public

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