

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, MAY 5, 2026**

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Councillor Nolan, Co-Chair
Councillor Al-Zubi, Co-Chair
Vice Mayor Azeem
Councillor Flaherty
Councillor McGovern
Councillor Simmons
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler
Councillor Zusy
Mayor Siddiqui

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Finance Committee was held on Tuesday, May 5, 2026. The meeting was Called to Order at 9:00 a.m. by the Co-Chair, Councillor Nolan. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2025 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

At the request of the Co-Chair, Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Vice Mayor Azeem – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Flaherty – Absent*
Councillor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Simmons – Absent*
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Mayor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 7, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

*Councillor Flaherty was present in the Sullivan Chamber at 12:08p.m.

*Councillor Simmons was present and remote at 10:03a.m.

Co-Chair Councillor Nolan offered opening remarks and noted that the call of the meeting was to discuss the City budget covering the fiscal period July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. Present at the meeting was City Manager Yi-An Huang, Deputy City Manager, Kathy Watkins, Assistant City Manager for Finance, Claire Spinner, Assistance Finance Director, Michele Kincaid, Budget Director, Taha Jennings, Principal Budget Analysis, Daniel Liss, and Melissa Liu, Participatory Budget and Engagement Coordinator. Also present was City Auditor, Joe McCann and Director of Administration and Operations, Matt Nelson.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized City Manager Huang who offered opening remarks and thanked the Finance and Budget teams for their hard work preparing the FY27 budget and shared that he looks forward to the conversations regarding the goals and priorities of the City Council and the City as they are reflected through the budget.

Co-Chair Nolan provided a brief overview of what was expected of the meeting and noted that there were FY27 Budget Finance Committee meetings that were held in advance of the Budget Hearings. reviewed the list of Departments that have been pulled by Councillors for questions (**Attachment A**) regarding the budget. The Departments that were pulled were, Arts Council, Community Development (CDD), Housing, Human Services (DHSP), Finance Administration, Auditing, Budget, Information Technology (IT), Cable TV, Communications and Community Engagement, Election Commission, Executive Office, Human Resources (HR), Employee Benefits, Law, and Equity and Inclusion.

Co-Chair Nolan made a motion to forward the Purchasing, Treasury/Revenue, City Clerk, City Council, Assessing, Mayor’s Office, and Tourism proposed budgets to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

ARTS COUNCIL

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy for comments and questions related to the three-year regional study. Jason Weeks, Executive Director, provided a detailed overview of the study and how it benefited the arts in Cambridge. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Mayor Siddiqui and Co-Chair Al-Zubi for questions related to the upcoming Porch Fest and the artists in residency program. Jason Weeks responded by sharing an update on Porch Fest and explained that the Arts Council coordinates with partners to make the Artist in Residency program a creative opportunity for people, as well as reviewing how the program is funded. Councillor McGovern asked for an update regarding restorations to the Gift of the Wind in Porter Square. Jason Weeks shared information related to discussions happening with the MBTA on how to move forward with the restorations.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy who made a motion to forward the Arts Council FY27 proposed budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Flaherty – Absent
Councillor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons – Absent
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Yes
Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Co-Chair Nolan recognized the team from Community Development which included Melissa Peters, Assistant City Manager, Jen Caira, Deputy Chief of Planning, Sandra Clarke, Deputy Director, Jeff Roberts, Director of Zoning and Development, and Pardis Saffari, Director of Economic Development. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy and Co-Chair Al-Zubi for questions and comments related to the budget increase, grant money, and social housing. Melissa Peters responded to questions and explained that the budget increase reflects Department reorganization within CDD and provided an overview of the factors that contributed to fewer businesses receiving grants. Melissa Peters shared her excitement for future discussions with the City Council related to social housing and shared information on how that City Council goal reflects in the budget, adding that the Department may need outside consultants to help guide the task force when it's created. Additionally, Melissa Peters responded to questions from Co-Chair Nolan and Mayor Siddiqui related to the use of AI within CDD and how the community is being made aware of the reorganization within the Department.

Co-Chair Nolan made a motion to forward the Community Development Department proposed FY27 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation. Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes
Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Flaherty – Absent
Councillor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons – Absent
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Yes
Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

HOUSING

Housing 9:46 Chris Cotter, Maura Pensak

Co-Chair Nolan introduced Chris Cotter, Housing Director and Maura Pensak, Housing Liaison.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy for questions related to the proposed budget. Chris Cotter explained how the budget reflects the range of work the Housing Department is doing and provided information related to the HIP program and Block grants. Chris Cotter and Maura Pensak responded to Councillor McGovern's questions and concerns related to naturally occurring affordable units and the Tenant Right Task Force. Co-Chair Al-Zubi asked for more information related to housing vouchers and case management support. Maura Pensak responded and shared how all the 20 vouchers have been used and shared information related case management efforts. Co-Chair Nolan asked how the Housing budget works with other Departments for long-term housing support. Chris Cotter reviewed information related to stabilization support services and other services and partnerships that offer supportive housing, while Maura Pensak reviewed how the Housing Department works with other City services for housing support. Councillor Zusy asked additional questions related to the Housing budget and program administration.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Mayor Siddiqui who made a motion to forward the Housing Department proposed FY27 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

HUMAN SERVICES

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Joseph Corazzani, Assistant City Manager for DHSP for opening remarks. Joseph Corazzani introduced his team which included Manisha Tibrewal, Assistant Director of Administration, Michelle Farnum, Assistant Director of Child, Youth, and Family Services, Sue Walsh, Assistant Director of Adult and Family Services, and Cheryl Ohlson, Executive Director Office of Early Childhood. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy, Councillor McGovern, Co-Chair Al-Zubi, and Mayor Siddiqui for questions and comments related to the budget, which included Workforce Development, collaboration with RSTA Programs, lottery programs, the Fresh Pond Golf Course, and after school. Co-Chair Nolan followed up with questions related to preschool and out of school time, and adult and senior services. The entire team was available to respond to questions and provided detailed information on the essential programs that are run by DHSP across the city and how the budget helps to support those programs.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor McGovern who made a motion to forward the Department of Human Services proposed FY27 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

FINANCE ADMINISTRATION

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Claire Spinner who gave opening remarks and acknowledged the other City departments she and the Budget team worked with during the budget season, as well as the City Council. Claire Spinner was joined by Michele Kincaid and Taha Jennings. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy for questions related to health insurance, salary and wages, and ordinary maintenance. Claire Spinner provided information related to employee health insurance contributions and the Health Care Trust and how it funds the health cost in the general budget. Claire Spinner provided information related to predicted salary increases and wages and Michele Kincaid reviewed ordinary maintenance. Councillor McGovern thanked the Finance team for all their work.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Co-Chair Al-Zubi who made a motion to forward Finance Administration proposed FY27 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Flaherty – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

AUDITING

Co-Chair Nolan asked clarifying question related to the addition of one FTE within the Department. Claire Spinner responded and noted that there was an error last year in the budget

book and that this is not an increase in staffing numbers, these numbers reflect the correct number of staff within the Auditing Department.

Co-Chair Nolan made a motion to forward the Auditing Department proposed FY27 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

BUDGET

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Taha Jennings, Claire Spinner, Michele Kincaid, Kathy Watkins, and Melissa Liu who were available to respond to budget related questions on Community Budget Walkthrough events and the utilization of office space and renting space brought forward by Co-Chair Nolan.

Co-Chair Nolan made a motion to forward the Budget Department proposed FY27 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Jay Fusco, Chief Information Officer, who was joined by Eric Belford, Deputy Director of Digital Services, Raecia Catching, Chief People Officer, and Claire Spinner. Jay Fusco offered opening remarks and responded to questions from Co-Chair Nolan and Councillor Zusy. Co-Chair Nolan had questions on the increase in the software license and the five-year investment being made to shift the City into a new system. Jay Fusco explained that the department's budget increase is largely related to higher software subscription and licensing costs and shared that vendors are moving more features into higher-priced costs. Claire Spinner

and Raecia Catchings reviewed the City’s planned ERP system replacement and explained that the project is expected to be a multi-year effort and how the new system will be easily accessible and beneficial for employees., Councillor Zusy asked whether the annual NIST cybersecurity framework maturity score of 5.3 was out of 6, and staff confirmed that it was and explained that the score helps guide future cybersecurity investments. Staff added that Cambridge has a strong cybersecurity program, but continues to look for ways to improve and reviews vendor cybersecurity practices when choosing or continuing technology systems.

Co-Chair Nolan made a motion to forward the Information Technology Departments proposed FY27 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation. Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes
Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Flaherty – Absent
Councillor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons – Absent
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Yes
Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

CABLE TV

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Calvin Lindsay, Director of 22-City View. Calvin Lindsay responded to questions brought forward by Councillor Zusy, Co-Chair Al-Zubi, and Co-Chair Nolan related to ordinary maintenance, the relationship between 22 City-View and CCTV, a new combined playback system, and how the City assesses viewership of 22-City View. Calvin Lindsay explained the relationship between 22 City-View and CCTV is a result of a funding agreement with Comcast and provided a brief overview of what the playback system is as it relates to broadcasting and why it is an important tool for both 22 City-View and CCTV. Calvin Lindsay shared information related to viewership and noted that the Department is in early stages of discussing how to provide a broader service to residents of Cambridge.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy who made a motion to forward the Cable TV proposed FY27 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation. Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes
Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Flaherty – Absent
Councillor McGovern – Absent
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons – Absent
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

COMMUNICATIONS AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Lee Gianetti, Director of Communications and Community Engagement, Jeremy Warnick, Director of Media Relations and Content Strategy, Crystal Rosa, Language Access Manager, and Jackson Price, Director of Community Engagement. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Zusy, Councillor McGovern, and Co-Chair Al-Zubi for questions and comments related to the Civic Outreach Squad, open positions within the Department, Boards and Commissions, having the City website be more consistent, accessible, and user friendly for all residents, and outreach tools. Jackson Price provided a detailed overview of the Outreach Squad, their structure and initiatives, and how they are being used to benefit the City. Lee Gianetti provided the Committee with an update on the vacant positions within the Department and how they are planning on being filled, as well as information on how the Department has been running without the support of those positions. Lee Gianetti also provided an update on how the Department has been working with Boards and Commissions and being more hands-on to be successful with the changes that are being made, both internally and externally. Lee Gianetti explained how the Department is working with other Departments, such as IT, to work towards making updates and improvements to the City website. The team provided an overview of the outreach tools that they are utilizing to get information to residents. Co-Chair Nolan echoed comments made by Councillor McGovern related to updating and improving the City's website and offered suggestions on how the Civic Outreach Squad could be utilized.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor McGovern who made a motion to forward the Communications and Community Outreach Department proposed FY27 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Nolan made a motion for the Committee to go into recess.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Yes
Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

**The Finance Committee went into recess at 12:35p.m. and reconvened at 1:14p.m.
At the request of the Co-Chair, Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.**

Councillor Al-Zubi – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Vice Mayor Azeem – Present/Remote
Councillor Flaherty – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor McGovern – Absent*
Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Simmons – Absent*
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Mayor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Present – 7, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

*Councillor McGovern was present in the Sullivan Chamber at 3:13p.m.

*Councillor Simmons was present and remote at 2:36p.m.

ELECTION COMMISISON

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Tanya Ford, Executive Director, Lesley Waxman, Assistant Director, and Charles Marquardt, Election Commissioner. Co-Chair Nolan asked for more information related to the budget increase. Tanya Ford explained that the increase in the budget is to help support the multiple elections that will be occurring during this fiscal year. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy for questions related to pre-registration for 16- and 17-year-olds and salaries and responsibilities related to Election Commissioners. Charles Marquardt provided an overview of the efforts that are made towards pre-registration and provided examples of how the Election Commission does outreach to teenagers in the community. Charles Marquardt and Tanya Ford provided an overview of the duties and responsibilities of staff as well as an overview of pay scales. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Flaherty who wanted to confirm that the Election Commission has enough in the budget to operate successfully, which Tanya Ford confirmed they did.

**Co-Chair Nolan made a motion to forward the Election Commission proposed FY27 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.
Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.**

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes
Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Flaherty – Yes
Councillor McGovern – Absent
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons – Absent
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

EXECUTIVE

Co-Chair Nolan recognized City Manager Huang, Deputy City Manager Watkins, Matt Nelson, and Jane Licurse, Strategic Initiatives Advisor. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who had questions related to the use of consultants versus City staff. City Manager Huang explained that the City does prefer to use in-house when possible because City staff have better knowledge of Cambridge, the community, and City operations. Kathy Watkins added that the City is reviewing consultant contracts more carefully to determine how the work can be handled. City Manager Huang and Jane Licurse provided a detailed overview of the Strategy Team and their efforts towards collaboration with Departments and what type of support they can provide. Councillor Zusy had questions related to See-Click-Fix and stipends for members of Boards and Commissions. Kathy Watkins share information related to response times and service level agreements. City Manager Huang provided information on stipends, noting that the Planning Board, Board of Zoning Appeal, Historical Commission, and American Freedman Commissions are ones who receive stipends and why the City provides a stipend for their service. Councillor Zusy had additional questions related to staffing levels within the Executive Office to which the City Manager Huang responded. Co-Chair Nolan followed up by asking for additional information on future saving processes and how the City will continue to identify savings in the upcoming budget years. City Manager Huang explained how the Budget Team worked with City Departments to identify savings for FY27 and will continue to be an ongoing practice, while also ensuring Departments are able to fulfill City Council goals with support from the budget.

Co-Chair Nolan made a motion to forward the Executive Office proposed FY27 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Absent

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Chief People Officer, Raecia Cathings, City Manager Huang, and Deputy City Manager Watkins. Councillor Zusy asked for clarification on how many staff are union versus non-union and more information related to ordinary maintenance in the HR budget. Raecia Cathings shared 45% of staff are union employees. Rae Cathings explained that

ordinary maintenance includes contract work, licenses, tuition reimbursement, workers compensations, and other citywide initiatives. Co-Chair Nolan had additional questions related to the Department's budget increase and where the Department was able to save money. Rae Catchings shared how the Department met savings goals by reducing legal costs and lowering licensing costs. Claire Spinner explained that other costs, such as salaries, union increases, fixed costs, and new centralized responsibilities, can still cause the overall budget to increase, which is why the Department did not meet the 2.1% in savings. Co-Chair Nolan provided additional comments related to the Compensation Study and that the City should be transparent and responsible with public dollars.

Co-Chair Nolan made a motion to forward the Human Resources Department proposed FY27 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Absent

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

EMPLOYEE BENEFITS

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Raecia Cathings, City Manager Huang, Deputy City Manger Watkins, Claire Spinner, and Taha Jennings. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Co-Chair Al-Zubi, Mayor Siddiqui, and Councillor Flaherty for questions related to minimum wage, the travel and training budget, health costs, and employee pensions. Co-Chair Nolan had questions related to healthcare costs. Raecai Catching explained she would be able to get more information back to the City Council related to the City's living wage later and City Manager Huang shared that the City does not pay the state minimum wage because it follows the City's Living Wage Ordinance. Claire Spinner reviewed the travel and training, and budget and explained that although that is the name of the budget category, the increase reflects medical bills and costs related to employees who are injured on the job. Joe McCann added that it is not necessarily a new cost, but more of a shift in where the cost is budgeted. Raecia Catchings reviewed the efforts that were made towards savings related to health benefits. Staff explained that depending on when an employee began working for the City, some employees may be eligible for pension plans that they do not contribute to, and the City budgets for those costs. Co-Chair Nolan had follow up questions related to the City's healthcare costs and pension. Raecia Catchings further reviewed healthcare costs for active employees and retirees and explained pension liability.

Co-Chair Nolan made a motion to forward the Employee Benefits Departments proposed FY27 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes
Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Flaherty – Yes
Councillor McGovern – Absent
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons – Absent
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Yes
Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

LAW

Co-Chair Nolan recognized City Solicitor, Megan Bayer, Deputy City Solicitor, Elliot Veloso, and Office Manager, Kelsey McGuffie. Solicitor Bayer offered opening remarks. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Mayor Siddiqui who asked questions related to the two new positions being added to the department. City Solicitor Bayer explained that additional positions are needed because the department's workload already exceeds current capacity. Mayor Siddiqui also asked about outside counsel, and City Solicitor Bayer shared that the Department has spent approximately \$312,000 on outside counsel so far this year and is trying to keep as much work in-house as possible. Councillor Zusy and Co-Chair Al-Zubi asked questions related to the number of public records requests and whether more information could be made available online to reduce the need for requests. Elliott Veloso explained that the increase is due to public awareness, better tracking, and more requests to the Police Department related to body camera footage. He also reviewed ways the City is looking to improve access to records. Councillor Flaherty commented on the amount of work handled by the Law Department and stated that the budget seemed low based on the department's responsibilities. Co-Chair Nolan asked about legal work related to federal actions, the use of technology and AI, and future ordinance review work. City Solicitor Bayer explained that federal related legal work is ongoing, the department is using technology to improve efficiency, and AI can help with research but cannot replace attorneys because legal work still needs to be carefully reviewed and verified.

Co-Chair Nolan made a motion to forward the Law Departments proposed FY27 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes
Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Flaherty – Yes
Councillor McGovern – Absent
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons – Absent
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Yes
Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Chief of Equity and Inclusion, Deidre Travis Brown, Executive Director of Human Rights, Carolina Almonte, Executive Director of Peace Commission, Saffana Anwar, and Executive Director for the Commission on the Status of Women and LGBTQ+, Shameka Gregory. Joining remotely was Executive Director of the Disability Commission, Rachel Tanenhaus. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Co-Chair Al-Zubi, Mayor Siddiqui, Councillor Zusy, Councillor McGovern, Councillor Flaherty, and Councillor Simmons who asked questions related to the American Freedmen Commission, the Police Review and Advisory Board, immigration legal aid, SMART goals, the Commission on the Status of Women, girls' programming, domestic and gender-based violence work, and community engagement. Deidre Travis Brown and her team were available to respond. Deidre Travis Brown provided an updated to the American Freedmen Commission. Staff also explained that the decrease in the Police Review and Advisory Board budget will not impact its work and shared that legal aid services will continue to be supported. Additionally, staff reviewed how SMART goals have been developed for the Department and can share them with the City Council soon. Staff highlighted how community engagement is being coordinated across the different Commissions to help support outreach and communication with residents.

Co-Chair Nolan made a motion to forward the Equity and Inclusion Department proposed FY27 budget to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 9. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Mayor Siddiqui who made a motion to adjourn the meeting

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons – Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 9. Motion passed.

The Finance Committee adjourned at approximately 3:49p.m.

Attachment A – Questions from Committee members

Clerk’s Note: The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. The video for this meeting can be viewed at:
[May 05, 2026 Finance Committee - Cambridge, MA](#)

Attachment A

FY27 Budget Questions from City Councillors

May 5, 2026 Questions

Councillor Nolan

Community Development

- Can the use of AI advance the work of the department? It seems it could streamline some of the work and shorten timelines, which would then allow for a different allocation of resources.

Finance Admin

- (shared question for HR/Finance/IT) significant budget allocation over a long time for the new integrated system: how much comparison work has been done to ensure it is the most cost effective system? Understanding our complex city and union environment, it is important to use system that is customizable but not custom, since that causes budgetary constraints.

Assessing

- How has the availability of big data affected the work of the department – is the assessment process mostly automated now?

Auditing

- 1 new FTE (pg. 226) up from 8 FTE to 9 FTE. What is the new position?

Budget

- Community Budget Walkthrough events - smart goals associated with those events or planning for future events?
- City Council recently reduced their footprint at City Hall in order to allow other departments to use space for staff. My understanding is that the capital building team was able to move some staff into that space. How will that move reduce rental payments and improve space utilization?

Information Technology

- (shared question for HR/Finance/IT) significant budget allocation over a long time (is it \$25mill over 5 years)
- Pg. 19 - \$1.15 increase for software and licenses: rationale

Comms and Comm. Engagement

- What is the purpose of the new FTE in the Comms and Community Engagement? Or is this the result of counting part-time employees?
- Glad there is a FY27 Objective related to the overall structure of Boards and Commissions to create consistency within all multi-member advisory bodies. Is there any additional objective to streamlining or combining or phase out multimember bodies with related or outmoded functions? Has there been any reporting on multimember bodies that have struggled to meet quorum or have not posted meeting minutes? As part of this FY27 objective, all multi member bodies with some work relevant to council deliberations should send reports to the Council, on an annual basis. Consider the practice of an annual report so that we can better utilize the expertise and community input that we seek to receive from these bodies – especially the bodies developed by Council ordinance.
- How is the effectiveness of the various communications assessed? What are SMART goal related to mailings and distributed materials, to ensure cost is justified?
- How does this department, which consolidated and coordinated communications across departments, work with other community engagement efforts in other departments?

Election Commission

- What is reason for the significant increase in budget? The amount of increase is 20% for salaries and wages with the same FTEs. and 29% up for other ordinary maintenance.

Executive

- Although stabilizing in recent years, the executive department has grown significantly since FY22. How has the growth of the executive department and especially the strategy team led to stronger organizational capacity and savings across the entire budget?

- We have looked at some departments - police, fire, DPW - budgets compared to other Mass similarly sized cities. Have we done the same with all departments, to look at staffing for all areas, to ensure best practice and efficient providing of city services?
- For the process of identifying savings: there were departments that could not - why and what is the plan for future savings ? And, were there any departments that identified more than 2.1% in savings within their budgets? Is there an ongoing effort to identify future savings across departments?
- Pg. 19 - The budget includes a \$1mill increased allocation to the executive department for community events support. why?
- Overall the city uses many consultants, which the strategy team should be reviewing.. Is there an internal objective and performance measure to reduce the amount of consultants, to consolidate, and to establish limits - e.g. \$150/hour max for consultants? For example, there should never be a need for consultants to run community engagement efforts, since the city is well resourced with staff.

Human Resources

- (shared question for HR/Finance/IT) significant budget allocation over a long time (is it \$25mill over 5 years)
- HR budget increased from FY26 adopted to FY27 budget by 9.3%, one of the largest increases by any department. What are the measures of success to justify this investment?
- What process did your department undertake to accomplish the Manager-directed savings goal and were you successful in finding department-level savings? What accounts for the large increase in budget request?
- Compensation study did it identify potential savings where out salaries are higher than other comparable public sector positions?

Employee Benefits

- FY27 request up 9.3%. is that all health care or other?
- What is the process and timeline for addressing our high health care costs?
- What is needed to ensure our pension liabilities get fully funded ?

Law

- Law department budget is up 6.3% FY26 adopted to FY27 request, higher than many department level changes. What process did your department undertake to accomplish the Manager-directed savings goal and were you successful in finding department-level savings? What accounts for the large increase in budget request?
- Law department FTE grew from 16 to 18 in FY27. New positions are for new assistant solicitor and a new paralegal. Are there any additional goals or operational capacity that will be filled with these new FTEs? Many law firms are using AI to be more efficient in operations and reducing the need for staff, what is the legal department doing related to cost effectiveness?
- Staff time allocations for law department vs. outside council for ongoing lawsuits – what has been the cost-saving strategy and will that change going forward as we find ourselves engaging in more and more federal lawsuits?

Equity and Inclusion

- The department budget was changed this year to reflect a new structure. There are no SMART goals for any of the divisions. Are those in place, and if not how is the work assessed?
- The allocation of funding for outside research for the Freedmen’s Commission is quite large – \$294K. The research could be done engaging members of our community - why not use the incredible resources of the city – the Historic Commission, Commission members, our university partners intellectual resources, nationally known experts who have already done this work – instead of expensive outside consultants?

Councillor Zusy

Arts Council

- What are the major findings from the 3-yr regional study: Making Space for Art?

Community Development

- Overall the budget is up \$6m from FY26. Why?
- Why are fewer businesses receiving grants? In FY25, 62; in FY26, 34; in FY27, 28.
-

Housing

- What is the funding for the HIP program?

- What is the average cost of units for the Homebridge Program?
- What is the average cost of repairs between owners of Homebridge Program units?
- How can we better mentor and incentivize Homebridge homeowners about the need to maintain properties and incentivize them to do this?
- Other Ordinary Maintenance: \$31m: for what?
- We are creating 3 new positions, including a Resident Engagement Services Manager and Housing Development Planner. What will they do?

Human Services

- How many students participate in the Green Jobs Initiative and are they getting jobs?
- What did DHSP Dept. of Workforce Development fund with \$5m? How many residents are engaged in Workforce programs? And what sort of work are they training for? Are they getting jobs? Are we tracking that?
- Eager to hear more about CRLS's Youth Employment Center.
- Shouldn't the benchmarking and analysis of toddler care have preceded the roll out of UPK?
- Eager to hear more about the Digital Navigator Coalition. (I thought the Library was leading with this.)
- Other Ordinary Maintenance: \$2m: for what?
- How many students are engaged in the College Success Program? Stats on its providing better outcomes? (Sounds like a great program. Eager to hear more.)
- \$111,000 budgeted to provide funding for expanded inclusion services: can this fall under the \$7.5 million we are already spending?

Finance Admin

- How is the Health Claims Trust Fund funded? (FY27: \$18.25m)
- Is the assumption that health insurance costs will increase annually by 10% from FY28-31, or overall? And that dental insurance will increase annually by 2.5% during this period, or over the whole period?
- Salary and wages are projected to continue to grow annually through FY31. Is that prudent if we'll have less income?
- Other Ordinary Maintenance=\$1.97m. For what?

Info Tech (IT)

- Other Ordinary Maintenance=\$6.7m. For what?

Cable TV

- Is the new combined playback system part of the 22 City View Budget?

- Staff of 5 with \$1m+ Other ordinary maintenance. What does this include?

Comms & Comm Engagement

- Eager to hear more about the Civic Engagement Compass and Civic Outreach Squad. How is the City using City View to get out video stories?
- Eager to hear about the City's unified branding work. What changes were made?
- \$1m for ordinary maintenance—for what?

Election Commission

- Eager to hear more about the Commission's "pre-registering to vote" initiative for 16 and 17 year olds.
- How much are Election Commissioners paid?

Executive

- What is the Service Level Agreement timeframe for SeeClick Fix?
- Which boards receive stipends and why?
- How many full time staff did past City Managers engage? Will the Manager always need a staff of 24?

Human Resources

- What % of City staff are union and non union?
- \$1.8m for ordinary maintenance—for what?

Law

- 2,255 public record requests: why so many and how can we make info more readily available so that residents don't have to file PRRs to access info? What sort of info is regularly requested?

Equity & Inclusion

- Where are we in hiring a American Freedman Comm. Director?
- What are the stipends for committee members and have we started paying them?
- How will the \$425,321 budgeted for this initiative be spent?

- Ordinary maintenance: \$239.2k. For what?

Mayor Siddiqui

General/Budget/Finance Admin

- Budget book states \$7.4M in departmental savings. What is the breakdown between citywide savings and department savings? Did elimination of out-of-state travel count towards the 2.1% goal? Where were there department-based revenue increases?

Community Development

- Planned consultant work for FY27?

Housing

- What work is being done to make sure constituents looking for housing support are informed about the restructuring?

Human Services

- Are there any goals around OST aside from the planned initiative about the registered apprenticeship program? How are last year's OST expansion study recommendations being implemented?
- Afterschool scholarships that were previously funded by ARPA?

Budget

- What were the key takeaways from the Community Budget Walkthroughs? Will this be an annual process? Any changes for next year?

Information and Technology

- Can you speak to the increase for software and licenses?

Comms and Comm. Engagement

- How is capacity being shifted within the department with the boards and commissions management moving over?
- Civic Outreach Squad—when and how do they get deployed?

Human Resources

- What accounts for the increase and what measures were taken to find department-level savings?

Employee Benefits

- During Feb 3 finance meeting, staff outlined potential citywide and department-based savings including health benefits savings. Is this reflected in total savings and/or this section?

Law

- What capacity will be filled with the two new positions?

Equity and Inclusions

- Last December there was talk of a strategic plan. When will we see it?
- CIRC—Are there any additional resources being invested into legal aid capacity?
- AFC—What is the timeline for hiring the ED?

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler

Executive

- Ask Executive team what their determinations are for hiring staff vs. consultants and what can we do to decrease our need for consultants
- Employee Benefits/School District/Executive: ask about state advocacy for using Chapter 70 funds to address high health insurance costs

Employee Benefits

- Employee Benefits/School District/Executive: ask about state advocacy for using Chapter 70 funds to address high health insurance costs

May 12, 2026 Questions

Councillor Zusy

Cambridge Health Alliance/Public Health (Little info re this department is listed.)

- How many staff? What do they do?
- Budget: \$12.9m!

Capital Building Projects

- 17 staff: 11 general fund and 6 capital staff (for specific projects?) Why do we pay so much more than neighboring communities for projects and what can we do to reduce project costs?
- When will the city repair the 1st St. Garage: cost said to be about \$10m. Noted that you're replacing the parking access and revenue control system.
- What are the plans for the Lafayette Fire Station and why will it consume most of the \$28.5m capital budget?

Dept. of Public Works

- Urban Forestry: budget \$4.6 vs FY26 \$4.8m + \$1.45m annually through FY31 for trees?
- Aren't we running out of places to put them? How many more will we plant each year?
- How much of this budget is financed by cutting down trees/tree mitigation funds?
- How are you envisioning updating the Tree Protection Ordinance?

Transportation

- \$10.2 for the Grand Junction path. Does that mean that we got the green light from Eversource and the MBTA to build it?
- Cost of the shuttle study and timeline, please.
- \$22m in parking revenues? (\$6.2m at the end of FY27).
- Other ordinary maintenance \$6m? For what?
- When will the New St. connector be built? Will the whole thing, to the new Fitchburg Line bike/pedestrian bridge cost \$9.5m?
- What will the Cambridge Access & Mobility Plan include, will it be done in-house & what is its timeline?

- How many of the top 10 dangerous intersections will be improved in FY27 and shouldn't this be a priority? (It isn't listed as one.) Is updating the signals what is necessary?
- Or will is the line item for \$500k to make Vision Zero Safety Improvements accomplish this?
- When will DOT implement traffic calming in the abutting Garden St. neighborhoods?
- Another priority: Creating the parking neighbors were promised with the flexible parking corridors to alleviate parking scarcity.
- 46.9% of Cambridge's workforce drive alone and have for some time. How many of these are City workers and where do they park? How can we better accommodate City workers, but not with street parking in our neighborhoods?
- EV chargers: \$1,100 is the annual? operating cost of the chargers?
- With street parking becoming more scarce, where will you put new ones?

Veterans Services

- Ordinary maintenance for small dept. with 5 staff: \$122.3k? \$462.8 for travel & training?! What for?

Water

- So many water leaks & repairs. How old is our water distribution infrastructure, what is the state of it and how can we stay ahead on this?
- What is CARE: Construction Administration & Resident Engineering Service? \$250k annually at Fresh Pond.
- The water-granulated activated carbon filter has increased in costs to \$1.3m? (\$1.1m budget in FY26)

Office of Sustainability

- Other Ordinary Maintenance: \$1.3m: for what?
- From FY20 to FY312, we'll invest \$3.7m in the City's Virtual Power Purchase Agreement (VPPA) at Bowman Wind in N. Dakota. This will give us renewable energy certificates but no energy, right?

Community Safety

- How do you define "extensive response program"?
- Will the Violence Prevention Program build on Niko Emack's study?
- When are you busiest? Will you be moving some staff to late night hours, at least during the warmer months?

- Concerned with only 727 crisis calls for 15 staff. Does this include 120 referrals by police?
- In spare time, could CARE team do wellness calls to seniors or checks?

Fire Department

- What is the cause of most fires? So many!
- Why do EMT calls include a fire truck? Seems like you could use a smaller vehicle, if needed, to supplement the ambulance.

Police Department

- Proposal to do hiring from the Local Register. What is that?
- Ordinary maintenance: \$3.7m. For what?
- How can we better protect Cambridge bikes? 427 thefts in FY26.

Debt Service

- Quote: “The City Debt Stabilization Fund will provide \$16 million to cover debt service costs, which is a slight decrease from the \$17 million used in FY26, in order to address increased debt costs.” (pg 9)
 - Does that make sense? The city is putting less towards debt service costs because of increased debt costs?

MWRA

- Does the City pay out \$34.3m or do the ratepayers?
- How do Cambridge ratepayers’ fees compare with those of neighboring towns who don’t have their own water supply? How does our having our own water system impact the cost?

Public Investment Section

- Parks & Rec: FY29 \$19m budgeted: for what?
- Central Square: \$10k for paving, bike lanes, bus boarding islands, trees, and outdoor dining + sewers redone, too—from FY21 \$27.5m sewer bonds?

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler

Police Department

- For CPD, it might be good to say something about how many of the recent expenses (settlement with Ahern, new guns) come from free cash instead of their budget. This impacts funding for other things citywide. Why does the city as a whole have to suffer?
- Can bring up civil service again and our need to do away with it to make sure we're getting the best. On page 35, they note the "Local Register" as an alternative hiring pathway. The Cambridge Police Department is implementing an Alternative Hiring Pathway through the establishment of a Local Register. This initiative modernizes hiring by supplementing the traditional civil service process with a more flexible, merit-based approach. Under this model, up to 50% of new hires may be selected from the Local Register, with the remaining positions filled through the traditional civil service list. This balanced approach preserves the integrity of civil service while providing the Department with the flexibility to identify and recruit qualified candidates, including entry-level applicants and POST-certified lateral officers. The Local Register will enable the Department to efficiently recruit and evaluate candidates while maintaining transparency and accountability. It is designed to attract individuals who reflect the values and diversity of the Cambridge community and who demonstrate strong judgement, professionalism, and commitment to community engagement. Once implemented, the Local Register is expected to reduce hiring timelines, address vacancies effectively, and strengthen the Department's ability to meet evolving public safety needs. The initiative reinforces the Departments commitment to building a professional, diverse, and community-focused police workforce.

Councillor Nolan

Cambridge Health Alliance

- The funding from the city is for the public health department - other than school nurses, how does the use of resources - staff - focus on services to Cambridge residents?
- The contract requires an annual assessment of public health needs in Cambridge - was that done and how is the budget organized around that assessment?

Capital Building Projects

- What has been the budget impact of commissioning of the city buildings that are done - the new standards should mean energy costs are not higher, but there has been some concern about higher costs - can you confirm the extent of commissioning and resulting impact on future energy costs?

- FTE from 10 to 11, but per page 80, no new positions - what accounts for the extra position in the budget line?

Inspectional Services

- How has the budget allocation been revised to account for the various changes in local and state codes, ordinances and requirements? Especially, does the budget include training and communication to not only staff but contractors, architects, homeowners and all involved in projects requiring permits?
- The FY27 objectives include more efficiency of the department - does that require investment in new IT or is the current system sufficient and no new IT investment is needed to fulfill the goal?

Public Works

- great SMART goals and excellent services provided - With the changes in some city policies - like no towing for street cleaning which changed the amount of time for routes, have department resources been able to be deployed to other services?

Transportation

- Good Smart goals for tickets, permits. What about SMART goals from the work done on mode shift: the percent of trips not in cars, and the # of cars registered in Cambridge, public transit use - are those goals still in place and DOT resources deployed to achieve them?
- Is there a budget for the planning for the pedestrianization of Harvard Square or is that inhouse or with community pro bono services?
- What is the budget for the work on understanding citywide shuttle possibility in conjunction with other partners?

Water

- Budget is up 11% - please explain
- \$1.3mill increase for granular activated carbon (GAC) filter media. Is there a medium or long term budget projection for the continued investment in GAC replacements or a projected timeline for functionality of the media? Smoothing out those large allocations over time will be important.

Office of Sustainability

- FY27 marks the first full year of achieving 100% reviewable electricity supply for municipal operations
- Budget request decreased by 0.3%

Community Safety

- The department should be able to provide services as needed - Is the budget sufficient for more deployment of staff for more times - during hours when most needed?
- Has the number of call codes and possible joint response as needed been included in the budget planning?

Fire Department

- 2 new FTEs associated with this budget (pg. 80). What are the new positions?

Police Department

- Employee payouts from free cash vs. internal budget. Need to better track payouts to CPD versus other departmental averages. If CPD payouts are higher than typical departmental averages, then that should be reflected in an annual budget request.
- Would like an accounting of recent expenses come from free cash instead of CPD budget. Free cash allocations are not tracked as clearly as department budgets and may provide a skewed picture of department costs over time.
- With the Community Safety Department now staffed and able to respond to calls which the police would have had to respond to, what is the expected impact on the budget?

Emergency Communications

- Lots of variance in the performance measure for social worker referrals. How have you worked to plan for that goal and why the high variability from FY25,26,27?
- Large number of systems upgrades (obj. 8) - is there a cost associated with those upgrades within the budget?

Community Events & Celebrations

- \$1mill special events support. \$850k for salaries and wages. Are there any FTEs associated with this allocation or is this due to the new community events cost-sharing initiative we discussed a few weeks ago?

Library

- The library FTE count obviously includes a number of part time positions, but it is difficult to account for the FY26 to FY27 comparison with the transition to an FTE framework. Are there new positions in the FY27 budget?

Debt Service

- What is the sustainable and fiscally responsible level and what are the risks in future spending for debt service?

MWRA

- \$1.2mill increased MWRA costs - any thing to highlight about this?
- What would it take for the city to provide funding for clean up of the CSO as has been proposed to ensure better and fewer CSOs?

Revenue Section

- Rent of City property (pg. 108) - thanks for including this item.
- Pg. 129 miscellaneous revenue -
 - Debt stabilization transfer down \$2mill. What is the function of this?
 - Interest earnings down from \$17mill in FY25 to \$5mill in FY27. What is the decrease due to? Does this decrease scale with decrease in Free Cash from \$18mill to \$13mill?

Councillor Al-Zubi

Capital Building Projects

- Can you help me understand how the department is prioritizing the sequencing of these projects especially considering capacity?
- There is a larger increase in salaries and wages from FY25 to FY27 even though FTE moved from 9 to 11. What is driving this increase? Does the staffing plan include the

six capital fund positions or just the 11 general fund positions? Where are the positions accounted for if only 11 general fund here?

Historical Commission

- The FY27 has a planned initiative to implement replacement and expansion of the African American Trail, but the Other Ordinary Maintenance is increasing by about 9000. Can you help me understand how the department is funding the installation of these markers? If from CPA funds, do we know if the allocation is confirmed?

Inspectional Services

- The department added a Director of Construction Quality Assurance, we're seeing an increase to 33.13 FTE, but the building permit compliance inspection target drops from 9000 to 8500 for FY27. Given there's increased staffing, are you able to help me understand why the inspection target is being set lower than higher? I know the change of accounting for FTE might be a part of this!

Public Works

- Can you help me understand why we don't have a performance measure for tree planting?
- How will the five-year sidewalk and street reconstruction plan affect near term capital planning, if anything at all?

Transportation

- Can you help me understand the larger jump in budgeted positions? I recognize part of this may be the transfer of the Transportation Department from CDD, but it's only happening in FY27. What's the number of new hires vs. transfers? Is there double-counting here?
- Are the municipal garage upgrades being done through the operating budget or through the capital budget? Has there been appropriation through capital if that's the case? What's the estimated cost here?

Office of Sustainability

- The budget is staying relatively the same even though there are new workstreams like a new heat emergency protocol and extreme precipitation initiative. Is there a prioritization framework here?

Community Safety

- Community Safety is seeing around a 2% increase. They're planning to have a significantly larger response to crisis calls while expanding the current window of hours. How does the department plan to staff these expanded hours and absorb call volume growth without additional positions?

Fire Department

- There is a large budget vs. actual gap that exists here. What percentage of this change is from the employee benefits accounting change vs. departmental spending?
- The FY27 Planned Initiatives section seems thin for a department of this size. Why is this the case? Are there any operational changes here?

Police Department

- There is a large budget vs. actual gap that exists here. Same as fire, what drove that large difference? Is this also mainly employee benefits accounting change? How much was overtime? How much was private detail reimbursements?
- The alternative hiring pathway initiative is described as being final implementation in FY27, but not seeing a performance measure tied to it. How many officers do we anticipate here?

Emergency Communications

- The FY26 projection for referrals to the 911 Social Worker was only 30 which is significantly lower than FY25 of 198. What caused the drop here? Is FY27 realistic given no structural explanation here?
- What is the total cost of the AI-enhanced non-emergency call processing initiative?