



GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, RULES & CLAIMS COMMITTEE

COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, November 17, 2020

2:30 PM

Sullivan Chamber
795 Massachusetts Avenue
Cambridge, MA 02139

- I. The Government Operations, Rules and Claims Committee will conduct a public hearing on decorum of the Council, as well as the rules around and duties of the Council Aides.**

II. Discussion

attendance

	absent	present	yea	nay
Councillors McGovern		x		
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler		x		
Councillor Toomey		x		
Councillor Zondervan		x		
Chair - Councillor Simmons		x		

motion that the city manager be
and hereby is requested to
perform ongoing training on the
city policies, including the social
media policy, for the city council
aides.

	absent	present	yea	nay
Councillors McGovern			x	
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler			x	
Councillor Toomey			x	
Councillor Zondervan			x	
Chair - Councillor Simmons			x	

mtn to close public comment

	absent	present	yea	nay
Councillors McGovern	x			
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler			x	
Councillor Toomey			x	
Councillor Zondervan			x	
Chair - Councillor Simmons			x	

mtn to adjourn

	absent	present	yea	nay
Councillors McGovern			x	
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler			x	
Councillor Toomey			x	

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Nov 17, 2020 2:30 PM (Committee Reports)

Councillor Zondervan					x
Chair - Councillor Simmons					x

	absent	present	yea	nay
Councillors McGovern				
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler				
Councillor Toomey				
Councillor Zondervan				
Chair - Councillor Simmons				

	absent	present	yea	nay
Councillors McGovern				
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler				
Councillor Toomey				
Councillor Zondervan				
Chair - Councillor Simmons				

1. A communication was received from Councillor Simmons, transmitting materials for discussion during the Government Operations, Rules and Claims committee meeting on November 17, 2020.



CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL
GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS, RULES,
AND CLAIMS COMMITTEE
COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS, CHAIR

COMMITTEE MEETING
TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

NOVEMBER 17, 2020
2:30 PM, SULLIVAN CHAMBER

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Nov 17, 2020 2:30 PM (Committee Reports)

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: The meeting having arrived, I will call the meeting of the Government Operations, Rules, and Claims Committee to order. The call of the meeting is to conduct a public hearing on decorum of the council, as well as the rules around and duties of council aides.

The Governor's Executive Order issued on March 12th, 2020, has authorized the use of remote participation at meetings of the city bodies in response to the threat posed to the public by the COVID-19 virus, and issues guide--and issued guidelines for the city's use of remote participation.

In addition to having members of the council participate remotely, we have also set Zoom teleconference for public comment. Please be aware that Zoom is primarily being used for public comment. And in order to watch the meeting, please tune into Channel 22 or visit the open meeting portal on the city's website.

If you'd like to provide public comment, please visit the council--City Council section of the city's web page. Instructions for how to sign up to speak are posted there.

Once you've completed the sign-up procedure, you'll

receive a link to the Zoom meeting. We will allow--we will not allow public comment--we will not allow any additional public comment sign up after three o'clock.

At this time, the clerk will take the roll of the members present. Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Present

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Present

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Present

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Present

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Present

Present-5, Absent-0. Quorum established.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

With that, all today's votes will be by roll call. Good afternoon. I want to thank everyone for attending today's meeting of the Government Operations, Rules, and Claims Committee hearing.

The call of the meeting has been read. I initially had hoped to hold this meeting near the beginning of the term, around the time we were updating City Council rules, but in early March, the pandemic swept in and upended so many of our plans.

I'm grateful that we have finally carved some time out for this discussion, though. I'd like to take a moment to clarify what I hope to achieve at this hearing. In recent years, the City Council has made a significant amount of turnover.

Of the nine members sworn in at the start of 2016-2017 term, five councillors are no longer in office. Only Councillors McGovern, Councillor Carlone, Councillor Toomey, and myself are holdovers from just four years ago.

And I say that fondly. It's a holdovers that sound like relics, but I don't mean that at all, are from--have served in with distinction for this time.

While it's also a good idea to have a refresher course on the Robert's Rules of Order and how best to conduct city business, this becomes especially important as new members are elected to--to serve.

It serves that no matter--it ensures, excuse me, that no matter the background, the experience, or the expectations of each incoming councillor, all members of this body have a template that provide us with a shared understanding of how our meetings will be run and how we can operate most productively. Even though we are nearing

the midpoint of this council term, I believe that this is a great value in holding this discussion.

In earlier Government Ops hearings this year, we set out to refresh the City Council rules, and those discussions will serve us well as we move forward. But one area that we have largely neglected to hold a serious discussion on is around the rules of decorum when it comes to using social media by members of the City Council.

Having done some preliminary research of other municipal governments, I've learned that we are hardly alone in this respect.

Whether it's due to a sense of fear of not wanting to create overly rigid rules that may inhibit the ability of office holders to communicate with their constituents, or whether there's some reason that municipal government seems to shy away from establish a kind of Robert's Rules for the digital era, I cannot tell, but I do believe that it is a-- it is a conversation worth having.

I would argue that the way that the City Council functioned in 1990 has largely unchanged from how it is functioned in the 1950s. But our world has changed a great deal in those years since 1990.

And with the advent of smartphones, emails, text messages, and social media, we've been given vast new tools, powerful new platforms for engagement and a new way of carrying out the people's business.

For all these important advancements, I question whether the city has done an adequate job of creating a shared understanding of how to best harness these new tools.

We all have a fairly clear idea of the general ways we're supposed to conduct ourselves in the context of a council meeting. But if you ask the nine City Councils the practices of which we should be conducting ourselves on social media, you might well receive nine very different answers.

While I don't view this conversation as necessarily establishing a rigid set of rules for us to follow, I think having a broad template that gives us a shared understanding of best practices and of how we better support the work and the message of the municipal government, is a worthy goal.

The other agenda item that I've been long waiting to bring to the committee is a discussion clarifying the rules

and duties of the council aides. The council aide position dates back to 2006. I brought with me a Cambridge Chronicle article from May, 2006, from the week that the policy order creating this position was introduced.

And in nearly 15 years since the role was first established as a research posi--research assistance position, we have many--we have had many dedicated, hardworking individuals serve in these roles. Yet there is a sense that this role remains loosely defined and is not necessarily consistent from year-to-year or from councillor to councillor.

I'm certain that the understanding of what the job was meant to be in 2006 and what is involved into in 2020 are likely quite different. There's not necessarily--that's not necessarily a bad thing, but again, there are benefits to having a shared understanding of what the general role is, envisioned as being even as we've made allowances for the job to evolve on an as needed basis.

In preparing for today's hearing, the City Solicitor's office provided me a job description for the council aid's position. It is not clear to me when this was written and when it was last updated, but we do have, or I think we're

going to have our city solicitor here today, as well as the Director of Personnel. And my hope is that they can provide some clarity about this document.

I'd like to enter this into the record, and I'd like-- I'd be asking the committee members whether they feel that this description is sufficient or whether it ought to be refreshed and revised.

And I just--and just as I want to be sure that the City Council continually refreshes ourselves on the rules of governing our ourselves and ourselves as a body, it's important to ensure that the best possible operations of our duties and our shared understanding of the rules and responsibilities of the council aides correlate with that.

So this afternoon, I just want to at least begin the discussion around both topics, to ensure that all nine members of the City Council have a shared understanding of how we can best work together in the digital and social media age, and so we can work to ensure the roles of the council aide is functioning as it should.

With that, I'm gonna ask everyone present to introduce themselves for the record, but I think only we've gone through the roll and we do not have the solicitor and the

director of personnel here. I hope they're on their way.

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: They're on the Zoom.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: They're on the Zoom, okay. Who I don't see, I believe, don't exist. Thank you for letting me know. Um, so let us go to the Zoom because I cannot see who is with us. So I did not know. So who do we have, um, represented the city with us, Mr. Clerk?

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: So currently, um, uh, participating via Zoom, uh, from the administration is, um, the City Manager Louis DePasquale, uh, David Kale, City Solicitor Nancy Glowa, and, uh, Personnel Director Sheila Keady Rawson.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Great. So we have all the members of the administration here present. I was gonna ask them to, um, introduce themselves, but there's no need for that. I will bring some--I will, uh, let me go over the agenda. Uh, after we--have now--now that we know who is present with us, the agenda will be as follows.

I'll bring forward examples of what other municipal governments have devised as potential social media and messaging guidelines. And I'll open the floor to discussion on that.

We will then review the materials pertaining to the council aide position. I'll open the floor to discussion and questions for our city staff and for the council. And then I'll open the floor to public comment.

So again, I want to thank everyone for joining us today, and I'll now ask, uh, if you'll look to the records that were provided to you in email form. Does everyone have a copy of it? Do my--the members that are Zooming in Councillors Zondervan, Sobrinho-Wheeler, and Councillor McGovern, do you have access to our Social Media Policy? I'll call you--

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Yes, Madam Chair. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Okay. So Councillor Zondervan, you have it. Councillor McGovern, do you have it?

COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN: Um, yeah, I can get it.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: And Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Hey, uh, saw the other documents you had sent over. Was it, uh, included with the documents that Clerk Wilson shared?

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: I believe he did.

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: And it's also in the open--
everything you sent me is on the email.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: And everything is--
everything that the clerk would've sent you would also be
in the Open Meeting portal.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Okay, great. Thank
you.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Okay. So if you--you
open the social media document, and--and if you actually go
to--I'm sorry?

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: There's nothing numbered.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Oh, your pages are not
numbered. Uh, all right. It's not important. Your pages are
not numbered. When I--when I reviewed the social media
document, the first thing that I noticed, and I don't even
see it on mine as well, was when it was the last time it
was, looks like it was updated or signed, was back--

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: Madam Chair, if I may,
just for the clarity of the members participating.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Sure. Go ahead, Mr.
Clerk.

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: The packet of documents that you received. Um, if you're looking at the attachment or if you're looking on the Open Meeting portal, it'll have the title, Internet, Telephone, Online Use Policy, REV, uh, Revised 0513.

If you're looking in your, um, if you're looking, um, in your paper documents, uh, for councillors who are physically present, it'll say Cambridge, uh, Social Media Policy on the top of the document.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Okay. Thank you. Ms. Glowa or Ms. Sheila Keady Rawson, my page of the social media document doesn't show this, but can you tell me when this, it was this--when this issue that we have before us, when it was signed by our city manager. I know it says, um, Bob Healy, so I know it's been quite a while ago. What was that date, please?

CITY SOLICITOR NANCY GLOWA: Uh, through you, Madam Chair. The policy was, um, signed by City Manager Bob Healy on May 2nd, 2013.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you. So one of my points that I wanted just to bring forward is this--this Social Media Policy was put together in 2013, and it

doesn't look like it's been revised since then.

So I wanted you to pay a particular note to that, because going forward then the clerk said, um, I have any orders. One of the orders I think that certainly should be put forward to the--from the council, from this committee to the council, is that this document should be updated more often.

And you can tell if you read it in, uh, I think it's in Section 5, it talks about MySpace. And if you know about MySpace, I don't think anyone uses it anywhere now. I'm not a tech--a tech savvy individual, but I--I know a little bit of an idea that MySpace is not a platform anyone uses anymore.

But I brought this before you just to get an idea of what we are now using as our Social Media Policy. When you look at, um, page one, Section A, where it talks about permission for non--for non-work is permitted, but it doesn't talk right immediately about political work.

As you go through the document, then it does talk about political work, but it's as political work as it is associated with a cause. Like the YWCA does anti-racist work and they have something on their Facebook page and we

were to put that out into the world, that would be okay.

But what we couldn't do, or shouldn't do, or anyone working on our behalf do is do political work relative to a campaign.

And I guess for something, because the lines blur so much with social media, that it would be important that that is clearly stated at the beginning.

The other thing that I noticed, um, was around prohibited uses, which is in part five of this document. And I think this document looks a little TA different from what I had at home. But again, it doesn't talk to political users until you get to that section. It also--

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Madam Chair.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Yes. I--I don't know who--I can't see anyone's face. Okay. Councillor. Councillor Zondervan, yes.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Just, uh, for clarification. I'm--I'm struggling a little bit. What--what exactly are we--are we asking here if this part of the conversation is about City Councillors using social media, then what--what is the--the question that--that you're putting before us as City Councillors?

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: My question I'm putting in front of you as City Councillors is we should review-- it's more of a request question that we should review our own social media practices. It's not a policy, it's an administrative procedure.

So I'm gonna call it a practice. With a view toward making it up-to-date and making--bringing it into the 21st century, which this document in my opinion is not.

Uh, and I give you that reference by saying, in some of the instances the document talks to outdated platforms like MySpace. It was signed on May 2nd, 2013. And as far as I know now, Ms. Sheila Keady Rawson has something else, it has not been updated again.

So the question is, how do we, as the City Council, ask the administration so that we can effectively carry out our jobs and our council aides have an updated document so that we don't make any missteps as elected officials and our staff as well the City Council aide don't make any missteps? Can't do that, I believe because this document is outdated. Is that helpful?

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. That's very helpful, and--and I fully support, um,

requesting that this document be updated. Um, I'm not clear on exactly how or how much of this document applies to the councillors. It's fairly clear to me that, as city employees, this document applies to the council aide.

But I'm not sure how much guidance we are supposed to take from this. So I don't know, if maybe the solicitor could speak to that as to what exactly does the document say in terms of what city councillors are or are not supposed to or allowed to do on social media, in particular.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you. I--I will, uh, give the floor to Ms. Glowa, uh, just in a second. The way, and this is--this is why it's helpful to go over this document and have this discussion. Although we are elected to the positions that we serve, I see us as employees, if you will, of the city.

And so that some of the principles that any other employee would have to operate under would be similar to practices that we would have to operate under. And if that was not the case, then I would strongly suggest that we had a social media, uh, policy or procedure because we cannot just assume what we can and cannot do.

But I'm going to give the floor to Ms. Glowa for her to, uh, answer your questions precisely Councillor Zondervan. Uh, Solicitor Glowa, you have the floor.

CITY SOLICITOR NANCY GLOWA: Uh, thank you Madam Chair, and through you. Councillor Zondervan, if I understood your question, it was whether this policy applies to city councillors?

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Councillor Zondervan. She wanted to know--

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Uh, thank you. Through you. And--and I understand that it applies to us. I'm trying to understand what if, if any, um, limitations does it impose on us because it speaks primarily to, um, use of city equipment, for example.

Uh, but you know, if we're using our own personal equipment, how much of that applies? Um, and it--it doesn't really, in my reading of it, speak to, um, any--any content or, you know--So I--I don't fully understand what, if anything, it--it limits us from doing, um, as city councillors based on--on how it's currently written.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: So, uh, so Councillor, just to be a little bit more succinct. Is your question,

does the social media administrative procedure not apply to city councillors?

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Um, Madam Chair, that is not my question. My question is how does it apply and--and what, if any, limitations does it impose on as city councillors specifically?

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Solicitor Glowa, do you grasp the question?

CITY SOLICITOR NANCY GLOWA: Uh, thank you, Madam Chair. I think I do. And through you to Councillor Zondervan.

Uh, let me first say that, uh, I'm--I'm not fully prepared to answer questions about councillors', uh, use of social media because, uh, that is not what I understood the call of the meeting to be. And it is actually a more complex question than how this policy applies to other city employees.

Of course, councillors are employed by the city, but they are elected officials and have different responsibilities with respect to, uh, communications with constituents, et cetera, that are, uh, different in kind than the responsibilities of--of most other city employees.

Um, so there--and there also are, uh, ethics and conflicts of interest laws that are more specifically oriented, uh, to elected officials than to appointed officials.

So again, that--there are a lot of complexities to the roles and responsibilities of elected officials such as city councillors. And I don't know that I can really get into all of that.

To the extent that this policy, um, would apply to city councillors, it probably would do so in conjunction with some of the other ethics and conflicts of interest laws and with some overlapping areas.

So misuse of city equipment in--in any way would probably pertain to city councillors as well as other employees because it's taxpayer-funded equipment that's supposed to be used for official business purposes of--of city employees, which in councillors cases, includes dealing with constituents or perhaps, um, putting together some draft legislation or--or the various other things that are included within city councillor responsibilities.

So I'm not really sure I can answer it with a very simple answer, uh, Councillor Zondervan, and perhaps you

could ask me a more specific question if you have one. And otherwise, I hope this has been generally helpful.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Uh, thank you.

Through you, Madam Chair. That--that is helpful, and it comports with my understanding, um, which is essentially that other than when we are using city equipment, um, this policy doesn't directly speak to any limitations in terms of what we can or cannot do on social media.

Um, and when it does pertain to city equipment, um, I understand from what you're saying that it's, uh, complicated, but that there are certain areas where it's pretty clear that we can use social media, um, on city equipment to, for example, respond to, uh, constituents or to, um, put together policy orders and things like that.

CITY SOLICITOR NANCY GLOWA: Uh, Madam Chair, if I may. I mean, just there are other parts of this policy, such as information in Section 4B that notes that these are generally speaking public records.

So there are a variety of provisions that I think common sense would clarify or make clear that do apply to-- to city councillors as well, although they're not explicitly directed toward city councillors. But again, I

mean, some of the, uh, some of the roles and responsibilities of councillors are not shared by council aides.

And I--I had understood that council aides and their role as city employees was more the focus of the meeting. So, um, so I guess that's--that's all I would add on that point.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: And--and let me say this, uh, to all my colleagues, it's a both end. Um, and we may have to have a conversation about how the coun--how this procedure, administrative procedure should reign over what the City Council does because there has to be some parameters.

So for me, it's a both and. How do I, as a city councillor, I need to know what the parameters are so I don't make any missteps. And in addition, as it pertains to council aide, it's important for, uh, the City Council to know what the Social Media Policy is so that when, uh, council aide is brought on, they're made clear that the Social Media Policy, as with many other different policies, does pertain to them.

So, uh, I think it's important and timely as--as, uh,

we see what happens on the national scene with social media, that we turn our attention to our own behaviors. And that's why the call was in the name of decorum.

Because when I think, not to use what's happening in Washington, as an example, but to use it as an example, there clearly means it seems to be a lack of decorum, particularly using social media, i.e. Twitter.

So what are the guidelines that we, as elected officials and, uh, elected officials who have staff that work for us and with us should be following? Are there any other questions from the floor before I just kind of walk through this document a little bit more?

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Um, Madam Chair, if I may. I--I do.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Oh, Councillor Zondervan, before we go back to you, I want to hear--to see if anyone that's also in the meeting has a question, and I'll certainly come back to you. So to Councillor McGovern,

COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN: Um, I'm sure we'll get-- we'll get to this. But I--I looked through the, you know, I looked, just looking through the document and I admit that I, um, you know, I hadn't read it thoroughly, uh, before

the meeting.

Um, you know, the issue, I think that--that comes up, and it's not just with council aides, but we've seen it recently with, um, some tweets from the police department and other places, is that I hope we're gonna get to that, you know, where is that line between someone's free speech versus someone being an employee and a representative of the city. Um, and, you know, how--how is that balanced.

And, um, because there are, you know, when someone tweets something or posts something that is, you know, not in line or is, um, not in line is probably not the right way to say it, but is embarrassing to the city in some way, um, or causes the city some kind of, you know, pushback or whatever, however you want to describe it, I think, you know, you all know what I'm talking about, um, you know, what happens then.

And then also the role of the co--I think the role of the council aide is often blurry. Because a lot of times, um, you know, it's, where's that line between, you're an employee of the city, technically, but the councillors in effect pick who their aides are, even though we're not the ones that actually hire them.

And so there's always--you know, sometimes there's this push and pull between, "I'm representing my councillor." Right? Or, "I'm advocating for my councillor." But you're also really, you're an employee of the city. And when those two things come at odds at times, where is that line?

I--I just, I think I don't--I think it's amorphous and I think it's--it's hard for people to know, and I think we've had instances over the years where, you know, maybe not by anybody's willingness, um, but those lines have been crossed and what happens with that?

So I hope we get into a little bit of that so that we can define it better so people know what's allowed and what's not, and we don't--they don't inadvertently--you know, I don't inadvertently ask my aide to do something that my aide shouldn't be doing.

Or I can at least say to--to Nico, "Hey, you know, these are things that are okay for you to comment on. These are things that are not okay for you to comment on. Um, so that we don't have any missteps."

But I think that's the real, for me, that's sort of the real--the real issue is how do you balance that right

to free speech but also your responsibility as a city employee, and then your responsibility as a city employee versus your responsibility to the councillor you're working for, if that makes sense.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Uh, thank you, Councillor McGovern. It does make a good sense, and that's why it says in the call to decorum, because whatever you say--I think it's very hard, and this is really an open discussion, to draw a line between what you think you're saying as an individual and what you're saying as a city councillor.

Because people don't always find a way to draw a line between the two. So I think it is an important discussion, and we have to figure that out so that not only do we, uh, conduct ourselves accordingly, but then when it comes to our council aide, we then also work with them in such a way of letting them know what is appropriate.

NAOMIE STEPHEN: Hi.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Hello? Someone talking that--Anyways. All right. So going--continuing on. Anyone else that wanted to speak before I go back to Councillor Zondervan?

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Madam Chair?

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Yes. Councillor
Sobrinho-Wheeler.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Thank you, Madam
Chair. Through you. Um, I was just sort of, uh, hoping to
define what we're, uh, talking about a bit. Um, the--the
document that we're all referencing, um, it, uh, this for
all of city employees.

And so just keeping that as part of the conversation
too, if we, um, sort of want to just talk about council or
council aides, that might be sort of a separate discussion
or we need a different document or something. Because the
document I think we're talking about is for Department of
Public Works and the Police Department and the Health and
Urban Services Department.

So if we're talking about that sort of a broader
Social Media Policy, that might be a sort of separate
conversation.

Um, uh, and then, uh, you know, we did want to just
talk about council aides being related to the council. I
think council aides should be part of the City Council
budget, and then we could be really clear about that, that

they, you know, work for the council and are still employee--city employees.

But right now, there's not really a way to amend this without doing it for all city employees, and that maybe we should just be more like boss than, uh, where I believe the aides come right through the City Council budget. That seems like a--a direct way we could sort of address this.

Um, and then the--the last piece, I think just when we're talking about social media, I think we should be clear that's, uh, sort of not that different from, you know, what any of us would say at a rally or--or an op-ed.

Um, you know, sometimes we--we use sharp language when we're--we're talking at a rally. Sometimes we, you know, make specific criticisms in an op-ed in the Cambridge Day or the Cambridge Chronicle. I don't see those as wildly different things than--than social media.

Um, maybe it's, you know, I use social media a lot, but I--I think that distinction is--is not as, uh, sharp as maybe sometimes we make it out to be. So just trying to, uh, have that be something we're aware of in this conversation. Uh, but thank you. I yield back.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you, councillor.

Councillor Carlone, did you want to speak on this at all? Anything you wanted to bring up? And then Councillor Toomey.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE: Uh, thank you, Madam Chair. I think, and we've had discussions about this in the past, that we all need to be respectful. We're all a team. We might be elected individually, but we're all a team and our aides are part of that team.

And, uh, talking about issues, as you will, is one thing, talking about people is another. And I--I do think what Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler said about the scope of this, is it citywide employees or is it council an aide specific, since that's what affects us the most? Um, I think that's a good comment.

And, um, and maybe during this meeting, we can figure out what to do there, the next step. Um, and you and I have spoken about this, about being courteous and respectful. We're all--we've all been elected and--and we all deserve to treat each other as such. Um, so that's all I have to say. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Councillor Toomey, do you want to speak on this? I think I've heard from

everyone. Yes, Mr. Clerk. We'll come back to you, Councillor Zondervan. Did you want to still say something?

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Yes, thank you, Madam Chair. And I really appreciate, uh, comments by my colleagues just now, and--and I completely agree. Um, you know, the--the Social Media Policy, uh, I've read it through a number of times now, um, since it was sent around. And--and it really doesn't speak to decorum, and I think that makes sense.

So, you know, I think it's--it's a little bit confusing for me to have this conversation because if--if we want to talk about decorum, then starting with the Social Media Policy, um, while it--it makes sense, it doesn't really inform us, uh, in terms of what we're trying to talk about when we say decorum. I think, you know, Robert's Rules gives us a better guidance there.

And--and as Councillor Carlone, uh, alluded to, you know, the basic rules of decorum are pretty simple and straightforward and--and should apply, uh, whether it's in, you know, speech, as Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler said, or whether it's on social media, it's--it's about, uh, treating each other with respect and dignity of--of the

office that we've been elected to.

So, I'm still a little bit confused as to exactly what we're, uh, trying to discuss here in terms of the Social Media Policy. I agree that it should be updated and we can ask the--the city manager to do that.

In terms of decorum, it's pretty clear to me that, you know, we're just going by the basic rules of--of decency and decorum here, whether we're on social media or anywhere else.

And so the only other question that--that I think, um, we may need some debate around is the one raised by Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler about, you know, how--how does this Social Media Policy apply to our council aide? Do we need a separate policy for council aides? Do they simply abide by the same policy as all other city employees? Um, you know, I think that's, uh, a reasonable discussion to have.

And--and from my point of view, I--I don't see, again, having reviewed this Social Media Policy a few times now, I don't see anything in there that would, you know, say to me that it needs to be different for--for our aide than for any other city employee.

So I--I guess it would be helpful to me if we could make a clear distinction between, are we talking about the policy or are we talking about decorum and how we conduct ourselves on social media? Because they are a little bit separate in my mind.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Uh, thank you, Councillor Zondervan. I see that David Kale has his hand up. I'd like to give the floor to Mr. Kale. Mr. Kale, you have the floor.

DAVID KALE: Thank you, Madam Mayor. Um, just, I think I may have heard, and if I didn't hear correct, I apologize, but the city council aides are budgeted in the City Council budget.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Okay, thank you. So for me, to go back to decorum versus social media. I--I think we can certainly have different opinions and descriptions of.

For me, when I think of social media, decorum is at the top of that, because what we say is very important, and how we say it and what medium we use to say it through is extraordinarily important. And that's why I tied the two together.

So I just think we sort of disagree that decorum is separate from social media. I think decorum talks about your behavior, what you speak, as well as what you do.

And when you speak in these days and times, it's now not only through a microphone at a meeting, but it's also through tweets, and text, and emails, and electronic instruments, and the like.

And so for me, the two are together. And that's something that, you know, uh, people can disagree on, but that's why I put decorum and social media and tie them together.

Now, the other question that was--hold on. The other question that was out there, and I think it's important, uh, so that--that we get this elephant out of the room is, is it a citywide employee policy--administrative policy, or is it one for, that's set aside just for council aide? And I think that's important to get that, um, addressed.

I believe that the--the social media, I call it administrative policy, is for everyone, including the council aides, because council aides are city employees.

I also think the City Council should adhere, if it's not expressly for us, we should adhere to either this or

develop our own Social Media Policy or for practice so that we're all on the same page and we know what the standard is.

So to answer that question, if--if she can, I would look to Sheila Keady Rawson or our Solicitor Nancy Glowa, to answer the question when it comes to social media, is it indeed the social media document that you have it's one for all--it's one for all, and not for different groups of people.

COUNCILLOR TIMOTHY J. TOOMEY JR.: Madam Mayor, a point of information

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Councillor Toomey, please state--

COUNCILLOR TIMOTHY J. TOOMEY JR.: I'm trying to get on the same page here as everybody else. Could somebody, uh, and excuse my ignorance, but can someone please define exactly, we use the word social media, exactly what does that encompass?

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Okay. So even in this document, it does say what social media is, and it talks about the use of, I call--I guess you call them platforms because I'm not the--the best at this. Uh, but a social

media would be Twitter, and not MySpace. Neal, name social media outlets for me.

MR. NEAL: Twitter, Facebook.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Twitter, Facebook.

MR. NEAL: Um, Snapchat.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Snapchat.

MR. NEAL: WhatsApp.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: WhatsApp. Or up?

MR. NEAL: WhatsApp.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: WhatsApp.

MR. NEAL: LinkedIn.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: LinkedIn.

MR. NEAL: TikTok.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: TikTok. That is what social media is.

COUNCILLOR TIMOTHY J. TOOMEY JR.: Okay. If at some point, uh, someone can compile that list and distribute to all the councillors would be, I think extremely helpful.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you, Councillor.

COUNCILLOR TIMOTHY J. TOOMEY JR.: Thank you.
Appreciate it.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Absolutely. And--and in

this document, as I mentioned earlier, it's a bit dated because it talks about MySpace and it doesn't talk about TikTok.

So one of the things I would hope that comes out of this meeting is--is a policy order asking, uh, the Personnel Department, if that's who writes these things, uh, to update this, so that's at least we're using terms that are consistent with the 20th century--21st century, thank you. And also consistent with a document that is a living document and not left to be--to age this way.

But back to the, excuse me, having answered Councillor Toomey's point of information to Ms. Glowa--Solicitor Glowa, or to our--but let's hear here from our Personnel Director relative to, um, this particular, uh, policy document or administrative procedure.

Is it one, in my understanding, this is something that an aide would've gotten, the City Council should have, and it's for all employees, not unless their department has written one specifically. Ms. Keady Rawson.

SHEILA KEADY RAWSON: Um, through you, Madam Chair, this is a policy that applies to all city employees, including, um, council aides. And I believe it is part of

the orientation packet that all city council aides get, all city employees get.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Okay, thank you. So just to clear up that question, and do you call this a Social Media Policy administrative practice? It just says social media. So I just wanna--I keep calling it something different because I'm not sure what to call it. Is it your social media--media administrative procedure?

SHEILA KEADY RAWSON: Um, if you are looking at the same policy I am, it's the City of Cambridge Internet, Telephone and Online Computer Services Use Policy?

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: No, I have two of them. I have one that says social media.

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: That's a different.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Oh, all right. I'm looking at the City of Cambridge Internet, Telephone and Online Computer Services Use Policy. And I hope everyone has that document. Thank you.

And so relative to this particular document, all city employees, including council aides, get this, read this, and are supposed to adhere to it. Ms. Keady Rawson?

SHEILA KEADY RAWSON: Sorry. It is a policy that, yes,

city employee--all city employees receive and are expected to adhere to.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Very good. So just so everyone understands that we've now sort of taken care of that question, which was raised, is this a policy for all city employees? And it is. So there's no pulling apart the--the council aides.

Now, how city councillors that, I will agree with, um, Solicitor Glowa, this might be a gray area, do we adhere to it? But I would say in the absence of any prepared document that says what are--what is our practices or procedures that we should adhere to this?

Because it does provide a guideline as to what we should be doing as elected officials relative to our social media practices.

But in addition, because to go back to the council aides, and I know we're going back and forth, is as a council aide comes before--comes to work for the city, they're then given this document to read.

And I think they should sign off on it. But also, if we have not read it, then we don't know what the expectation is for the employee. So we don't know if there

are any missteps in violations.

Because if you read it, and we will have, I think we're gonna have to have a further conversation on this, it has--it even speaks to, if you fail to follow this policy, you could get written up and you could be also, in a severe instance, be asked to leave.

If we don't know that we cannot function well in--in relationship to our duties as city councillor--councillors, as well as being able to work with our council aides to make sure that we enforce this policy that they've all been given. Any statements from the floor? Hearing none. Councillor Carlone.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE: Yeah. I--I think what you're saying makes a great deal of sense. It just seems to me that we and our aides are one entity. Each of us are with our aides are one entity.

And as a group, we need to respect what you're talking about. Um, and you can have a completely different opinion, which we often do on issues, you focus on the issues.

And, um, I don't even like saying, when people write back to me, "Well, who's against this?" Or "Who's for this?" I don't even like doing that, because all that does

is create more friction. And I think in the long run, this is the proper way to handle it. Thank you, Madam.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you, Councillor Carlone. Councillor Zondervan. Yes.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Through you. Uh, I agree with my colleague, and--and again, I just want to point out that the--the policy document that's before us really doesn't speak to that issue.

And so I think if--if the chair's, uh, intent or desire is to have some agreement among us as to how we would conduct ourselves on social media, particularly in terms of how we address each other or perhaps criticize each other's actions on social media, this policy document does not speak to that.

And--and so if that's what we're trying to do, then I think it would make sense for us to have a separate, um, I don't know, if we want to call it policy, maybe it's in the--in the council rules, or just an agreement among us that says these are the basic rules of engagement that we're agreeing with each other on in terms of social media.

But--but I don't think it makes sense to look to this

policy document to really inform how we, um, you know, conduct ourselves on social media in terms of decorum, because it, again, really doesn't speak to that.

And--and it's not what it's for. You know, almost any, um, business entity and government would have a social media policy, but it's not really focused on, you know, this issue of--of the quorum. It's--it's focused on, you know, the use of city equipment and, you know, how one spends one's, uh, work time on--on these platforms. But it doesn't really speak to these questions of how we address each other on--on social media.

So that's why I'm suggesting that it's really a slightly separate conversation, it makes sense to review the policy and to ask for it to be updated, I fully support that.

And then I think we--we really are having a slightly separate conversation about decorum as we use social media, particularly as councillors. And I agree with Councillor Carlone that our aides being part of our office are--are obviously part of that conversation as well.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you, Councillor Carlone. Uh, you did state and now you've restated, uh,

your thoughts on that. And I do hear and acknowledge. I don't totally agree and reasonable people can disagree.

I took, not to speak for, but my interpretation of Councillor Carlone's statement is we are sort of a team and kind of locked together. That for me, that is true in the-- to the extent that, uh, and why this is so important, what one does as a council aide affects the councillor and vice versa.

And I think it's important that if this City of Cambridge Internet Telephone and Online Computer Services Use Policy does not speak to decorum and the use of social media, then I would strongly suggest that the council, through Government Ops or another committee, which is what I'm trying to do now, is either we develop our own social media practice policies, in the context of rules of decorum, or we lean to this one.

And--and according to, uh, Solicitor Glowa, she's not sure that this governs elected officials. And I will talk a little bit more with her about that.

And if it doesn't, then we--I would say that we then need to look at the rules with a view toward adding something like this, because our aides in particular do

what they see are the councillor do. To speak to Councillor Carlone's point, we're almost, um, one and the same, but not quite.

So again, I sort of--for me, what brought this to the attention of wanting to bring this to this council was around the issues of decorum and what is has said and how social media is used by the City Council as well as the council aides. And I just led with the social media and the context of the City Council.

Uh, my thoughts at this juncture, I know a few people may have just gotten this document, uh, that we may want to look at this document with a view toward how it can or should pertain to city councillors. That's one discussion.

And the second discussion, which is still very pertinent, will take up is how should the aides who work for the city, for us are guided by this particular, uh, policy.

Moreover, I would like to add, I feel very strongly, so I'm not gonna give up on it, is that one of the things that I saw from out of the city of, I can't read it very well, uh, it's a guidelines for elected and appointed officials using social media. I think this is a very

important document, and if you haven't had a chance to read it, you should.

Because in the context of developing some practice, again, if this document, which is the city's Internet, Telephone, and Online Computer Service Policy does not adhere or apply to us, then I think we then should craft one, and as a companion have got a guideline for the use of social media.

I think it is very well done. I'm not saying we should cut and paste. I know that sometimes, uh, a practice that people use, but I think it has some very good points in it, uh, particularly about First Amendment and Employment Rights.

And I think it's important for us in this sort of toxic environment that we live in, uh, nationally speaking, that we pay attention to our own social media habits and practices, always wanting to model the best practice and best behavior.

Because one of the things that we do all know about social media, uh, is it's not like in the my time, I won't speak to anybody else's time. If you wrote something down, you could erase it, you could throw it away, you could make

it disappear. You can't do that now.

And so we have to--I think it is important for us to be very cognizant of our--our practices and procedures. So I want to just take us back to this document. Some of the things that I, uh, thought were important to pay attention to, it was around the in issue, this is--

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Madam Chair?

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: If I may, uh, Councillor.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Sorry. Which--which document are we--

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: I'm on the City Council--The City of Cambridge Internet, Telephone and Online Computer Service Use Policy.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Okay. But previously, were you referring to the, um, Olympia Washington document?

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: There's, in your packet, I don't know how it came to you, but there is another document.

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: Yes, that's the Olympia Washington.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Olympia, Washington. Oh, I didn't know it. Uh, yes, the Olympia Washington document, it doesn't show very well in my handout. I referenced that because as I read through the City of Cambridge Internet, Telephone and Online Computer Services Policy, I was asking myself, "Gee, there should be some sort of guideline on how you interpret, how do you--how do you use these, what should you do?"

And then I came across this and I said, "Well, this is--this is very," I thought, "reasonably well done, and might be something that we might want to use, because I believe the two should go hand in hand. That this should be not only the policy, but a guideline." Does that answer your question, Councillor Zondervan?

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Thank you, Madam. Chair, I did find that, uh, document helpful and--and I think it might be useful to ask the solicitor, um, to--to look at it and help guide us on whether any of those guidelines in that document, um, would--would make sense for--for us as a council.

You know, again, having reviewed it, and I am a bit of an expert in--in these, uh, platforms, it doesn't give a

lot of specifics about you should do this and you shouldn't do that. It talks about considering this and balancing that.

And so, again, I think it might be helpful to get more clarification from, uh, our solicitor on, you know, which of these points are useful for us to--to really, um, elaborate on.

I think, you know, at the end of the day, we have First Amendment rights, and so, you know, it's not really about limiting what we can or cannot say. It's--it's more about agreeing to some basic rules of engagement.

And I think it would be helpful to have, uh, some guidance from the solicitor on what makes sense for us to consider and--and what might be out of bound.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you, Councillor Zondervan. Are there other thoughts before I go through some of my thoughts? Hearing none.

So, as I read through the policy, I paid attention, again, I asked the question to myself, I was later in the document, and on page one, Section 4, the--the conversation around political work. And I thought that was important.

So I wanted that to be fleshed out. Because I think

it--I've seen an instance, not in our city, where a councillor was using the same technology or a computer to do their political work.

And it's important, I don't think we would do that here, but I think it's important to be spelled out so that people know that that isn't something that we would be able to do.

Uh, I know in Section 5, the reason I bring that up, it talked--it prohibited uses. What I thought about this particular document that was very telling was that it wasn't keeping up with the times.

Uh, just a small thing because it talks about MySpace, RSS, YouTube, Second Life, Twitter, LinkedIn, Delicious, and Flickr. And I think at least two of those don't exist anymore, and they've been replaced by things like TikTok and WhatsApp. And that's not here. I know WhatsApp is very popular.

Uh, the other--so I wanted to see some modification in this document that spoke to that. Um, I thought it was--I thought another important piece was political lobbying. I think that's also under five.

Uh, I think it's E um, what's okay, what--what is okay

to lobby for and what is it not okay to lobby for? And I use the example of, uh, the YWCA does a campaign on anti-racism. That's something that you could put on your Facebook page.

Uh, but if you wanted to do something around, something that was in front of the Ordinance Committee, that might not. And how do we make sure we understand, uh, that subtle difference. The--

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Sorry. Madam Chair?

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Sure.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Could you clarify? Again, I'm--I'm getting locked here. So when you say you are lobbying, what--what does that mean? Who's lobbying?

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: It says you cannot, you should not. Certain kinds of lobbying are--are accepted and others are not. Lobbying is trying--is influence peddling or trying to get influence on a particular piece of legislation, if I read it right, would be illegal.

Whereas if you'll lobby against a movement around anti-racism, that would be accepted. That's how I understood that piece. And if that is indeed the case, we need to be very clear about that, so people understand.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: That's focused again, on city employees. But now if we're talking about councillors, I'm not understanding what, um, we're--we're really debating because we're not lobbying ourselves. So what--what lobbying restrictions are we talking about here?

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Uh, for me, it would be lobbying around a particular issue that was in front of the council. It may not be appropriate to use the city's facilities to do that.

If you want to do it on your own computer, on your--that you pay for your own, uh, internet account, that's fine. But can you do that? I am not sure.

And I want some clear knowledge, is it okay for me to do that if I wanted to or would be inclined to do it on something that was owned, operated by the city? I want to be clear, is that appropriate or not appropriate?

And if it's gray for me, it might be gray for someone else. You may understand it. I don't. So I highlighted that to bring before the solicitor to get some guidance on that, as we develop our own policy. Uh, do you yield the floor because Councillor Carlone wanted to, uh, make a statement.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Yes. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you. Councillor Carlone.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE: Thank you, Madam Chair, and Councillor Zondervan. I--I think when we're talking about issues before the council, we're doing our job communicating those issues.

I don't mean denigrating whatever the substances that other people believe in, but your own beliefs and bringing forth hopefully uneducated, uh, explanation. So that to me isn't lobbying, that's educating and--and sharing what's going on in this room.

Now, if you attack people or come right out and attack the issue, yeah, maybe that's wrong--the question that's wrong and improper.

But as long as you're civil and you're talking about the issue that's before us, I don't see that as lobbying. Uh, I see that as sharing. I mean, they're not making the vote. We're making the vote.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you, Councillor. And I--I see what you're saying, and I'm trying not to be very specific for deliberate reasons.

But I think there's been times where we've gotten

dangerously close to not using, and I say we, it may--I'm trying to be cautious. Uh, and I'm not trying to point fingers. This is something that we just want to flush out on the floor so that we have of, uh, understanding.

So you and I may think very similar, but councillor A or B may think a little different. And we want to say, you know, "You know what? I think that dance is dangerously close to lack of decorum using social media."

So I understand your point. I don't know if we have a universal understanding about that, but I do really do appreciate your point there.

COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN: Madam Chair?

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Uh, we have Councillor McGovern and then Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, if Councillor Carlone has yielded the floor.

COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE: Thank you.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Okay. Councillor McGovern. The floor is yours.

COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN: Thanks. I wanted to kind of bring this back a little bit to--um, you know, I think there's a question, whether it's councillors or city--or our age or whoever that if you're using--So for example, if

I'm--to see if I've got this right because this conversation's been a little hard for me to follow.

If I have my assistant do, I mean, we all have newsletters, right? Or things that we put out. If I have my assistant who is a city employee, using a city computer, do my newsletter for me, then it's clearly then that newsletter can talk about what's before the council, it can talk about information that I want to give to the community about an event, or this, or the other thing. But it cannot talk about, "Oh, you know, if you want to--" Something that's more politically aligned, right?

And so I think being, and that line gets--that line is furry, because--fuzzy. Because everything that we do as elected officials becomes political, right? I hate it when people say, "Name your--tell me your favorite pizza place." Because I know if I pick one, I'm gonna off all the other pizza places in the city. Because everything is political.

So even if we send out our newsletters, there is a political that is part--that is sort of political, right? Because we're communicating with people. So you can draw these lines. They're--they're hard sometimes. But I just think it's important. I just want to make sure people know

what--what they can and cannot do.

So, you know, if you send, if your aide, my aide, right? I'm not, and there were some comments before about naming people. I don't think anyone's named any particular aide here or anything or talking about any particular aide. I've used my aide as an example.

So I'm talking about myself. Um, you know, if I said to my aide, "Look, I want you to do my newsletter, and in that newsletter I want you to put something in about a fundraiser I'm having." That's inappropriate, right?

So again, just how do we, because--and I don't think it's happened a whole lot with the councillors that are here.

But some of us know historically those lines have been crossed, right? And--and so I just think it's just how we can be--I don't want anyone to misstep unintentionally. Right?

And so, uh, I guess to you, Ms. Glowa, you know, where is that line between, you know, either if someone is using--if someone's employed by the city and they're using city equipment, or they're on the clock, you know, it's work hours, where is that line between sort of what they--what

they can sort of say in social media and where does that line get crossed?

And I don't--I don't have an answer. I don't, you know, I mean, some is obvious, right? Some--some things are obvious.

But it gets--it gets fuzzy. And that's all I'm trying to figure out. I don't--I don't want my aide to do something unintentionally that's gonna get him or me in trouble.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you. Councillor McGovern. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Thank you, uh, Madam Chair. I would also be interested, uh, in those answers. Um, I think, uh, you know, OCPF has specific guidelines about what we, uh, can't do as councillors in terms of, uh, you know, using city equipment for fundraising work.

Uh, I think those also apply, uh, to aides. I guess, I don't want to make sure we're not duplicating rules that already exist. If we want to sort of publicize those rules, make sure councillors and aides are aware of them, um, that's great.

But it's, you know, our job as councillors is to change policy, to make policy, um, both at the city level and all the time.

We pass, um, policy orders and resolutions asking our state reps to sign on to things, to change state policy, asking the--the federal government to change policy.

So to say, you know, we--we shouldn't have our, we can't have our aides using equipment to--to lobby to change things, I mean, that's sort of all of our jobs.

And so I--I just don't know how we're gonna sort of break that down too much, um, other than following the--the state rules that already exist. Um, um, but yeah, I would also--I would like to--to hear the answer from Ms. Glowa. Thanks.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Okay. Thank you, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler. Any other questions from the floor? So I--I just have a few other recommendations. And what I--before I close out this section, I want to go back over what questions, uh, this committee or members that are present may have, so that when we come back Ms. Glowa can answer them, um, for us.

And so the--the last thing I would say that I had on

my document that I wanted us to look at was, uh, the fact that the agreement I felt was outdated only in that it looks like it has not been signed.

And if signing means the last time it was updated, it wasn't until 2013. I think that's something that should be taken care of.

I wanted to know if--I know that new employees certainly will get this document. I wanted to know how often members of our city employees, including our council aides get updated information on this policy in the practices that come underneath it. And, um, maybe there should be a sign off.

So, you know, I know with some of the documents that come before the council, I want to try to remember the one, it may have been the ethics.

You had to do training and it was--it was computer based and you had to sign off on every page that you went through, just to confirm that you had gone through the entire document.

So those are some of the things that I will put in writing to the solicitor to come back to. I know that--just a moment, please. So, specific to, um, the city council and

the council aides, are there any questions we want to forward to the city solicitor before we close out this segment of the discussion?

I'll call the members, uh, each individually and you can say yes or no. So I don't have the names of--could you count--could you call each member and then let them answer yes or no, if there's any question they want to put forward for our next meeting to have the solicitor address?

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: Councillor McGovern, do you have any, uh, specific questions you'd like to put forward to the solicitor?

COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN: Yeah. I guess, and I don't know if you can, how clearly you can answer this. But, you know, if you can just get--be very as clearly as you can sort of what is appropriate and what's not appropriate for, um, for us or for, you know, for everyone who falls under this policy, um, you know, to--to post on social media.

Like, obviously not specifics, but like, you know, we just had this whole incident with the Police Department, right? And this--this has come up. What is--uh, when you're working up for the city and you're representing the city--

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: Pardon. Excuse me.

COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:--where is that--I'd just like to have some more clarification as to where that line is.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: All right. And Councillor McGovern, to keep within the call, the question would have to be answered within the context of the City Council or the council aide.

COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN: Okay. So it's fine. So for the ci--for, um, you know, for the councillors or the council aides, um, how--uh, I just don't know how to--how to phrase it.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: If you're having difficulty, if you wouldn't mind framing it and then sending it to the clerk and we would forward.

COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN: Yeah. I gotta--I gotta think. I know what I want to say, I just can't find the words right now.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Not a problem. If there's anyone else, would you like to call other members?

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: Uh, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, do you have any questions that you'd like, um, the

committee to forward to the solicitor?

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: And you may--and you can forward it yourself by email if you prefer.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Okay. Yeah. Uh, ask for, uh, an explanation of what the--the law says about what councillors, uh, and aides, uh, what kind of political work, uh, we can engage in.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Okay. Councillors and aides--and you kind of drifted off at the end.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: What kind of political work, uh, councillors and aides can engage in?

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: What kind of political work, and what was the end of it?

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Oh, sorry. I'll-- I'll send it in an email, but what kind of, uh, political and campaign work councillors and aides can engage in?

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Okay. Thank you

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: Councillor Toomey?

COUNCILLOR TIMOTHY J. TOOMEY JR.: Uh, thank you, uh, Madam Chair. I will reserve my right to submit a question shortly.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Councillor Toomey

reserves his right to submit it by email.

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: Councillor Zondervan.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Through you. Um, my question is--is around, um, decorum, and--and particularly, um, the Olympia Washington, uh, document that you sent. If the solicitor could, uh, give us some guidelines on what would make sense as rules of decorum for the council to voluntarily agree to, uh, on social media.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you, councillor. And I will also, I've already stated mine for the record, but I'll also type them up and send them to the solicitor. If there's no further discussion on that.

I want to move us to the discussion on, um, specifically on the council aides. You should have in your packets the job description.

Does everyone have a copy of the job description? It should be, I don't know if the attachment are numbered, but it would be, I think it's attachment number three. They're not numbered? Okay. So it'll be in your packet.

What you'll notice, and reason why I bring it forward to you, just a little history. On May 1st, 2006, there's a

policy order that, uh, was introduced by Councillor Reeves that introduced the idea of having, uh, council aides. And council aides were not always called council aides. They-- they started as research assistants.

And that was introduced, again as I said in 2006. I am not sure this would be a question of Sheila Keady Rawson. If this job description has ever been updated since the 2006 order, um, that suggested that we have counsel aides.

Ms. Sheila Keady Rawson, can you edify us on that? Do you know if this has--this council aide job description has been updated? Because it says City Council Office Aide to City Council. And I know initially when they--when the idea was conceived it was in 2006.

SHEILA KEADY RAWSON: Um, according to--Through you, Madam Chair, according to my files, this was a job description that was adopted in April 6th, 2009 meeting.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: April--

SHEILA KEADY RAWSON: April 6th, 2009. By the Government Operations Committee meeting.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: And to your understanding, it may not have been updated since then?

SHEILA KEADY RAWSON: Uh, the job description that you

have before you is the job description that was incorporated at that meeting.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Very good. So as you review, uh, council--uh, committee members, this job description, as I have, the question that becomes, when we come to the city council as electeds or members-elect, we are given this job description and then we're out--we are charged with finding someone to serve in that capacity to serve with us or for us, however you'd like to say it, in the carrying out of the duties of our--our office.

So one of the important questions are, you know, this is the original concept, has the position evolved? Should there be--should we consider, and it would not affect probably the council aides in this term, but should we consider making any, uh, changes? Would be the first question.

The second question that I have is what is provided to the new aides after they're hired? You know, you bring them in under this job description, I assume, I know they get the employee handbook, but do they get--are they signing off on anything? We talked a little bit about the social media policy.

I think that's probably the biggest issue for us to be looking at. Uh, but I'm just trying to see how well council aides are supported in their work as city employees. Are there any questions thus far?

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Madam Chair.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Councillor Zondervan.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Thank you, Madam Chair. Um, so thank you for, uh, providing this job description. I've reviewed it, uh, carefully and--and I agree with you that it--it is a bit outdated and there are a few things that need to be updated and added.

I think overall, in--in my opinion, it describes, uh, quite accurately, uh, the vast majority of the scope of the position, uh, certainly as I've experienced it over the last three years.

Um, so, you know, I'm certainly supportive of a request to, um, the Personnel Department to update this document in, uh, conjunction with the Executive Assistant to the City Council.

Um, and then I believe this job description was originally conceived as 30 hours a week. And we've had some discussion, uh, this term about going to, uh, full-time

positions for the council aides. And I believe that was, uh, part of the budget that was adopted.

So I think that also may have some bearing on this, uh, job description, if indeed it's transitioning to a full-time position that should be, uh, captured in here as well.

And then in terms of the, uh, agreement that--that the aides receive or sign, again, it's my impression or understanding that they should and are receiving all the same policy documents as any other city employee. And if that's not the case, then that certainly should be the case in my opinion.

Um, and then, you know, again, we may want to consider some additional, um, parameters that we ascribe to council aides specifically, uh, given that the unique nature of their position, um, which again, should be captured in this--in this job description so that it's clear to everyone what the expectations are.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, you have the floor.

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Thank you, Madam Chair, uh, through you. One of the changes, uh, I would

like to see is, um, right now, currently in the Reporting Section, it says, uh, uh, as a city--as a city employee, the aide works at the pleasure of the city manager.

Um, I think that should be changed to, uh, the city councillor for which they work, um, given that, uh, we heard earlier in the meeting that this is funded through the city council budget, um, I think that, uh, makes more sense.

I guess I also have a question about the sort of legal parameters. Uh, if it's through the city council budget, it seems like it should already be that way.

Um, I don't think the aides, uh, who work for the--the city councillors in Boston serve at the pleasure of the mayor there. Um, so it seems like that, uh, that's how our system should be operating as well. So I can, um, send my question to the--the solicitor.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Okay. Uh, thank you, councillor. Uh, I'm gonna pose the question to the solicitor, uh, to get back to us on that, but I think, are you in the Reporting Section? I was trying to follow you. Did you say you were under Reporting?

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Yes. It's in the

Reporting Section, uh, section down towards the end of the document.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: All right. So, and just, uh, if I may, just a little bit history. When the idea of the aides was conceived, they were in the Office of the Mayor. Uh, that was 2008--no, in 2006, they were in the Office of the Mayor. 2008, they were still in the Office of the Mayor.

And the mayor at that time discharged that duty to the Office of the City Council, in part because mayors change. And we did not want the responsibility to be rising and falling on a new mayor learning the--learning all the procedures and guidelines and rules. So it would made more sense to move it into the Office of the City Council. That's number one.

The second thing, at the end of the day, the beginning of the day and all during the day, uh, council aides is a city employee.

And as a city employee, although they do work for the city councillor, they're employee of the city and responsible to the city manager.

Uh, and that's why that's written that way. I suspect

that can't be changed because of the charter. But I will send that to the, um, solicitor for advocacy. You wanted to say something, councillor?

COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER: Sure, Madam Chair. Thanks. Yeah, because I'm just confused and given that it's, uh, the city manager has the functions and operations the mayor would have in a non-E platform of government.

And that the mayor can't fire city council aides in Boston, I don't sort of see how the city manager could in Cambridge. It seems like that would be a violation of the charter. Um, but I'll leave it up to the--the solicitor to report back on.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Very good. Other discussion. Is anyone else in queue to speak or ask a question? Let me ask my colleagues that are present. Councillor Toomey, any question relative to the--

COUNCILLOR TIMOTHY J. TOOMEY JR.: No. I'm just, uh, waiting for the, uh, response from the city solicitor on Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler's question.

I believe the city manager has to sign off on every single employee that's hired, and he's the sole responsibility for every employee in the city. So, um,

maybe the word pleasure could be changed--

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: May be tweaked.

COUNCILLOR TIMOTHY J. TOOMEY JR.: But I believe the city manager has exclusive, under the charter. I could be wrong. So I'm waiting for the city solicitor's clarification on that, please.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Okay. Before we go to the city solicitor, because I know some of my colleagues might have to leave early, I wanted to ask Councillor Carlone, did you have anything that you wanted to put her on the floor, um, before I go to the city solicitor?

COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE: I just wanna--thank you, Madam Chair. I just wanted to add that I think this discussion is a good discussion. I'm glad you brought it up.

And I'm looking through some of the documents, uh, the clerk sent us that you, um, asked him to send to us. And I must admit, I don't remember seeing some of these.

And so I thank you for that. And there might be other things that come out of this. For instance, the, uh, employment, uh, document needs to be updated. Um, and, uh, it's not terrible, but it's 2001. And, uh, it's good to

review this and rethink things. So thank you for doing that.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you, councillor. Uh, there's no other questions coming from the floor. Councillor--uh, not councillor, Ms. Glowa--Solicitor Glowa, I'm trying to elevate you to the, either the depths or the lows or the highs of the council position.

Uh, do you have a, uh, are you on the ready to respond, at least to one question, um, that was raised by my colleagues, which is the jurisdiction of speaking to, I just closed my document, I think it is, uh, hold on, Reporting.

It says, "The aide report to the city council. Day-to-day administrative oversight is provided by the assistant to the city council office.

And as the city employee, the aide works at the pleasure of the city manager and is required to follow all the rules of city employment unless waiver of a particular rule is specifically approved by the city manager."

So the question I believe in was captured by Councillor Toomey is, is the council aide a city employee, and as such, their reporting is to the city manager. And

that is because why? Madam Solicitor

CITY SOLICITOR NANCY GLOWA: Through you, Madam Chair. This is pursuant to the city's PLAN E Charter, pursuant to which the city council has the authority to appoint the city manager, the auditor, and the city clerk.

And all other employees of the city are employed by the city manager, and generally are considered at will employees under common law, which means that they can be, uh, removed at the pleasure, which is the, uh, terminology that has been used historically, or one could say discretion, of the city manager.

With respect to the--uh, so that's why, uh, legally they are, in fact, um, appointed by the city manager who is the hiring authority for all council aides and other employees, except for those I just mentioned. Um, with respect to the structure, I agree that historically there have been various changes.

But the current arrangement is that while city council aides work directly for and with the councillor who, uh, has, uh, indicated their request for the selection of the council aide and the city hires that council aide, um, on the basis of the request of the councillor to make that

hire, they are in fact, given a hiring letter by the personnel department.

Um, A, there is a job description pursuant to which they are employed, which is this description we're discussing, and they are all sent the employment manual and various other documents and policies.

In addition, you will note that, um, not only are city employees, uh, um, serving at the pleasure of the city manager, but they are required to follow all the rules of city employment, unless waiver of a particular rule is specifically approved by the city manager.

And in the job, uh, sorry, excuse me. In the job, um, materials, uh, it's clear throughout the various documents that pertain to any city employee that the rules of the city pertaining to personnel matters and various other policies are applicable to all city employees.

And almost every job description notes that all such policies, rules, regulations must be followed by all city employees.

So I would also add that this does not explicitly apply to councillors, as I noted before. Um, the manager is not, of course, the appointing authority, uh, of the city

council. In fact, it's quite the other way around, as you know.

Um, so, uh, while it's a city policy and while the two sample policies that were attached to the materials, I just quickly glanced at while we were meeting, um, would-- anything that would be rules of the council would have to be adopted by the council.

And to the extent that there might be a model that would be helpful, that would apply to both elected and appointed officials, any such policy like that would have to be approved by both the council and the city manager because they would be--they would be applying to both different categories of employees.

Um, and finally, I would just note that under the current arrangement, in order to make sure that, um, that council aides have the general oversight and supervision and support that all other city employees have, there's sort of a dual reporting relationship, both to the councillor for whom the council aide works, as well as the assistant to the city council.

And I believe that, uh, supervision and support is carried out by, uh, the assistant to the city council in

that office.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you, Ms. Glowa. Discussion on the answer. Hearing none. So this is what I would recommend.

I want all my, uh, members and those that are joining, that have an interest to review this document again for any questions or clarifying thoughts you may need or have.

At our next meeting, we're going to answer some of the questions that were put forward from committee members and others. Uh, and the last thing that I would want to drive home is our Social Media Policy. And so this question is to you, Ms. Glowa.

If I understand correctly, then are council aides have to follow the letter and the spirit of the social media document. Is that correct? And they're given this at the time of their employed?

CITY SOLICITOR NANCY GLOWA: Uh, through you, Madam Chair. Yes, they are required to follow all city policies, and they are given the employment manual, which also references and incorporates by reference all other city policies.

Personnel Department has all policies of the city for

employees, and they're also on the City Council's intranet, uh, website for all city employees to look at whenever they wish to.

So I do not think it has been the practice of the city to give every single employee every single policy, but they are made aware that all of these policies exist and are under the broad umbrella of the terms and conditions of employment.

And all city employees, um, under the jurisdiction of the city manager and his appointment power are subject to all of those, uh, rules, policies, and procedures.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you, uh, Solicitor Glowa. The only question I have, when I look through the employee manual, I did not see any reference to the City of Cambridge Internet, Telephone and Online Computer Services Use Policy. Is that standard that they would not be there?

Uh, is it part of the employee manual, the usage of, um, the computer services and online computer services and or social media?

Um, I read it quickly, but I don't recall seeing that. And I'm just curious why it's not in the document.

CITY SOLICITOR NANCY GLOWA: Uh, perhaps Ms. Keady Rawson would like to more fully respond. But I can say that not every single policy is included in the manual.

It is, uh, I believe it's stated somewhere that other policies are incorporated by reference, but, um, perhaps Ms. Keady should answer this question as the Personnel Director.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you, Solicitor Glowa. Ms. Keady Rawson, can you answer that question?

SHEILA KEADY RAWSON: Uh, I believe that the city manual as, um, City Solicitor Glowa mentioned, incorporates other city policies as well, which do become, um, part of, uh, you know, the--the city's comprehensive policies and procedures.

Um, also city employees do receive an orientation packet, and this particular policy is part of the city's, uh, of the employee orientation packet that city employees receive.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: And just to follow up, is there specific training around the social media piece of that or any other piece of the employee manual? But specifically I'm really interested in the social media

aspect. Is there any--uh, they've given this document to read. They don't have to sign it.

Is there any training or guidelines or anything that a council aide, as a city employee, would get relative to social media and our online computer service, Internet, Telephone, and Online Computer Service Policy?

SHEILA KEADY RAWSON: Um, through you, um, Madam Chair. Typically, um, we rely on supervisors and department heads to talk to new employees about city policies and procedures. Um, but we don't have a specific training on the Social Media Policy, I believe.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Uh, I'm going to, by way of motion, if it's appropriate, uh, Solicitor Glowa as that, that you review the option of doing some sort of training.

I mean, I think social media and internet uses is just too important, too volatile, and always changing not to have ongoing training about that. I do see Councillor Zondervan has his hand up. I'm going to yield the floor to Councillor Zondervan. Councillor Zondervan, you have the floor.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Thank you, Madam

Chair. And I do want to express support for, uh, training for the, uh, city council aides, not just on social media, but--but all aspects of their job description. And, uh, I hope that we can make progress on that.

Um, I wanted to request if we could have, um, electronic copies of the, both the council aides description and the Internet Telephone Online Use Policy.

Because the versions we have are, appear to be scanned documents, and it would be easier to--to comment and propose modifications if they were, uh, fully electronic. I am able to convert them. But if--if we have, uh, electronic copies available, uh, that would be very helpful.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Very good, Councillor. Any other comments before we, uh, turn to public comment? Hearing none, public comment is now open.

Oh, there's a few motions, but you hold on. Okay. So there's just one motion that we want to dispose of before we move to public comment. I'll have the clerk read that motion, and then the, uh, committee on Government Operations will vote on it.

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: Uh, so I will read the motion. Uh, uh, Councillor Simmons, please correct me if

I've, uh, read this incorrectly.

Uh, the motion is to--is that the city council hereby, uh, request that the city manager perform ongoing training on the city's Social Media Policy for city council aides. On that motion. Councillor McGovern--

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Madam Chair?

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Councillor Zondervan.

COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN: Thank you. Would it be possible to, uh, broaden that a little bit? I don't think we should limit training only to social media. I think we should provide training for all aspects of the, uh, council aides position, including certainly social media.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: I do not have an objection. Is there discussion? Hearing none. Do we want to add it or do I have to do the amendment first? The clerk will--

COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN: Madam Chair.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Councillor McGovern.

COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN: Just a quick question. I mean, do we know that they don't get--get training now in other areas? I would assume that Ms. Stephen does some kind

of training for them. So who would--

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Well, if I understood Sheila Keady Rawson's answer, was that supervisors would do that. So in this case, it would be, uh, the executive clerk would do training. I could defer to her to see--oh, she's not sitting on a mic. Um, oh, she is sitting on her mic. I apologize. Ms. Stephen.

NAOMIE STEPHEN: So for new hires, um, there are the formal trainings that all city employees do, which I believe are the diversity training, and then, um, sexual harassment, I believe.

And then from my perspective, we do, um, train the, excuse me, the incoming aides on the software that they use for Minute Track. And then there's more of a conversational training about their specific duties.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Is it spec--, um, to you, Ms. Stephen, is it specific or does it drill down on the social media aspect?

NAOMIE STEPHEN: We haven't drilled down on the social media aspect per se. Um, particularly recently, I did send, um, some information around to the aides just reminding them of like a loose outline of what the social media, or I

would say, um, general communications might, um, you know, sort of gray areas to be aware of, um, where you're sort of crossing those political lines.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you, Ms. Stephen. So, Councillor McGovern and to the rest of the committee members, yes and no.

Uh, so according to, and we can have Ms. Keady Rawson repeat this, certain trainings are left up to the department head. I think this means, this is a larger conversation because it says to me that training is uneven.

But aside from that, because we're only speaking and I have to try to stay within the call, talking about council aides and onboarding. But, councillors, we may want to, and I think this order becomes important.

I don't know how it impacts, um, what you're asking for, Councillor Zondervan. I'm saying let it stay in the motion, but the difficulty is then I'm going to have--we have to lean on to Ms. Stephen to look at the--to interpret the manual and or bring in an individual beyond sexual harassment and diversity training to train around some of these aspects. Because it seems to me that there is no one way, a citywide way of doing it.

So that might be something we, as a council, not that we can get into personnel matters, uh, uh, directly, but we might want to say to our city manager or the incoming city manager whenever that might be, is it's too, what's the word, fractured. It's not consistent. There's no one consistent line about the training.

So you could work for the councils and get one set of training on something and then go to another department and get something different. That might be something we want to talk about.

But specific to the city council, I would let the policy order stand and it so it--so it reinforces that we do want council aides to get training across the board in addition to specific training around what I think this council and this committee sees should pay a good deal of attention to, which is the social media aspect. Because that is always changing.

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: So I'll just read the revised, uh, motion. It is that the city manager being hereby is requested to perform ongoing training on city policies, including the Social Media Policy for city council aides.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Any discussion? Please call the roll.

City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Yes

Yes-5, No-0. Motion passes.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

At this time, we will open public comment. Mr. Clerk, would you please call on those who have signed up for public comment?

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: First speaker in public comment is Catz LeBlanc.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Catz LeBlanc, 14 Tufts St #3, indicated that it's critical that the City of Cambridge appreciate and support the vital role of council aides. She commented on her experience with the efforts and diligence of Councillor Zondervan's office regarding multiple issues, most significant housing, which required extensive navigation

and liaison with CHA and other agencies.

She spoke that council aides are a vital link to the council. That the aides care, they're working many hours behind the scenes, they increase the chances for the city council to reach, know, and help with dire issues. Finally opined that it would be wise and humanitarian for the city to expand the hours and resources of aides so that more residents can be helped, especially now.

Robert Winters, 366 Broadway, spoke of how the City Council aides position have largely been subject to political patronage, people who have been affiliated with people's political campaigns.

His recommendation is that any research assistance should be tied to city council committees and subcommittees rather than to individuals. He mentioned that aides and research assistance staff to side with committees rather than councillors.

He spoke of his experience with city council aides acting as flack catchers for councillors and as political advocates for their bosses, effectively acting as tax funded campaign workers. Gave example of one former city councillor who had a staff persons go to city departments,

and cross the line of what limitations of Plan E and pressured department heads to provide information and do things. Because the councillor couldn't do it directly, they sent the staff person as a proxy to basically do that.

Finally, he spoke about the city charter which hasn't changed in many decades, nor the roles of city councillors. He indicated that prior to the existence of the city council aides, the city council was doing fine and it will do just fine without them.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Thank you for your testimony.

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: The next speaker is Heather Hoffman.

NAOMIE STEPHEN: Heather Hoffman has left the zoom meeting.

CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON: There are no further speakers.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: There are no other speakers that are signed up for public comment, I would entertain a motion to close public comment. On a motion by Councillor Toomey to close public comment, Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Absent

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Yes

Yes-4, No-0, Absent-1. Motion passes.

COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: Public comment is now closed. This will, uh, this will complete the meeting of Government Operations--Government Operations and Claims Committee.

We will--I will take down the--I've taken down the notes. I ask that you, in the next couple of days, if you do have a question that you would like the city solicitor to answer relative to our discussion this afternoon, I would ask that you send them to the clerk and then the clerk will then forward into the solicitor. Solicitor will make them ready for us for our next meeting.

The schedule is quite cluttered, but we will try to, you know, wedge this in. I think this is an extraordinarily important topic that we need to have some clarity, consistency, and some agreement around.

With that, if there's no further discussion, I'll

entertain a motion to adjourn. On a motion by Councillor Toomey to adjourn, Mr. Clerk.

City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Absent

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Councillor E. Denise Simmons - Yes

Yes-5, No-0. Motion passes.

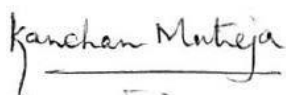
COUNCILLOR E. DENISE SIMMONS: The meeting is therefore adjourned. (gavels) Thank you.

The Cambridge City Council Government Operations, Rules and Claims Committee adjourned at 4:15 p.m. approximately.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, **Kanchan Mutreja**, a transcriber for Datagain, do hereby certify: That said proceedings were listened to and transcribed by me and were prepared using standard electronic transcription equipment under my direction and supervision; and I hereby certify that the foregoing transcript of the proceedings is a full, true, and accurate transcript to the best of my ability.

In witness whereof, I have hereunto subscribed my name this 25th day of June 2023.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kanchan Mutreja". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Signature of Transcriber

Minutes Acceptance: Minutes of Nov 17, 2020 2:30 PM (Committee Reports)