



# FINANCE COMMITTEE

## COMMITTEE MEETING

~ MINUTES ~

Tuesday, May 11, 2021

9:00 AM

Sullivan Chamber

### The Finance Committee will hold a public hearing on the Fiscal Year 2022 budget

TUESDAY, MAY 11, 2021 - commencing at 9:00 A.M.

<b>Budget Overview</b>	Mayor's Office	Finance Admin. Budget Personnel	Public Celebrations Reserve Animal
Executive - Leadership Diversity DGVPI	Purchasing Auditing Assessing	Commission Electrical Fire	
Equity and Inclusion Public Information	Treasury/Revenue Information	Department Police Department Traffic,	
Office Tourism City Council City Clerk	Technology Law Emergency	Parking & Transportation Inspectional	
Employee Benefits	Communications General Services	Services License Commission Election	
		Commission, Housing Liaison	

Introduction from City Manager, David Kale and Taha Jennings

Attendee Name	Present	Absent	Late	Arrived
Dennis J. Carlone	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
E. Denise Simmons	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Sumbul Siddiqui	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Alanna Mallon	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Marc C. McGovern	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Patricia Nolan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Quinton Zondervan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Timothy J. Toomey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



**CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL FINANCE COMMITTEE**

COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE, CHAIR

COMMITTEE MEETING

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

MAY 11, 2021

9:00 AM, SULLIVAN CHAMBER

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Councillor Carlone,  
Councillor Carlone.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Your time of the meeting  
has arrived, and you have a quorum.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you very much,  
Mr. Clerk. I call this meeting of the Finance Committee to  
order. The call of the meeting is to conduct a public  
hearing of the city budget covering the fiscal period July  
1st, 2021, to June 30th, 2022. There will be additional  
hearings on May 18th at 10:00 AM, May 19th at 6:00 PM and  
May 20th if needed.

The following sections of the budget have been pulled  
in advance for questions from councillors. It's--it's very  
likely that additional, uh, sections might be pulled during  
this morning. The areas that have been pulled for this  
today is Budget Overview, that's Finance and Budget  
executive, and then executive related to Domestic Violence  
Prevention, executive relating to Housing Liaison,  
executive related to Public Information Office, and then  
Fire Department, Inspection of Services, Law Department,  
Licence Commission, Police Department, and Traffic, Parking

and Transportation.

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

In addition to having members of the council participate remotely, we've also set up Zoom teleconferencing for public comment. Please be aware that Zoom is primarily being used for public comment. In order to watch the meeting, please tune to Channel 22 or visit the city's open meeting portal on Cambridge's website. If you would like to provide public comment, please visit the City Council section of the webpage of the city's webpage. Instruction for how to sign up to speak is posted there.

Once you've completed the signup procedure, you will receive a link to this Zoom meeting. We will not allow any additional public signup after 9:30 AM. Mr. Clerk, please take a roll call of the members present, and with that, all of today's votes will be by roll call. Mr. Clerk.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Present

Councillor Marc C. MCGovern - Present

Councillor Patricia M. Nollan - Present

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Present

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Present

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Present

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Present

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Present

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Present

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

Uh, today's agenda, uh, or format is the following;

departments and budget book sections being considered are already listed on the agenda, what I've called out. We'll, we will then discuss department budgets that are pulled by councillors.

Um, I'll thank councillors that in advance who have submitted their questions for discussions by the requested deadline. Uh, we will obviously entertain, uh, any important questions that have not been pulled today. We will recess for lunch for about 45, for 45 minutes at approximately noon. That will depend on the discussion. It might be a little later. We will remind councillors to keep questions and comments directly related to the budget in

front of us. In the interest of time and moving discussion forward, please limit questions for each department by each councillor to two. Uh, at this point, I'd like to ask my co-chair who is present Councillor Simmons if she would like to add any additional comments. Councillor Simmons.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Thank you Mr. Co-Chair. Uh, thank you for the opening remarks. And I just wanna be sure when you said we will keep it to two, you mean, two questions or two minutes or both. You said --

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** It'll be great if we kept it to two minutes.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Okay.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, that'll be a goal.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Thank you, Councillor. So, I wanna just, welcome to day one of the Finance Committee hearings for fiscal '22 budget of the Cambridge City Council and as I agree upon by myself and my Finance Committee Co-Chair Councillor Carlone, we have divided the duties of these hearings by placing me at the helm at the primary chair during last year's round of budget hearings and placing Councillor Carlone at the helm this year.

Therefore, I look forward to Councillor Carlone

driving this process forward today and of course these hearings, and I will see employees to step in during those moments and we need to step away when the Chair needs to step away. And I have questions for various departments as well.

In terms of my general opening remarks of the budget hearings, I just wanna say that I applaud the work of the city manager, the finance department and their team, and I've done as much as I can to support them, but also to applaud the face that they have done so much to maintain critical city services throughout most of our challenging periods, uh, that any of us have lived through. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought with it tremendous challenges.

The City of Cambridge has only continued to function and maintain our existing staff, and we have established lifelines, fiscal and otherwise, to some of our most vulnerable community members during this time. I do wanna state that it's imperative that city continues working to lift up and bring relief to our Black-owned businesses, Black and Brown-owned businesses, women-owned businesses, which are among the most hardest hit, uh, during this past year. If businesses are to fail-- if these business are to

fail, it will send ripple effects through our community, and likewise, if they succeed and thrive, that shall create positive ripple effects.

So I wanna keep my remarks brief, as I know we have a very long day, uh, ahead of us. So I'll stop there and just thank everyone who worked so hard and diligently to put this budget together. I look forward to the presentation and to the question and answer sessions as they unfold throughout the hearings. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield the floor.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Co-Chair Simmons. I want to add that you speak for both of us, and I greatly appreciate your comments. So, for the public we want you to know that, um, the budget book is an inch and a half thick and, uh, very detailed, uh, in many areas.

One of the things that we ask the administration to do this year is to explain more about the process. They've done that. Um, it probably added 20 pages, but, um, if you are interested in greater detail of how the process is done, um, please do look at it and it includes definitions as well. In the past, we've asked some general questions about that, and I greatly appreciate it.



This year, obviously, um, the past year has been a difficult year for the city, um, both in figuring out the budget and in balancing situations, uh, less income in some areas that I think the manager might just casually mention, not in great detail.

So this is an unusual year, and Cambridge, pretty much comes out in a very good balance, uh, state of affairs. Um, there are always issues. Um, councillors have particular issues that are important to them, and this is the way we discuss those issues and question scope.

But the questions today by council, as I said earlier, will relate to the budget and scope. Um, and, uh, we will go from there. Uh, the next portion of the discussion is an introduction by the city manager. Mr. Manager, uh, could you, uh, please present your preliminary thoughts on the budget today?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Uh, certainly. I'll make some open remarks and then turn over to David Kale for specifics. But first of all, I wanna thank the two co-chairs, Councillor Carlone and Councillor Simmons, for all the work they've done throughout the year, uh, working with myself and my finance team in terms of the finance position

of the city in really helping deliver and work what is the budget we've produced today.

So I am pleased that we were able to receive some of the councillor submitted questions and advance of today's hearings. I think that's always helpful. Our staff work incredibly hard and they have demonstrated their commitment, flexibility, and creativity to the residents of our city, particularly during this pandemic. It has been a very challenging year, and you have in front of you a budget that I think would be the envy of most cities in the Commonwealth. All departments dedicated an enormous amount of time in preparation of the budget in really how it addresses the city council priorities.

I can't stress enough that the department heads have really spent the tremendous time focus on City Council priorities. We think the council should ask questions and concerns they have with the budget, and no question is too difficult.

However, what concerns me is that some of the submitted questions that we have received perceived to be having a negative tone. It can have potential impact on the test staff. I raise this issue because I don't believe it's

the intent of the council and I hope that all of us as we move forward can keep this in mind during this important budget discussion. And I'll turn it over to David for the financial position. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mr. Manager. Mr. Kale.

**MR. DAVID KALE:** Yeah, I'll just be brief. I think as we talked about last year, when we developed the '21 budget, we had to make adjustments. And we talked a little bit about that last night about holding positions till April in the way we budgeted them for a variety of reasons. While things look like they're improving, clearly one of our strengths in the past has been our ability to use non-property tax revenues, um, we are continuing to use those, but frankly, they're at the lower amounts that we established when we set the tax rate in the fall. Hotel-Motel tax is, uh, budgeted, um, approximately to what we budgeted. We were getting \$16 million a year.

We're getting far less than that. We're budgeting, um, uh, 75% less than that amount. Meals tax looks like it's, uh, rebounded, but again, nowhere near than the five or 6 million we were normally getting. Traffic and parking funds

are coming back, but again, we've been conservative and have made adjustments to their revenue streams. You have approved the water and sewer fund budgets with the tax - with the water and sewer rate, again, we had to make adjustments with our revenues there. Um, state aid, um, again, fortunately has not been reduced and is being increased, uh, based upon on the Governor and House Ways and Means budget. So there's pluses and minuses.

Again, in the departmental budgets, we've been conservative to make sure that we don't over budget our revenues. Um, and hopefully by the time the fall comes, uh, we will have a better sense of where things really will be in September and looking forward to the remainder of the fiscal year and make any adjustments.

Um, I know that the manager, uh, may wanna speak to, uh, um, levy increases, but again I would just point out that the levy increase in this budget is 8.95%, uh, which is one of the largest increases that we've had in recent memory. And, um, even though while in the fall we tried to reduce, um, that percentage increase in the levy, uh, we've been able to do that by using our reserves and non-property taxes, revenues that we feel we could expand upon, based

upon actual receipts in the prior fiscal year.

I'm not as confident that we're gonna be able to do that in the fall. And I think that, um, and the manager may expand upon this about, you know, impact on property taxpayers in terms of what we are presenting in terms of their tax bills in the fall.

Again, we've been very fortunate to be able to produce budgets that have expanded services that basically have had limited impact on the, uh, levy and the impact on people's actual property tax bills. Um, uh, again, though, I think one of the things that we're fortunate is that we are below the levy limit, but we are gonna use some of that in terms of balancing the budget in fiscal '22.

As I said last year, '21, um, was a bridge year. Um, we're on the other side of that bridge, and hopefully things will continue to get better but as we also said it's gonna take a few years before we get back to where we were in '19. And I think while things look encouraging, um, you know, our revenues are not what they were, um, with regard to the, um, non-property tax side. So that's gonna have an impact on how we balance the books. So, um, I don't wanna add anything, Mr. Manager.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mr. Kale.  
Uh, are there any other additional comments by Mr. Jennings or others on your staff.

**MR. TAHA JENNINGS:** Um, thank you, through you, uh, Mr. Chair, uh, thanks again to staff, department staff, city manager, um, fiscal staff. Uh, the budget book is obviously very comprehensive. It has a lot of information in it, um, and takes a lot of work to put together, but it's really critical that it's clear to you as a council, it's understandable to not just the council, but also the community members who are interested in it, um, because there is a lot of information and it is important information about how the city uses resources and where we set priorities, um, and the work we do. So, happy to move forward with the discussion and look forward to helping clarify anything and answer questions that come up.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you all. Mr. Manager, did you wanna conclude with any comments?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** No, I would just say, you know, obviously the second part of the budget hearing becomes in September with the tax rate. So one thing that is tricky is that when you vote for a tax rate

in September or October, it's really based on what happens in these hearings.

And as David had mentioned, uh, primarily due to the COVID, uh, finances, uh, we are looking at a larger tax increase than usual. I think we will continue to do everything we can to keep that number down, but obviously there are demands that we, our residents expect, and, uh, we think we're giving you the best of both situations.

But, uh, it is--this is a year where we'll be seeing about an 8% levee increase, uh, and it'll be the fifth year in a row that the percent of the levee has gone up. But I think we can explain why in all those situations. So I think I'll look forward to these discussions. I know the department heads are ready for your question. So I'm ready to start when you are.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank--thank you, Mr. Manager. I'm going to, um--

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** So Mr. Chair. Excuse me, Mr. Chair, just a point of information.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes, Councillor.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** I was just reviewing very quickly the questions and it looks like the Mayor's

questions might have been left off the document.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes, I have it. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Just to make aware. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I was just, um, going to go over the list already.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** This is the list I read earlier and I am going to read it again was the list that was put together by the clerk from questions and requests for pulling certain departments as of Friday, uh, noon. Uh, since that time, uh, we do have, uh, other questions and these departments have not been pulled as of yet. So the questions that came in later, if after I read the list again, if you wish to pull a department, uh, that you have a question for, um, please let me know.

So I will read the list one more time just for clarity. And I will list the Councillors who have asked questions related to that, again, that came in on Friday.

Budget Overview, uh, questions from Councillor Toomey and myself, Executive Questions from Vice Mayor Mallon,



Executive Department questions on Domestic Violence  
Preventions from the Vice Mayor, Executive Department  
Housing Liaison questions, and these departments have been  
pulled from Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Executive  
Department Public Information Office questions from  
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler and Vice Mayor Mallon.

Fire Department questions from Vice Mayor Mallon,  
Inspectional Services questions from Vice Mayor Mallon, Law  
Department questions from Councillor Simmons, Co-chair,  
License Commission questions from Councillor Sobrinho-  
Wheeler and Vice Mayor Mallon, Police Department questions  
from Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, Vice Mayor Mallon, Co-  
Chair Simmons, Councillor McGovern, and myself, Traffic,  
Parking and Transportation questions from Councillor  
Sobrinho-Wheeler, vice Mayor Mallon and coun—and myself.

Now, looking at the additional questions that came  
later, I suspect, uh, there will be other departments  
pulled, and this is your opportunity now, uh, to pull them.  
Uh, I don't see hands raised. So Councillors, uh, just call  
out if you wish to, uh, to address the full council and the  
committee. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, yes, please.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Um, there were a

couple that may have been filed, and so apologies if I--if I missed it, but, uh, I wanted to make sure we pulled Information Technology and the Housing Liaison.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Information Technology. I'm sorry, and the second one, Councillor?

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Uh, Housing Liaison.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Um, I should have--I did mention that, but maybe I skipped over. Yes, that's already been pulled. Thank you, councillor. Anyone else? Yes, Councillor Nolan.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yes. Um, and sorry, it--it appears that, um, I did send questions late over the weekend.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** That's fine. That's fine.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Although these are relatively simple questions that hopefully can be addressed, um, Employee Benefits.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Employee Benefits. I'm just writing this down, so one sec. Yes, Councillor.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Budget Policy.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Budget, um, okay.

[Inaudible 00:28:02] Mr. Chair could we redefine, what that means please?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Is that Budget Overview, Councillor Nolan?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Well, it is, the, uh, a very specific question I asked was, was just related to how it is that we will, in this budget at least reference the fact that we will intend to change our budget policy in line with the council order that was passed about divestment from fossil fuel and private prisons. We recognize, we won't have a full policy, but I want it to be reflected that we will be working on it.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay.

**MR. DAVID KALE:** Mr. Chair. I think that would probably be deferred to next week under financial summaries.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** I would defer to you. What I see on the list is budget - policy is one of the actual elements. If it is next week, that's fine.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** So, Mr. Kale, you believe it is?

**MR. DAVID KALE:** Financial Summaries, the Investment Policies under Financial Summaries.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. Thank you. Sorry, I just want to make sure we have it right. Financial summary. And after financial summary, it was Investment Policy?

**MR. DAVID KALE:** That is--that is part of the Financial Summary.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes. Investment Policy. Yes, thank you. Any other, councillors?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yes, electrical.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I'm sorry, you have to repeat that.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Electrical.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Electrical.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Oh, electrical. For some reason, I'm not hearing it very well. Electrical. Yes.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** And, and I believe those are the only ones that, uh, are in addition to the ones you have called, several of which I also had questions on. Thank you, Chair Carlone.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor.

Madam Mayor, yes, please.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Um--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor Zondervan,  
yes.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr.  
Chair. I would like to pull the Clerk's office as well.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Clerk's Office. Yes,  
Councillor. Anything else?

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** That's it. Thank  
you, Mr Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Madam Mayor,  
is there anything that you would like to pull?

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** I think all the ones that, um--  
-

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. I'm just looking  
at your--your list.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** I think Diversity Committee  
and Committee on Civic Unity.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes, yes. You also  
have, oh, that is already pulled. Yes, you're correct.  
Everything has been pulled. So, um, unless I hear  
otherwise, that'll be all the departments that are pulled.

And I'd like to move the vote the balance of departments.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** So, Mr. Chair?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Are you asking for a motion to move the balance of those departments with a favor of recommendation?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Co-chair.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** So I move.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** So move, um, Mr. Clerk.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** On that motion,

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nollan - Yes

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Present

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

Motion passes, 9 in favor, 0 against.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you all. Uh,

we're going to open up public comment now, and depending on the number of people.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** There's no one.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** So, uh, at this moment no one has signed up. And so we only leave it open for five more minutes. Correct? Okay. I think we'll start right in, um, in our discussion.

And if someone joins us in the next few minutes, we'll pause and let them speak. So I will go through the list as we have it here. So the first, um, department is the Budget Overview (Finance, Budget) Uh, the first question is by Councillor Toomey.

**COUNCILLOR TIMOTHY J. TOOMEY JR.:** Uh, thank you, Mr. Chair, through you, to, um, Mr. Kale or Mr. Jennings, uh, I know last year \$7 million was allocated for Travel and Training, and I assume the city had in place, uh, a pause on any type of travel.

So I assume there's some -- \$7 million that was saved, uh, from that. And now I see that this year, we're setting at--at \$5 million. So my two questions are, do we anticipate that there'll be an--an increase in the travel account? I also saw, which kind of surprised me, the

Veterans Department of Budget, uh, I think it was 70% of their budget is going to Travel and Training.

And I was wondering if I can get some specifics on why that is. I think it's almost 70% of the referenced budget is travel and training. So I assume we have the figure how much that was saved by, uh, no traveling training last year. Uh, if there was, what--what amount was, and do we anticipate now with some relaxation on the COVID but I don't see much travel, uh, coming up? And also on the Veterans Department-wide, that is, uh, such-- in such a large portion of their budget.

**[Inaudible 00:34:00]:** I guess I can start off. And then I'll turn it over to David and Taha for more detail. Uh, the Travel and Training budget, it's a category that's set by the state in terms of municipal finance, what falls into those categories. And what has happened is the real training amount of that \$5 million is about a half a million dollars. That--that is what we put in there for travel.

Uh, the rest of it is almost 600,000 professional development, uh, to subscriptions, and then there's judgment and damages, which also includes the veterans



payments, which is the largest number. So of the bulk, the \$500,000 that we budget for travel, uh, you're right councillor, most of that was not spent as last year or this fiscal year.

Uh, we are starting to open up based on the governor's guidelines and based on discussions with the Health Department, some of our travel. So it's about a \$500,000 budget. But I'll let David and Taha if they wanna jump in with more of the specifics on the veterans and the rest of the statutory categories.

**MR. DAVID KALE:** Um, I'll, Taha has the details. I'll let him do that. Uh, for last fiscal year, uh, we had an unextended balance about a million dollars in the Travel and Training account from Balances not being extended. And Taha, I want you to talk about, again, some of the specifics.

**MR. TAHA JENNINGS:** Yeah, and as the city manager and--and David mentioned, through you, Mr. Chair. Uh, most of the Travel and Training budget is not actually for travel. Um, of that amount, it's really about half a million that is actually set aside for travel purposes.

Uh, when you take out the, you know, the amount that

goes towards the School Department in that category, um, which is about 1.2 million, uh, Professional Development and Tuition Reimbursement is about 600,000 of that. Uh, dues on subscriptions, which also falls under that category is about 274,000. Um, and then the judgment, uh, and damages also falls under Travel and Training.

And there are a number of things that fall into that category, including, uh, medical services and also veteran, um, benefit payments. That's the reason that the Veterans Department Travel and Training budget seems so high. That's not for trips or things like that. That's actually where we pay, uh, veteran benefits out of.

**MR. DAVID KALE:** And--and as a reminder, the statutory categories that we have, salary, wages, other ordinary maintenance, which are supplies and services Travel and Training and extraordinary, which is equipment that those, uh, categories are established by the state and their accounting practices.

So even though some of the categories that are under, "the Travel and Training" statutory category are not as obvious as you would think, for example, um, the Worker's Comp medical services and the, like in the veterans

payment. So, um, or when we have appropriations that get charged at our office, uh, damages account.

So again, it's--it's counterintuitive about the title, but in fact, what is contained in those statutory categories in terms of specific object codes. So it is a little confusing.

**COUNCILLOR TIMOTHY J. TOOMEY JR.:** Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes, Councillor, please.

**COUNCILLOR TIMOTHY J. TOOMEY JR.:** Thank you and I appreciate the response and, it's, you know, very, uh, rewarding that we are providing, uh, veterans, uh, with, uh, services. And I think that's so important and we appreciate what we're doing for all our veterans. So it just seemed to me when I looked at that account that 70% was going to Travel and Training.

And it really, you know, it probably should be under different category, but if it's statutory requirement, it just looked to me like, and the whole Travel and Training with \$5 million to, um, but, um, I just know that's the way it has to be reported. But--and I'm glad that this money is going to services for our veterans who have served us well

over the years, so that's very important.

So, um, but I wish it was kind of categorized in a different way so people would recognize that we are in fact providing these benefits to our--to our veterans. And--and it would be, if it was in a different category, people would appreciate much more than seeing that, that this money was going directly to veteran services and not to Travel and Training. So I appreciate the response. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you for your question, Councillor. Uh, I'm next. And my comments were more, uh, comment related than questions. But, uh, as the city entertained, and I'm talking about budgeting now, entertained an evaluation program, is there an eternal evaluation program of looking at previous budgets what worked. I assume there is but, we don't really talk about that. Um, Mr. Manager or Mr. Kale, um, do we have such a program department by department?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** So I can jump in. So, in the budget discussions, uh, we often take a look and work with the departments on what services they're providing. They may not be providing as good a service as

possible.

However, and because of the financial position of the city, we have often not then addressed those positions by reducing them or putting the money elsewhere. We tried to figure out ways of making those programs more successful. So we have those discussions, but they're not really to discuss whether or not the program should really continue to be honest, it's more about how we can improve the--Uh, and that's been an ongoing discussion probably for the last 30 years about how to improve rather than should that money go to a different program, uh, because we've tried to do as much as we can for everybody. So the discussion is there, but in terms of evaluating an program with a discussion, is it worth, per se, with the dollars we spend versus something else, uh, because of our financial position to be honest, that's a discussion we often go and have. I will have David and Taha talk a little more on that if they choose.

**MR. DAVID KALE:** I would just say that as a, again, we're--we're in a, a good position in the sense that we have the ability to look at these things in a holistic fashion and prudent way. So as opportunities as the manager

said, present themselves, we try to take advantage of those.

And I know that, uh, um, you know, the place where we have a lot of programs such as human services, I know that, uh, assistant city manager, Semonoff does constantly, uh, for example, when we had a vacancy in the General Services Department, we basically did consolidation so that it fell under the Finance Department and we were able to make, uh, some reductions there and still provide services in the print shop, in the, uh, postage area.

And then, um, when we had a vacancy in the Weights and Measures, we evaluated the program and we were able to consolidate that within the Inspectional Services Department to basically take advantage of some economies of scales and basically provide, uh, better service, in my opinion. So, um, as opportunities present themselves, and I just gave two examples, we do look at that.

And then on the programmatic side with, uh, uh, regard to the social service side, I think that happens constantly. And, uh, as the manager said, I think we try to make improvements, uh, to make the service delivery better, but it is a constant conversation that does take place.

It's done in, uh, in the budget hearings, but it's also done year round, to be honest with you, as opportunities present themselves.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. So in essence you are constantly refining scope and programs, um, over time.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Yes. Especially programs that don't affect the residents directly is most.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes. Thank you. My--my second question which I realize is, doesn't have to be in this meeting, but I have it here. The scope of city hall renovations. Um, it's been almost a year since we talked about it, and construction is going on. Just briefly, can you tell us, um, are the offices for councillors in this scope or is that a second year scope?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** So I can have David go over the specifics, and I know the council is aware of this, but I will remind 'em again that about six weeks ago or seven weeks ago, there was a concern that how we could keep the council more updated on what's going on.

And that is not specifically addressed in your question councillor, but I do wanna remind the council that

for the last five weeks we have been giving them the updates of where we are. That, that doesn't give you long range plans, but it does keep you up-to-date of what is happening in the building. For your question councillor, which is more of a long range question, I'm gonna have David give you an update on that.

**MR. DAVID KALE:** As a brief overview, what we started it, the construction now, basically the first stage is to basically, uh, run the new electrical and plumbings while the building and that's happening and that, and putting in smoke detectors and then providing juice to the different floors, um, that--that should be wrapping up in the next month or so, uh, give or take, uh, month and a half. And then, um, the elevator will be replaced over the summer, so that'll happen. And then at the same time, uh, the plan is to start the renovations to the basement level so that the assessing offices can move from the second floor to the basement level.

Um, and then once that done--once that is done, uh, then we'll be able to work on the vacated assessing offices to provide, uh, office space for, uh, council and the council aids and then the project will be done. And, uh,



um, it's about a year and a half away, but basically that's the phasing of the project in broad strokes.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Uh, Councillor Nolan, it looks like you have a question for finance.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Is this--this is just overall in the budget overview as the section run.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Okay. I do want to add-on to your question about the municipal improvement side. I also had enquired about what are we doing in line with our policy of any time we do building improvements that we pay attention to our own policy regarding, um, getting closer to net zero.

And Commissioner Rearden sent me a list of the various ways in which this upgrade is trying to reduce the, um, the impact on adverse impact on the climate that are on operations at City Hall have. Um, and I, and I know they're--they're seeking to do more and I will continue to push us to do more. It's an old building, but we really have to get to a better place.

But I really appreciate it and wanted to, um, thank

the city for that response to my question on this--on this issue. If we're in the Budget Overview section, I'm not sure if this is the, um, correct place to--to be, but there is a mention on page I26 of the Future of the Public Safety Task Force. And we can either talk about it here or at another time, but I'm incredibly--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Another time. Then we'll get to it. Thank you. I just noticed you had a finance question and, uh, that--

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** On the, uh, oh, on the pensions?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Well, I know an entirely new budget cash management policy will not be ready in time.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Right. I believe that's the one that, um, uh, Director Kale said we should hold off until next week?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. Sorry. Um.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** I think -- I do think on the precursor tip for the entire Budget Overview, I wanna echo that it's an incredible job to get this out there. It would be really helpful to me, and I think to

others as well, in many areas that specifics of the outcome and performance measures are not actually very specific and they do not include outcome measures.

And some departments excel at that and others don't have those outcome measures. They're not smart goals, they're not specific measurable achievable, relevant or time base. And I really encourage us to move to a situation where every single one of those are.

And again, I appreciate there are many departments that are getting there, but there are others where it's very difficult to know how we would measure success because it is not any kind of measure of what the actual outcome would be, other than, for instance, holding a meeting. We wanna make sure the meetings held are effective and produce some kind of outcome.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Are there any other comments about Budget Overview or questions from councillors? Yes. I can't tell who is speaking. I'm sorry.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Uh, this is Councillor Zondervan.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes, Councillor, please.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank You. Thank you. Mr. Chair, are you able to see us reading? Our hand is on Zoom because --

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** It's not coming.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Okay.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** He's raising hands on Zoom.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** I wanted to go back to, um, to, uh, Councillor Nolan's reference page I26, the Public, uh, Future of Public Safety Task Force, because that's actually the only place in the budget where it's mentioned. And my question is simply that, uh, it states in the budget book that recommendations will be made—it is anticipated the recommendations will be made in early fiscal year '22. So my question is does that mean that this alternative to public safety is not funded in this budget, um, and--and will not be funded in this budget?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I guess I can jump in and we can --

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Mr. Manager, I could--

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I submitted police, but Mako Denise, I don't know, but I certainly--

[inaudible 00:48:13]: Yeah, If I can. Um, so, we have, we're expecting, um, we're working on the draft of the report currently. We're expecting that that draft will be submitted to the task force, uh, very shortly, um, and to the city manager, uh, soon after that.

One of the things that, uh, has been made clear throughout, um, the task force conversations is that we wanted to, uh, certainly move quickly, uh, as this is an issue that, you know, people are very concerned about.

But at the same time, it's a complicated and complex issue, and we weren't going to, we needed to do our due diligence and we weren't going to put something forward just because we felt we had to put something forward. Um, we wanted to try to do it, uh, well.

Um, what has sort of, uh, developed is, and anyone who's been on a task force, uh, would notice this or knows this, is that sometimes you come out in a different place than where you started or where you thought you were gonna end up.

Uh, it's looking more and more like, uh, there will be recommendations around continuing this process in a more broad way to include more, uh, to get more feedback from

the community to look at this closer and further define what an actual alternative program might look like.

Um, one thing that the manager has made clear from the start, and I think we all know this, uh, given Cambridge's strong fiscal position, um, unlike other communities where if a--if an item does not get a program or an item does not get a line item in the budget, it doesn't get funded for that fiscal year. That is not the case with Cambridge.

We fund things constantly that are not in the budget. Uh, we get allocations all the time, uh, around that-- around that issue. So as, uh, Councillor Simmons and I have said to the task force and to others, if there is not a specific line item, uh, in the budget that does not mean, uh, that, that moving this forward will not be funded in the budget, and that money might come forward with, uh, through an allocation, uh, request to the council.

So, um, you know, right now there's, you know, there is not a line item in the budget that is partially due to, you know, there was a tight timeframe to get this done the more and more we talked about it, uh, the more and more we dug into, um, you know, what this issue really, uh, you know, how you would operationalize such a department.

It's not as simple as just throwing money at it and saying, we're gonna create it. It's really complicated to do it right. Um, it's looking more and more like, you know, we will be coming forward with recommendations and there'll be a further allocation that will come.

Um, but it may come through, uh, you know, a budget request and not necessarily the line item in the budget. So, um, it's moving. Um, those recommendations will be coming shortly. Um, but just because you don't see it in the budget doesn't mean it's not gonna be funded just like a million other things that we do.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Uh, if I can follow up, if that's okay.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Uh, I really wanna thank Councillor Simmons and Councillor McGovern for their leadership. I wanna thank the task force. I mean, we said early on that we really didn't wanna let the budget process dictate the outcome of this. It's just too important.

And even though the budget's submitted in I think May 3rd, and really to have an opportunity to have the budget, get the work done, you really had a deadline of--of really

early April, and it just wasn't realistic.

So we will, uh, continue to work. Uh, we're making great progress. I wanna thank the police commissioner as well, and we'll get those recommendations. And then we will be coming back to the council as we thought was gonna be the case to be perfectly honest, when we started.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** And Mr. Chair, if I may.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor Simmons.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** I thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just wanted to concur first in support of my co-chair of this committee. Um, what was implied and what a lot of what he said was that this has been a, uh, extremely powerful experience.

We have had a number of meetings, we have subcommittee meetings, people have been meeting on their own. And it became evident very early on that this work was very important. And folks in their desire to do a good job, respectfully asked, you know, do we have to make this deadline?

And we went to the city manager, city manager says, "Don't let the budget drive your decision or your decision process." Which is really important because what we didn't



wanna do was try to make a budget deadline and not have a fully formed response, and then have to go back and--and revisit it.

So with the support of the city manager and the members of the advisory, we've slowed the tempo. And because of that, we've gotten so much more information. What we, you know, without going into the report that you're gonna give very soon, we've had a number of people in--from what I call community experts that have donated their time, I mean, hours of their time to inform the committee so it could come back with a rich, and coherent and confidently done response.

So we're pleased to say that we're getting to the end of the, what I wanna call the first phase. My colleague says, maybe we'll stay, um, together with the, um, uh, support of the city manager to--to look at other issues that kind of were not within our direct purview, but certainly came up so that we can continue that work.

But we do see ourselves coming to--coming back with a recommendation to you fairly soon. And again, with the city manager was saying, because there may be budget implications, do not rush this work, do it right. Take your

time, do it, we will make sure that whatever budget, um, recommendations that come out of this, he would meet those budget recommendations.

And of course, this will come forward to the council, um, as well, because of anything that has, uh, a budget impact over a certain amount of money has to come before the council. So, uh, again, uh, it's been an instructive process. I'm glad to have participated in it.

Uh, we think the people that come every week, every week. So this is not like the average committee. They-- these folks come every week. Uh, I do thank them for taking the time to do this important work. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield the floor.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, one second please. So we have a number of councillors who wish to speak, but let me just summarize. So what I understand is that the work is ongoing in the committee, there will be a report soon and the manager is definitely aware of it and open to it, um, and a financial resolution or a budgetary resolution of an effort will be done, I assume, before summer session begins. Because once we get in the summer, we don't meet very often. Is--is that an accurate summary?

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Mr. Chair, I would say that's an accurate summary, and we are going to certainly work to get to that.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Mr. Manager?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Yes. I mean, I've attended almost all the meetings as well, and you know, I think we're on the same page and it will be no delay once we get the recommendations, we will address them and come back to the council with, but we wanna make sure that we have enough time to come up with the recommendations.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. So I have three councillors waiting with--I have three councillors waiting with their hands up. And it would be unfair. You will get your opportunity.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** I still have the floor, Mr. Chair. I asked a question.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** The question was answered. Continue?

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Okay. Thank you Mr. Chair. Appreciate that. Um, I appreciate all the work that's gone into it. Um, but--but I am disappointed that we don't have a proposal before us and I am aware that the

community has been working really hard on sourcing its own proposal that is ready to be funded.

So, um, I just don't understand how we can be here, uh, one year later and not have a fundable proposal before us that we can present to the community so that we don't continue to, uh, respond to--to crises in--in the wrong--in the wrong way.

And other communities across the country have implemented these types of programs and have informed us on how they did it and how we can do it here in Cambridge. So, uh, I don't understand why--why this is so delayed. And--and I hope that we can, uh, rapidly move this forward, uh, to meet our promises to the community. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** And that's--one second, Councillor McGovern. And that's why I said that we're looking forward to this, uh, happening as early as June and before the Summer session. Councillor McGovern, I know you wanna comment.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** I would just point out

that, yes, we are. This was talked about a year ago. Um, the task force did not come together until February. I'm sorry, Councillor Zondervan doesn't understand that this takes a lot of time, and is complicated.

It's not a cut and paste kind of issue. Uh, we are meeting every week to, uh, address this issue and are working hard on it. I understand there's frustration around concerns around transparency and who was involved in this process and who wasn't.

Um, I think we stay very clearly that this is not, you know, you know, if we rush something forward, we'd be accused of rushing something forward, right? And--and I guess, you know, some folks just wanna, you know, aren't happy. But, um, you know, we're gonna do this right. We--we have, uh, we're gonna make a recommendation. There's been a ton of work that has gone into this. And it's complicated.

Um, and it start, again, it started in February. And we have met virtually every week. Some weeks -- There have been some weeks off for various reasons. Um, but it's complicated. It's not, you know, just file a policy order and magically things happen. So, um, you know, I will defend the work of this task force and the volunteers that

have given their time and their effort.

Um, you know, it, it's, uh, sure it would be great if we had something in front of us right now, but that's not the case. And it's not for a lack of effort. And to suggest otherwise is really insulting.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, okay.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** A point of order.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Mr. Manager.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** A point of order.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please--

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Would you please remind my colleagues not to--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** You will get an opportunity. I don't want this to be a debate--we're talking about a budget. There's been an alternative offer. Please let me finish--

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Protocol is not being followed.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please let--as the chair, please let me finish. You will get your opportunity. You both spoke.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Point of order, Mr.

Chair. I'm not trying to debate. I'm asking--

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Mr. Chair, if this is going to continue, I'm gonna ask for a recess, because this is inappropriate and maybe we can need to talk to our colleague offline just to have the try to follow the--the basic rules of courtesy. So if this is gonna continue, I'm gonna ask for a recess.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Mr. Chair, if I may--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Mr. Clerk.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Just through you, the chair has the, uh, authority to grant the floor to individual councillors. So if, uh, one section of conversation has ended, the chair has the right to, uh, assign the floor to another member to continue the--the discussion.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. So I share the interests as deeply as you do. I see this conflict and timing, there isn't two efforts going on, and people have asked for it to be resolved in June. I promise you, I will vote for a positive program going in the right direction.

And, um, they have asked for an extension to June. That's how I look at it. I have other councillors who wish

to speak. They might say exactly what you are saying, but it is their turn. We are still in the--, excuse me, we are still on the first topic. And I want, we--I have to manage this through the whole day. You'll get your opportunity to talk, but I don't want a repetition of the same comments. I realize there's a conflict here and opinion. And I am going to go on and to the next speaker.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Please point of order, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I am going on to the next speaker to--to get other people's opinions in. You can come back after that, but at that point then we're going to move on. That is my job is to move on. I know we're gonna have disagreements on this issue. I get it.

I support it, but I also want it to be a fair process all around. An independent study, as much as I believe it's correct has to also be followed by the managers to look at. And this is what is happening. As much as we don't want it that way, that is the process. So Councillor Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler is next followed by Councillor Nolan and Vice Mayor Mallon.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Mr. Chair, --



**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Could you speak a little louder, Councillor? We are not hearing you.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** How's this? Can you hear me a little better.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes, we can.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Okay. Thank you to the chairs and to staff for putting together, um, the FY'22 budget and these hearings. Um, I had two questions on this, uh, Budget Overview section that hopefully will be, uh, pretty brief. Um, the first is after some of the large public conversations around the budget last year, we had talked about holding meetings earlier than, uh, May this year to sort of give councillors, give the public more time to--to weigh in, you know, starting in--in either the winter or even the fall. I know chair Carlone has certainly asked about this, uh, a few times, um, that didn't end up happening.

Um, and I know there's been a lot going on with the pandemic, but I, um, did just wanna give, you know, both staff and the chairs a chance to explain for councillors, members of the public why, you know, we didn't end up holding finance committee meetings earlier this year.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I'll leave that up to the chairs, but I'm not sure what type of finance committee meetings you talking about. The process is based on a calendar. In the middle of COVID we were able to accomplish that calendar. Uh, so we have followed the format to a T. I can't tell you how proud I am of city employees and the budget to get us to this point. But I know we haven't missed a meeting that I'm aware of.

So if there was an additional format that I'm missing, I'll leave that up to the chairs.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Mr. Manager, in all fairness, this is on, uh, the co-chairs, not--not you per se. Uh, I did say that we would have meetings, and quite frankly, we've had so many meetings in this council in the last year that even during COVID that, um, we didn't get to it as simple as that.

Do I think we should have policy meetings in finance? Absolutely. But it didn't happen. And Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler and I did communicate. I think it was about two months ago and I said you are right, um, and, you know, I don't know what more to say. It's been a tough year. That's all I can say and um, we have so many committee meetings

that we have a hard time getting ordinance meetings in. And um, that--that is my only response. But I agree with you is my point and I see it as I have - it's a disappointment for me. Please, Councillor.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Thanks Mr. Chair. And figured that would be--be response. And I know it's-- it's been a really challenging year for--for everyone, um, uh, in, you know, the city and beyond. Um, yeah, just sort of putting on record that for the FY-'23 budget. I, uh, would love to see us start the conversation, uh, earlier.

Um, I think, you know, today's an example we're going through I think more than 20 different departments in today's meeting. It's just not a lot of time to really go, uh, in depth. Um, I've been talking with city councillors in other cities about the budget process there.

Um, Boston is really, uh, interesting example where the--the city council and administration, uh, do meetings like this, but they also do public working sessions where they're--they're really getting into the details of line items, uh, budgets are going up and down according to, uh, you know, the wills of the elected body.

Um, I'm really grateful for these hearings. But once

we get to this point, the budget is not really changing that much. We're asking questions, but things are pretty set, at least they were last year. And I think we can do, uh, a lot more to sort of make the--the process transparent for the public and also just make it more--more engaging for elected officials, for members of the public to actually have a say in our, uh, what's, you know, a financial document, but ultimately a moral document, uh, as folks often say as well. Um, my second question--

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Hold on. Mr. Chair, I have to respond to that. This is a city manager form of government, and as much as the council sometimes feels it isn't, it is. We have allowed the public to be involved in every process. The budget is based on what the residents of this city want.

So it is unfair to compare our process to Boston. I would put our process up against any city. I would say the services we provide to the public is as strong as every city. But there is a charter in a way you do budget when there's a city manager and when there's a mayor.

And we just cannot change that because the councillor feels like we don't need to follow the format that reflects

a city manager. This is over and over again happening with the challenge of the city manager's position and authority. And the simple answer is you either work with the city manager's position or you remove it and go to a different function. But you can't change the government that you have as long as is a city manager.

And this is an ongoing discussion in so many areas that it needs to be addressed because it just continues to come up. And it is unfair. This is the Government of Cambridge. This is the process we have. It is something I am proud of. I think if you look at our resident surveys, they're proud of it, and I think the council should be proud of it. And I'll stop with that.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Uh, through you, uh, the chair. I thank you, you know, uh, to the chair for giving the opportunity to speak. I do appreciate the city manager's comments. Um, I gotta say, I don't appreciate the tone as much. I tried to be very polite in my tone and provide constructive criticism and--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. Let's focus on the subject.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Thanks. I just

wanna address that remark because I'm trying to be very, you know, clear and constructive in my remarks.

Um, the second piece, um, I just did wanna ask about, um, and I think this is a question for--for Mr. Kale, um, and sort of to address the budget as a--as a whole, you know, the city council, the charter is very clear, has to approve the budget, you know, the charter is very clear that we have power over that in that area and that's why it's, you know, appropriate to ask these questions.

Um, the second question I had was, um, on the levy capacity. And I know the--the tax rate is set, um, in the fall that, you know, here we're setting the budget and that the tax rate will come likely in October. Um, but did just wanna ask if we have a sense of, um, you know, what the excess levy capacity is gonna be with the--the budget that's before us today.

**MR. DAVID KALE:** Um, we really won't know that till the summer because the assessors are finalizing the values and we haven't finalized the levy, but the levy is going up \$42 million, which is one of the largest increases in levy in the last few years.

And so basically, um, I believe our excess levy

capacity was, uh, \$188 million. Um, but I think we'll eat into that. Um, and I think that we're assessing the, uh, issue of, uh, assess values that the assessors are working on and what that translates into.

I would, uh, point out that the reason why unlike other cities and towns, um, that are looking at overrides or looking at budget reductions is our ability to basically bring you a budget that frankly can increase 8.95% in the levy and not have to worry about it because we do have excess levy capacity.

And I think that is one of the things that outside rating agencies look up--look at is our flexibility. And our ability to meet challenges and --and I think that we've faced it this past two years, and we'll continue to face it in future years, where our ability to have strong reserves and flexibility allows us to have a budget that you have before you that increases money to priority areas of the city council.

So I would say that we'll know exactly what our, uh, excess levy capacity will be, um, as we get closer to September, I suspect it will not be as large as it is now to be honest.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Thank you. That's helpful. Uh, and just briefly, um, you know, I know this is the point I, I brought it before when we talk about the budget and the tax rate. But, um, most cities and towns in Massachusetts, um, many, if not most, I should say, um, do use their full levy capacity. I know there is take it offs between the--the levee, um, and the tax rate.

Um, but just do wanna bring up that we have among the lowest tax rate, um, of cities in Massachusetts. And so when--when we aren't using that full levy capacity, we're leaving money on the table. You know, the bulk of which would come from the large corporations in Cambridge.

Um, and that's money that, you know, especially in the pandemic, could go to affordable housing, it could go to supporting local restaurants, it could go to municipal broadband. Um, and so, you know, I won't belabor this point too much, but did just wanna, uh, to--to bring up that point while we're on the budget appropriate. Um, so I get back. Thank you.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** And so if I could, Mr. Chair, and again, I appreciate what you said Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, is working in two committees that were at



the two and a half levy limit is a--it is a very miserable existence. I'll just leave it at that. Okay.

**MR. TAHA JENNINGS:** And I will respectfully jump in and say any one of those cities who are at the levy limit would change the situation with Cambridge in about two seconds. Uh, they're not at the levee limit because they chose to go to taxes. They're at the levy limit 'cause they have no choice. And the flexibility we have is something that--is something we should be proud of. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. Thank you, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler. We're going on to Council Nolan followed by the Vice mayor.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you. I won't belabor the point too much, but I certainly agree as somebody who's lived in Cambridge, we have a phenomenal spending, we have phenomenal rates, and yet we also still have people even with relatively low tax rates with our high valuations.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. Questions?  
Questions?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Okay. Um, I do wanna, since it was raised, I hope it's okay if I do just say a

little bit about the part of the Budget Overview on the, which we had some discussion earlier on in the, um, Police Review Task Force. 'Cause it was, um, incredibly wonderful to see the council order from June of 2020 suggesting that we look into this.

I found that the Commissioner Bard's, um, response in September of last year, of the incredible array of programs that the Police Department has taken on was quite, um, extensive and thoughtful. And it certainly dovetailed with what I had learned on School Committee about the number of programs we have for diversion.

And the task force work has been ongoing. I will say that, uh, as we move forward and there may be a budget allocation, I found it incredibly exciting to see the collaborative process that has come out of a community process, where literally hundreds and hundreds of people in the community have responded to a survey. This group has developed a proposal that is to me exactly what we need to do to build on, to take that as a start--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. Just--

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** --we shouldn't have to recreate something. So I'm really hoping that--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor--

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** --get to that point.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** --You can bring that up in the police discussion. Um, it's not in this area. Thank you. Vice Mayor Mallon.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to have a clarifying question around the police task force recom-- when we will see those recommendations come forward. Uh, this was one of my questions, but I'll pull it forward earlier from the police budget.

It just says in the budget book under Key Initiatives that the, it is anticipated the recommendation will be made in early fiscal year '22. So is that summer? I guess I was reading that as, uh, early '22, which I was--was thinking as in January, but is that, are we saying the summer?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Yes. I mean we're hoping to have it as--as soon as possible, but yeah, that was not meant to be January. No. Absolutely. It's fiscal year. Sorry if there was confusion with that.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Mr. Chair, just so I can answer the--just, so we are looking at the--we're drafting the final report right now. Um, we're meeting again on, uh,

the plan is to meet this coming Tuesday where the entire task force will take a look at that report. We will get input from task force members to make sure it captures what the task force is thinking. There's a lot. It's hard to get consensus and there's people have different opinions and that's gonna be reflected in the task force because it is complicated.

Um, so the hope I think is that we will have a report, you know, to the city manager by the end of this month, um, and then it's with the manager at that call.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you Councillor for clarifying that. Um,

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Mr. Chair, can I--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I just wanted to add one thing. Uh, Vice Mayor. Councillor McGovern, you're gonna have quite a Tuesday 'cause we have a finance meeting before your, uh, committee meets. So, good luck with that. Um, Vice Mayor.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you. I just wanted to say, you know, just doing the math on the number of months that people who have been meeting, you know, three and half months for task force, this important is, that's a

really short timeframe, so I appreciate everybody getting this together and doing it in four -- four months, I know, just doing the arts task force took us nine months and that was not as big of a community conversation. So I look forward to those recommendations. And thank you for the clarification on when those will be coming forward.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Vice Mayor. Councillor Toomey is next.

**COUNCILLOR TIMOTHY J. TOOMEY JR.:** Uh, thank you, uh, Mr. Chair. Mr. Chair, are we still under the, uh, Budget Overview?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Believe it or not, yes, we are, Councillor.

**COUNCILLOR TIMOTHY J. TOOMEY JR.:** My question, hopefully will pertain to that. Mr. Kale, Mr. DePasquale can answer this question at this point, but there's been discussion about, um, the spending and you knows just a reference right now to large corporations paying the large share of that.

Has there have been a, um, has the city received request for tax investments from these large corporations? You know, I get the bank and tradesman, I think everybody

here does every week and the prices of property are just incredible that people are paying \$5 million, \$10 million, \$15 million for homes in the City of Cambridge.

So what the increase assessments is gonna be a huge increase, I assume, and in taxes for individuals. And I just wanna remind my colleagues that, you know, there's still many, many working class families and senior citizens that are struggling to stay in Cambridge. It's great, we -- we're able to spend all this money, but it, you know, it is not going up--going up in the back yard and taking the money off the tree. So I--I just wanted to raise that caution.

So, and the tax bills, we've been coming out just before November, and it'll be interesting. I've seen it happen here before in one neighborhood that was a revolt, uh, with their tax bill.

So has, to the manager, has we seen any requests from corporation, large corporations for tax investments over the past years? Not from, I guess from individual homeowners and what we anticipate the tax rate could be is a significant jump? Thank you.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** So I'm gonna--I'm

gonna start off and then I'll turn it over to Gail. We'll let the city assessor, but councillor Toomey, that's a tremendous point because even under the COVID guidelines, we're gonna see that assessments of one, two, and three family houses will probably be up. Condos will remain level, so there will be a dramatic increase in property taxes at the current projected levy.

Uh, we're gonna try to do what we can to reduce them a little, but we have been able to control taxes. This is a difficult year, but all the COVID revenue losses that we're facing. We're trying to be fair to our business community. We're trying to be there to our residential taxpayers. Uh, abatements are developed not on your assessment. They're developed on whether your bill goes up or down.

And in Cambridge, we have had less than one half of 1% of our residential population property owner apply for abatements. That's not because their assessments are low, it's because we have kept their taxes down. If and when the assessments go up and their tax bills go up, we will see a major change in that as we did many years ago and we stated we would not let that happen again.

So fortunately, uh, most of the councillors here have

not had to sit through a very, very difficult taxpayer year because we have made that a priority in the city while providing an incredible amount of services.

But as someone who did sit through it for a year, it is very difficult situation for our residents, our taxpayers, and for the department. So we'll continue to try to avoid that on the commercial side, give and give you more information but as bills go up, the reality is abatements will go up as well. Gail.

**GAIL:** Uh, thank you. Um, yes, I think that the city manager is absolutely right, especially on the residential side. What people are filing on is the impact of what the increase is not necessarily the value.

Um, I think that we are still reviewing our values now, um, so I'm not able to say what we think will happen, um, for the bills. But, you know, looking at what's happening in the market, looking at the, uh, interest in single family homes as people want to have their own space due to COVID, um, it's certainly concerning for us the idea that you could, uh, have the residential values going up and the commercial values going down, specifically issues around the hotels, around office space, around retail space



that are all being affected by COVID. Um, so that's certainly concerning for us.

Um, thankfully the abatement rates have been fairly stable. Um, fiscal '20, we had 485 abatements. Fiscal '21, we had 421. Um, I think that the flexibility that the city has in having free cash and being able to use that at tax rate, time is certainly something that helps protect the homeowners and ensures that we don't have these large bills coming up and having the excess levy capacity also gives us the ability to not be forced to shift value onto the residential class, which is what some of these towns have to do when they're at the levee limit. And it's our flexibility that really helps ensure the stability of what the homeowners are paying in Cambridge.

**MR. DAVID KALE:** And--and I would just add that while we are continuing outreaching to our commercial and hotel motel, um, uh, property owners, remember what happened last fall. Uh, the values are--were as of 1-1-20 before COVID hit.

So basically this current tax season will be reflective of the impact on folks, uh, commercial property on with regard to, uh, vacancies in their property or, uh,

uh, occupancy levels very low for hotel, motels.

So we will see abatements being filed because the impact of the COVID will be reflected in the FY '22 values which is as '21. And as Gail said, and I think as the manager said, um, the worst thing that can happen is our residential, uh, component of--of the bill, um, gets shifted to more residential.

So basically any increases in levy aren't necessarily split that two-third, one-third, but gets shifted more to the commercial side, which happened several years ago, which had, uh, a chilling effect on folks tax bills. And I think, um, uh, we should just keep that in mind. We've got a couple things going on.

The impact of COVID on the values for FY-'22 and the shift between who gets assessed, um, the value of the, uh, property taxes and making sure that that doesn't necessarily shift entirely to the residential homeowners.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Uh, I'm going to-- please go ahead.

**COUNCILLOR TIMOTHY J. TOOMEY JR.:** No. I appreciate the response from--from everybody. And again, I just thrown caution to the wind here. I've been through it when it

happened. Uh, there was what we called, we never thought we see in Cambridge, you know, really a tax payer, uh, not a revolt, but certainly one ward certainly was impacted tremendously and actually with city council and that Ward actually lost that election because of that.

So I'm just throwing that out there, that, you know, with these abatements coming in from these corporations and they're entitled to it and the shift more to the residential, it's going to be impacting a lot of people, especially the working class and seniors in the city. So again, just throwing caution to the wind here. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you Councillor Toomey. So people who wish to speak the first round have spoken, now we go back to Councillor Zondervan.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Um, I do, um, wanna make a brief comment and--and I would like to request, um, that you recognize my earlier point of order because we--we are trying to have a very difficult conversation, uh, of one of my colleagues said that the budget is a moral document and, and last time I checked, we still do live in a democracy.

And--and as the elected representatives of the people, it is our job to ask difficult questions. And I appreciate that, you know, sometimes those questions might be, uh, perceived negatively or, or, you know, not, not be received, um, in--in a positive light.

But--but it, we're just doing our job and--and I recognize that, uh, everyone else's as well. So it's really important that we maintain decorum and that we do not take these questions personally, and that we do not, um, you know, speak to each other, uh, inappropriately during these--these conversations. And--and that happened earlier, and I would appreciate, uh, recognition of that fact.

And a reminder to follow our--our council rules of decorum and to speak through the chair and--and to not, uh, assume intent or assume that what people do or do not understand, um, and to not speak to each other, uh, by name, uh, during--during this debate.

Um, I would also like to, uh, ask for clarification because several times while we've been, uh, asking questions about the future of public safety, it's been said that that should, um, be discussed during the police budget. But--but in fact, it is not referenced in the

police budget. So I don't understand, um, why that would be the case.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Number one, the chair's job is to be fair to everyone and to move the conversation along. We've been on this subject over an hour. I felt you made your points. I felt other people made their points while, uh, while different councillors were waiting online.

I knew we were coming back to you. Um, I still feel I did what was proper, and, um, if you wish to discuss it further, we can do it offline. I meant no disrespect. I think, you know, everyone knows me that I try to respect everybody in their tent. And as far as goals, you know that I share many of the goals on this subject that you brought up.

Um, but my job today is to get through the budget to get a vote on each pulled section. And, um, that's my job, and I have to be somewhat neutral on the subject. However, as I said, you know I support doing the right thing, um, vis-a-vis the committee that's in process and the black response. Um, and, uh, I will stop there and I--I appreciate your comments, but I have to do what I feel is right. And, uh, we just have a lot to get through today.

And that's my goal, is to do that in a fair way.

We've certainly talked about the topic a lot tonight-- this morning, just like we talked about it a lot in committee, the manager has responded, the committee has responded, and people on opposite viewpoints have responded. And that's my response.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I guess, um, perhaps you're not, um, understanding my question. I'm not questioning that I should have been recognized to express any further opinions, I'm asking to be recognized for a point of order because the rules are broken and colleagues spoke in--in a way that is not in accordance with the rules.

And I'm simply asking that that be addressed so that we can have a productive meeting. And I'm also asking whether this particular topic is or is not in order during the police budget discussion, because it's not actually referenced there.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. My comments are for the full council, not just you. And you have a point there that they just spoke up, but I'm--I'm not going to continue this conversation council. I know you are both

good people. And you're both right, please.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** I just wanted to offer my apology to Councillor Zondervan if he felt offended.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Can I get that on tape? So you both can share it? I agree there was tension there. It's unnecessary and I wish I had stepped in sooner.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Mr. Chair, I'll just say, you know, but there's, we do have to be--there are ways that, yes, I should not have mentioned Councillor Zondervan's ways, but there are ways that people are throwing insults without mentioning names, and we should all be a little more careful.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I agree and I failed there. That's on me. Okay. I believe we've come to a point where we are going to vote on moving the Budget Overview, um, forward. Mr. Clerk,

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. MCGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nollan - Yes

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Present

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Present

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Motion Passed. Yes - 7. Present - 2**

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Yes. Motion passes. Seven in favor, two present.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you all. The next section that's been pulled is executive. Let's see if there's a more refined--No just executive and the first person, maybe the only person that is Vice Mayor Mallon. Uh, Vice Mayor, um, could you please tell us your preferred question first.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you to the city manager and his team. I was excited to see a line item for translation services as, uh, \$45,000 in the fiscal year '22 budget.

This is something I think we all have seen over the past year, has been incredibly critical as we, um, push out information on the public health crisis to our residents. But it is something that I think we've been talking about for a long time that is, uh, been really needed across the



entire city and the School Department.

There are a couple of other line items for translation services that I've noticed in the budget. And I'm wondering how these different departments are gonna be working together to, um, create synergy around those different line items.

So there's, uh, \$45,000 in the Executive Office. There's 130,000, I think in the school department, 10,000 in the mayor's office, and \$75,000 in the family policy council budget under an initiative that the mayor and myself and many people in the city are working on a Language Justice Initiative, um, that hopefully will be coming forward with budget recommendations.

So my question is, how, um, is the executive office, the mayor's office, the Family Policy Council, and the schools all working together, um, on some kind of, uh, synergized, uh, translation services for our residents?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** So I guess I'll turn it over to Lee, but before I start, I do wanna say thank you because in this budget, that was an important feature that we wanted to make sure we added to the budgets.

And individually we talked to all those departments to make sure what the appropriate department was, but the fact that often is the case. There is money in many departments that you need to make sure that someone's kind organizing it so we get the best value. So I appreciate the question. I'm gonna turn it over to Lee.

**LEE GIANETTI:** Uh, thank you Mr. Manager. And through you, uh, Mr. Chair. I'm excited to see translation really, you know, really moving up in our--our budget. The money in the executive really is to handle what we've learned over the past year of what we expect for our normal translation services that we are now, um, doing and as you know since March we've been putting out information in eight different languages.

And we're gonna continue. And at the same time, it's really great that the Family Policy Council has been engaged in the language justice work, uh, Bridget Martin, who's the communications manager at DHSP, has really been serving as, um, our liaison to sort of stay connected.

And, um, but we're gonna take our lead from the recommendations that come out of, um, the Family Policy Council. I think we do need to have a citywide approach of

how this works. Um, they seem to be really uniquely positioned, um, to be able to put out those recommendations.

But it makes no sense for the Public Information Office to be doing something completely different, um, the DHSP that's doing something different than the schools. We probably will have unique and some differences at times, but having a unified strategy is gonna be key, so we will be taking the lead from what comes out of the, um, Family Policy council.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Madam Vice Mayor, any follow up comments on that?

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Yeah, thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to say thank you to Lee and to the city manager, um, for really thinking about this in a holistic way. I think you're--you're right, like we need a citywide strategy. We've needed one for a long time, and I just wanted to make sure everybody was working together.

And that funding will, um, help what we end up coming up with from the Family Policy Council with the many, many focus groups and conversations we've had with other municipalities. There's been a tremendous amount of work in

the language justice area. I'm excited to see almost a quarter of a million dollars really being, uh, allocated to this effort this fiscal year. So, um, thank you for that clarification. And I'll yield the floor. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Vice Mayor. Mayor Siddiqui, followed by Co-chair Simmons. Mayor Siddiqui.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Thank you. Yeah, I wanted to just, uh, echo this. Like we had a lot of conversations with, um, the city manager's office, uh, around this and the importance.

And, um, I think we all recognize that, uh, the recommendations from the Policy Council, which I chair, and, uh, which as you know, uh, we have Vice Mayor Mallon, um, as a member and member Wilson from the school committee, and then many, many others. Um, David Kale's on that too.

So we're all trying to work together, um, to have some really robust, um, you know, resources on this. So I think we, you know, in my office, have seen such a need throughout this year.

Um, and I think, uh, you know, we're probably the first Mayor's office to really say, you know, um, moving from now on we have to have translation and I think we'll see this happening throughout our departments once we have the recommendations from the Policy Council, which will be available, uh, very soon. So stay tuned on that. Thank you.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Uh, through you, Mr. Chair. I also wanna thank the mayor. She has been a real leader in making sure that departments have this in their budget, and has had many, many conversations with me, so I wanna thank her for her leadership in this matter as well.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Any followup, Mayor?

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** No, thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Uh, Councillor, Co-chair Simmons.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Co-chair. Just briefly, um, because there was mention of it, but I don't see that it's in the budget, and I think Mr. Kale spoke to it, and I saw the light he may be going forward even if it's something that's out of the budget cycle,

which is how do we make this more comprehensive?

I'm excited to see the, uh, this Language Justice effort going forward and I would agree that that is-- it will only be as effective as its coordination. And so I, you know, just would like to urge the city manager as he is going through what may very well be a supplemental budget, uh, which is something we always do, uh, what is normal to us, um, that we might consider what a comprehensive language engagement policy might look like and how that would be funded so that we have parity across the community.

Because, um, as everyone says, a lot of people are doing it very well. Uh, but it's not consistent across the, uh, city. Thank you, Mr. Chair, I yield the floor.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. All good comments. Please, did someone wish to add their comments, Mr. Manager?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** No, I think we will, uh, move forward and take a look at this priority and something--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** --would edit, the

money will be available.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I don't see any other hands raised on this issue, so there are no more questions I believe?

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes, please. Vice Mayor, go ahead.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** I had another question--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** --for the Executive Office.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Go ahead.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Um, my question is around the position for the deputy manager. There is still a line item for the deputy manager position and a salary listed, uh, for \$250,000. The deputy manager, um, retired in January, and I haven't heard anything about replacing that position if it's been online or--or noticed. Is there a plan to hire a deputy city manager, and if so, um, what is the expected timeline for that process.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Mr. Manager?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** So, like all

vacancies, we've put almost every position on a hold. Uh, we are in discussion on whether or not we are moving forward with that position.

Uh, I'm not gonna say yes or no yet because we are in discussions on, you know, how we're gonna handle that vacancy. So obviously it's an important position, it's in the budget that way, but how we fill it when we fill it, to be honest, is still in discussion with me and the personnel director. But as soon as we come up with a plan, I'll make sure that the council is well aware of it.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Oh, thank you, Mr. Chair, through you. I think, um, I think this is a really important position, particularly knowing that there will be a change in leadership next July, and, um, making sure that we have somebody in that position that is well suited to perhaps, you know, fill in for a few months.

I know when, um, when you were hired, Ms. Peterson actually was the acting city manager for several months while the contract negotiation happened. Um, so I would just like to say today that I hope that, um, I hope that we are moving forward with filling that position.

I know it's a probably a difficult conversation to



have knowing that there will be a transfer in leadership. Um, but I think for this--the health of our city, um, and the health of the executive office, I would like to say I think it's a good idea to fill that position, and--and pretty quickly, I would like to see somebody in that role.

I know Ms. Peterson did a ton of work and, um, I know that there's probably a big hole in the office, although I think that your--your team has been admirably pulling together and making that happen and making it seamless. But I would love to see somebody in that role that was really dynamic that we could, um, bring forward into the next administration and--and make sure that we don't have a hole in leadership should something happen or contract negotiations go on a little longer.

So, um, I guess I'm glad to see it still in the--in the budget and that there are conversations still happening. And I look forward to any updates from your office. That--those are all my questions. Uh, Mr. Chair, I yield before.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, thank you Vice Mayor. You raise a great point and I completely concur. So at this point, I'd like to move to accept the Executive

Budget as we just discussed. Mr. Clerk.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** On that motion.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nollan - Yes

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Motion passed. Yes - 9. No - 0**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

Our next area is the Executive on Domestic Violence Prevention. Vice Mayor Mallon has the first question. Vice Mayor.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, through you, um, to the city manager and to Ms. Speakman. Um, there--my question is, there's a significant increase in the OOM for the fiscal year '22 budget, around \$70,000.

During the pandemic, there were additional dollars

allocated for things like funding for hotels and other expenses, like a citywide marketing strategy called "You Are Not Alone" to make sure that domestic and gender-based violence victims understood that even in a pandemic, um, they didn't have to stay with their abusers.

There were other options. I guess I'm just wondering, uh, if this additional funding in OOM is to continue some of this critical work, or if it's going to be used as we start to recover, I just was wondering if, um, Mr. Manager or Ms. Speakman could speak a little bit to what that funding is for.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Uh, Liz, do you wanna jump in?

**ELIZABETH SPEAKMAN:** Sure. You can hear me okay?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Yep.

**ELIZABETH SPEAKMAN:** Thank you. Thank you for the question. Um, and I appreciate all the support, um, from the city councillors on the work that we're doing on domestic and gender-based violence prevention.

So, um, the additional 70,000 is kind of gonna be split up in a few different ways. Um, this city has committed to supporting a new position at Transition House.

Um, so part of that position will be funded by the city, and they're gonna find other funding for the rest of the position.

It's gonna be called, um, Director of Equity and Justice. Um, and that position's gonna really focus on internal and external, um, ways that we can better improve our response to survivors of domestic violence who have traditionally been, um, marginalized or voices have not been heard as much in the process.

Um, so that will include outreach, um, to communities that we don't often, um, hear from. Um, additionally, we're gonna have, um, an additional \$10,000 that's gonna go towards the emergency fund, um, at Transition House. So that will provide, um, various, um, emergency related assistance for survivors of domestic violence.

Um, and then we've also contracted with someone to provide a need--to partner with us to do a needs assessment on, um, how we can better support black and brown survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault.

Um, and so that's gonna be a, um, extensive process that's starting this month, and we'll hopefully wrap up with a report and recommendations in December. Um, and so

part of that additional funding is gonna go there. Um, we are doing--continuing to do outreach.

Um, when we first did the Quarantined but Not Alone Outreach campaign, when the lockdown first started, um, service providers were seeing a dramatic decrease in calls for service. Um, and since doing that campaign, I'd say late summer, um, they've seen a dramatic increase in calls for service, including many more consultations from providers who were looking for, um, advice and, um, suggestions on how to support survivors.

And so, um, I think that campaign was pretty successful and we're very pleased with that and knowing that more people are getting access to the services that they need. So we wanna make sure that we're really reaching all members of our community as best we can. Um, so that's kind of what we're looking at with that funding.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Um, through you to Ms. Speakman. Um, I know this has been like just a huge, huge, explosive issue in the COVID pandemic, and I think your team has done an incredible job responding in each and every moment along the way that has evolved.

As you said, in the spring, there were no calls, which was concerning. And then over the summer and continuing, there's that increasing calls are happening. So it looks like a lot of this funding is--is being used very wisely to fund a position at Transition House to provide that \$10,000 worth of emergency funding for things like T Passes and cell phones and, um, all kinds of manner of things that people need once they're leaving their abusers.

So thank you for, um, just explaining what that additional, uh, funding will be used for. I look forward to the needs assessment coming out, uh, around supporting our black and brown domestic and gender-based violence victims, uh, because I think that is a really critical piece of this that, um, deserves a real long look.

And so just thank you for the work that you did over the--over the course of the pandemic. You don't, uh, you don't get to come to City Council very often, but I know that you are doing incredible work for some of our most marginalized, some of our most vulnerable, and particularly in this pandemic, um, the--some of the hardest hit, uh, with men and women and--and people in our community. So thank you very much. Um, and thank you Mr. Chair. I yield

before.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Vice Mayor, and thank you, Elizabeth, for what you do. Um, I don't see any other councillors have raised their hand, so I'm going to move that. We accept this budget as presented. Mr. Clerk.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** On accepting the Executive Domestic Violence Report.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Point of order. Can--can the clerk clarify what we're actually voting on? I don't understand what we mean by accepting this budget.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** So it's my understanding that this is on referring this portion of the budget to the full city council with a favorable recommendation.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** So on accepting and referring to Executive/Domestic Violence Prevention, uh, portion of the budget and referring it to the City Council with a favorable recommendation. Councillor--I'm sorry,

Vice Mayor Mallon.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nollan - Yes

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Motion passed. Yes - 9. No - 0**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** The next section that we'll be exploring is the Executive Portion of the Housing Liaison. And the first person that pulled this is Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler. Councillor, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and through you. Um, really appreciate all of the work, um, that the housing liaison, uh, has done this past year, especially, I know I have reached out about a number of situations during the pandemic, uh, with, uh, folks



during your in-person apartment showings during the height of it.

Um, uh, I'm glad that there's now another person, uh, in that office, uh, working alongside it. Um, I wanted to ask, and I notice something was brought up before about doing more about, um, having an Office of Housing Stability in Cambridge.

Um, this is something Boston has, uh, Somerville Housing Office of Housing Stability, um, with seven different staff members, folks in the office speaking Spanish, Portuguese, Somali. Um, I know we have housing assistance in other places in, uh, the multi-service center.

I just wanted to ask about this more. I know it's something I brought up last year what--what the hold up is or what--what's stopping us from moving towards that Office of Housing Stability approach in Cambridge? I think it would be incredibly valuable to have it all in one place, to have one place, you know, called the Office of Housing Stability.

Um, 'cause I know I've--I've had a number of residents confused about what the Multi-Service center does, where

they can go for services. I just wanted to ask about--about that approach, if it's something we've talked about, thought of, um, what--what the reason we haven't moved in that direction is.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Uh, I can start and then I'll turn it over to Mara. But we've had, had this discussion. Um, Mara's been really my lead person on this, and I think she can explain it far better than me. But we feel the format we have with the Multi-Service Center and with the work Mara's office is doing, provides a better service to be very honest, or at least an equal service.

Uh, as you said, it's more about a title, and we feel that the service we're providing is strong. And Mara can really talk about why we think that. But I wanna say, and I appreciate Councillor Wheeler mentioning it, the work that Mara and Multi-Services have done during this COVID pandemic has been exceptional.

A lot of the palms have done exceptional work, but I think in Liz and Mara and Multi-Service Center, they have been leaders. So I'm gonna let Mara talk about the specifics that hopefully can answer your question. Mara.

Mara: Thank you, City Manager. And, um, thank you for

the--the question Councillor and through you Mr. Chair. Um, I understand the question, um, but I would offer that the Office of Housing Liaison is that dedicated resource that's embedded in the city structure as--as you formulated the question. Um, in fact, you know, the Housing Liaison, as you said, the staff support and respond to housing crisis by addressing displacement issues and concerns, working on tenant disputes and providing housing search and case management.

Um, and also by engaging in policy reviewing advocacy efforts. And then also, um, the position serves as a primary point of contact for--for, um, complex housing situation such as large building sales and displacement of fires.

And also, uh, and here's where it's, uh, I think similar is, uh, or we have a different model, but similar services that we work very closely, uh, with CDD, and DHSP and other relevant departments to coordinate initiatives that result in strategic change.

So, but for the name differential, um, from OHS to OHL, really the focus and activities of each office, Boston stems from Cambridge are comparable. Each share basically

four or focus on four different areas, tenant support, program development, policy review, and advocacy. Um, and I'll make this brief, but I just wanted to go over each of those, uh, of the cities. Um, the City of Austin was the first in the region to establish the Office of Housing Stability, as you probably know. And it's a division of the Department of Neighborhood Development.

Um, they primarily offer resources and services for tenants facing the housing crises. Uh, they provide emergency funds, tenant workshops, information, uh, as well as services to local providers. And much of the direct service work beyond information referral that they offer, uh, including the administration and disbursement of city funds, is contracted out to department agencies. A lot of that work is done through the Multi-Service Center here in Cambridge.

Uh, the City of Somerville established the Office of Housing Stability in 2018. And that office is housed in the city's, uh, Office of Strategic Planning and Development. And as you know is staffed by a director, a couple of co-deputy directors and a number of staff.

Um, and the office, again, provides tenant

information, referrals, workshops, landlord, uh, outreach, and policy advancement. And certainly, the director has been instrumental, um, in Somerville in organizing local and regional responses to affordable housing, uh, legislative initiatives.

Um, they also manage vendor contracts for homeless prevention services, including legal services, housing search, attending education, and outreach. And again, that's--a lot of that is done to DHSP, and in particular, uh, MSC.

So in Cambridge, um, as you know, we started in September of 2019 and we're housed in the Executive Department. Um, and again, the--the focus and activities are very similar in that we provide direct services and we engage in programming policy development.

Um, and I think what's important to note is the additional staff that was hired in December of 2020, uh, to do ongoing intensive case management, uh, that is field-based intensive case management. And at this time Somerville and Boston has the capacity within the direct staffing.

So I think we're all trying to kind of fill the gaps

that are relevant in our city. Um, and so to appreciate the fullness of the Cambridge response, I think we really have to look at the work and services that are offered by existing proposed staff in Cambridge in the three main departments, uh, that work on housing, CBD, DHSP, and the Model Liaison's Office that's similar to the work, um, that staff things some of the Boston do in their Housing Stability offices.

Um, and in particular, and embassy has been noted, um, you know, Cambridge, even before--before any of the, uh, Offices of Housing Stability or the Housing Liaison was established, Cambridge had the most comprehensive city funded array of affordable housing programs and services. Neither Boston or Somerville had or have a city Multi-Service Center.

And so, again, a lot of the, with the Offices of Housing Stability in Boston, Somerville do, um, fill that role. So the addition of the Housing Liaison position added capacity to DHSP and CDD, CDD does a lot of policy work. Um, but I recognize that, you know, because of COVID, much of the focus for Cambridge has been on direct service and just local policy implementation.

Some of the planned activities such as launching a citywide outreach information campaign, which we're embarking on now, and hopefully we'll clarify some of the, um, distinction and, uh, help residents recognize, uh, the--the collaborations that we have within the city, um, that and--and other programs and policy events and we're postponed or delayed.

Um, but, um, you know, we have contributed to many of the vital City initiatives and will continue to do so. So I guess in summary, I would say that the three points of contact in Cambridge CDD, Housing Liason, DHSP have a very comprehensive, um, and coordinated approach.

Uh, it is a decentralized approach, um, but I believe our model, uh, does offer a robust coordinated and no wrong door approach, um, for Housing Stability Services, and you utilize the expertise of each department. Um, so hopefully that answers your question, but I'm happy to--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, do you have a follow up?

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Thanks. Yeah, just brief--briefly, um, through you, Mr. Chair. Thanks for that response. And again, really appreciate all the--the work,

uh, that the Housing Liaison Office and other departments have done. I, you know, understand there's a lot of overlap between the--the work Cambridge is currently doing through the different departments and that the Office of Housing Stability is doing in Somerville or Boston.

Um, I do really think a dedicated office would help with communication, would help with collaboration, and would also make it a lot easier for residents to have a one stop shop and not have to, you know, figure out who to--who to go to or get referred.

Um, you know, we do a biannual community survey, as I'm sure staff now. Uh, and the biggest issue that always comes up on it is by far and away housing of something the city could be doing better.

Um, I'm really glad we have a new person, uh, working with the--the Housing Liaison Office that we got. We're able to start earlier in part through the--the police budget reallocation, uh, and the--the budget last year. Uh, but the Somerville office has--has seven staff members, and we have them in one office. And I--I think that, you know, would really be, uh, an improvement. And I--I hope that's a direction we can head, uh, in Cambridge. So I'll ahead and



yield back.

Mara: If I may just follow up on that. I understand that. I do think if we combine the staffing of MSC and, um, the Housing Liaison Office, um, and we are in one office and work very closely together, um, we actually probably outpace, uh, what Somerville or Boston has. Um, again, I think with the--the launch of the campaign, continued information sharing, um, I think that will help residents.

Um, and I do think we're reaching the point where folks know that there is one place to go. But also I think it's important that if they do go to another place, it's--it's coordinated and we communicate really closely with, again, CDD, um, and MSC. So it's--it's a no wrong door approach, which I think is important. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you both. Uh, Mayor, you had your hand up, but it seems to evaporated. Do you, uh, wish to say anything?

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Yeah, I'm--I just, I got a quick call. Let me, um, I'll be back in one minute.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** That's fine. We'll go on to the next comment then. Uh, Councillor Zondervan.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr.

Chair, and through you. Um, I--I agree with my colleague. I, you know, I've done a lot of, um, had a lot of interactions with, um, the Housing Liaison, uh, during this pandemic.

And--and I have certainly, uh, appreciated the support, uh, that they were able to provide, uh, as we were trying to provide direct services and assistance to, um, our constituents.

And I believe that they are still understaffed and, um, I--I look forward to, um, the new hire coming on and--and, um, being able to, you know, increase the capacity of--of the response.

But I also worry about, um, the end of the--of the moratorium that's coming, um, and what--what that will do, um, to our, our tenants, uh, in the city who--who will be scrambling for-- for housing and--and housing services.

So, um, you know, and--and we saw some of that during the pandemic, even with the eviction moratorium in place. And I'm just really concerned about what we will see once that, uh, that is lifted.

So, uh, I'm--I'm gonna be voting, no, not in as any kind of rebuke or, um, you know, anything negative about

the--the department or the staff, but simply because I think we should be, uh, putting more funds into this, uh, office and--and really providing even more services to our unhoused, uh, and housing challenge residents because, uh, they really need it. Uh, it's--it's a real crisis.

We spent a lot of time in my office, um, supporting constituents directly, uh, as they're dealing with these challenges. And I think we need to, uh, apply more resources to--to support our residents. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Madam Mayor, are you available?

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Yes, yes, I'm back. Um, one of the questions I said that I had was around one of the objective goals, um, which was, uh, around the data, Development and Implemented data tracking system in order to identify and report trends. I'm wondering, um, you know, is that like Smartsheet or is it, um, do we need some extra budgetary support for that?

Mara: Thank you, excuse me, Mayor, through Mr. Chair. Um, uh, we did put money in the budget for that. Um, it's, uh, we did some research to figure out, uh, what would be

needed.

And we found that we might, we will--are going to be tapping into an existing database system that will have minimal cost. So that is in there and it's, uh, being worked on to--to get that up and running.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Great, thank you. Um, and then the second question was around, um, uh, this, I know that in the vision, um, there's a section around policy work related to tenant displacement. Uh, and, uh, I know you, the office does case work, there's policy work, um, and I think, you know, I'm now I'm reading this, um, the, there's a sentence in here about how the office will monitor staffing needs and capacity, um, in order to continue to effectively address the ongoing housing crisis in the city.

You know, I think, um, a policy, uh, you know, there's so not--I think, I know we utilize interns to look at eviction, we utilize interns, um, in a variety of ways, but I think just, this is more of a comment, but having an additional staff, um, to help with some of the policy work in collaboration with CBD in the future, I think, could be a benefit.

Mara: Absolutely. Thank you. Um, and that is the,

there is some money in the budget for additional staffing, and I think that's a strong consideration in terms of, you know, data analysis, administrative and--and, uh, research and policy development. So, thank you.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** And yeah, I think, you know, to sum up, uh, you know, I think I wanna respond to some of the comments that--that were made. I think, you know, our offices have worked very, very closely and, you know, through, and you know, obviously Multi-Service Center as well. And I think nomenclature, I recognize that for some, they've seen in cities that they have the housing stability there, or they have this, and we have different names.

You know, I think we can have another conversation in the future about if people are unclear, making it clearer or considering, you know, future name changes. But I have to say all the work that this office does, the Housing Liaison office, and in conjunction with the Multi-Service Center, um, you know, it is more staff.

And, um, many--then Somerville and, um, uh, Boston and I think the--the caseload, uh, and the--the type of work and the case intensive studies, um, is really unique. And I think even--I think maybe last year, even, you know, before

at this point, I was, I think, less clear about what Multi-service Center was doing and, you know, still learning.

But now that I've seen it firsthand and have really worked very closely with both--both teams, it's very clear to me that, um, the, you know, I think there's, um, there's a lot of great work happening. And, um, you know, I think if we can have conversations around what's needed, uh, if there's future, um, support needed, I think, uh, I look forward to those.

And, uh, as I mentioned yesterday, there's a lot of support being given to our legal aid providers, De Novo in Cambridge and some legal services. I've called, you know, I've made calls of, "What do you need?" You know, the city is ready to help.

And they're like, you know, "We're--we're doing well. You know, we have support." And I think, uh, that's one of my things that I, you know, we wanna know what the trends are, where help is needed and to respond, um, adequately.

So, you know, I think, um, as I said, happy to have future conversations and work with, you know, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler around the nomenclature and so forth, and think about ideas. But, um, you know, just wanted to thank

you for all that you're doing, and it's a pleasure to work with all of you. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you for your comments. Uh, Councillor Nolan is next. Councillor.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yes, thank you, uh, Chair, and thank everyone that has gone before and all the work that's gone into this. I want to build on something that, um, uh, director or Housing Liaison Penza said about the fact that we do have an amazing array of programs.

We are doing a tremendous amount. It's just scattered around in a few different places, but it brings together, um, I--I think a wealth and in a way, and a comprehensive approach. And that's what we're trying to build.

My question is whether, given that this is really a regional issue, I mean, if every town around us was doing what we were doing, we know this would make everybody's job who are working on this much easier in the city. Is there any, uh, thought or, uh, any kind of additional support that we need to bring to bear to ensure that the regional nature of this, uh, problem can be, um, addressed?

I know that obviously we are a city, we can only control what we do within our borders, and yet this is

clearly something that other municipalities struggle with. They do not have our resources, they are not able to provide, uh, many of these services.

And certainly at the state level, there really needs to be this addressed. I'm not sure if that's part of the plan, but I certainly support, uh, giving, uh, your office or, uh, through the city manager as we think about this, anything that we can do to ensure that the far-reaching nature of this issue, which affects all of us far beyond our borders, is something that we don't get totally overwhelmed with, frankly, because of--of who we are and our resources. And keeping that in mind that it's quite a challenge.

Mara: Thank you, Councillor. Um, I can respond briefly. I know that number of years ago, um, I believe then Mayor, um, McGovern, uh, created a regional focus group or Regional Task Force that worked on this.

Um, and I also, uh, know that, uh, DHSP, a few years back, uh, created the, um, I'm blanking on the name, but it's the, um, it's a--it was a full day's effort. It was a French term for, so--

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Charette.



Mara: Charette. Thank you. Thank you. Um, so I think that there is opportunity, um, for, uh, at least the three groups, um, Somerville, Cambridge and Boston to get together and think about this and--and try to, you know, uh, do some thinking on how to kind of resurrect some of those efforts that were made and talk about an original approach.

Um, I know a couple of us have had, you know, some conversations a while back and then totally happened. So I think it's a good reminder, uh, that we can certainly take a stab at the--again. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** And--and I know you and the mayor's office and the former mayor's office really took this on and addressed it and has created so many, um, ability, uh, it has increased the ability of the city through the city manager's allocation to this to address this.

So if there's anything, again further you need for us to do to try to enhance that work, um, I--I certainly stand ready to support you in that. And I'm very grateful. I'm sure you're another of the 24/7 or 48/14 we're closed this past year. Thank you. I yield, Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you both. I see no other hands up.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Mr. Chair, can I just jump in?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes please, always, Mr. Manager.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I just--I wanna let every council have an opportunity. I think this is an important discussion. I mean, housing is clearly the number one priority of the city council in this administration.

And the fact that I'm proud of the fact that on the guidance, actually, Councillor Carlone, we have put a consolidated budget together. When it comes to homeless in housing we are spending almost \$50 million. And that's something we're very proud of.

Also, when there is need of staff, we've tried to address those concerns. I don't think any area has had more staff added to it over the last two or three years as I've--since I've been city manager as housing between Multi-Service, Community Development, and the Executive Office. So obviously we'll continue to look at this.

It's an important service we'll provide, but we really

have tried to address the concerns of the council and the residents. We're adding additional money.

And I think even Monday night we put up a letter showing that we've put additional \$500,000 in other areas. So it is a priority. Appreciate the council's time on this, and we'll continue to provide funds absolutely when we feel it's necessary.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mr. Manager. Uh, I'd like to, um, move to forward the department's budget to the full council with a favorable recommendation.  
Mr. Clerk

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** On that motion.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. MCGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nollan - Yes

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - No

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Motion passed. Yes - 8. No - 1**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Chair--Chair Carlone, would you like to, uh, move to close public comment at this time?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes. I think that's a good idea.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** On closing Public Comment.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. Mcgovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nollan - Yes

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Motion passed. Yes - 9. No - 0**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. So the next section is in the executive portion under Public Information Office. And two Councillors have submitted

questions, and we'll begin with the first Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Uh, Mr. Chair, I think I had pulled Information Technology.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Um, I see. Yes. You're absolutely right. I see the question is in the wrong location. So, um, Vice Mayor, although you did bring up some of this, would you like to talk about your submitted question?

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Um, no. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I think my--that question was now number, on the number of different, uh, departments so they can be crossed off. My question was answered when you first go round in Executive.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I thought so, but I wanted to make sure that you felt it was addressed. Um, yes.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Mr. Chair, just through you, the--the, um, administration did go through the questions and I believe they--they put it in this section.

They may believe that it's appropriate to respond to, I'm referring to Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler's question. So

I dunno if you wanna ask the administration if this is the right place to respond or if it should wait for IT.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. Um, I think we'll wait for IT.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** I don't have a preference whatever the council--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yeah, I know. I think we will. But I notice, uh, the mayor might have a comment or it's an old hands up. Mayor.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Um, Mr. Chair, this is, um, I'm sorry, this is--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Public information Office.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** I think I had a quick question and, uh, on this, which was, um, I think the expenses in Ordinary Expenditures, and just clarifying what--what that was going to in the PIO office. I'm sorry if I missed it somewhere, but--

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** That's okay, Lee.

**LEE GIANETTI:** Sure. Um, Mr. Chair, through you, um, Madam Mayor, there--there are two increases in this year's, uh, PIO budget. The first is 45,000 for the translation

services, and the other is, uh, 216,000 for us to really be able to expand our capacity to be able to support departments in UX/UI animation graphics.

If you've noticed over the past, um, four months or so--or so, we've completely redone our COVID page, our vaccine page, and our communications are now really starting to be aligned. Uh, and the conversation you just had with, um, the Housing Liaison is a perfect example of how we will use money, um, to--to support departments.

You know, as she has special needs, how can we have it so departments can come to us and say, "I have these communications needs." Whether it's related to web, whether it's related to print, whether it's related to outreach for us to be able to say, yes, we can help you and have the capacity to do so, uh, which we don't currently have under our, um, our existing budget.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Okay. Okay. So it's--Okay. That makes sense. All right. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mayor. Councillor Zondervan, I thought I saw your hand up and now it's not there. Did you wish to add something?

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr.

Chair. I was just, um, trying to understand if we were trying to address the municipal broadband question, um, whether it should be in this department or--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** We will do that under IT.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Okay. Thank you Mr. Chair

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. And we will get to it. Um, so I see no other hands up. I, uh, propose we move to forward the department's budgets. Yes.

Councillor Nolan.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Sorry, I did want--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** That's fine. Go ahead.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** I appreciate all the work that this office has done, and if I understood it correctly, the \$200,000 is not under Salaries and Wages. So we're not increasing the staff in the department, but we are increasing external use of, uh--

**LEE GIANETTI:** So our plan to be as nimble as, uh, through you, Mr. Chair, is to use outside services to help us with this. There's so many specialized, um, areas, whether it's graphic design, whether it's animation,



whether it's website design, that really will be better served to have outside folks helping us so we can be nimble, so we can act quickly and we can have the right resources, um, when we need them.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you. Through you, Chair Carlone, to the city. I look forward to that. And I hope that as we move forward, we do, just like in any other area, look to see if there's cities that have managed to figure this out and have a really robust program. Um, because cities have the same goal.

They're all trying to communicate to people. And I certainly know that there are many cities that have kind of conquered this. And--and I hope that we're doing a, as we move forward, a best practice round of, if I go to a city website, I'll try to remember to send it on to you and say, "Wow, this city really does this well."

So that we can move forward with, um, in this increasing communication age, people are turning more and more, and we know that from our--our city, um, uh, survey that sends out to residents that they are turning more and more, and especially the pandemic.

So it's critically important that we up our game in

terms of having our website be very, very user friendly. And I will reiterate and--and glad that we're doing what we can for translation.

There's also, um, folks that, uh, I did log on to a couple of sites recently where they're just an automatic translation. You know, you just push a button and even if it's Google Translate, it's better than nothing.

And I wouldn't expect us to translate our entire site, but we should definitely be looking into that in addition to the ways that we're thinking of bringing on translation services.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. I once, oh, uh, Councillor McGovern.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Yes. Sorry. Um, real quick. Um, but Councillor Nolan reminded me, I--I sort of bring this up, um, every year, um, you know, the, in terms of being user friendly and, you know, there are some folks who are more comfortable, um, being online and--and using the webpages. Um, the city departments, all their webpages are different.

The format is different, where you go to, there's some similarities, but there's a lot of things that are

different. You know, where you go to click on different information is in different places.

And I just think as much as we can kind of get that stuff unified, I think it eliminates a lot of that confusion. I mean, I even get confused. I'm like, "Wait a minute on CDD, I gotta go here for this but on DPW, it looks like this."

And, you know, so I mean, I know we want--we want departments to be individualized in some respect and--and support that, but there is some benefit to consistency. So that's something I'd like you to, you know, take a look at. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, I think that's a good suggestion, even if it's just the main page is organized, so it's understandable from one department to another. Um, good comments. There are no other hands up. So, uh, I propose to move to forward the department's budget section to the full council with a favorable recommendation

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** On that motion.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. MCGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nollan - Yes

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Motion passed. Yes - 9. No - 0**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

Uh, the next, uh, department is the Fire Department, uh, pulled by the Vice Mayor. And, um, Madam Vice Mayor, it's your call.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Um, through you to the city manager and the, uh, Police Chief, or, I'm sorry, the Fire Chief. I'm just pulling up my questions here. Um, I think I can speak for all of us.

We're very excited to see that the Fire Department Cadet program is in the budget for \$700,000. Um, and that, that will be moving forward this year, I think as a big proponent of this plan and the idea, uh, modeled after the Police Department Cadet program, the idea is to create a

vehicle for greater diversity on the Fire Department, both, uh, in ethnicity and in gender.

So I just wanted to ask some questions, um, around how that will be achieved, uh, through this program. What kind of levers will be in place? So, I know I sent my questions in advance, but I'll--I'll mention them again here.

What is the estimated number of Fire Cadets, uh, that we're expecting per--per year? How will diversity and equity metrics be established? Who will be deciding on the criteria and goals for such equity metrics, and who will be considered diverse and or equitable?

And lastly, how will the Fire Department be working with the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion office to create metrics and criteria for this program? I think the reasons behind kind of asking these questions is, you know, it would be a shame if we had the first Fire Cadet program, and it looked very, um, similar to, you know, what we're seeing when we see new recruits in terms of gender and ethnicity.

So just really kind of digging in a little bit on this--the \$700,000, it's a a lot of money. It's an exciting program, but how are we going to be ensuring equity, uh,

and inclusion and diversity within the Cadet program?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** So, I'm gonna jump in and I'm gonna turn it over to the chief and, uh, personnel director. But as I think everybody knows, one of the first priorities I had when I became City Manager was to bring back the Police Cadet program for the exact same reason. And--and the Commission of Five's leadership, it's been a tremendous success. So even though the fight is a little different, uh, we will follow, obviously, what we've done with the police in terms of absolutely making sure the cadet program reflects the City of Cambridge.

And I think these are great questions, these are discussions where we're in still in the early stages, but I agree with you, uh, we cannot not have a cadet program that reflects the city population and the people we serve.

So I'm gonna let Sheila and the chief talk about that, but we are on the exact same page. I wanna assure you on that one. Chief and Sheila, I don't know who wants to go next.

**FIRE CHIEF THOMAS F. CAHILL, JR.:** Uh, good morning. Um, thank you Mr. DePasquale. Uh, through the chair, uh, to you Councillor Mallon. Uh, we are very excited about the,

uh, potential for this program as well. Um, we will be working closely with both the Personnel Department and the Office of Equity and Inclusion to design the metrics and-- and establish benchmarks.

Um, we have some significant challenges ahead of us with respect to the actual design of the program for a whole host of reasons. Um, fire service is different than the police department, um, obviously. Um, there is no, uh, similar program in this area that we're aware of.

Uh, I know a Special Act that the legislature was passed for Boston, they're--they're grappling with the-- with the same issues of how to design the program and set it up.

Um, we have done a little bit of looking, uh, actually quite a bit of looking, uh, across the nation for similar programs. Uh, got some ideas from some places, uh, particularly out west and--and in the Southwest.

Uh, I would estimate that--that in the first iteration of the program would probably only see four to six candidates maybe. And--and as it progresses, I would estimate that we'd have probably no more than 10 at a time. Um, you know, the goal is, as you have stated, and as the

manager has stated, the goal is to, uh, make significant improvements with respect to the diversity of the department.

Um, you know, we--we have some ideas on a curriculum, uh, to--to maybe, uh, potential partnering with community colleges for--for classes in fire protection and safety technology and so forth. Uh, EMS training is obviously another component that we're, uh, giving some serious consideration too.

Um, but you know, as I said, um, I think we're up to the challenge. We'll look forward to, uh, to seeing what comes back to us from the legislature and--and, uh, getting things moving.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Uh, thank you Mr. Chair, through you. I didn't know if, um, Ms. Keady Rawson wanted to add anything.

**MS. SHEILA KEADY RAWSON:** Um, thank you, um, through you to, uh, Councillor Mallon through the chair, um, you know, we are equally excited about this program. It really is, um, something that, um, all of us have wanted to do. And we've been very pleased that the fire union has been so supportive of the program as well. Um, we, you know, the



key to this in terms of diversity is gonna be the recruitment. Um, and so, you know, the Fire Department is doing a really good job now of laying the groundwork in terms of, you know, the youth academies and really trying to get out into the high schools more and more to get-- generate excitement about a career in fire service and the diversity of jobs that are available in the fire service, particularly, um, through EMT programs and paramedic programs. So we will be, you know, working with the Fire Department to focus on those areas moving forward to--to ensure that the--the first class is a diverse class.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, and through you. When are we expecting the first class, um, to be up and running?

**MS. SHEILA KEADY RAWSON:** Um, my understanding is, you know, it's still with the legislature, so it's sort of unclear when, um, it would pass. Um, so it probably is not, um, definitely not in--in this fiscal year. I don't know Mr. Manager, if you have more information on that.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Yeah, so it's--it was a delay in getting it to the legislation. We found that out. We've resolved that. Uh, but I assure you we've got a

priority at the legislation, and we will, as soon as it's available, we will stocked. Uh, so hopefully we'll be able to give you more information on when a starting date is. But I wanna assure you that this is a top priority in terms of getting it started. I'm sorry for the delay.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Uh, thank you, Mr. Chair through you. I think Ms. Keady Rawson said it probably wouldn't be in fiscal year '22 given the, um, the legislature. So we're--it's in the budget, just in case there is an opportunity for it to be in fiscal year '22?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I think she meant '21, is what I'm guessing when she said the current year. But I do it--we think it'll be in '22. So I think there was a little confusion.

I think she meant--before June 30th obviously, we won't be ready, but we will be ready next year as long as we don't have an issue with the legislature, which I don't believe we will.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Okay, great. That

**MS. SHEILA KEADY RAWSON:** Fiscal year '21.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Okay. Thank you for clarifying. Um, I think, you know, we have a real

opportunity here. I'm really excited about this.

I'm excited that the Fire Department and the--and the union and the Personnel Department are working hand in hand with the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Office, because I think we have an opportunity to be really groundbreaking here.

And I'm--I'm looking forward to, you know, the Cambridge Fire Department really coming forward and--and being groundbreaking and being a leader in this area and taking this on.

So, um, I look forward to having more updates on that. And just, um, I guess that was--those were all of my questions. Thank you very much. Um, and thank you, Mr. Manager and Mr. Fire Chief. Thanks.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you all for your work in this area. So I don't see--oh, I do see a name. Councillor Nolan, please. You have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you. I'm totally excited about this program and I also hope that we move forward in all city departments to address the issue of diversity in hiring, that I look forward to us, uh, looking into civil service. We're waiting for a report that's, um,

we expected last summer.

And I really look forward to moving us into an era where we can, uh, hire the best of all across the board, all, uh, folks, um, in every department without, um, having to--to develop separate programs that end up being sometimes problematic. And yet, I'm completely thrilled about this program and look forward to moving forward as soon as we can on a range of other initiatives in this. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. So we have completed a discussion. I propose that we move to forward the department's budget section to the full council with a favorable recommendation.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** On that motion.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. MCGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nollan - Yes

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Motion passed. Yes - 9. No - 0**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

The next section that we will discuss is Inspectional Services. And, uh, the Vice Mayor has, um, two questions, and I believe that's all that's been submitted. Vice Mayor, you have the floor.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Uh, thank you Mr. Chair, and through you to the city manager and, um, the Inspectional Services team. My question was around the number of current FTEs that are showing as vacant.

There's 29, I think, current FTEs in the--he department and six of them are showing, uh, as open positions. Some of them are, are pretty high level positions, a sanitary housing inspector, building inspector, and a manager of building inspections. I wanna say that over the last 15 months, Inspectional Services has been one of the busiest departments in the city.

Um, you know, going above and beyond for our retailers, our restaurants, and, you know, making sure that everyone was complying with new, uh, policies and

procedures that seemed to change each and every day, while at the same time, we still had a tremendous amount of building happening. Um, it, six out of 29 positions is about 20% of the whole, uh, department is currently considered vacant.

I'm just curious as to those positions, were some of those positions, holdover positions from fiscal '21 that weren't filled? Are these ongoing positions that we--we need to be filled now? Uh, I'm just--I'm concerned about this department that I think does a tremendous amount of work with not a lot of people. Um, I'm just, um, curious about those six vacant positions and where we are in that process of filling them.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Sure. So I can jump in and I'll turn it over to Ranjit and David Kale, who's actually been a point person for me. Uh, some of these six have been filled. Uh, we've also used some temporary help. These positions have never been on a freeze.

We've attempted to fill 'em, we've had some difficulty filling them, but it's been a priority. But I think David can give you an update on each one along with Ranjit. But we've really tried to work with Inspectional, 'cause you're

right, the workload's been incredible and we've just had some difficulty filling these as quickly as we would've wanted.

Uh, but we have been able to bring in some additional staff that is not in a permanent position for temporary help, but the goal is to fill these.

So I know David's been working closely with Ranjit, so I don't know if you wanna give us an update, David or Ranjit on each one of the positions on the list, but I think it's important to address them.

**MR. DAVID KALE:** Yeah, so I'll--I'll run through the list and, um, Ranjit can, uh, fill in. So the admin assistant position, that position was posted, it's now closed, and interviews will be scheduled. Um, the access analyst was listed as vacant, but as it turned out, the incumbent, uh, had decided to stay.

So it really isn't a vacancy. However, we are, uh, in discussions about trying to do a transition plan and continuity so that, um, if and when he decides to go that we have a plan in place to make it a seamless transition.

The sanitary housing inspector position, that individual started Monday, so that position is filled. Uh,

the building inspector position is filled. So that's done.

Uh, the records coordinator, um, is, uh, will be posted this week that--that was, uh, a vacancy that was created when the incumbent, uh, took the compliance position for STRs in the department. And the manager of building inspections, uh, that is posted, has a sixth grade closing date. And interviews will start thereafter.

Uh, frankly, we, uh, Inspectional sideway holding posting that till they got some of their inspector positions filled. Um, and just in addition to that, uh, the department did have some other vacancies that it did, uh, fill, which is a zoning specialist that has been filled, um, electrical inspector, a position that, uh, was vacant that has been filled during the fiscal year, additional building inspector positions.

And as I mentioned, the um, the, uh, code compliance officer position that was vacant, that has been filled. So, um, so yeah, we have not held the positions as the positions come vacant. We have a process and we try to, uh, get them filled as quickly.

And I think in addition to these positions, there have been some other that have been filled in the interim, uh,



during the fiscal year. So they've been working on, uh, filling these positions as quickly as possible. And Ranjit, do you have anything to add?

**COMMISSIONER RANJIT SINGANAYAGAM:** Uh, I think in addition to what Mr. Kale said, uh, we have a part-time building inspector as also a part-time housing inspector, and also we have a temporary, uh, person who's dealing with the records room.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Vice Mayor.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Um, and thank you for that explanation. Now I can rest a little easier knowing the Inspectional Services department is fully, almost, fully staffed.

I just wanna really a shout out to this team, this really small team that has been doing a tremendous amount of additional work over the last 15 months. I just want you to know that it--it hasn't gone unnoticed. Um, and I, you know, when I saw those vacancies, I just got a little nervous that this team, um, didn't have enough help.

But I'm glad to know that we're are all set. Um, but really a huge shout out to ISD for, um, all of your work over the last 15 months. It has not been easy, but it is

fully recognized. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield the floor.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Vice Mayor. Uh, Councillor Nolan, your hand is up. Do you have a comment or question?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yes. Thank you, Chair Carlone, and thank you Vice Mayor Mallon for saying it, uh, setting the tone for this is an incredibly difficult time. It's been challenging.

Uh, we do continue to hear from people that it's very difficult to schedule inspections, and I know that's because with the safety issues people are in the office or not in the office. And the more that we can do to ensure full staffing so that, uh, people can be out there would be, uh, wonderful.

I have a question, which is, we had talked last fall, um, and I know, um, that it was, uh, ISD had said the leadership in, uh, the city had said this would be something that would be relatively easy to do, which is to have online ability to look at building permit applications.

And I was just wondering the status of that, whether that was any additional budget was required, which I was

told at the time when we first asked about this, that it would be no problem since building applications are actually filed online, it's just a matter of getting them online. So I'm just wondering about the status of that 'cause it's now been a few months and we haven't had an update.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** So I will leave it over to David, who's been the point. We were hoping to send the council, uh, an update on that about two or three weeks ago. There is some concerns that have come up.

And, uh, I've David in the Law office and Ranjit can go over those concerns. But yeah, we have encountered some difficulties in determining whether or not this is the right thing to do. So we can address them or send them up in a council order next week or so. But if you're ready to talk about 'em, David, we can do that now.

**MR. DAVID KALE:** I think we've, ISD, Law, and um, IT have talked about this. Um, I think one of the challenges is, is that a building per--building permit application is a ongoing document that gets amended based upon information that is required and needed.

And, um, we're not quite sure that posting building

permit applications online and then having to make sure that the amendments and the like are implemented, uh, gives a true picture.

So at this point we're investigating. But I think the initial take is that something that we probably do not want to do, which is post the ongoing applications online. Once a building permit is approved, it is available in its entirety, uh, with regard to the completion of the process.

But, um, basically the moving parts of application that is being reviewed potentially by several departments or individuals that gets amended, uh, is viewed to be not a, um, process where basically it leads to a benefit, uh, just because of the maintenance and the upkeep that's required. So that's where we are right now. We're continuing to explore that. But that's the initial blush about the request.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** And I don't know if Nancy or Ranjit have anything they wanna add. I know it's been the three of them that have been working closely on this.

**COMMISSIONER RANJIT SINGANAYAGAM:** Um, ISD has been working with the Law Department on this, and we are

concerned about changes to applications that happen all the time. So we want to, with something that is, will be changed frequently, they change them because of zoning over other reasons. So that's the question we have, and working with the Law Department on this.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Thank you, Ranjit. Nancy, anything?

**CITY SOLICITOR NANCY GLOWA:** Um, thank you, um, Mr. Manager, and through you to the chair, through the chair. Um, one of the issues is that we have a fairly short turnaround time once somebody submits a building application to do the review. That often is done by a number of different city departments and there are potential implications if that period comes and goes without the permit application having been acted upon.

So, uh, if it were a live application while it's being changed and while we're trying to keep track of the various changes, it's just adds that much more potential for confusion or possibly dropping the ball. So I--I think that's the main reason along with what David and and Ranjit said about it.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yes, thank you. I was just waiting, I think I was just a way to recognize that. I kind of understand, but I look forward to some memo. This was, um, we had talked about this, it was said it was easy to do. I believe these are public records so that if I walk into ISD, I would be able to see this application.

So if--if that's true, and it's already a public record, I understand there are changes made. The council was asked to make the request formal, which we did November 2nd, 2020.

So it's unfortunate that it's gone this long I guess. I was--I'm just surprised to hear there's even any question, but I believe the city manager said maybe they would write something up and explain.

Again, I understand there may be changes, however, there had been a sense that this was a positive, transparent effort to, you know, put everything that was public available to the public. So I guess if the city manager and the, and ISD and the city solicitor will--will explain this, then we can look at it.

But I'm just--I'm surprised that it--that it hasn't moved forward and wouldn't understand why if it's a public

document, that it wouldn't be available with the understanding that it should be marked that this is a draft or maybe changed.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** And council, that's one of the reasons why it's not come up yet, because it was our understanding that we were gonna be able to do this and it was not gonna be difficult. But after reaching the point, I wanted to make sure before we said we weren't doing it, that we had dotted all the i's crossed all the T's.

So that's why we've held this up little to make absolutely sure. So I appreciate the question, but we right now are facing some roadblocks, but we will be getting something up to the council shortly. But I understand your concern.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you. Um, glad I asked. So I got the update there. The other question, and-- and this is, I know that there's a challenge sometimes. We--we have so many things going on. There's--it's the multidisciplinary nature of so many different areas of the city, so it get challenging to coordinate.

And I'm--I'm wondering if there's, um, with the

increase in stock in an ISD, if this will also mean that there will be an ability to better coordinate with some of the other departments of the city, for instance, um, make sure that whatever ISD understands that the License Commission is dealing with.

'Cause sometimes there can be delays in ensuring that all those departments are working together. 'Cause sometimes they're working on a similar project and they have to dovetail and--and have the various points of information be shared.

So I'm just curious as to whether that's also something that is--is in the works when is fully stepped up that that will be able to be, uh, a more, uh, coordinated response sometimes, whether it's online or, um, or just in-person.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I'll let Ranjit or David talk in, but I can tell you I feel right now that the License, the Inspection, all the Traffic, the Public Work are truly working as a team better than we ever have to get these things done quickly. Matt Nelson's also been a point for a lot of this, as has David.

So we understand that. But I think we've done a much



better job getting everybody on the same time to move these things quickly, be on the same page. And I think we're in a lot better place than we were maybe when these concerns came up. But I don't know if Ranjit wants to add anything to that.

**COMMISSIONER RANJIT SINGANAYAGAM:** I mean, we have been working with all the departments regarding building permits or other restaurants or any other permits. Uh, we coordinate almost daily with all these departments because building permits have to go through all the departments, DPW, Fire, Historical, maybe License sometimes, CDD, Water Department.

So all this department are coordinated, uh, for billable. For housing and--and the restaurant, we coordinate the licensing DPW and Traffic sometimes before we and coordinate and contact the applicant through these departments too.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Should I--Thank you. I appreciate that. I will say I--I continue to hear some concerns that, um, the efforts aren't much appreciated and yet they're not always, um, felt perhaps.

So I think what would be good, and I will certainly

communicate and forward to Vice Mayor Mallon as chair of the Economic Development Committee some of the concerns I've heard, and she may be able to take that to the Small Business Advisory Task Force so that we can continue.

Again, after this challenging year, it's been--it's been difficult. And I have heard city manager that there--there is an appreciation that there's been more, um, attempts to try to do that.

And yet I'm continuing to hear some concerns. So I just want us to make sure we're in a position to--to do everything we can to be coordinated and as quickly and responsive as we can. Thank you.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I agree. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Thank you both. Um, there are no other hands up at this moment. So I move to forward the department's budget section to the full council with a favorable recommendation.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** On that motion.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. MCGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nollan - Yes

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

Motion passes, 9 in favour, 0 against.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you Mr. Clerk.

Um, we will now discuss the Law Department budget. Uh, Councillor Simmons has pushed it--pulled it, excuse me with a question. Councillor Simmons, the floor is yours.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Thank you, uh, Councillor Carlone and Mr. Chair. Regarding the solicitor's budget, what is the monetary amount of 5% of the solicitor's operating budget? What does that mean? 'Cause that was bandied about in a council order that was earlier put forward.

And I'm curious to know, and if this money were spent on obtaining outside legal counsel for the City Council as called for in the recent council order, what would that look like? Um, so basically, what is 5% of the city solicitor's budget?

And, um, what does--does this mean by way of services to the city council? 'Cause I know it, what the order said, I'm just not sure as the interpretation from the, uh, solicitor's office. So through you, Mr. Chair, to Mr. DePasquale and or Solicitor Glowa.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Mr. Manager.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I'll be happy to start then I'll turn it over to Nancy. So 5% of the total budget counting salaries is \$184,000. Uh, what I would suggest, if we go this way, it would be to define a number based on what we really feel the need will be.

And if it's more than that, then we should provide more than that. If it's less than that, we should provide less than that. So if we're gonna go this route, I think we should just discuss what we feel the amount is gonna be needed, and then we would come up with a number that would feel comfortable as we have in the past.

And as has been stated earlier, whether it's in the budget or not, if it's a priority and we feel we need to find the funds, we will. Uh, but I'm gonna turn it over to Nancy to go over some of the details. But, you know, the money, I think on this 5% is really not the issue. So I'll

turn--turn it over to Nancy.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Uh, thank you, Mr. DePasquale.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Ms. Glowa.

**CITY SOLICITOR NANCY GLOWA:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Um, through you, what I wanted to do was to, um, refer to the order that was passed and--and not so much in terms of the monetary amount, but with respect to the authority issues that were raised.

Um, I--I know that people, councillors raised questions about, um, the charter issue and whether this is in fact a charter violation.

Um, I wanted to, uh, advise you that we have gone back and researched these issues further as well as talking with a number of municipalities, including all of the municipalities that were mentioned by council in the meeting that we had about the opinion that I had submitted, um, as well as other municipalities.

I just wanted to remind the council that in under Massachusetts law, the--the way, uh, municipal government is set up is that there's a legislative branch and an executive branch.

And that there some of the confusion that may have arisen, which I know the council knows, but some of the confusion that may have arisen in--in the prior discussion was what form of government the particular municipality has. So in--in the plan, each charter, the chief executive officer is the city manager who is also the contracting authority.

Um, and also under the municipal code and charter, the city solicitor is both appointed by the city manager, but also serves as legal counsel to all department sports commissions as well as the city council. With respect to the, uh, the, I believe that we had mentioned in our prior opinion that in Newton, or maybe I didn't mention that, I apologize.

In the city of Newton, this issue was raised and, uh, it's a slightly different charter, but the city, um, the mayor, excuse me, it's a strong mayor form of government, um, had a similar request from the city council there and informed the council that there would not be separate legal counsel provided, um, because that would be a violation of the charter.

Um, the councillors, um, brought up, um, uh, both

Boston, which, um, as I previously said, there was a lawsuit, uh, that went actually to the appeals court where the court confirmed that this would be a charter violation and that that authority rests with the mayor.

Um, in Waltham, uh, the city solicitor had given the city council that it was the mayor, not the city solicitor, excuse me, city council that had the authority to hire council.

Same thing was true in Somerville, where we have confirmed that the city solicitor there gave a report to that city council, that it was the mayor who had the authority to hire council, not the city council.

Um, Newburyport was brought up as an example of a city with separate council, and we were informed by the city solicitor in Newburyport that while the city council at one time had wanted separate council, the--the solicitor gave a legal opinion that that would violate the municipal charter. And the council there did not hire their own counsel.

They do hire outside council in that town to serve as municipal council, but it is, um, under the direction of the mayor, not the city council. Uh, with respect to

Waltham, which was raised as an example, that's, uh, a city where the city council appoints the city solicitor, um, but the city council itself does not have separate legal counsel.

So they have used outside council to work on complex matters like collective bargaining, but it is not an appointment that would've been made by, um, the mayor in that instance. Um, so I wanted to confirm that we have carefully looked at the questions that were raised.

And, uh, all of the information that we have reviewed, um, is consistent with our original legal opinion. And, uh, so I wanted to confirm that to the council, and hope that that assuaged the council with respect to, uh, the concerns that they had raised.

This is in fact not something that's within the council's authority, under the charter, it would be a charter violation to, um, dictate that.

However, uh, since we do want to be responsive to the city council and provide the best legal services available, uh, we would hope that the council would rely on this office as, um, designed and to, particularly with the getting back up to being fully staffed, we would provide



the services, um, in a more efficient and responsive manner.

But we also wanted to say that, uh, we--we would be, uh, willing to work with as, um, a modified version of what the council order was in that if a majority of the city council votes to request that the city solicitors seek outside legal counsel assistance on a particular, um, opinion or legislative drafting issue, we would then enter into an agreement with outside counsel.

And as always, in contracts for legal services, the outside counsel would report to the city solicitor and the legal advice would come back through the city solicitor to the--and through the city manager on the manager's agenda to the council. So I wanted to, uh, make that point in response to the council order, and of course, I'm available for any questions.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** And whatever the financial ramifications are, we would forward that to the council for the vote. So I think it--it certainly addresses the concern of whether or not we can get to these items quickly.

I think both myself and the city solicitor understand

that concern and wanted to try to address it in the best way possible to make sure the council understands that we appreciate your concern about making sure these orders get turned around quickly.

And if it means outside counsel that we would be quickly able to do that, however, it would go to city solicitor and myself.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. I have four councillors with their hands raised.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, Co-chair Simmons, yes.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Uh, I just wanna say that was--the information is certainly helpful. I mean, I, whereas I understand my colleagues' desire, uh, I wanna make sure that we are following not only the letter, but the spirit of the law. I'm sure it's no one's intention not to flagrantly break any municipal law code or--or edict.

So this is helpful information. I'll look forward to hearing a more fleshed out, uh, report from the city manager. But I just wanted to, it said X percent of the

city's solicitor's budget, but I didn't know what that was and I don't think the council knew. So now we have an idea of what that is.

And well, you also have the, to share with that is the strong, um, advisory from, uh, the city solicitor about what, um, the way it may--this order may be--may be written does not conform to the letter and the spirit of the law. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I yield the floor.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** And thank you, uh, Co-chair Simmons, because your question allowed the solicitor to clarify, uh, the office's position as well. So we have four councillors, um, with their hands up. I'll list all of them in the order.

Councillor Nolan, Councillor Zondervan, Vice Mayor Mallon, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, and the--and the mayor. So, uh, co--Councillor Nolan, you're first, although your hand has disappeared. Did you wish to speak on this?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** No. I think it had been up from before.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Oh, you're an honest--

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** I'll yield to the others and then if what I wanted to say isn't said I'll--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** You're an honest person. You could have gotten a double there. Uh, so Councillor Zondervan is first. Councillor.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Actually, I would like to yield as well.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Wow. Two in a row. That's great. Uh, Vice Mayor Mallon, you're next.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I am gonna take the floor. Thanks to my colleagues for yielding. Um, I just wanna make sure I understand the city solicitor's proposed modified version of, um, the suggestion around having outside legal research.

So if I understand it correctly, a councillor could bring forward, or a group of councillors could bring forward a request to the full city council to request a legal opinion or a drafting of perhaps zoning or an ordinance.

If there's a majority of the city council that votes for it, then the city solicitor would engage outside council to do that work and then it would come back into the city solicitor's office and then report back to the full city council through a city manager's agenda item?

I just wanna make sure that I understand that that's the process and not that we would vote to move it forward, and then the city solicitor would come back and tell us how much it would cost and then we would vote again. I just wanna make sure I understand the process that has been outlined here.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I can turn it over to Nancy, but there--there is outside council in the Law Office Budget, so I think we would have some balances in there. So my intent would not to be the comeback every time to have the council to vote on appropriation.

However, this budget--if this budget needed more money just in general for all outside council, rather than just tying it to what the city council allows, at some point we would come back for a recommendation that says, "Do the things we've not doing. We'd like additional money." But no, I would not wanna hold it up to circle. We'd come back for another vote. No, we would try to move, but I'll leave it that to Nancy.

**CITY SOLICITOR NANCY GLOWA:** Um, if I may, through you, Mr. Chair, um, thank you, Mr. Manager. Uh, yes, we certainly wouldn't wanna take that extra step, that would

be unnecessary. And as the manager said, we do have, um, outside counsel budgeted in our, uh, budget already.

I would just like to, uh, point out that to the extent that the council is concerned about, um, the, not the, the service--legal services that are being provided, not being as responsive or as efficient or timely, um, I did wanna point out to the council for your information that a lot of these issues do require a lot of research that includes looking at operational impacts and issues that relate to other departments work.

And so the benefit of having the legal research as well as drafting handled in-house is that often we are working with multiple departments when we get the research assignment or the legislation to be drafted.

Um, and we are also able to use our expertise as municipal lawyers who've looked at a broad range of issues over many, many years to make sure that we're giving the work product to the council that's most responsive, most up-to-date. It also often involves looking at similar issues around the country or around the state, um, often checking with state agencies about various issues that may arise. So we do very thorough work.

I did wanna confirm with the--with what the vice mayor had said, that what we're proposing is that the, a councillor or more than one councillor would submit a proposed order if the order is passed by majority vote at a public meeting to request a particular legal opinion or legislative services that would then be forwarded to this office. And we would work with, um, retaining outside counsel to provide the services and report back to the council.

I did want to offer, however, that I think that that may often end up taking more time than if we got right on it, particularly if it involves issues that we already have some familiarity with.

And to the extent that it involves checking in with other departments, if it's a council order that involves multiple parts, not just legal drafting or research, but other operational aspects of, um, working with the Traffic Department or the Department of Inspectional Services or Zoning implications.

These are all things that we're working on regularly, um, in this office. And I think that in many instances, the work would be more responsive, more on point, more

efficient and faster, if it were done within the Law Department.

So I am still very hopeful that this will not need to be used very often because I do believe that we can work harder to both, um, get back to the council more timely and--and reassure the council that we are, um, able to do this work in a way that the council can feel good about. Thank you.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Um, thank you Mr. Chair through you to Ms. Glowa. Um, you know, I think we're having a couple parallel conversations here at the same time. Um, I guess, I'm intrigued by this modified version.

However, I think there would have to be some work done upfront by councillors who put in a motion for, uh, you know, I'm a majority vote by the council to--to say I've-- I've spoken with the Law Department, this is, uh, this is the route that we've decided to go because there isn't capacity at the Law Department, or this isn't something they don't--they feel like they're specialized in.

I just wanna say that I think that there would have to be some preliminary work around capacity, uh, to go this route so that doesn't feel like, um, we're being asked to



vote on the floor for something that no one's ever had a conversation with the Law Department about.

So I'm gonna--I'm gonna yield the floor to my colleagues 'cause I see that there's a lot of questions, but thank you for clarifying, um, this modified version and--and the route it would take through the council. Thank you Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you Vice mayor. And I wanted to say, I agree with you that preparatory conversation, uh, is critical in--in your evaluation of what you wanna do and knowing what the next step is for the solicitor. So I--I concur. Um, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler is next, followed by the Mayor. Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, through you. Um, as always, I, you know, appreciate the solicitors work and opinion and the, the work of the Law Department in general.

You know, from what I'm hearing, it sounds like this proposal was an improvement over the--the status quo, as was the sort of the--the previous version that was presented at the council meeting a couple, couple weeks

ago.

Um, I think Vice Mayor Mallon made the same points, it would be helpful to--to see something in writing and--and to talk about it, um, some more because I'm--I'm still a little unclear about some of the details.

Um, you know, the broad, uh, picture is that I, you know, continued to disagree that the--the city council couldn't request this under the charter. Um, I don't believe it's a charter question, but a question of how the legislative authority of the city council is defined under state law.

And that's how we've seen city councils in, uh, a variety of different cities with different charters, uh, hire, have a budget for their own outside legal research. Um, and so I don't see anything that would preclude us.

Uh, and it would be great to have an outside legal counsel to give us an opinion on this. I think it sort of really illustrates, uh, the need for it.

Um, uh, so I'd still prefer to move forward with the city council having its own budget for outside legal research. Um, I think it's our authority, uh, to approve or not approve the budget and--and to, you know, request it in

there as a result. Um, uh, I also understand though that I'm--I'm one vote of nine on this.

Um, I'm happy to--to talk more about this, um, but you know, as the Vice Mayor, I'm sure others will say this-- this is the first time hearing of it today, so, um, I'm gonna need some more time.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Again, I just wanna state that we are not opposing giving outside council help. We're just saying it should come to the city solicitor. Uh, it can't be directed to the city council. So hopefully we've come up with a compromise.

I understand your concern, but it's pretty clear cut that we think that would be a violation of the charter. And we think this is a solution. It hopefully could get us to a compromised place.

So that's why we wanted to bring that up today. But we can't send something up on the agenda as well, if that's what the council would like to see as well.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you both. Uh, the next speaker is the mayor, followed by Councillor Nolan, and Councillor Zondervan. Madam Mayor.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Thank you. Uh, quick question.

I know that, uh, solicitor, you mentioned, uh, conferring with the various city departments, uh, solicitor departments in some of the cities.

And I think I, based on the conversation I had with the city manager as well, um, it's my recollection that there was, I think there was, uh, an outside opinion given on this. Um, and if that is the case, you know, could the council have that just in writing?

Um, whenever you do respond to the council, I think that would be helpful. And then as has been mentioned that the--the proposal that's--that you've come up with, um, uh, would be helpful for the council to get. Along with, you know, the memo had some good suggestions around staffing and so forth.

So I think, uh, having that all in one place, uh, as a responding to the waiting report would just be helpful, uh, because I think some of the, um, those, you know, points, uh, that were brought up, um, you know, we should be implementing. 'Cause often it does come to, um, you know, it's more kind of understanding, you know, of, "Okay, I know we have this. There was an order put in and let's now timeline it."

And we know the Law Department's working on it, but there's just, there's the communication hurdles that occur and I think we can, we need to work through those, uh, to move the work forward. So that's all I have, but it would be helpful to get, um, if that you did get an outside opinion on this question, it would be helpful to have that. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you Madam Mayor. That adds, uh, some more detail to our discussion. Um, Mr. Clerk has corrected me. He said Councillor Zondervan is actually before Councillor Nolan. Um, so Councillor Zondervan, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, uh, through you. Uh, thanks to the city manager and solicitor for the response. Um, I continue to agree with my colleague. I think this is an improvement and I--and I do appreciate the--the compromise approach.

Um, but it still, I think doesn't fully address the--the underlying question because if--if it's legal for us to get pro bono opinions on matters as individual councillors, then I don't understand why it would not be legal for us to get opinions, uh, that we pay for.

And I think having a majority vote, uh, approach can certainly be helpful in--in some cases. Um, although I'm not sure how that's truly different from what we do now because we currently request a legal opinion through a majority vote.

Um, so I--I guess we would explicitly say that we wanted an outside opinion if we wanted one. Um, but I'm not even sure how we would make that determination. So I'm a little bit confused about that.

But--but I guess we will--we'll have other opportunities to discuss that. Um, but I remain of the opinion that just as you know, the--the manager has authorized the budget for, uh, the council office and--and we have an executive assistance and, uh, receptionist through that budget, I don't see why we couldn't have, um, some outside legal counsel, uh, through a similar arrangement. But I look forward to, um, you know, implementing this and, uh, we'll see how--how it works out. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you Councillor. Councillor Nolan, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you, uh, Chair

Carlone and all my colleagues for, uh, adjusting many of the questions. I, for me, I think it would be helpful to see the full one in writing.

There had been a memo that had included an attention to the idea of responsiveness to the council, and--and I can say as someone who has sometimes reached out, and I definitely appreciate, um, getting responses from the--the city solicitor.

And there's been a couple times when a question's been raised is, should I ask that question if I haven't had a majority of the council?

So for me this is partly about getting and ensuring that we have, uh, an understanding of if I have a question, I'm thinking for instance, of putting forward something that raises a legal question, can I have the Law Department help me understand various things about it instead of having to put a motion on the council agenda to ask for some help?

So that seems still a little murky to me and a little confusing honestly, um, that, um, the role of the city solicitor's office in helping us as we think through some of our own, um, proposals that we are working on, if that

makes sense.

And--and I'm hoping that will be clarified in a write up around this, but that is one of the areas that has been, I think sometimes challenging from my side to know whether it's okay for me to ask.

And also from the city side, does it make sense for them to respond? I'm just one councillor. It hasn't come from the whole council.

So I think that's this area that sometimes is challenging and if there was a clear here's a legal research or anyone on the council can just ask them questions, that's the kind of thing that I think might help, uh, all of us be in communication about this, if that makes sense. I see the city manager nodding his head that that might be his area.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I mean I think this is that we can talk about. I think there--there is different interpretations, but I think the bottom line is we're here to help the city council get to where they wanna go. And I think we can make sure that that continues to happen. But I understand your question and we can clarify.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Right, and--and I



understand that if I ask a question, sometimes it, depending on how long it would take for the city solicitor's office just to not be sure if they should be, if that makes sense to everyone.

But the other question I had sometimes in the responsiveness, am I right in reading the budget that there are three vacant positions for assistant city solicitors in the office right now, which is what I saw in some of the budget back up?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Nancy, do you wanna give a status of where we are with your positions?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Because that would certainly explain a challenge in terms of workload.

**CITY SOLICITOR NANCY GLOWA:** Sure. We have had, um, a vacancy of a--of one assistant city solicitor. That has now been filled. We had a vacancy of our first assistant city solicitor. That position has now been filled.

So we're in the process of, um, trying to do the inter--trying to get through the interviewing process to fill the new assistant city solicitor vacancy that was created when we, uh, promoted someone to the first assistant city solicitor as well as the other assistant

city solicitor position that was not actually a vacancy, but was approved in a delayed way because of COVID.

So those two positions are in the process of being filled. And in this year's budget, there's also an additional position and we've also been inundated with, uh, public records requests. So there's also a position for that.

So we do believe that with this additional staffing and getting up to our full staffing, um, addressing those vacancies, the two of which as I said, have not been filled, that that would give us much greater bandwidth to make sure that we're addressing all the needs of our office promptly.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Great. Thank you. Um, that explains it 'cause when I did review that, it seemed, you know, that there had been those three full-time, uh, positions vacant.

That first assistance city's solicitor is listed as someone, maybe that's not the current person, but that was the budget backup from--from recently. And what I'm hearing is that once fully staffed, then that, and that's in process and very much on--on track to be fully staffed

soon.

Um, the other question I wanna address is in this, um, area, there are obviously sometimes when there will be a somewhat different interpretation, otherwise we wouldn't have courts of law. There would just be, well, there's a law and that's it.

And nobody would ever go to court because everyone sees it exactly the same way. This isn't about shopping around necessary for second opinion, it's about understanding the full flavor of, um, interpretations of various law when sometimes it's a little bit gray.

So I do think this is a really positive step forward to both, between the earlier memo about ensuring that we will clarify how it is that we can get some of the--the research help that will make our jobs easier to do.

And also understanding as we move forward this, uh, idea of when it makes sense to have outside counsel. So I appreciate the work that's been done on this, and I yield.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, thank you Councillor Nolan. Uh, there are no other hands up and I think we've had a good discussion and had some further clarification, but we all know there'll be more work done

in this area.

So unless there are other comments, I will, um, propose that, uh, I move to forward the department's budget section to the full council with a favorable recommendation. Mr. Clerk.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** On that motion.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nollan - Yes

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Yes

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Motion passed. Yes - 7. Present - 2**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Well, thank you all.

We're going to take our lunch break now, um, and reconvene at 10 to one. So that's just under 45 minutes. Uh, unless I hear a reason to change that time, uh, that's what we will do. I don't hear any comments.

So let's reconvene at 10 minutes to one. Uh, we're making good progress. We do have a few topics that, um, have many questions coming up. Thank you all. I'll see you in 45 minutes.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Well, it's 12:50 and we're going to start with the afternoon session of the Finance Committee hearing. Uh, welcome back. Uh, the first-

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**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Uh, do you want me to take a roll and make sure that everybody is in?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes. Yes. Thank you, Mr. Clerk. We'll take a roll call, uh, to gather attendance at the second half of the meeting.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Present

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Present

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Absent

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Present

Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Present

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Present

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Present

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Present

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Present

**Present-8.Absent-1.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk.

Um, the first, uh, department in the afternoon will be the License Commission, and, uh, both Vice Mayor Mallon and Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler have, uh, submitted questions. Um, Vice Mayor, you have the floor.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Uh, thank you, Mr. Chair, through you to the City Manager and the License Commissioner. I just had some questions around some impacted fees that might be impacting your department and their revenues this year.

I know that the License Commission, um, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the situation that a lot of our restaurants, uh, found themselves in and small businesses, uh, decreased a number of their fees and, um, that likely took a hit on the department.

So my questions, um, really are around the total amount of fees that were collected by your department as compared to your overall budget. Um, and what was the difference between estimated fees and actual fees collected in fiscal 21 and how that is affecting your budget going

forward, uh, in terms of, um, revenues.

**NICOLE MURATI FERRER:** Hi. Thank you. Uh, good afternoon everyone. Um, so you're right, we--what we did is we reduced all of our fees, um, except for, uh, disposal waste haulers, leaf blowers, pulling conduit and flammables by 40%. Um, and, and we also changed the way in which we accepted the payment of those fees.

So some of them, uh, came later on in the fiscal year and then a small portion of them, of the ones that we're renewing now in the spring, well receive in FY-22. Uh, so we--obviously, we did receive a, um, decrease in terms of revenue.

**NICOLE MURATI FERRER:** Um, in terms of projected revenues for FY-21, we have, um, \$1,607,930. Um, that's where we're at. Um, and then we had our budget--our budgeted revenues for FY-21, where \$2,506,400, um, with a further reduction at recap. And then-- Yeah, go ahead. Sorry.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Uh, I think Mr. Kale was jumping in--No.

**MR. DAVID KALE:** No, just checking my budget book. Sorry.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** So that looks like a million dollar shortfall of what was collected or projected revenue collection for fiscal 21 and the budgeted for fiscal 22. I'm just trying to--I'm trying to assess the magnitude of--of the, the impact in the 40% of the reduction in fees.

**NICOLE MURATI FERRER:** So basically it was a saving of a hun--well, a saving for our businesses, approximately \$888,000. That number is not specifically the number that you'll see in the revenue that we collected because we had about half a million dollars from the second half of the renewal fees of last year come in on this fiscal year.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Okay. So the savings for businesses that we--that this, by reducing these permit fees, these revenues by the License Commission through the license department is \$880,000. That's what you're saying?

**NICOLE MURATI FERRER:** Yeah, approximately. I think it's \$888,000.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** That's a nice round number.

**NICOLE MURATI FERRER:** I'm sure there were--I'm sure there's a few dollars extra. It's the number that's came in



my mind. It's easy to remember.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Okay. Well that's very helpful 'cause I think, um, you know, what we're hearing, uh, in the community is that the small businesses and the restaurants would like to see this production continue into this fiscal year and possibly to the end of, um, calendar year 22 just to do, um, 'cause we know that the recovery effort for--particularly for our restaurants and our small business is going to be long.

Uh, so I wanted to--for us to really understand the impact of--of what that looked like over the last year and what that could potentially look like over the next year, year and a half if we were to entertain, um, further reducing fees for our small businesses as we move from sort of, uh, this phase, which we're calling COVID Recovery, uh, which I think, as we all know, is going to be long and there are going to be impacts on revenues all over the city.

Uh, we talked about tax assessments and, and tax abatements earlier. This is just another place where I think, um, we are going to be asked by the business community to continue this reduction if you, so I wanted to

make sure that, uh, myself and the Council were all aware of, uh, of the number and, um, what we might be asking the city to--to do next year. All right. So that was really my only question. So thank you very much for putting that together and it's always nice to see you, commissioner.

**NICOLE MURATI FERRER:** Thank you, same. Um, and just so that, you know, uh, we are internally discussing the issue and obviously we're trying to do our best to support our businesses throughout this recovery time.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you. That's so great to hear. And I know that we have a--we actually have, uh, a meeting coming up at Economic Development Committee where we'll be discussing that. So I look forward to that expanded conversation then. Thank you, Mr. Chair. I--I yield.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, both. Uh, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, through you. Um, my question was in the--a sort of similar vein to the Vice Mayor's, um, the, the city's required really critical support for, uh, restaurants, for outdoor dining and--and for all our residents, for people-

centered streets and including in places like Inman Square.

Um, and as we, you know, start to come out of the pandemic, what, um, funding or how are we thinking about, uh, those kind of, you know, outdoor spaces for, uh, for restaurants but also for residents and how are we thinking about that on the budget?

**NICOLE MURATI FERRER:** Thank you. So, yeah, so, you know, in terms of outdoor spaces, that's a--that's a question that involves multiple departments, uh, particularly in the public ways that includes, traffic and parking, ISD, um, DPW, City Manager's Office.

Um, and obviously we are continuing to work with that, and as you know, we have our one-stop shop temporary extensions, um, which continue to be applied for. Uh, we have the ones that people applied for last year and even this year we've seen an uptick now, in the last few months, we've had about 30 to 40 new ones come in, so we're definitely dealing with that.

I know that the city, um, and I don't wanna speak for, uh, the City Manager, but I know that we're committed in making sure that, um, we have spaces for these businesses to be able to, um, extend to.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** And--and I don't know Nicole--if Matt has anything to add, but I do wanna recognize the Nicole 'cause she has been the point person in getting the information out after the governor in the city has decided. And she's done a phenomenal job that the communications out incredibly quick and our team has been there 24/7. So thank you.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Matt, is there anything you want to add?

**MATT NELSON:** Sure. Thanks, uh, through you, uh, Mr. Chair to the Council and, um, just a quick--just to follow up with Nicole quickly. This is, uh, an internal group that, um, from multiple departments, internal working group with public works, traffic and parking, ISD, the Law Department, License Commission, Community Development and the City Manager's Office.

And, you know, back in March, we officially announced that we are committed to maintaining outdoor dining through the end of this calendar year. Um, that is currently also working with some, um, authority given to, uh, city through state executive orders that are tied to the Public Health Emergency.

Um, so in the meantime, we are also reviewing that internally to figure out if the Public Health Emergency ends, what that means and how we--how we need to--to sort of change our focus here in the city.

Uh, as far as beyond that, we're also working closely to try to figure out what--what the next, uh, next year might look like as well. But, and just in addition, you know, as the City Manager mentioned to the Council last night, uh, Traffic and Parking has, um, offered up over 160 parking spaces for our restaurants.

DPW has sent out, uh, almost 150 jersey barriers to help protect our restaurant diners from the street, um, as well as the patio heater reimbursements, and, uh, continued commitment from all of the staff--the staff time that, um, often happens at nights and weekends, 'cause that's often the time that restaurant managers have time, uh, to communicate with staff.

So we've adjusted our, our flexibility and our ability to--to, um, work with our--our restaurants and the business community, um, really around the clock. And we're--we're committed to continuing that throughout this--throughout this year.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** I don't have anything else.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you very much. So we have, uh, Councillor Nolan and Councillor Zondervan in that order. Councillor Nolan, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Uh, thank you, Chair Carlone. Thank you to all the staff working on this. I wanted to follow up some on, uh, the Vice Mayor's question, and if--if this is something that will be addressed at her committee meeting, that's fine, but it'll be really helpful to have a clear list of what fees were waived, by how much, with number of entities by category.

Because it--it's always been a little bit unclear to me, were fees waived entirely or just 40%? Was it just restaurants or was it all businesses?

And I know we've talked about this back and forth and the City Manager has--has worked on ensuring that as many fees as possible are waived, although it hasn't been all fees in all areas. So is there a list of that somewhere, or is that something--and is that something that could be provided to the Economic Development Committee and Vice

Mayor Mallon will be addressing it.

**NICOLE MURATI FERRER:** Thank you. So--so, yeah, I mean, there is a memo, uh, with the board's vote and it's actually posted on our website. I'm happy to forward it to the Council as well. Uh, but to answer your question, we reduced our fees by 40%, of renewal fee.

So meaning existing businesses only by 40% for all of our businesses except four categories. So that means we reduced it for common victuallers, alcohol, In holders, lodging, house, entertainment, used car dealers, dispatch companies, open air parking lot, garage peddlers, second-hand goods, antiques, letting a motor vehicle and fortune tellers.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** And that was all renewal fees. And--and are there--and are those the only fees that your--that the License Commission handles? Or are there other fees like weights and measures or others?

**NICOLE MURATI FERRER:** No, weights and measures is, um, ISD. Uh, we also handle Hackney and for, I wanna say--- I wanna, I think it's almost the fourth fiscal year in a row we've waived all Hackney fees. Um, so those--those fees, we also did not, uh, waive--we waived completely.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** I apologize if this is in the--in the memo, I can look it up, but does that memo include here's the total and here's the number of licenses that were reduced and here's the total a dollar amount associated with that?

**NICOLE MURATI FERRER:** No, because--so when we took the board--when the board voted to reduce the fees, we--it was right before a renewal season in--in the fall. So obviously we wouldn't have specific numbers when we voted. But it does list the specific fees, um, and I'm--I'm happy to share that with the council.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yeah, it just--and this is to follow up as--as when you look at the budget book, the total budgeted revenue for licenses and permits is expected to be \$1.6 million. The current year it's \$1.5 million. The year before that it was \$2.2. So there's been some reduction, but it's certainly not all reductions, which I'm not suggesting we necessarily, uh, should have.

But certainly in terms of a budget impact, if the fees will be similar to this existing year, um, we should just understand what the, um, repercussions of that are and whether there are businesses that are gonna continue to



need our help because we know, while the numbers looks, uh, good, they're still small businesses and medium sized, but still struggling across the city.

So it's really important for us to know it--it is still totals \$1.6 million we're expecting to collect in licenses and permits, and it would just be good to know what the breakdown of that is, particularly for small local businesses and, um, and--and what the plans are for this-- for this next year, because it will clearly need ongoing support.

**NICOLE MURATI FERRER:** Okay. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. Councillor Zondervan, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you to the Commissioner, um, thank you for your work. I did notice in the budget that, um, there-- there is an vacancy. I'm just wondering if you have enough resources to, um, respond to--to all these changes and, um, challenges of the pandemic.

**NICOLE MURATI FERRER:** Thank you Councillor. So--so, yes. So unfortunately we, um, we lost our Chief

Investigator. She retired last, uh, year, I think I wanna say in September. Uh, and as you know, as the City Manager sort of mentioned before, earlier in this hearing, uh, the positions were sort of on hold.

We have posted this position as an investigator position. Uh, the opening is still, um, I believe it closes at the end of this month. We've been receiving resumes and we're hopeful, um, that we can fill it as soon as possible. Um, our investigator Tyler Bubenik, has been doing an excellent job.

And of course, um, Inspectional Services department has taken a lot of the load as well in terms of, uh, the COVID related matters during this emergency. So thankfully we've been able to survive, but yes, we are looking to fill that position as soon as possible. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor, you've completed your conversation?

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Yes, Mr. Chair. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Well, I don't see, uh, Mr. Manager, did you want to add something?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Nope.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** You--you came up on the screen, that's why I asked.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** No problem. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** So with no further, uh, discussion--Councillor Nolan, yes.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Sorry, I had written down another question and forgot to ask it.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I'm--I'm sorry, councillor--No, keep going. Of course.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Um, in this discussion, I know that, um, as Mr. Gianetti alluded to and, um, the city staff that you're working with a group of people and bringing in all the different players. It--how is it that the outreach is done to the--to the business community to ensure that their voices are--are there?

I know that there's a Small Business Advisory Council, but that, as I understand it, only as one small business owner on it. So how--how can we make sure we're working with and hear the voices of the range of maybe even a survey done by every single business association in the

city so that we can have that dialogue and make sure that as you do your work, that it's, um, responsive so that we can understand as we move forward with these budget questions about what would be most helpful to them.

**NICOLE MURATI FERRER:** Thank you. Yeah. So, um, you know, I think since the start of the emergency, I've made myself the point person for my department in terms of our licensees. So literally all of them, um, they sometimes mock me, the amount of emails that they have in their inboxes from me.

Um, but I've--I've sort of become the point person and, you know, we hear from them often and, you know, thankfully our business community is vocal, so, uh, we get information from them. I know Matt Nelson from the City Manager's office has sort of been the point person at the executive level in terms of business associations.

We've--which we also have made ourselves available, but we know we hear from them. And I know that CDD has, uh, created these, uh, programs in virtual office hours in which we participate, or I participate as well, uh, to make sure that we're hearing concerns.

Um, in terms of the survey, I leave that to the powers

that be. I think, um, uh, there's other people in the city better equipped, uh, to answer that question than me, but I would--I would obviously, uh, welcome any feedback. Thank you.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Uh, I can--I can jump in before I turn it over to Matt. I would say between the output of the Economic Development and CDD, Matt Nelson license and other departments. Uh, availability, uh, urging, uh, supporting our business community has been exceptional.

Uh, we've made sure that we've heard them, we've reached out to them, and I really think the decisions we've made has been with tremendous communications with them, with partners. And Matt played a key role in this too. So I don't know if Matt has anything to add.

**MATT NELSON:** Just sort of, uh, through you, Mr. Chair, just, uh, reiterating what, um, a license commissioner and the City Manager just said. It--it is a team effort here in the city, and I would just also like to call out, um, Economic Development Division and Community Development as well.

Their Party Safari plays--plays the specific role of a

small business liaison, um, and has done that, uh, even before COVID and does, uh, a great job, uh, with our whole team over their economic development. And I work really closely with them in the role here in the City Manager's office.

Uh, we do have the Small Business Advisory Committee that was set up for COVID reopening. Um, and they still are our folks we go--we go to, but we also, uh, utilize Nicole's list because she's got every licensee email address and phone number. So when things--when things change, when there's new orders, new, uh, reopening guidelines, we, we aren't just going to the advisory committee, we're going citywide and asking for support in input.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Does that conclude your comment, Councillor?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yes. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you very much. So there are no other hands ups so, I move to forward the department's budget section to the full committee with a favorable recommendation.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes  
Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes  
Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes  
Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Yes  
Councillor Jivan Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes  
Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Yes  
Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes  
Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes  
Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Motion Passed. Yes - 9. No-0.Absent-0.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Well, the next department is the Police Department. And, uh, we have questions from a number of councillors, um, the first question in was from the Vice Mayor. Vice Mayor, you lead us off.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Uh, thank you, Mr. Chair, through you to the City Manager, the police commissioner, um, and his team. I had a couple of questions. Uh, um, so the first one is about the Roca allocation of a \$100,000. Last year, I think we-- this was a free cash allocation in June after the budget was passed, uh, about of the same amount to ensure that there was a

Cambridge-based Roca outreach worker.

Can you just speak a little bit to the successes of this program, um, and any challenges and why we're choosing to continue with this model and invest in this partnership as part of the budget this year? Uh, I think that there have been some great stories that have happened over the-- the course of the pandemic, even though people were still at home.

So I was glad to see this as part of the budget this year, um, and hope that it's an ongoing allocation rather than us, uh, always doing it through free cash. Three, free cash, sorry about that. That's my question.

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** Through the Chair, Um, thanks, Vice Mayor. Yeah, so I mean, just understanding Roca, Roca's mission is to break the cycle of prison and poverty. And it does so by being really the conduit or the touchpoint between young adults, the--the courts and the police. Um, they help young adults to address trauma, uh, and--and drive change.

What they do is use cognitive behavior therapy and, uh, life skills training and--and really such a short time and--and understanding privacy issues, our successes have



been numerous. We get monthly updates from our youth worker, Hannah, and I must tell you, it's the joy to see some of our most challenged young people, uh, doing so well with her, getting high school diplomas, driver's licenses and jobs.

Uh, Vice Mayor Mallon, ever since you saw Roca present at our quarterly stakeholders meeting, which you always attend, you really were relentless in making sure that we had Roca here in Cambridge. And I have to say, it was an excellent judgment, and thank you. But when you see who has been impacted and to what extent, is a no-brainer to include Roca and--and you know, it's just a, it's--it's just an important program.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Oh, thank you, Mr. Chair, through you. I--I mean, I think this is one of those excellent opportunities where we can take a function that, um, you know, was--was trying to be worked through the police, uh, department, but just really was kind of missing the mark and there was this amazing non-profit doing this deep work, um, with our most at Rescue Youth and providing just, you know, a single, uh, city outreach worker just sounds like it really was, um, the right way to go.

And I'm excited to hear that Hannah has made some-- some really great strides with some of our young people that I think, you know, we worry the most about. Um, so I'm--

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** Some of our most challenged, uh, young folks whose name you used to see on a different list is now a--a blessing to see him on her list.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Right. So I, again, um, you know, when we think about non-profits and other organizations that can take on some of the work that the Police Department maybe is not as equipped to do, I think this is an excellent, um, example of one of those, one of those places where we really had a win and for not a lot of money, right?

If you think about, um, \$100,000 moving it to, uh, Roco, which to them is--is quite a bit of--quite a bit of--of support. So, uh, I'm really glad to hear that this worked out and that, um, you know, it wasn't just a one year pilot effort that this will now be part of our--our police, our--our budget moving forward.

So, um, that was my first question. And then my second

question was, um, providing--if you could provide an update on the procedural justice dashboard and timelines for its implementation. It's not listed as a fiscal 22 objectives and performance measure in the budget narrative.

Although there is a lengthy narrative on I-43 of key initiative section of the budget I know, I think there was just a--a person hired. So just giving us an--a--a idea of the timeline of when we can actually see this work moving forward and online.

I think, you know, there's been a lot of things that have been happening behind the scenes, and it's been several years, but we're just wondering--I'm just wondering when we might see this, uh, up and running online.

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** So the procedural justice section and the impending dashboard is an important, you know, Police Department initiative is something that I conceptualized, uh, several years ago. Um, and it's just one of the many ways that the Cambridge Police Department is protective of the people that we serve and accountable to the people we serve.

Um, uh, it guards against racial profiling and--and racially biased policing. And the--to your question, the

city solicitor is in the final--or the law office is in the final stages of, uh, contract review and approvable--approval. The vendor, uh, should begin implementation shortly after that.

And the vendor has also promised that they'll bring the dashboard component online as early in that process is feasible. So, you know, I'm really excited about it, uh, because the completion of that work, it really marks a significant achievement for me personally because, you know, I get to see an idea through from conceptualization to implementation. So, um, you know, we're--we're in the final stages of it and--and excited to see it come to be.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, through you to the City Manager, I wonder if, um, I don't know if Ms. Glowa is still on the line, if she had, um, just an update of when we might see that approval coming from the--the Legal Department.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I don't know if she's on the line, but if she's not, we'll be happy to send that out tomorrow.

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** Um, through--through the Chair. Just to add on, um, the City Solicitor's

Office has done a great job representing us here and making sure that everything is done in the most favorable manner to the city. So it's been a back and forth process with the vendor, but I'm--I'm told that it's in the last days of being approved.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Uh, thank you, Mr. Chair, through you to the commissioner and the City Manager. I--I think if we could get just--just a written update to the Council on, um, you know, an estimated timeline of when that approval will go out. Uh, just so we have an idea.

I think we were all eagerly awaiting this--this dashboard, and so just having some idea of whether or not that means this summer or this fall, um, that type of thing. I think that would be really, really helpful. So those were my questions, uh, for the police budget I yield back, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you Vice Mayor. Um, the next speaker is, uh, next Councillor with a question is, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler. Councillor, it's all yours.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Thank you, Mr.

Chair. Through you, um, I had submitted a question, um, on Friday about the alternate Public Safety Program, and I know we've talked about that, um, some of that already and, um, you know, we've been, uh, told by the--the program sort of isn't funded in the FY-22 budget and the--the opportunities to fund it going forward.

Um, so I'm, you know, not trying to go back over that. Um, but do, um, wanna try to get an answer on something that a lot of Cambridge residents have asked me about. Um, and that there's a--a significant increase in the police budget this year, um, and, you know, a year after we have talked about some, you know, really important and--and public conversations on shifting some of the way we're thinking about public safety.

Um, and in particular I'm thinking about conversations about how we're under--addressing the underlying causes of public safety. Um, and not necessarily, um, not in--not I should say, um, sending armed city employees, you know, to respond to issues if we don't have to. Um, you know, and that program isn't in the budget, and we're also seeing this--this increase here, and community members are express frustration to me that we don't see the program in the

budget, but there we do see this increase.

So, you know, again, I'm not trying to sort of re-litigate the conversation from this morning, but, um, because we are talking about the Police Department budget now, and there's this increase, um, did wanna give, uh, City Manager and the police commissioner a chance to respond and--and put that question out there.

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** Was that even a question, Chair? Long statement. What--what is that question, Councillor?

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Sure. Uh, it's better in the simplest form possible. Why is there an increase in the Police Department budget?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** There is--I'll just first--and I'll turn it back to the commissioner, but there's gonna be an increase on every budget because of union negotiations 'cause of health insurance. So right off the bat, the police budget has been treated like every budget in the city right now, and we are still waiting for where we're gonna go when we get the recommendations from Councillor Simmons and Councillor Carlone, I mean, uh, the Governance Committee.

But the increases in the police budget are like mostly every budget. They're based on contracts settlements. They're based on increased costs and insurance, increased cost and pension, and any other initiative the police commissioner wanted to move forward. So I'll turn it back to the commissioner.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I would--I would also add this Mr. Manager that if you look at the budget book, we have the actual--we have the projected budget, and then we--

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** Just wanna go over that--

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** -- the office budget. So clearly the Police Department is not spending its allocation this year in full, so therefore it really isn't an increase in--in totality because the projected number is lower than what their adopted budget was.

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** Through-- through the Chair. You'll see that for each of the last three fiscal years, FY-'20, FY-'21 and FY-'22, we've requested level funding for staffing. Um, any increases in our budget, uh, simply as the manager stated due to, uh,



contractual raises and--and other fringe benefits the, the increase in cost.

Um, from FY-'20 to FY-'21, our budget went up our--our request went up 3.63%. And this year, from '22, from '21 to '22, the request went up 4.38%. But once again, totally for, you know, salary considerations, contractual raises.

Um, in terms of the, uh, task force, you know, we've already talked about it, that the City Manager has already embarked on this more thoughtful process in the form of that task force to examine, uh, the future of public safety. If it has the effect of reducing the footprint and of policing here in Cambridge, which we fully expected to do so, then it's going to do so in a measured way.

Um, I think that some people are under the--the misconception that, if we create a new division that has X amount of employees that, that means that X amount of employees come from the Police Department. And--and that's not the exact way it would happen.

If it did happen, it would be through, you know, uh, a measured transfer and attrition or services. If you just look at the--the benchmark in the front of the public safety section and you just see the calls into ECD. You'll

see that 63% of 'em are directly for the Police Department. And then of the other 37%, uh, the vast majority of those we attend with fire and medical services also.

So what we seek to do is to create alternative responses to some of those calls that we go to and we gladly, you know, we will turn that work over and, um, but City Manager has already started this more thoughtful process and we are letting that play out. And I don't know if the Co-chairs, I know they're here if they wanted to say anything, but, uh, you know, I'm--I'm really excited about the recommendations and--and how this process is--is turning out.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** And one--one on minor increase, it would be in its budget, is the continuation of the cadet program. As we add more and more cadets, the budget will grow, uh, for that as well. That was planned and we hope to continue to do that.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Okay. Thank you. Um, through the chair. You know, I, um, got some more additional questions, but I no other Councillors, uh, do as well. So thanks for that additional detail. Uh, and I'll, uh, yield back.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. Uh, two people would like to comment on this subject. We have Councillor McGovern, followed by Councillor Zondervan. Councillor McGovern, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Uh, thank you, Mr. Chair. If it's--I know I have a question, um, pending if you want me to hold everything till then, if that's easier for you, would--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Well, if--if the question is related.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Yeah, yeah, just--just-- just sort of real quickly, 'cause this was brought up earlier too, and I think it applies, um, to the Police Department budget as well as really any--any department budget. Um, uh, Mr. Chair, you--you valiantly fell on your sword when the issue came up of, um, you know, that we haven't had additional Finance Committee meetings over the course of the year to talk the budget, and you took responsibility for that.

Um, I would also point out that, you know, it's really a responsibility of all of us because any of us can ask for the Finance Committee or any other committee to, um, have a

committee hearing to discuss a budget issue or budget reallocation. And so I agree with Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler that, you know, at this time last year, there was a lot of conversation about, um, the Police Department budget and reallocating money from that.

Um, and it was a relatively--in some ways it was a relatively new discussion for the council. I mean, I know people in the community, you know, have talked about it, but the Council really hadn't addressed it. But from last May till now, you know, we have had a year, um, and we haven't really talked about what that, if we wanted to make a reallocation from the Police Department budget or any budget department budget, what that would look like.

What--how--how much money, how--what--how, where would that money come from? What would be the implications of that money? Where would that money go? Um, you know, if we're cutting, you know, most of these budgets, the vast majority of these department budgets, including the police, are salary and benefits, which are much harder to cut because of contractual and collective bargaining agreements.

So typically when you money comes from discretionary

funds, which are certain types of programs and supports. So if we were gonna cut those programs and supports funding for those, would some another department pick them up or not pick them up. So we really haven't had those deeper level conversations, and then we get to the, we get to today and it's not really the--the opportunity or the time to really have those deeper level conversations.

So I would just, I would--I would suggest that if this is something that we continue to want to discuss, whether it's the Police Department or other departments that we use our committee process as well to have those conversations over the course of the year.

So we don't find ourselves in this situation, uh, next year. Um, but I think, you know, this has been, um, because, you know, it's not quite so easy, it's just cutting money. There's a lot of implications as to what that means, and we just need to give it its due process. And I don't think we've really done that thus far. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Um, so the next speaker on the issue is Councillor Zonder, uh, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler. You came on the screen. Did

you want to add anything? Oh, sorry, Councillor Zondervan is up. Councillor, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. And through you, um, I didn't wanna briefly respond to the previous comments. I--I'm a little bit, um, struck by those because, you know, we--we did have extensive conversations in the Public Safety Committee, um, both on alternative, uh, crisis response as well as alternative, uh, traffic enforcement, uh, as well as demonization of the police.

And so, you know, we have talked extensively about, areas that we want to see changed. And the, uh, policy order last year that asked for a reduction in the Police Department made it very clear, outlined specifically where we would like to allocate those--those funds. Um, so I--I'm not sure in what sense we would say that we haven't had these conversations.

We--we didn't have them in the Finance Committee and--and it would've been better to do that, but--but we nonetheless had those conversations, um, in--in some form in the Public Safety Committee and elsewhere, um, as well as in the--in the community overall. Um, and in--in terms

of, you know, salary obligations and--and so forth, which are not so easy to, uh, to cut. I--I understand all of that.

Um, but we can choose to not fill vacant positions. Um, we can choose to shrink the overall footprint, um, of the police force, which is what our community is called for. Um, we can shrink some of the equipment and the weapons that--that we are deploying, which again, our community has called for.

Um, and--and we're not seeing any of those things being proposed. We're seeing, again, continued routine, uh, increases. And I appreciate that, you know, the, um, Police Department is--is spending less than--than is in the budget, but nonetheless, they're spending what they're spending and--and asking for increases, um, each year above that.

Um, which is completely the opposite of what the community is asking for. The community is asking for less policing and for more services, um, to assist with housing, with economic opportunity, with mental health and other domestic crises. And that's where we wanna see the, the investments going, not in continued, uh, policing of the

form that--that we have seen, uh, for decades and decades.

And, you know, we're--I'm just responding to--to that not coming through both in--in terms of no conversations about the budget over the course of the year in the Finance Committee and--and even now with the budget before us, there's no apparent recognition of that call for a decrease in policing and a decrease in spending on, um, policing.

So I--I do have a couple of quick questions. One is on the, um, training, uh, travel and training budget. And--and I would wanted to know if there was any, uh, overseas training that was being paid for by the--by that, um, budget line item.

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** Through the Chair. Uh, uh, the specific training--question about training overseas. Training, no.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you. And, um, also in terms of the, uh, overtime budget, I know that, uh, some of that pay for the traffic details and--and some of it, um, presumably for events, has there--have you seen any reduction in--in the overtime expenditures because of COVID and are we making any adjustments to that in the budget?

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** Uh, through



the Chair. Uh, see, we're--we're operating right now with an unacceptably high number of vacancies both in sworn and professionals staff. And continuing to operate with the high number of vacancies. It--it is not sustainable.

Um, it--it--it's unsound fiscally even because it--it doesn't even permit us to make sound projections on overtime because in real time we always have to backfill vacant spots, um, because of mandatory--to make sure that we're up to mandatory minimum staffing levels.

If you just look at FY-21, our backfill overtime ballooned 40% from, uh, up to \$1.4 million. Um, and that's not counting any COVID related monies, uh, which we spent over a million on also, but those monies were paid for out of the Care Act. But we're--we're operating with incredibly high, um, vacancies that really threatened the stability of the--of the department.

Vice Mayor Mallon on the--the previous question alluded to the fact that we, um, hired, uh, our procedural justice informatics officer, but the truth of the matter is that that candidate backed out over the uncertainty of what this body might do, uh, with our budget believing that if cuts were to be made, that civilian positions would likely,

uh, go first.

In fact, our--our top two candidates backed out for that same reason. So, um, these actions that threaten to negatively impact the department's budget, even if they don't happen, they don't simply dissipate in the abstract.

They--they have real world identi--identifiable negative consequences. So, you know, I--I would speak to your whole so politically, but I'm--I'm not, but we're operating at extremely high, uh, vacancies right now.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you. And through you, Mr. Chair, I--I believe that the--particularly with regards to traffic details, um, that's part of the collective bargaining agreement that, um, unfortunately requires police officers to conduct those, um, when--when in fact there's no actual need for that to be limited to the police.

Um, and I--I don't believe we ever got an updated, um, collective bargaining agreement since the previous one expired in--in, uh, 2020. So any updates on that agreement and whether we are going to continue to require traffic details to be conducted by police officers.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I--I believe the

latest agreement is online. That's what I was told. So I'm surprised, whatever that is, I mean, yes, we will continue to have police and the commissioner can talk far--by why that is important to have them conducting those how.

But I think, again, the plan we have in place is not only to have been on details, but it also provides safety to our community. And I--I don't wanna underestimate in the middle of COVID the responsibility that the Police Department has had to continue to make this city safe.

And I--I think, again, know, I have not heard the cries of 118,000 people say, "Defund the Police Department or eliminate police officers." What we have heard is, "We need to try to provide the services differently." And that's a big difference.

So I--I do think it's-- it's unfair to say that there's cries to eliminate police officers, I have not heard that. In the population of 118, what we have heard is, and what we're working on is how can we provide service better in differently. And both myself and the commissioner have worked with Councillor Simmons and--and Councillor McGovern in the committee to recognize that, and will recommend the plan that does that. But that doesn't mean

eliminating police officers.

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** And, and to piggyback on what the manager says through the Chair, um, the USA TODAY just published a study that said that only 18% of the population favors defunding the police. Um, and I've heard quite the opposite, you know, and to--to talk about traffic details, I just wanna point out that, um, the reason why officers statutorily in many states are required on traffic details is because of the incremental mental wisdom of having the police officer there as it pertains to increased public safety.

And I think that there's a common misconception that, um, if you replace officers with civilians, that the price goes down. One, the city doesn't pay it, the--the vendor pays for the officers. But a flagman and, or--or as they call a position, a flag person, which rightfully would be called, um, is--is really nominally cheaper than a police officer.

And I mean, dollar--little nominally, maybe a dollar or two cheaper than the rate for a flag person and the rate for a police officer is--is no appreciable difference. There was a misconception that it's gonna save some money

somewhere, and it's not.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Um, thank you, uh, through the Chair for those answers. I--I don't wanna get into a--a policy debate, but, uh, I--I have certainly been in conversations with many community members, particularly those who are negatively impacted by over-policing, who absolutely are asking for a reduction in the size of the police force and--and the reduction in the interactions with, uh, police in--in the community.

Um, and, you know, I, again, I--I don't wanna get into a policy debate, but the--the people who are asking for that are primarily the people who are negatively impacted by the current system. And--and of course, it's not surprising that people who are generally speaking, um, wealthy and privileged enough not to be bothered by it, are--are perhaps not so concerned with it.

But I--I don't think we, uh, certainly I don't take that as--as the policy direction just because, um, you know, privileged people aren't--aren't necessarily calling for the police to be defunded. Um, and--and with regards to--

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Mr. Chair, I--I

have to jump in. I--decisions are not made--

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Excuse me, I--I have the floor--

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Council, you--you announced that our administration is being run by privileged people. That is totally unfair--

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** I absolutely--

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** --and that's all. I'll let it go, but it's unfair. My reputation has been committed to everybody in this city, and I've got 50 years-

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**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Mr. Chair--

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** --and for you to continue to make that statement--

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** --Mr. Chair, I have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes. But the idea is to ask questions and get responses. That's what this session is.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Well, and--and I appreciate that. But if--if the Manager and the Commissioner want to engage in the political debate, I

would like avoid that. But--but they're, um, being, you know, provoking this political argument that I'm not even trying to have--

**CITY SOLICITOR NANCY GLOWA:** Point of order, Mr.

Chair--

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** -- and in any case, I--I wanted to respond to the commissioner's statement about, uh, traffic details, because I--I'm not asking about that in, in order to see a reduction of cost, but because we are limited by the current arrangement to, uh, police officers, and--and in the past when I've asked about this, it's been made very clear to me that we're unable to fill, uh, all the traffic details as a result of that.

And--and this leads to extensive, um, safety concerns and traffic that--that I've reported and observed many times and--and others have as well. Where we are unable to fill those, uh, details and--and, you know, traffic is, uh, left to manage on its own, which--which doesn't always go so well. So, uh, again, I--I think it is really important--

**CITY SOLICITOR NANCY GLOWA:** Is there a question here Mr. Chair?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. This, um, I think

this is a discussion that can occur outside budget hearings, especially since we don't pay for these details. And I totally agree we can discuss it like we have in the past, but we need to move on and focus on the budget.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. The, um, the manager alluded to the, um, bar Collective Bargaining Agreement being available online. Um, I--I was not able to find it, but I--I would appreciate that.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. I--I think you, that is a good comment, and we'll all look for it. Now, we have other people waiting with questions that they submitted. Um, Councillor Simmons, uh, you are next.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Uh, thank you, Mr. Chair. Uh, it's this conversa, uh, and thank you for reminding us the difference between a budget inquiry and, um, ex--extemporaneously pontificating. Um, some of this has been addressed already, but I think it's interested, uh, I just wanna put my--my question into the context of a bit of a preamble.

Um, a committee meeting is not a hearing or a discussion on the budget. I--I think that's being



conflated, and I respectfully ask that we don't do that.

Uh, but in addition, I--I think it's--we have to be careful how we frame what and who the community is.

If someone who lives in The Port--who's lived in The Port 50 of my X plus years, uh, and intimately speak to my neighbors on a regular basis, um, and has been stated here, I have not been hearing a long year-in a or, uh, desire to defund the police as has been represented here.

We all have our constituencies and we all, um, have the ear of them, but we have to be very careful not to say that the community feels a certain way when the community there is not a mon--monolithic body. None of us gets the opportunity to speak to the entire community. So I will say, and I would hope that we kind of think of it in this context.

The people that I have spoken to a great deal in my community of The Port in particular, but other parts of the city do have a concern about the conversation around defunding the police, which is a budgetary discussion.

It's really not a--a any other kind of discussion. So I'm glad that we're gonna try to talk a little bit about that here, because when we talk about defund the police,

everyone has a bit of a different idea of what that means.

And it would be helpful, uh, through you, Mr. Chair, to our commissioner. When--when you think about defund the police in the context of the police budget, what would that look like? Because one person in particular mentioned to me, and I would like to hear from the commissioner on this, is if we were to take positions out of the Police Department budget, which I hear sometimes is what people mean when they see defunding the police,

Um, we would all, we would lose so many of our qualified staff, particularly those of color, black, brown, Latinx, and women. And so, I would like to hear a little bit, excuse me. Uh, I would like to hear a little bit about the impact of this defund, um, notion, knowing and not expecting that the--the commissioner can give us a full array of the impact.

But if he could talk about that, we, and--and in addition to that, we have spent a, um, um, a good amount of time lauding the police academy, the procedural justice project, and all these interventions that either our commissioner has maintained, invented himself or expanded. And it's almost like a disjointed conversation, you know,

building do--how do we build and tear down at the same time?

So for the community that I represent and speak to very often, particularly those that are very worried about this notion of what defund the police might look like, it might be helpful in this budget context to talk about what that actually would look like.

Particularly does this mean that we would lose some of the diversity that we have worked so hard to--to get and maintain, and that we are trying to bring on. So, through you to, uh, through you, Mr. Chair, to our police commissioner, if you could speak to that, uh, briefly.

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** Through-- through the Chair, um, to Councillor Simmons. Yeah. So, yeah, that's a multifaceted answer. So, um, if you look at, since, uh, FY-18, our diversity in the department has increased from 34%, the 39.2%. And if you talk about in terms of reducing positions, contractually, we--we go by the--the Last-In, First-Out, Last Hire, first, first, uh, Laid-off.

So, you know, you're--you're talking about reducing that diversity that has come into the department from that

point on. Although we lost a slew of diverse candidates, um, prior to being able to start the academy here in January, we were able to put in, uh, 12 individuals. And of the 10 who remained, because we always expect attrition through, um, when they go into the academy, it's still a very diverse class.

We got four, uh, females, we got four Hispanics or Latinx. We have, uh, uh, four African--four Caucasian and two African-Americans. So it's outta those tens, you got diversity there, those will be gone.

When you look at mission critical functions, um, and--and what, you know, the Police Department's main function is, which is the prevention of crime, then that means that we have to reduce everything that we do down to those mission critical or those core functions. So you lose a lot of the protective measures that this department has spent more than a decade building up.

Um, I--I spoke at length, I believe it was July 10th at--or June 10th at a budget hearing, um, last year, and just talked about what, uh, that proposed 4.1 million, uh, reduction would look like, and what services would be--look like--would look like, um, what we would lose. And when you

think about that, all of the protective measures that--that we would lose, we end up looking like the--the Police Department that you're talking about, defunding. And that's not what you want.

The Cambridge Police Department goes out of its way to have all of these protective measures. Our Family and Social Justice Section, um, people conflated. But what it does is, instead of promoting social harm or furthering social harm, the Family and Social Justice Section connects our most vulnerable, uh, people, uh, to the appropriate services, thereby steering them away from arrest or more punitive measures.

Um, our Safety Net Collaborative, which is housed in our Family and Social Justice Section that would cease to exist if you--when you talk about defunding us because we would only be able to do our core Programming.

It, it--it, I mean, it was started under the notion that we know that anytime you take a young person and put 'em in contact with the juvenile justice system, that they're seven times more likely to be in contact with the criminal justice system as an adult. So it just makes all proper sense to do everything you can, not to put them in

contact with juvenile justice system.

And that's what we do. So you--you, you're gonna lose what makes the Cambridge Police Department special. Um, and--and just as a pragmatic view, nothing, um, gets better when you take monies and budget away from it. If you want to improve things, oftentimes it, um, requires additional funding. And--and we are--we, you know, we can read the room. That's why you see requests for level staff.

But yeah, you lose the diversity because that's what's come along lately. You--you lose the protective measures because we would have to build--go back to only performing mission critical function.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Uh, thank you, Mr. Commissioner. Uh, thank you, Mr--the Commissioner. Uh, that was very helpful and informative because I think people just see it, um, one way or the other and not the shades in between. One other follow up question to that.

Uh, for several years, and Mr. City Manager can attest to this, I had asked because of the people that I speak to in Central Square in particular, 'cause I do live in Central Square area, had said over and over and over, uh, "Why don't we have a little bit more presence and then in

Central Square?" So I wanna add, not only have I been hearing about presence in Central Square, but presence in The Port, but that's a conversation I'm willing to have with one of my colleagues offline.

Um, and it wasn't until, uh, Mr-- Commissioner Bard came, and I wanna thank him very much that we actually got the coverage, uh, that, particularly the seniors I'm talking about at 411 Franklin, 237 Franklin, 55 SA. 114, Norfolk, the ones that I speak to. Uh, it took--it--it took to getting this commissioner to actually get that Public Safety outpost with the--with the support of the Cambridge Savings Banks.

So two things. One, it talked about community collaboration between two, a private-private entity getting together and collaborating around a service to the community. But two, I cannot tell you how many folks have said, "Thank you, thank you, thank you for making that happen, thanks to the City Council." Et cetera and so forth.

And so my question to you as the commissioner, will any of cuts to the Police Department budgets have an effect on that Central Square, uh, station--substation that's now,

um, on Mass Avenue by the T station.

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** Um, through the Chair. Um, uh, Madam Councillor, uh, yeah, it would, and--and just think of it in terms of, um, I've--I've assigned a much larger group of officers to Harvard Square and Central Square. Much of their time, obviously, because of the clientele there is--is devoted to reducing social harm and connecting individuals with resources and services.

So once again, we'll have to constrict the department and only perform mission critical functions, which is answering calls for service and patrolling, um, in--in the vehicle in the normal fashion. So, yeah, it, it--it cuts away at, um, certain, uh, amenities that folks become accustomed to, and that would be one of them. Anything that you see added on recently would--would, you would likely see, uh, go--go to way at a button down sheet.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Uh, thank you, Mr. Commissioner. I think that's an important, as we discuss this budget in--in talking about allocation or reallocation of funds or cutting funds, we have to think it through and see it through the lens of services that are provided, that



people have gotten accustomed to have asked for.

And again, um, as someone who spends a good deal of their time talking to people, actually talking to them, not talking to one or two people and making that a gaggle of folks, but talking to people, uh, this is what I hear.

And so I wanna thank the commissioner, and particularly the City Manager, uh, for putting those services visibly in the Square for people who, as--as far as I have heard, have only had positive things to say. So I wanna think--I wanna us to be very thoughtful when we talk about, uh, uh, what, what--what defunding actually looks like. With that Mr. Chair, I--I again, my thanks to the commissioner and to Mr. DePasquale, I will yield the floor.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor Simmons and Co-Chair Simmons. So we have three councillors so far who have their hands up. The first is Councillor Nolan. Councillor, the floor is yours.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you, uh, Chair Carlone. Thank, uh, everyone who's answered so far. I did have a similar question to some of the others. Um, but I will ask, uh, I--I heard pretty strongly from Commissioner Bard that he is understanding that if we offload over time

some of the, um, functions from the department, that there would be an opportunity in the future to think about, um, reallocation.

So I'm just curious as to whether it would be during the budget process or another process that that kind of discussion would happen. And obviously it would happen in conjunction with all the other departments of the city to work for, because the work of your department is obviously very tied to human services to so many other areas of the city as well.

So, um, I--I appreciate that--that I certainly saw on the school side some of the diversion programs and yet there was also, um, some question of bringing that into other areas as well.

So, um, and I noticed in some of the performance measures, it includes some of the diversion program. And as you said, if it turns out that there are ways that we can address some of the underlying issues that, um, at some point in their future, it would make sense to then rethink some of the, um, positions in your department.

So I'm just, uh, curious as to whether it would be-- that would be a budget discussion or that would be longer

term on some other area, if that makes sense as a question, commissioner through you Chair.

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** Through-- through the Chair, Councillor Nolan, I think it makes sense as a question, but I--and I think the most succinct answer is that as long as it's done thoughtfully, then, um, then I, you know, I--I don't care, you know, I--I don't think it matters so much what process it comes through.

It just has to be a thoughtful, measured process and not this, you know, harried or histrionic process that-- that, you know, some ind--some places are undergone and-- and just look around the country, we've seen a lot of harried processes and a lot of cities around the country have to then be reversed and now you got councils going and--and going through asking for increased police budgets.

When in Cambridge, in my opinion, we can and should do it better. So I, I--I really trust the--the more thoughtful process that the manager has already engaged in with the task force to examine the future of public safety. I think some--some very helpful and game changing recommendations are gonna come from it. And all I--all I ask is that the pro--process, however, it happens to be done thoughtfully.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yeah. Thank you, and I certainly, I don't know if others had a chance, I, as just a member of the public read there were a couple of very interesting articles specifically on this issue in the Boston Globe magazine. And in particular about how many of the police, uh, training modules, some of which were developed by, uh, someone out in, um, uh, Amherst, about something you either changed or solidified, which is the duty to intervene is something that also requires ongoing training.

That it's one thing to have a policy, but it's another thing to ensure that folks know about it and there in essence, trained in--in how to do that and there are programs, you know, that--that I think our department already has, and I look forward to continuing those discussions.

I do think there's some really exciting energy around this moving forward, that there's--there's folks weighing in and bringing together, um, specific models that I would love for us to, um, continue to develop, because I think we have both benefited from other people developing those models that we then start, and also other people looking to

us for some of the models that we start, right? And that's the way across the country, we're gonna get to a better place. So I--I look forward to working with you on that and, um, thank you for, uh, for answering that question.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. Councillor McGovern is next, followed by Councillor Zondervan. Councillor McGovern.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I just wanted to follow up on something that, uh, Councillor Simmons mentioned about, um, you know, the, as we talk about potentially reallocating money from the police and defunding the police, whatever--however you wanna phrase it.

Um, that, you know, not only are there differences of--no one, none of us, I, anyone on this Council, anyone in the city, anybody in the community, nobody speaks for the community as a whole.

Um, there's a lot of--of difference opinion--different opinions across the community. And it's not just, there's difference with, uh, differences of opinion within subgroups, right? Not every--there's a lot of white privileged people in Cambridge who, uh, don't have negative

interactions with the police who are asking for the police to be defunded, right? There are people who live in public housing who are non-white, who are asking for more policing.

And I just think it's important that if we're gonna-- if we're gonna talk about this issue, that we not speak for the entire community, and that we--we'd be respectful of those differences of opinions.

I'm not saying who's right or wrong. I have my experience and my experience is not the same as others and I respect that. But if we're really gonna talk about discussing this as a community, we need to do that as a whole community. And just today, we received a tweak, uh, to the city--to the Commissioner. Why don't we, in Newtown Court, in Washington Elms have walking and bike patrols. The shooting of a Watertown man happened in our community. And again, a summer of cowering in our homes with our kids and grandkids is no way to live. Please, we need help.

I'm not saying that person is right, I'm not saying that person is wrong. I am saying that this is a person who lives in public housing, who is saying--is not calling for a reduction in the Police Department is asking for more. So

I just think it's important again, that we just--especially as elected officials who represent the entire community, that we acknowledge that there are different voices and different perspectives, and we--we be respectful of those. And again, I'm not saying who's right or wrong, um, but there are differences and we should be respectful of that.

I wanted to ask the commissioner, um, and I--and you did touch on this a little bit, but if you could be sort of more specific, when we talk about, um, potential reductions in funds, what are some of the areas where that discretionary money could come from? Because again, it's harder with Collective Bargaining to pull it out of salary and wages, but what are some of the programs that potentially would be impacted?

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** So--so, uh, through the Chair. Um, Councillor, if I understand your, the--your question, uh, and lemme just to be clear. Our discretionary funds are--are so limited. I think that they--that any discretionary funds go to, uh, increased cost and fuel and things of that nature. Like the--the reduction in our budget is personnel salaries. That's the 95% thing, that's the--that's the thing to go at, that is easily--

easiest to touch. So it would be salaries.

And, you know, you--you know, we talk about our diversity and increasing last year we had to set out at the cadet program because of the, uh, that negotiated hiring for you. Um, this year we looked to bring it back. I mean, remember the purpose of that is--is to increase diversity and to ensure that we can put Cambridge kids in these Public Safety jobs that are actually very well paying.

We've already seen benefits with our first initial class. We have, uh, one African-American female successfully graduate the academy. We have Hispanic Latina--Latinx male who scheduled to graduate in a month. Um, so, you know, we--we have these successes and we're able to put diverse candidates, you know, in these Public Safety jobs from--because of these programs. But then these programs would obviously be in line to be cut and would not be in line to be cut. They will be the first, among the first to be cut, if we, um, reduce our--our budget.

It's--it's there's no way to get around the personnel impacts that reducing our budget have. Um, you know, we--we can do, we can look at, you know, what any new programs that we implement and how they impact, you know, us and



then thoughtfully look at, um, whether there's an opportunity to a trip. But once again, it has to be measured, it has to be a thoughtful process.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** And Mr, uh, Mr. Chair, through you, just a quick follow up. And would those personnel cuts, I mean, I--and I--I don't know, I don't know the answer to this. I mean, we know that there are some, um, members of the Police Department who are in unions and there are certain rights that are collectively bargained with those unions that make reductions sort of more--more difficult.

And I assume that there are probably personnel in the Police Department who are not members of unions. I don't know that for sure. And so, would we be talking about those would be the first cuts that would happen because those are sort of the easier ones to do. And those--are those positions more in line with kind of the more social service work that gets done? I'm just trying to figure out where it would, you know, where exactly it would come from, um, if it--if it happened.

So, um, it's--it's both and, uh, through the Chair, councillor, it's--it's from, you know, it's going to affect

every corner of the department budget, uh, decreases 'cause it's gonna result in the reduction of personnel from-- remember like the social justice, restorative and procedural justice work that we do, it is so interwoven throughout the fabric of the entire Police Department that if you touch it, you touch it everywhere.

So, you know, those reductions will come everywhere. It, it--it really impacts morale, uh, as I already indicated, as you just said, and I thought I indicated earlier, we gotta, uh, uh, you know, a CBA a Collective Bargaining Agreement in place that flat out mandates that our, you know, we do reverse or inverse seniority when, if we're talking about layoffs, um, I lost my, my train of thought but yeah, we do inverse seniority in terms of layoff.

In terms of morale, um, it, when I tell you that literally we had two prime candidate--we had a number one candidate and a number two candidate in both civilian position. Civilian and potential employees backed out because of the uncertainty of what might happen with our budget because of the histrionics from last year.

Um, that impacts morale, um, for us, our professional

staff, because they also believe that if cuts were to happen, that they would likely be first to go. And then it impacts our overall morale because you know, we're this symbiotic organ organization. So it--it, as I said, these discussions don't just dissipate. Even if they don't happen, they--they really manifest themselves in and real world consequences that you can point to.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Thank you. Uh, thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. Um, Councillor Zondervan has his hand up. Councillor Zondervan.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Um, this has been a fascinating discussion. I--I don't quite understand, um, the--the claim that these discussions themselves have such a--a negative impact. Because again, part of the challenge here that we're trying to navigate is do these positions even need to be in the Police Department?

And--and when the commissioner says, for example, um, that we--we need to do, uh, patrols in--in Central Square to, um, reduce social harm and--and provide access to

services, are--are we saying that--that those services can only be provided by armed police officers? That there is no way that we could provide an alternative service that did not involve armed police officers that would accomplish the same goal?

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** Through the Chair, that was a question to me, councillor. What I said was that you have to look that they also, um, perform or they also engage in harm reduction strategies. That's-- that's what I said. So they patrol the squares, but then they also spend their time, you know, helping out vulnerable populations.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you. So--so it is my understanding that we could be providing those services without, um, using armed police officers, and that is frankly what, um, I'm suggesting here, you know, nobody's, uh, suggesting that these services go away. We're--we're simply asking, do they need to be provided by armed police officers? I--I also, uh, find it interesting--

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** That's--that's a conflation though, Councillor. That's a conflation. Nobody said that they--that they solely had to be provided

by the public. The police officer there for a public safety component and it's something that they do ancillary, um, because we adopt a protective strength--stance here in Cambridge.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. This--this is not budgetary right now. This is policy--

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Thank you Mr--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** --and I--I firmly believe with all my heart, this is what the Council will be discussing in June, policy, about the future. I--as I've said before, I believe there is truth and--and what is being said from the other side of what we're doing now, from the other side.

And I believe the administration will, and--and I'm including the commissioner at the top of that list. We'll look at this seriously, but this is not the proper time. We've already did this in the first hour, and, um, we got a lot to get through. We're not--we're about halfway through, not even--

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I would appreciate the opportunity to--to finish asking my questions.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:**No, no--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** You can ask a question, but it has to relate to the budget. That's what we're doing today.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:**Thank you, Mr. Chair. I believe all my questions have and will continue to relate to the budget. That's why we're here. Um, I--I also heard in--in previous statements, um, as well as last year when we had this conversation that every time we ask for a reduction in the police budget, we are told that the only way to accomplish that is by reducing the diversity of the police, um, budget.

At the same time, we're told that we are operating with a lot of vacancies and I can see that in the--in the budget, um, backup. So I--so I don't quite understand that if--if the police commissioner could help me understand if--if we have all these vacancies and then we're trying to fill some of those, uh, with cadets, why--why would we necessarily reduce diversity? Just because we're reducing the size of the, uh, of the force.

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** Uh, through the Chair. So councillor, um, as I stated earlier, we're

operating at an--with an unacceptably high number of vacancies. We have minimum staffing levels that require us to force officers almost daily, um, to stay on overtime shifts.

So it--it's about, um, those vacancies, we have those vacancies. We don't have those vacancies because it's a desirable state to be in, we have that--those vacancies because it's, uh, just so happens to be a negative consequence of--see we succession plans for these vacancies.

When we had this arbitrary hiring and freeze, it disabled us from being able to fill spots that we knew were coming up to be vacant because, you know, we session plan and we plan for these vacancies. So, um, not only were we not able to fill the 18 to 20 vacancies that we knew we would have, uh, been, but we had additional vacancies. So it's not an ideal state that we're in.

So we're forcing officers that--if you heard me also said this, our backfill over time has ballooned 40% from last fiscal year, the prior fiscal year. Um, just because of feeling those back, those overtime because of the high vacancies, it's not desirable. Yeah, we're trying to make

sure that we onboard diverse individuals and can Cambridge kids so the cadet program is helpful on that. But it's not the only way or the only measure we use to fill vacancies.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you, I--I think that's perhaps, um, some of the, um, I--I don't even want to say this agreement, but different visions here because again, what--what I'm hearing from members of the community that I'm in extensive communication with is that, we would like to see a lot of these functions provided, not by the police, not by armed police officers, but by other, uh, trained community members who can perform the same function, um, but--but are not, uh, associated with, um, uh, law--law enforcement specifically.

Um, my final question, and--and you know, this has been mentioned several times last week, uh, Monday during the Council discussion and--and even today that the task force is--is somehow going to make recommendations that, uh, would lead to a reduction in the police budget. But--but nothing I've heard today, uh, indicates to me that that's in fact going to happen or--or even that--that's what the commissioner or the--the manager would like to



see. So--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay, we're going to discuss that in June. That is not on the budget at the moment. I agree it's important and we're gonna deal with it in the future, not today. And we've talked about this a number of times already. Um, and my job is to move this meeting forward, and--and that's what I'm going to do.

And I might add, there are other people who've submitted questions who've not had an opportunity, uh, to talk yet. So I'm going to take, uh, my lead responsibility and move on. In fact, there are two other Councillor-- or one other Councillor who wishes to speak on this, and they've been waiting a good time.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** So--so, Mr. Chair, this was my final question and I would like an answer, which is, should we expect to see a reduction in the police budget in June or not?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I don't think we can answer that until we see the whole report, the whole, uh, committee report. It--it, that will, you can bring that up at some other meeting that's about policy and when we deal with the extended budget or refined budget on this issue.

But we don't know. We're not--I'm not in that committee, you're not in that committee. We don't know where it's going.

But now I have to deal with this budge. And I--I've said before, I concur with the principles and I do want change, but it now we have to deal with what is before us or will never get done with this budget. Councillor Toomey, you're next.

**COUNCILLOR TIMOTHY J. TOOMEY JR.:** Thank you, uh, Mr. Chair. First. I want to thank you, Mr. Chair, for your leadership and patience on this, uh, first day of, uh, budget deliberations. I will be brief. I just want to say to the police commissioner and to the entire department staff that how much, uh, on my constituent appreciate all that you do on a daily basis to protect and serve us and that's a big thing.

It's not only protect, but it is serving us. And I will say this, I--I'm listening to--to what the commissioner just said, I'm somewhat alarmed, but why his--his reference to unacceptably high, um, levels of vacancies.

Uh, as you know, Mr. Chair and Mr. Commissioner in the

last month or two, we've had an--an awful increase in the number of shootings of, um, of people in the--in this city and it's very alarming to me. And I know there's been some other guns fired throughout the city. And unfortunately throughout the country, there's been--the gun sales are off the charts. They're the--from all age groups and all ethnic group and--and everything.

So Commissioner, I guess my concern is I'm sure you're hopefully ahead of what potentially is coming in the next couple months in terms of, um, gun violence and that we are prepared, hopefully, that we are prepared to deal with that and that all our residents are safe.

These shootings have happened in all parts of the city and it's unacceptable. And, uh, so I just want to, uh, to say that, and--and when there is a shooting, I think the resident would expect an officer to appear on the scene with the--the appropriate equipment to deal with the situation that they encounter. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Commissioner Bard, did you want to--

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** Yes, Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please.

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** I--I was gonna ask you if the councillor wanted me to respond to--to his statement. But yeah, we--we're--we're doing our--our diligence to address the violence working with our regional partners. Um, as you know, our most recent victims were, um, from out of town and--and we're working to make sure that that violence doesn't rear its head into Cambridge.

But once again, we're not, you know, immune. We don't have this bubble wrapped around us. So, um, we, you know, what goes on in the region impacts us here in Cambridge. So we are at unacceptably high, uh, levels of vacancies, and it's forcing me to, um, utilize overtime to force officers to fill those vacancies so that we can meet minimum staffing requirements.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, thank you. Um, I'll let Councillor McGovern, uh, have the next question. I believe the Mayor and Councillor Nolan will add questions after him. Councillor McGovern.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Uh, thank you, Mr. Chair. Through you, um, Mr. Commissioner, we--we did have, um, we've had a couple convers-- we had a couple conversations last year around the potential of, uh, body cameras, um,

for police. And I know it's something you have done working on behind the scenes.

I--I'll just say that we know as we sadly, um, have seen that body cameras don't stop, uh, incidents of violence from happening and--and, um, that's not really the intent. But they do provide, um, if we haven't had all the body camera footage from incidents around the country, there'd probably be, um, you know, these things wouldn't be as well-known and there wouldn't be as much evidence to support the victims of--of these, uh, violent crimes at the hands of law enforcement.

Um, there's also been oppor--there's also been times where the body cameras have been used to, um, you know, where there's been debate around what actually happened at an event. So keeping it in perspective, it's not an answer to every problem. Um, but they have been shown to be useful in certain circumstances. So where do we stand with that? It's not in the budget, where--I know you've been working on it, what's the update?

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** Uh, through the Chair, Councillor, yeah, thanks for the question. So we're--we're at the stage where we're working with the person and

agent. We're working with Ms.Unger to, uh, get a RFP out there, Request For Proposal for body cameras.

Um, obviously I'm a proponent of body cameras. Uh, I think they, you know, are the best neutral on detached witnesses, and they keep individuals, uh, you know, generally on their best behavior. Um, it's obviously a process that would have to go through, you know, the surveillance ordinance process.

But that's where we are right now, uh, working on that Request For Proposal. Um, I--I don't think that from, you know, inception to implementation is--is a long process. You got companies chomping at the bit, you know, trying to service Cambridge in that area. So, um, RFP should be going out shortly, um, not exactly sure when, but you'll--the Council will have to be intimately engaged in that process because of the Surveillance Order.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:**Uh, thank you. Um, through you, Mr. Chair, and so does that--again, I would assume that there--there would have to be some negotiation or some agreement reached with the union a--around this. Is that true? And have those conversations taken place or we're

gonna do the RFP first?

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** We--we're doing the RFP and we've had preliminary conversations with the--with the unions, but obviously they view it as a substantial, uh, change to working conditions. But, um, contrary to what popular beliefs may be, they're--they're willing to work with, um, the City Manager and with the city and make sure that--that they--they believe that having body cameras is in their best interest as well. Lemme just say that. Thank you.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I would like to follow up, Uh, uh, that I am in a hundred percent agreeing with the Commissioner that we will get this done with the support of the unions. There's no question in my mind.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Thank you. And I would assume, again, maybe it's a silly question, but I would assume, as with other issues, uh, or other allocations, just because it's not in the budget doesn't mean we won't potentially move forward with it in the upcoming fiscal year. That will just come through a separate allocation,

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** Um, through-- through, the Chair, uh, yes.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Thank you. Thanks--thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. Um, I look forward to that happening. Uh, Councillor Nolan, uh, you have a question that you haven't brought up already?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** No, I had, uh, talked earlier. I don't think my hand was up--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. No, it wasn't up, but, um, you--on your list of questions, you--

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Oh, I--I think they were--I--I mostly rolled them into--into--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Great. Just wanted to make sure.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yeah, I do have some information on others. I might contact the Commissioner later. I--I, yeah, we can talk later.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I--I had a question, but Councillor of Sobrinho-Wheeler's question pretty much covered it, but I realized there's another question and that is, uh, commissioner in-- in an average year, how many police officers retire? Must be three to six or something



like that?

**POLICE COMMISSIONER BRANVILLE G. BARD:** Uh, through, well, through you and to you, uh, Mr. Chair. So this is-- what we are in, uh, are well out of average years and normal times.

So, in a normal year, I looked to have about anywhere from 10 to 15 officers a trip through, uh, retire-- retirement. We knew that 1988, 1989, '99 were large classes. Um, and the, you know--in--for the Cambridge Police Department. I say that, and I go back those years because that starts 32 years ago, and that's when officers are--are meet--max out in, uh, retirement, uh, benefits.

So, we knew that we saw this large portion of our department eligible to leave and indicating that they would be leaving. So we, as I said earlier, we succession plan. So we try to get, you know, enough officers in the academy in advance, because think of it in terms of when an officer goes into the academy, then we got the five and a half months of training, then another 12 to 16 weeks of training here on the street before they even can--before we can even put 'em by themselves. So, that's how far off we are from replacing, or that individual officer becoming a really

viable officer on their own.

So we, succession plan and the hiring freeze that was negotiated, uh, last year was, you know, irrespective of our actual needs. So, you know, it was--it was one of the negative consequences of that.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Well, thank you, uh, for coming. Unless I see another hand go up. Um, I'm going to move--move the budget, and I don't see one so formally, I'll say I move to forward the department's budget section to the full Council with a favorable recommendation.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** I'm just gonna state it again for the record. Uh, the motion is to move the Police Department's budget to the full City Council with a favorable rec, uh--favorable recommendation.

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler - No

Councillor Tim Toomey - Yes

Councillor Zondervan - No

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Absent

Council Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Motion passed. 6 - Yes. 2 - No. 1 - Absent.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Um, the next area of discussion is traffic, parking, and transportation. Um, and the first question submitted to us is from the Vice Mayor. Um, Vice Mayor, you have the floor.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. My internet is a little bit unstable right now, so I'm hoping that I can get through these questions, uh, to Mr. Barr and to the city manager. Um, I just had a quick question on some open positions. So, there are two open positions under engineering, project manager, dash bike lanes.

I'm just curious what these new positions are for, if they are to help comply with the cycling safety ordinance. If traffic, parking and, um, transportation can describe the roles and responsibilities of these two new hires, uh, that would be appreciated.

**MR. JOSEPH E. BARR:** Sure. Um, thank you Vice Mayor Mallon, and through you. Um, Councillor Carlone, uh, I'll just--before I answer, I'll just, um, mention that I'm joined today by, um, uh, a couple of my--a few of my staff, uh, Stephanie McAuliffe, who's our assistant Director for

Parking Management, uh, Brooke McKenna, who's the Assistant Director of Street Management, Patrick Baxter our Engineering Manager, and who's our, um, financial manager as well as handling administration and technology.

So just wanted to introduce them. Um, the answer--the simple answer to your question is yes, uh, but I'll turn it over to Brooke to provide a little bit more details on the actual, uh, duties and responsibilities.

**BROOKE MCKENNA:** Great. Thank you. Um, for you, uh, Councillor chair, I'm not sure that's right. Um, so these two positions will be working on the separated by claim projects to meet the requirements of the ordinance. Um, you know, this is, we'll be working at a much faster pace, a very accelerated pace than we have in the past. So, having these two dedicated project managers will really help us keep multiple projects moving forward at the same time.

Um, they'll perform a range of duties including managing the public outreach, overseeing the consultants who help us with design, doing design work themselves, and, um, helping with the collaboration across all of the departments who work on these projects, including TPT, CDD, DPW, the City Manager's Office.

So, they'll really be, um, in charge of making sure that we're moving forward at the pace that we need to, to meet the requirements of the ordinance. And we're actually in the midst of the hiring process right now on these, and they should be in--on board in the next few months.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Well, thank you, Mr. Chair. Ms. McKenna, um, anticipated my next question, which was when we would likely see these two positions come on board. I know that, um, a lot of this work is coming up quickly, so I'm--I'm glad to see these two positions in the-in the budget to support this initiative.

I know it's an intense one, and, um, Mr. Barr, thank you for introducing your team. I think one of the things that's missed been missing this year and last year too, was, um, gathering in the Sullivan Chamber and really getting to say hello, um, to--to all the staff members and, um, really seeing everybody face to face.

So, uh, thanks to your whole team for--for being here today and for--for your work over the last 15 months of the pandemic. I know I've said it before today, but it has not been an easy year for anybody. And, um, I know you guys have all brought your best selves, uh, to the city and to

this work. So thank you for being here. Uh, and thank you for answering that quick question. I yield back, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, thank you, Vice Mayor, Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler. Your question is next.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair, through you. Um, there's a--a lot of things in this department that I could, uh, pull and talk about and--and general think, uh, transportation department's doing a lot of great work, uh, on things like transit signal priority, bike lanes, bus lanes. Um, I, uh, just wanted to ask particularly about one, uh, thing, um, uh, and for th--the budget or--or potential budget.

And that's, uh, you know, about, uh, a little more than a year ago now, um, the City Council passed a policy order on a fair free, uh, bus pilot, um, that was sponsored by Vice Mayor Mellon, uh, myself, Mayor Siddiqui, uh, and passed by the Council, um, unanimously or near unanimously.

Um, I understand, you know, there have been a lot of challenges with public transit during the pandemic and--and this past year, you know, uh, in a lot of ways wasn't ideal for--for big new, uh, public transit pieces, but, uh, as we come out of

the pandemic, um, I do think it's going to be really critical to support, uh, our buses and--and T and help make, uh, as easy as possible for people to take public transit.

Um, in Boston, they are doing a--a fair free pilot. Um, there's a thousand free bus passes, uh, being given to residents in five neighborhoods. Um, I know Boston has a larger budget and, uh, more residents that we do, but, um, it continues to seem very possible in Cambridge, especially, given our--our resources.

Um, I know, um, Cambridge is doing things to support public transit in other ways, but I--I think this is a--a key one to help people, um, encourage people to--to get on public transit so that when we, uh, see people starting to go back to work, we don't see traffic come back, you know, with a vengeance, which we're--we're already, uh, going to see. Um, we need to--to find ways to--to help people and support people to take public transit. So, wanted ask, um, where we're at with that.

**MR. JOSEPH E. BARR:** Um, sure. Uh, through, uh,

Councillor Carlone, um, I guess, uh, two--two thoughts. One, um, you know, it's not something we've--we've budgeted for specifically this year, just to be specific on--on the--the budget question.

But I think it is something we are continuing to talk to the T about what the options are and--and--and certainly given, I--I did read about the program in--in Boston as well, and so I think it's something we should, you know, follow up on to figure out if there's some way to sort of build on that or--or do something on our own.

I think it's also, um, important to say that, you know, the community development department whose budget hearing is a week from today is--is very heavily involved in a lot of the sort of policy coordination with the T.

Um, so I can certainly, um, not to say that they'll be able to get a conclusive answer in a week, but I can certainly pass the--the question, uh, along to, um, you know, Farooq and see if she's able to provide a little bit more information during next week's hearing if if--if it's available. But



certainly, we're continuing to pursue those types of initiatives.

I don't have anything specific though, to say that we can say, "Yes, we're absolutely doing this, but it's important." It's--it's you know, it's--it's important for us to hear that that's something that's a--that's a priority for you so.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Great. Thank you. And I'm, uh--yeah, happy to talk to this--uh, about it with, with Ms. Farooq as well, and I'll--you'll back.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. Um, I wrote, um, a number of--of things, um, and just like the first two Councillors, I thank you for a lot of great work on intersection changes. Um, it's pretty, um, dramatic the--uh, the character of street traffic after you've redesigned with your team a number of intersections.

My focus, as I wrote you, I think a week ago, is on the main drags, if you will, in neighborhoods. Straight roads appear to be wide and as far as driver's view, um, and where there tends to be

speed. And yeah, I grant you it might be more than 85 per--less than the 85% that follow the rules of the road, but that one out of seven is where accidents come from. And I get each of the roads I mentioned, Garden, Linnaean, and Cardinal Medeiros.

People have said they will get neighborhood people to write letters demanding something be done. And I know you've heard back from--you've heard from people in the past, and you have a budget and you have to work within that budget.

I get that, but it seems to me we got--we need to start focusing on these roads where it looks like a speedway, the design of the road, not what you've done. It's--it's engaging. And I see it on Linnaean and I see it on Garden every day. And Cardinal--the reason, I know Cardinal Medeiros is I visit people near there and they complain of the same.

So, my question is, can we set a policy for where we're heading on roads? Last time we talked about this in Council, you talked about the appearance of the width of the lane, um, you know, that's just paint, and we talked about ex--extended

walkway, uh, bump outs, um, and you've done it in other areas working with community development.

So, my question is, where on your master list are these roads, uh, as far as reconstruction? I know you don't have an unlimited budget, that's my next question to you and the manager, but is that even on the list, these roads?

**MR. JOSEPH E. BARR:** Um, sure. Um, so it's--it's a complicated set of issues to address and figure out how to pursue safety improvements in all these roads. Um, you know, whether we--I mean, a lot of what we do is through the DPW five year plan for streets and sidewalks, um, which really defines, you know, the priorities for where streets will be fully reconstructed or have significant capital work, um, along with the sort of city's traffic hauling program.

I think we are trying sort of, to your--to your point, to add additional measures where we can, um, on streets that don't, um, fall into that list. Uh, because I think we, we do recognize that, you know, there's a--there, you know--although Cambridge is

not a huge community, it has a--a lot of streets that need help and we can't necessarily wait for the, um--the five year plan to get to every street, you know, pretty--given that we don't, in fact have an unlimited budget. And, you know, this has been a very challenging budget year, um, given the--the reductions in--in parking revenue that have occurred.

But I think, you know, we're looking at sort of more, you know, kind of building on what we've done with bike lanes is more sort of quick build or tactical improvements. Everything from, you know, we--we've responded last, uh, year to a couple of policy orders about, you know, just things like striping, like you mentioned, to narrow travel lanes, um, and other measures to--to try to visually, you know, constrain the road.

Uh, we're working on, um, you know, procuring, uh, speech feedback signs which have been shown to reduce, um, you know, speeding on--on some of those types of streets. Uh, I think all the streets that you mentioned are, um, you know, good candidates

for--for those types of interventions.

Um, you know, I think Garden Street in particular is a street that's listed on the bicycle network plan to become, uh, hopefully, transitioning over time into more of a low speed, low volume street that's more comfortable for cyclists.

And that's something that's been, you know, stated in the bike network plan for--for a while. Um, and so we're starting to think about how do you actually make those--make changes to those streets, you know, with the--with the input from local residents with, you know, the appropriate, um, outreach to, you know, kind of get to where they need to be to be safer, you know, for all users, including cyclists and pedestrians.

So, I think it's--there's no--I hate to sort of provide a somewhat, you know, rambling answer, but there's--there's not really one-size-fits-all solution to these streets. I think we have to look at each one.

Um, you know, we are trying through our Vision Zero efforts to be more prioritizing, you know,

based on safety concerns and, you know, crash history, uh, which is obviously always something we take into consideration, but trying to sort of make that the--one of our more--one of our decision making factors in terms of where we deploy some of these meas--measures.

Um, but we, you know, I think it's--it's good to hear, you know, where your concerns are and--and where concerns are from the--the rest of the community. And then we can definitely try to respond, uh, to those.

I--I think Linnaean Street, which I know obviously you're very familiar with, 'cause it's in your neighborhood, um, you know, is a good example where, you know, there was a traffic calming project done there several years ago.

I don't think, looking back at it now, it's-- it's as necessarily as aggressive, uh, set of treatments as we might want to implement now. Um, but it was, you know, the subject of community discussions and--and some changes.

Um, but again, you know, perhaps like the, you

know--that wouldn't--we would--we would take a slightly more aggressive approach now to the traffic calming, although it's also important to--to recognize that, you know, we want--we--we have to do all that in collaboration with the fire department and make sure that we're, you know, not negatively impacting their response time. So that's sometimes why the measures aren't as aggressive as we might otherwise want them to be.

But, um, you know, I think, like I said, there's no one-size-fits-all, but we are certainly committed to trying to address, you know, as many of these locations as--as quickly as possible possible. But as, you know--as we sort of talked about in the--the answer to, uh, Vice Mayor Mallon's question, we're also, you know--we're resource constrained not just on the financial side, but also, you know, staff capacity. And just the capacity of the community to, you know, accept the--the types of changes that you're, you know, alluding to that are very important but also require, you know, the right level of outreach and engagement.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Well, you're-- you're going to get a lot of letters in the near future on this. And, um--and which leads me to my second point, uh, really abysmal, and again, I know you have to work with numbers. Abysmal financing signal program for the year 350,000, and I know each traffic signal, that's probably three traffic signals if not less. In the city, Vision Zero, very important, 300,000 traffic calming, 250 bicycle spot improvements, \$25,000.

That's not the lanes, that's pedestrian crossings, and bus stop improvements, 25,000. This is not Cambridge. I know you know this, I know the manager knows this. This, it is--this is almost like a small town budget for those items. And, um, we have the funds to do something. I listed new park construction that was meant for another list. That's a mistake on my part, but looking at that, it--it's abysmal the budget.

I mean, 25,000 for anything. You know, what the market is, I know what the market is, traffic calming, Vision Zero, and traffic signal is under a



million dollars and a budget, that's hundreds of millions of dollars. Um, I'm bringing it up because this is growing in the city as a prime issue.

And I even heard in East Cambridge where you're working on Gore Street with community development and DPW, people are complaining about what's happening now, even during construction. Not with the cons--construction workers, but with traffic.

And it--it's only gonna get worse. And I greatly encourage you to increase these numbers to something that's much more plausible and therefore can be implemented in my lifetime because at these numbers, these streets will not be.

I mean, that's the reality. Um, and it's just terrible given the financial situation we're in. I realize we're in COVID, but these numbers are ridiculously low. So, I--please go ahead.

**MR. JOSEPH E. BARR:** I--I was just gonna say, um--I mean, and obviously we--we always would like to have more resources, but I think it's important to recognize that that's a--that's only one piece of the--the totality of where we, you know, spend our

transportation--our spend money on transportation.

You know, many of the improvements we make are funded, you know, through The Capital Program for DPW through the five year plan, which, you know, includes tens of millions of dollars.

And that's often how, you know, traffic calming improvements are made, how traffic signal improvements are made. So, these are kind of additional funds to help supplement that or--or--or intervene when there's not another project going on. So I--I don't wanna--I'm not trying to disagree, I just think it's important to recognize that.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yeah--yeah. But here's the thing. In the next four to--five to 10 years, Garden Street, Linnaean Street, and Medeiros, maybe not Medeiros, but I'll include it now, these are the only funds--type of funds that are gonna go there. We certainly know it for the next five years.

And you see what I mean? It's--it's abysmal given where the--this is the only money that goes toward those kinds of streets. I agree. River Street, Gore Street, I--I get that. But we have to

look at the--where there's speed, we have to look at it. And you know, that one of our Councillors homes were--was hit, speed through an intersection. And, um, I--I just think we have to more broadly look at it isn't just the big streets.

It might be intersection by intersection over time, but boy, we have to do a lot more. It's a matter of time before somebody gets hurt.

So I--again, I said this within the context of the great work and the great team that you have, we're impressed by that. And it's by far the best team I've ever seen in my 40 years working for the city. Um, I just think budgetarily, we gotta rev this up. This is insufficient. Uh, I will be not voting for this particular budget because of that. I hope that will change.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Through you, Mr. Chair, can I just say most of these are in capital, so I--I--I certainly wouldn't mind revisiting this when you have the Capital Committee, but a lot of these are not part of the operating budget.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, yes, I realize that, but this is how you get things done, unfortunately.

**MR. DAVID KALE:** And--and, I--I might add Mr. Chair, one of the things that we were trying to struggle in the development of this budget is the decrease in our normal parking fund revenues. And--and clearly we've continued the traffic calming print from property taxes within the, um, capital budget where frankly, was funded from parking fund resources.

So again, one of the things that we talked about earlier in the day was, you know, some of our revenues are anemic, um, hopefully, to recover. And I guess the--all these things you just mentioned are funded from parking fund revenues, which has taken a hit.

Uh, but we've been able to fund them in some part with, um, uh, other resources. But I would say that, uh, and--and the amounts there have been consistent, uh, that we've bun--fudge in the pack, we can talk about it during capital, but, uh, just

to put that in context, in terms of available parking fund resources.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, thank you for saying that. However, these numbers aren't that far off of a typical year. So, we've been doing this pretty much on and on a little different, but pretty much on and on. And I realized scopes have increased over time, and I appreciate that.

But we gotta focus on where people live and where their kids live more. And I--I, again, I give credit to this department for asking about 20 mile per hour zones in our neighborhoods.

Um, that was a major victory for the city, but this is what helps implement that kind of program, these issues right here. So, thank you. Um, let's see. There are two other Councillors with questions. Um, so, uh, Councillor Nolan, followed by Councillor Zondervan.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you, uh, Chair Carlone, and thank you to Mr. Barr and your whole department and the city manager for working on a really, really difficult year. I was surprised to

see the numbers of signs put up not being about triple from the prior years, because there were so many things going on with the pickup delivery with the shared streets experiment.

Um, my question is that in the past we have discussed a possibility, and this gets to the question of the decline in revenues for parking. Um, how often do we revisit, um, various parking meters in the--in the book it talks about it being anywhere from \$1 to \$3, depending on the location per hour, to increase that, to be in line with, um--with--with what would be more appropriate and maybe more in contention depending on the area of the city with garages that are around, is the first question that I have.

**MR. JOSEPH E. BARR:** Um, sure. Through, uh, Councillor Carlone, um, we--we look pretty much every year as we go through our--our budget process at the meter rates, um, we have actually been planning to do an increase, um, in, uh, Central Square and Kendall Square to a dollar 50 an hour, um, which is what our rate is in Harvard Square.

Uh, we've put that on hold just pending COVID because we felt that, you know, we didn't want to have that potential impact on--on local businesses, uh, as the, you know--I would hope, um, and I haven't spoken directly with the manager about this, uh, in--in other than to just say that we're holding off for now.

But at some point in the future, I think we would go back to implement, um, that--that increase, um, you know, once we feel like it's not gonna be the sort of, uh, you know, the last incremental impact we want to have on local businesses.

So that--that's certainly something that we look at every--every year. Um, I think there is some additional, you know, room to go up on that. Um, but again, we want to be sensitive to the--the impact on local businesses and--and not have it become sort of a source of contention with--with those groups.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I mean, I think, you know, since my days of finance, I've probably talked about this two, three times a year, uh, with every traffic director in terms of making

sure we're getting the most volume we can get.

However, during COVID, to be very honest with so many open spaces in with the timing, right, we thought it was incorrect, but, you know, we're facing a million dollar annual loss in piping fund, and we're eating up the fund balance, so we wanna increase revenues where we can, but we also understand the impact of increasing revenues in the wrong spot could have a reverse effect.

But it's a great question, and it's something that we spend a lot of time thinking about, and we have delayed some permitting me--meter increases that we've talked about for a while. But I think, again, the discussion will be when we should revisit that. And I know David, it's been in this loop as well.

**MR. DAVID KALE:** And--and the--through you, mad--uh, Mr. Chair, the other thing to consider is, while we might consider increasing meter fees, we are decreasing the number of meters we have in the city, which then has another impact on parking tickets that are written. So it--it--it's a



complicated issue. It's not just raising fees, it's--  
-it's losing meters and, uh, losing ticket  
opportunities also.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yeah, I  
appreciate, it's very hard. We really do wanna  
support small businesses, and yet we also know the  
roads and the parking spots are often, if they're  
not in contention or at the--anywhere near the same  
level of some of the private garages in particular  
on Kendall, then--then there's a--a disconnect that  
is, um, something that we--I'm--I'm glad to hear  
it's addressed.

And again, given the decline in revenues, it's--  
it's something to look--to look at. The other  
question is another thing that we've raised in the  
past, and I understand it is, um, sometimes  
difficult. I am someone who does own a car. I drive  
it around.

I am thrilled to be able to have my resident  
permit, but in the past we had looked at, it's--it's  
an incredibly low fee for, um, an annual permit, uh,  
\$25. And one question that had been raised in the

past, I understand it's COVID and we might not want increase, but a very simple, not complex form of a, "All right, the real cost is \$50 each, but if you're low income, just check this box and yours is \$25."

You know, it--eventually, are we looking at that? Because that is something certainly for a number of, of people in the city like myself, I'd be, um, even happy, uh, to pay \$50, but honestly, I don't think I would do it if it was just a voluntary checkup. But I would not--um, but I would certainly pay it if it was expected to be paid, if that makes sense. And I understand this also is complex. I am someone who believes for something people, \$25 is a lot of money. We do not wanna increase it for low income residents. And yet there should be a way to do this quite simply.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I--I'll let Joe go into details, but from what you looked at so far, the implement--the implementation of trying to put a discount on this fee is gonna be a lot of work. And--and I'm not just quite sure if the work is what the revenue we were gonna bring in.

And obviously, we've looked at increasing that, but again, like everything else, as we wanna protect small businesses, we--we also wanna protect our residents who are facing some difficult time.

So we're trying to find the right charge when we go up on all of these categories. So, uh, this has been the year we have probably financially the city probably needs to do it. However, based on what we know people are facing, businesses are facing, we've taken the other approach to say, let's pull off and have this discussion at a later date. But it's, it's certainly valid questions.

**MR. JOSEPH E. BARR:** Yeah, I guess the--the only thing I'd add, uh, Councillor Carlone, through you is that, you know, we--we certainly heard, uh, loud and clear from--from the Council that if we are gonna propose something along these lines whenever the timing for that is right, that it needs to include some form of means testing.

Um, and--and as the manager said, there's some complexities to that. Um, although I think that, you know, we're--we're talking to some of our technology

vendors to see if there's ways to simplify that. So I think if that's possible, then that could make sort of the--the process easier on our end than for our staff. So I think it's--it's definitely in our minds, it's not something we're pursuing immediately.

Obviously, you know, as all the Councillors know, we would need to come back to the Council for approval of that, whether that's through the budget process or at some other time, um, as an--as a--as an ordinance amendment. Um, but it's certainly not--not something that we've lost track of, but not something we weren't necessarily planning to pursue in the immediate short term for the reasons that the manager mentioned.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Uh, thank you all through the Chair. Back to all of you. Thank you. And since my other questions were addressed and just reading through this part--part of the budget, I'm glad to see many of those, the bus pilot, the trying to really accelerate the way that buses travel through the city.

Right now, they're mostly empty, but I'm hoping they'll be very, very full and that those lanes will give them even more of an incentive for people to fill them up. Um, and my other questions were addressed in the--in the narrative. I thank you. I yield.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Councillor. Um, Councillor Zondervan is next. Councillors Zondervan, it's yours.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair through you. Um, I--I echo a lot of the comments and--and questions that have--that have come before. Um, and--and I appreciate the, uh--the attention to the--to the corner where I live, which is, um, you know, be because of COVID, I've been home a lot in the last year and--and it's--it's like a daily, uh, near miss.

And--and every once in a while there's an actual crash. And--and a lot of it does have to do with--with visibility and--and speed Councillor Carlone, uh, mentioned. So, um, and--and you know, like the Chair, I really appreciate the--the 20 mile per hour

signs.

Um, but my question there is whether--whether we are now done with that, uh, process of installation and I--I've noticed a couple of places where we still have conflicting signs where it says 12--20 miles an hour, but then a few feet yards down the road it says 25. So, where are we in that--in that process?

**MR. JOSEPH E. BARR:** Um, sure. Uh, and thank you for the question, Councillor. Um, I'm actually gonna ask, uh, uh, Brooke to provide a quick update on 20 mile in our program. We are pretty much complete, um, but we are trying to address the--the issue that you've--that you mentioned.

**BROOKE MCKENNA:** Thank you, through you Mr. Chair. Um, we are, as Joe mentioned, pretty much done with the installation of the 20 mile--20--20 mile an hour signs. There may be some here and there that we need to make adjustments to. And we're in the process of doing that now. Um, and as part of that, we will be looking to catch all of those, um, conflicting signs and--and remove the 25 mile an

hour ones as well.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Great, thank you. Um, my--my next question is, um, around the--the parking re--revenues. And--and I feel like we do have this, um, conversation almost--almost every budget cycle. Um, and it--it really does feel like, um, a perilous way to--to make a living, especially, as we are.

I mean, we should be eliminating parking as--as, well, car storage as I call it, um, as we move forward. So what--what's the alternative revenue mechanism here that we could, um, be--be leveraging? Can we do, uh, an excise tax where--where we get, um, more revenues based on the value of the car in order--are there other ways that we can, uh, raise revenues that--that start to lessen our dependency on this, um, car storage model that--that needs to be retired to?

**MR. JOSEPH E. BARR:** Um, sure. Uh, through you, Councillor Carlone and I'm--I'm sure that David will have some additional thoughts on this, but I--I would say we're definitely--it's, you know--aware of

it as an issue. It's an issue we've been talking about internally.

Obviously, COVID has made it challenging to sort of think, you know, too far forward in terms of, uh, revenue. But it's definitely something that, you know, Guardian and I have spoken about looking at, you know, maybe even doing a study of future revenue sources, you know, what's happening around the country in terms of this issue. 'Cause it's--we're not the only city in the--in the country in the world that's facing the same challenge in terms of changes in, you know, revenue from the traditional sources for transportation.

Um, so I think, you know, we--what one that we are hopeful for, although again, it has gone down just as much, if not more than parking revenue is sort of TNC um, you know, Uber, Lyft, um, you know, surcharges and there was a proposal that was--that was passed and then vetoed by the governor to, um, increase those rates.

Um, so hopefully, those will recover in the future as we recover from COVID. So, but--so I



think, you know, that--that is one sort of specific transportation source. Um, but yeah, I--I obviously, I can't speak to, you know, things like excise tax and other sort of, you know, sources that I assume require state approval.

But I think we are--we are very much aware of the issue and--and, you know, would--would be--are looking to come up with some proposals for how we might, you know, not just continue to increase our traditional sources of revenue would actually look for--for new sources of revenue that--that might, you know, be more sustainable in the future.

**MR. DAVID KALE:** Um, through you, Mr. Chair, I-- I, again, I think Joe said it, any alternative revenue sources that require, um, legislation would have to be done at the state level. And typically, um, those kind of conversations would mean statewide, uh, initiation as opposed to just Cambridge specific, which is difficult to do.

Um, as I mentioned earlier in the day, we benefit from the fact that the parking fund generates 20 million of revenue. That's a lot of

money. Um, obviously, to replace that, um, would have to come from other sources and might have to come from property taxes if we didn't have the parking fund revenue to use.

Um, so again, I think the new normal is that the parking fund revenue generation, uh, probably, will not bounce back as quick as we think until there's, um, some increase in, um, the activity that happens in various squares and the like. So, um, which then has a whole spiral effect in terms of Neals tax, and hotel, motel tax and et cetera.

So, um, I think we've been privileged in--on, uh--in the way that we've been able to have non-property tax revenues, but this is one that, uh, has taken a hit and we've compensated for it in the FY-22 budget, but other revenue sources are not as easily replaced, or I should say the parking fund isn't easily replaced without--without remedies at the state level.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** So, I--I mean, I would--I would also follow up that I do wanna continue to say that the parking fund is self-

sufficient. Uh, what we've been able to do is take related expenses in other departments and offset that those days are gonna be fewer and far between. So, the operation of the trafficking parking department is still enough revenue for that.

It's the money we distributed to other departments that we could attribute to traffic and parking revenue. That is one that's been hit. And this year here, that has been substituted by property taxes.

So, uh, we've got some work to do, but, uh, I just wanna do bring home that right now the budget, what we bring in in revenue does--is self-sufficient. It's the additional use that we have for parking related states that are taking the blow. And at this point, what we've been able to do is increase our taxes to support that.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Well, thank you for your comments. My feeling is nothing is more important than safety and especially, in neighborhoods where there are children. I know you agree, I'm not questioning that. And that if

anything needs to be reduced, it's not safety.

Um, that--and I'm--I was just trying to make an observation of something that I understand why the numbers are low, but the--those are not the numbers that should be low, and I just wanted to call that out, um, so that we can discuss it further.

And thank you for your comments. And once again, Mr. Barr, thank you for your department's work. Um, it's very noticeable and we thank you for that. So, um, please.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Uh, sorry I did not--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillors, please.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Uh, thank you, Mr. Chair. Um, and--and I appreciate that discussion. We just had, um, I wanted to ask about the shared streets. I know that, you know, when we did the pilot and--and there were some issues with that and--and, um, the, um--Mr. Barr said that we would be trying some other approaches in--in more--more on the residential streets, and particularly in

Eastern Cambridge.

I'm--I'm eager to see that move forward. So I--  
I'm just asking whether any of that's contemplated  
in this budget and--and what that might look like?

**MR. JOSEPH E. BARR:** Um, through you, uh,  
Councillor Carlone. So the, um--we've not--we don't  
have anything specific in terms of saying we're  
gonna do this or do that, but from a budgetary  
perspective, um, the, uh--you know, we were able to  
do the Shared Streets Program last year and--and I  
think we--anything we would wanna do this year, we  
were able to do out of sort of our normal operating  
budget, um, and using, um, you know, sort of  
existing staff, it was a bit of a stretch and that  
was part of the challenge of it, particularly in the  
midst of--of COVID.

But, um, so I think if we--if we--if it did make  
sense for us to do additional, you know, shared  
streets, um, or--or something different, um, you  
know, in East Cambridge, then I--I don't think it's  
something we needed to provide additional budget  
for. 'Cause it--it can sort of fit in within our

existing, you know, operating budget, uh, allocations.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you Councillor. And for the question. So, um, just keep the process going. I'll move to forward the department's budget section to the full Council with a favorable recommendation.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - No

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Absent

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - No

**Motion passed. Yes - 6, No - 2, Absent-1.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mr. Clerk. So we have, uh--we had listed five more

discussions, but the clerk notified me that budget policy related to financial summary and an investment policy is actually on May 18th. So, we have a whole week to prepare for that.

So, the remaining four are information technology, employee benefits, electrical department, and the clerk, um, office. So, the first is information technology that was pulled by Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler. Councillor, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Thank you, Mr. Chair through you. Um, last year when we were discussing the budget, we used this section to talk about municipal broadband.

Uh, I think that was Councillor McGovern's idea, but it might have been someone else's. Um, you know, we could definitely handle it in other areas, and it's sort of not a reflection on the IT Department itself as wanting to see this in the budget.

Um, um, you know, last year the Council had voted to give the IT budget a negative recommendation because there wasn't funding from

municipal broadband in the--the FY-21 budget. Um, there was then funding added for a feasibility study. Um, I'd hoped last year we'd have the results of that study by now. Um, I know the RFP has gone out and that Councillor Nolan, uh, I know there's--put a lot of work, uh, into it and the--the issues that there are with it.

Um, but there is not new funding from my understanding for municipal broadband in this budget. Uh, there's some funding for digital equity, which is good, but it's--it's not the same thing as a municipal broadband Network. Um, and the pandemic has really highlighted the need, uh, for this. That's harder to do work. It's harder to stay connected with friends and family, harder to talk to your doctor if you don't have a reliable broadband connection.

Um, and the Wi-Fi hotspots that we've done, uh, are a great help, but they aren't a substitute for this. Um, so, you know, I would make that--that motion to send this with a negative recommendation. Again, of course, happy to--to have other



Councillors, um, speak on this as well.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Uh, Councillor, there's no money in because we got an RFP out and we're waiting to see what the cost is gonna be. So, as we said we were gonna do, we have followed exactly what we said we were gonna do with--when budget was held hostage last year.

Pat and Lee have done a phenomenal job getting us to this point. Once we get that number as we've done with everything else, we will come back with a request for an appropriation. But we have committed to this.

We are working on this, and I don't know why it's been so hard to convince the Council that the work Pat and Lee have done has been exceptional in that we are moving it forward this, but we don't have a bid yet. So, once we get that, we will move forward with it.

So, I don't see how holding this budget hostage when you won't get a number before the budget is adopted is the way to go. But I--I think I'd like to get Pat and Lee at least have the opportunity to

speak what we've done to help convince people that we are taking this incredibly serious.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Mr. Chair, if I could respond briefly.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** I just, um--yeah, I wanted to note that saying that taking the Boston that ho--budget hostage sort of implies that the Council doesn't have to approve the budget. The charter is--is very clear that the Council does have to approve the budget.

This is completely within our authority. So, you know, I appreciate that there are dissenting opinions on this, but let's be--be clear about what the role of the Council is here. We have every right to--to demand this and request this. Um, so, you know, I'm sending this with a negative recommendation, does not have direct implications on this.

It's a way of--of registering dissent with the budget that we haven't moved as fast on this as I think residents are demanding we are. And I think

it's, you know, perfectly within reason. I'm happy to--to hear from other members of the staff, but, um, you know, I don't think this is a--a crazy, uh, suggestion. So I'll go back.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Well, uh, with that Councillor, Co-Chair, Simmons raised her hand first, followed by Councillor Zondervan.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Uh, thank you Mr. Chair. Quickly, um, over the past few years, there's been persistent issues with regards to the city's audio visual services when broadcasting city meetings and both internally in the Sullivan Chamber and externally, such as--such as, choppy video, audio issues, bro--broadcast cutting out.

Are there plans to address these issues in the F-22 budget? And I--this is particularly important depending on what we decide to do, uh, around continuing the Zoom meetings. I know that's sort of up in the air. Can we legally do it once there's no pandemic restrictions, but assuming that we can, the audio has to be better in here.

So, I'm just curious through you, Mr. Chair, to

the City Manager or other appropriate individual, um, what--what are we doing around the poor, you know--from a fi--fiscal perspective, what are we doing about the poor quality of communication that comes into the chamber, in and out of the chamber?

**MR. PATRICK MCCORMICK:** Yes. Um, uh, through you, uh, Chair Carlone, um, to Councillor Simmons, um, we are in the process of making a number of improvements to the audio, visual equipment in the chamber and elsewhere in the city.

Um, there actually have been some recent upgrades in some of the hardware. Um, I won't get into a lot of detail, but, um, there are, uh--there are encoders that are used to stream the meetings, uh, that have been upgraded--

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Excuse me, Mr. Chair, what did you--I--there are something--there's a word that you said I could not quite understand. They're Homers?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Toners, I think.

**MR. PATRICK MCCORMICK:** Oh, uh, apologies. Uh, encoders.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Encoders, yes.

Okay. Thank you.

**MR. PATRICK MCCORMICK:** Sorry, I don't mean to get into too much of the--

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** No, it's the quality of the sound.

**MR. PATRICK MCCORMICK:** Okay. Yes. So, um--so yes, we recognize there are some improvements to be made and, uh--and we are working on those. I should also just add that I have, um, the IT Department Assistant Directors, Mike Dugas and Eric Belford with me today in case we do want to get into more, uh, details in any of these areas. Um, but, um, suffice to say we have budgeted for some of those improvements and, uh, we're continuing to--to make those.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Uh, uh, thank you. One other question--uh, so well, the Council will wait to hear back from, from you, particularly if we take up this idea of continuing some remote access, uh, for the Council and for people's participation. The only other question they wanted to, um, turn my-

-turn my attention to, and this may be a more of a City Manager question, I'm not sure.

Um, we talk a lot about municipal broadband, and I know we talk about it in the context of the--it being the be all and the end on. What I mean by that is, yes, it is important and yes, we want to have as wide as possible ability for people to use technology in a reliable, incredible way. And I know we do also have CT--C--City View-22, um, but even that requires basic cable.

And are we exploring any ways, um, like local radio stations to be able to push our--our meetings out so that people that can't watch or don't watch, I mean, there are a few people out there in the world that don't have TVs, um, or don't--are not, uh, totally technology driven.

Um, and, um, certain kinds of radio abilities are free of charge. And I just wanted to know, in terms of being able to use our dollars to reach people in the broadest sense possible, do we have--we thought--given any thought to that at all?

**MR. PATRICK MCCORMICK:** Um, through the Chair,

uh, Councillor Simmons, um, we have given a lot of thought about the different ways we, uh, reach residents, um, online and through cable. Um, I have not heard of any discussion about radio as an alternative.

Um, so that--that would be something to--to investigate at the moment. We've been looking at, um--at--at again, ways to see and participate on the web. As has been true, particularly during COVID, but also previously. Um, and, uh, as well as cable.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Uh, uh, thank you. I--I would hope, and maybe this is more of a policy order directed to get more information about that as one of the many ways we reach out to people so that they can at least listen or--and passively participate in our meetings by--to listen and see what goes on. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I yield the floor.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you both Councillor Zondervan, you have the floor. Anybody else?

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you, Mr.

Chair. I--I just wanted to, um, support my colleague and--and give a slightly different reason, um, why I'll be voting, um, against this budget and--and certainly not, um, any, um, you know, disrespect or--or negative feelings towards the IT Department.

I think they do a great job. Um, it's just simply that this is where the Council has chosen to take a stand on municipal broadband. So, um, in--in support of that, I will be voting no, but while--while I do appreciate the, um--the municipal broadband feasibility study, um, RFP and--and I've read it, uh, thoroughly and carefully, um, to me it--it doesn't quite address the--the ask that we made because it--it really frames the question more broadly than--than just municipal broadband.

It--it, um, is really looking at, you know, how can we provide digital equity? How can we provide competition? And how does municipal broadband fit into that as a possible solution? And--and I understand, um, you know--I think I understand why, um, it was framed that way.

But--but from my point of view, what--what we



want is a feasibility study that says, "Is it feasible or not for us to build out a municipal broadband network?" And--and these other questions, um, in my mind, don't really belong in that feasibility study.

Um, now I--I'm still hopeful that we would get proposals that--that do, um--offer to do that part of the study, that--that would really look at, can--can we do a municipal broadband build out or not? Um, but--but again, the way the RFP reads to me, it doesn't just ask that question.

And--and that's really the question we're looking to get an answer to. And--and just anecdotally, you know, over the weekend we had a--a large section of--of the city, um, you know, Comcast was--was knocked out and there were a number of trucks working on Hampshire Street, uh, that I--that I noticed.

Um, and, you know, there was really no, um, consideration for--for us as--as residents who increasingly depend on this infrastructure, uh, in order to--to, you know, go through our lives.

And so that's why it's--it's really so important to consider municipal broadband, uh, solution because it's--it's the equivalent in the 21st century of our road network. You know, we--we just need it to be there and to be reliable and to function, uh, so that we can--can use it, uh, at all times and not be dependent on the whims of--of for-profit corporations that may decide that, you know, for their profits, they might knock out the network for a bit.

And, uh, too bad if that inconvenience the rest of us, um, let alone the fact that, you know, even when it is operating, uh, the quality is--is quite low compared to what is possible and--and what we see in other, uh, parts of the world or--or even the country.

So, um, again, I--I do look forward to the responses to the RFP, but, um, I--I do want to note that--that what we're looking for, what I'm looking for is really the--the specific feasibility of a municipal broadband buildout.

**MR. PATRICK MCCORMICK:** Um, so I don't know if

it'd be helpful through the chair to speak a little bit about broadband. I don't know that there were any, um, specific questions. Um, but I--I--I would like to try to, uh, address some of these issues.

Um, a--as the Council knows, I was just a couple weeks into the job last year at this time, uh, when this issue was raised. However, my prior affiliation with the city was serving on the Broadband Task Force. I've actually, currently, serve on two other Broadband Task Forces.

I've worked on municipal broadband in two different country--three different countries. Um, I don't know that you could find someone who's more passionate about municipal broadband than me.

Um, and that also goes for digital equity. And those things are tightly related, but they are not exactly the same. Um, if we think for a moment about digital equity connectivity is one so-called leg of the stool.

There's also devices, there are skills, there are that sort of thing. And our, uh--the--the city's Digital Equity Study, I think did a great job to

shed light on that. But in terms of municipal broadband, uh, I think it would've been irresponsible to look at, uh, a connectivity model and solution without calling out the digital equity problem.

That is to say the connectivity portion in our city. And--and I will just say as a Broadband Task Force member, all those years ago when we had community meetings, when we, uh, got together with experts and, uh, talked through the city, it was quite clear digital equity or the digital divide, as it was referred to then, was the priority of the city.

And I think it is still today, these things are not in conflict. I--I won't speak directly to the RFP because it is on the street. I think--I understand we've had great feedback.

There's a lot of concern, more about what will the response be, and I just wonder if that's a little premature to see what we get. The--the RFP clearly does cover municipal broadband in--in my view, as well as digital equity.

I can't speak to the years, uh, that this has been an issue in the city entirely, but I can speak to the year I've been with the city, and I--I understand frustration that that RFP didn't go out right away. But I--I also believe firmly that it needed to be informed by that Digital Equity Study.

It needed to be informed by the work we were doing. Um, and folks within my department, uh, within purchasing, uh, within Lee Gianetti's department, uh, work very hard to try to pull together what is a very complex, um, equation in terms of what sort of municipal broadband solution, what sort of approaches to digital equity can work for the city?

So, you know, I will say that, um, I'm sometimes surprised. I feel that, um, we're mostly in furious agreement about these priorities, and yet it feels often like there's some disagreement. And--and--I--I understand there are many approaches to any procurement or RFP, particularly one as complex as this, but it does seem to me we are doing, um, what, um, has been asked for by the--by the public and the

Council.

And, um, I'm hopeful, I'm optimistic that we can achieve something, um, that may not feel perfect to everyone, but is going in exactly the direction, uh, that most of us want to go in. So, just stop there.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you.

And, uh, through the Chair, thank you for that answer. And--and, uh, I do agree that the RFP covers municipal broadband and I guess the--the concern, and--and you know, by the way, we've heard extensively from Upgrade Cambridge, which, um, really was founded to concern itself with this question. And--and they are, um, of the opinion as well, that, um, the problem isn't that it doesn't cover municipal broadband.

The problem is that it is--is broader than municipal broadband, and it covers all these other issues. And--and I agree that digital equity is--is incredibly important, and I appreciate the city's efforts on that. But I do think they are separate.

They're of course also connected, but--but separately, we need to just continue to address

those problems. And--and we don't necessarily need a feasibility study for that.

Um, whereas for municipal broadband, we clearly need to understand whether or not that is a feasible thing for us to--to build out. And--and that's really the question that we're asking.

So, we're not asking, you know, is it feasible for us to--to solve or provide for digital equity? We're--we're saying we want to just do that, like, you know, take care of that problem. And then separately, but at the same time, let's understand if we can do municipal broadband because we believe that's a better solution and ultimately needs to happen. So, I think that's where a disagreement is coming from.

And--and again, I appreciate, uh, the response and--and the work that's gone into it and--and certainly acknowledged, uh, Mr. McCormick's expertise. And--and I do hope that--that we ultimately, despite, you know, some of the rough patches we'll get to--to where we're all trying to go. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you Councillor, and Mr. McCormick for, um, educating us a little further. Um, the next speaker is--Nolan is first? Sorry, I had it the other way around. Councillor Nolan is next, followed by Councillor McGovern, and then I believe then the Vice Mayor.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you Chair Carlone. And thank you to, um, Mr. McCormick, to Mr. Gianetti and the city for moving this forward. It-- this is a really difficult issue and topic because we're all frustrated. Um, this has taken a lot longer than any of us expected.

And while I understand it, it's also really, really hard because even the Digital Equity Study, yes. Could we come up with 10 reasons why it's legitimately was delayed more than a year? Yes. On the other hand, it was, which meant it wasn't ready. And could we understand, therefore why the RFP, which was supposed to be drafted last summer and out by September, wasn't even until April. Can we understand it?

Yes. But it--it constantly puts us in a very



difficult situation. And while I understand it, it's just still it--it doesn't make it any less frustrating. And it would be really good if we had--could in the future avoid this by really understanding this was a--such a huge priority for the entire Council, that we actually took a stand on the budget last year.

And so that makes it particularly challenging to--to, you know, I don't want to--I--be critical on this, but I--I need to be critical 'cause it's put us now in a situation where we're really frustrated.

Yes. Um, as Mr. McCormick said, we were this RFP, what he said was it--it does what we were asked to do by the public and the Council, and yet we're hearing from the public and Upgrade Cambridge, who has hundreds and hundreds of people who, while they may not--I do think they represent a majority of people in the city have said this really doesn't meet the mark.

Um, we--just for the Council's benefit, um, uh, both the Mayor and particularly the Vice Mayor and I had--had several different meetings over the course

of--of starting, I think, last August about this and really pushing forward. And we had one recently after the RFP was out and expressed some of the frustration.

And I--I, you know--we--we have been asked by many people who know far more about this and are very technically expert, including people like Mr. McCormick who have done studies and very familiar with broadband networks, that this is somewhat confusing and muddled and doesn't actually do what we asked for, which is a very clear, ironclad kind of study that says, "All right, you want to know if you should do municipal broadband?" Here's four different--I don't recommend any, we're just gonna lay them out and tell you the--the feasibility in the form of what it would take and what it would cost. And then you all decide.

And--and that's what doesn't seem to be, again, from people who have read this RFP, that that will be coming out of this. And I also agree that yes, digital equity is, uh, obviously very important, but the Digital Equity Study laid out most of the work,

uh--most of the recommendations of that study are totally separate from this.

We can--we can, and we will move forward on addressing those, but we really do need to understand where we're going with, uh, this study. One of the things that we had wondered once this was out, I--I really wish we had had more input into this.

I know there's laws around purchasing, but I also know there's--you can always bring in people, uh, to be involved in a process. You can do it under a legal banner.

And I just--I--I'm frustrated that that, uh, didn't happen here enough. So, now we're faced with something that--that is really troubling for those of us who--who have a clear sense that what we do want is a sense of municipal broadband, not just options for citywide service, an option for municipal--uh, a--a core principle municipal broadband.

We also know that since there had been some concern about confusion, do we have a sense of what

the questions were and where we're going and how quickly we can make sure that we address some of the concerns that we and many people who are experts in this.

I reached out to a couple different experts who know about this, and they read the RFP and said, "This is really confusing what the city even wants."

So, I think the question is, uh, do--hey, we--we also were--were I believe, the Vice Mayor can, correct me if we were told there would be questions and that that would give us a lot of information about how this is being interpreted and what kinds of people, um--what kinds of questions that possible respondents had would--would give us a sense of whether this was actually going to get us to where we are. But I haven't heard a report on that, which would've been nice to have if the--if--if that question period has concluded.

**MR. PATRICK MCCORMICK:** Um, sorry. So, the--the question, uh, through you, uh, Chairman Carlone, um, is about questions in response to the RFP?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Right. We had

discussed that at our meeting and you had said, "Let's wait until then because that will tell us a lot about how people are viewing this." Is my recollection of that meeting is my notes.

**MR. PATRICK MCCORMICK:** Um, I--I didn't say that, but it might have come up. I--I think, uh, the purchasing director Liz Unger is--is here and might want to, if she is available, address the question of--questions, so to speak.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Because those are public, right? The questions become on that are public record so.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Um, I will allow the speaker to speak, but again, this is a budget hearing. I know this is a big issue, it's a big issue for me, but my goal is to run a budget hearing. So, if you would like one of your people to talk a little bit about it, that's fine, but let's get back onto the budget in a moment.

**MS. UNGER ELIZABETH:** So, through you, Mr. Chairman, uh, the question period has ended on the RFP, the answers to those questions will be posted

via addendum as, uh, instructed and laid out in the RFP.

Um, so that all potential proposals will have an opportunity to see those answers. I would just caution, uh, what we discuss here in detail about the RFP itself so as to not taint the open and competitive process and put information out there that some potential proposals may not be aware is available to them now via, uh, this particular hearing. Uh, that would be my one caution and concern that to not taint the process itself.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Yeah, I would think we should take that caution and concern very seriously because it could have major ramifications. And I know often the Council doesn't always feel the advice they're given by city staff is the way to go.

But I would hope in this matter, based on all the time and effort we've put into this, that they recognize that the purchasing agent is a very strong opinion on this one.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Well, if--if we can't answer some of the questions about the IT

department and the--the concerns about RFP, it would, I hope, and I hope Mr. Gianetti and Mr. McCormick and I have also spoken directly with the City Manager about, again, what we're all hearing about concerns about--about this critically important, um, process. But, uh, if that ends the discussion that ends the discussion.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, Councillor, we could hardly hear you. Um, could you just summarize what your last statement was?

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yeah, I--I understand we've all been working on this really, really hard and if--if we can't then move forward on understanding, uh, that question I asked, I, um--I hope, and Mr. McCormick and the City Manager and Mr. Gianetti do know my concerns.

I have been transparent about them expressing them over the last few weeks since this came about, and certainly over the last few months, 'cause this is--it's a utility. We need to do it and we need to basically have this in place as soon as possible. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you Council--uh, Vice Mayor Mallon, your next.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Oh, thank you Mr. Chair. Uh, through you. I just wanted to echo some of--one of my colleagues said that this doesn't--the RFP as put out does not ask the questions that we asked, which was, how much would this cost for us to implement municipal broadband in the City of Cambridge, with a few different options of what that would look like, whether that was a full expansion, partial expansion, et cetera.

Um, and I understand that the digital equity piece, that there is a--it is a three-legged stool and you know, the hard devices and the skills are definitely something that was covered in the Digital Equity Study with specific recommendations.

The RFP is out, it's in the middle of the process. As Ms. Unger just stated, we can't talk about it here, um, to keep the process, um, moving forward and--and not taint it. But I can--I also am frustrated that the RFP went out without any input from--from any of us even looking at it.



Um, I understand Upgrade Cambridge was not asked to participate in--in formulating the RFP and we had a long conversation--what--about that. My question is, now what happens once those responses come back for the RFP?

How does the Council in any way, participate in the responses from the respondents to try to figure out how to move forward? Because I think what you're hearing is everyone is not crazy about the RFP the way it went out. I would hate for the RFP respondents to come back. We choose somebody and it's going off in a direction that again, we don't want--that we are not gonna feel comfortable with.

We're not gonna get what we asked for, which I think is going back years, right? Like there was a study that said that it was gonna be hundreds of million dollars to--to implement municipal broadband. The question really is, is that--is that right? And if so, are we gonna make that choice?

I don't know that we're gonna find that out coming back with the RFP that we've put out, which does seem to just ask for an array of options, which

we have never discussed here at the Council.

So, I guess, my real question as it relates to the budget is we are going to be spending money on this--this service, right? We put a--a request for proposals.

We're gonna be paying a consultant to do this in terms of the budget, how is the Council going to be participating in those responses and picking a respondent? My guess is we are not, but that's my question.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** You are not, that's not the role of the City Council. I don't know who wants to hear that. Obviously, our intent is to meet the guidelines of what the City Council asked us to do. I--I have confident that Pat and Lee have sent on --this--on that objective to do that.

I think, let us get the RFP, let's see where we're at, and let's really decide where we're missing this. Because I think based on Pat's experience and what he has stated, I think he knows what the Council wants. I don't--I know there was no intention not to give the Council what they want, so

why don't we wait and see where we end up with this.

But the whole point here was to get to where the Council wanted. And I'm still not sure that's not the case. And I'm not sure why Council feels so strongly that it isn't, 'cause I don't think Pat and Lee feel that way. And I would hope we can come to a conclusion, but I don't--I don't know what else to say other than I thought we would be on this point.

And I have confidence in the team that we put together to put this in it that we'll address the concerns the Council had. And I don't know if Pat and Lee want add anything.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Oh, can I just respond Mr. Chair?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** I think Mr. Manager, what you're hearing is--from the majority of the members who have spoken already is that this RFP is not what we wanted and it does not address the concerns that we had raised in a--over the past--especially, over the past year.

So, if there is no way for the Council, as you

said, that is not the role of the City Council to review RFPs and to pick a vendor. Our only choice, our only piece of this is like putting forth what we want so that the RFP can be written in a way that we end up with an outcome that we have envisioned. But now we're at a place where that horse has left the barn. So, I'm just trying to figure out at this point what we can do so.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I guess, I don't think Pat and Lee feel that's the case and-- and I don't wanna speak for them, but, uh, I--I think we have to have that discussion, but I--I don't know what else to do other than, Pat do you want to try to answer why?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Could I just-- this is, uh, Councillor Carlone, could I just add something?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Yep.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** In my business architecture, urban design I get requests for proposal. I used to all the time and on occasion I

would get an addendum that said, "Change the scope, add this." Whatever it was. Um, is that possible or are we beyond that point in your schedule?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Liz, pat?

**MS. UNGER ELIZABETH:** Um, if it's appropriate through you, Mr. Chair. Uh, we are not beyond that point in time yet. Um, I would say that for a matter of best practices, one should give at the least minimum 48 hours to issue an addendum, uh, and give potential respondents an opportunity to incorporate whatever is included in that addendum in that final proposal, depending on the complications involved.

However, with the addendum, uh, more than that best practice time may be warranted and I would certainly defer to Patrick and Lee on that particular element.

**MR. PATRICK MCCORMICK:** Yes, I guess, I--I would just add in, I--I think it--it is challenging to discuss this without, um, getting--getting into the specifics and potentially compromising the process.

So, um, I would say that, um, I don't think there's complete agreement on, um, how the RFP has

been characterized. I--I think it does remain to be seen how the responses will be in terms of the specificity. Um, but, you know, if--if it's a matter of taking it, uh, to--to look at an addendum, I suppose we can--we can do that.

I--I will say that, um, I don't know that the Council has heard this, but there has been a lot of positive response to the RFP as well. Um, you know, and I'll--I'll just read something because this is copied to a dozen people.

It was from Upgrade Cambridge, and the last line was, well, it was pointing out some--some, uh, differences of opinion. The last line was, "Anyway, there's a lot of good work in the RFP and I thank you, and those on your team who contributed to it, it advances the effort in important ways, and that's truly important." That was sent to a large group of stakeholders around the city non-profits, uh, from Upgrade Cambridge and--and, uh--as we were sharing, um, the RFP as well as the Digital Equity Study.

So, I--I just wanted to make sure that people understand there's--there's quite a bit of

commonality even as we look at some, you know, very legitimate questions around the--the margins of how exactly this sort of thing is done. Um, so I hope that's helpful.

**MR. GIANETTI LEE:** Mr. Chair, do you mind if I add a comment?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please do, Lee.

**MR. GIANETTI LEE:** Um, you know, I--I appreciate the--the discussion and you know, I do want to acknowledge, uh, the Council frustration that some of you had that have articulated.

You know, something that has really stuck with me, and I know I've mentioned this before, one of the members of the Broadband Task Force had always mentioned that, you know, we--we don't have an engineering problem we have a goal problem. You know, when we talk about municipal broadband, there are many different systems that you can build, but it's not a one size fits all.

At the end of it, you still need to articulate what goals are you trying to do with a municipal system. Does that mean you're going full fiber to

the home or does that mean you're just doing a backbone?

There are many different iterations and something that--and I think is what may be causing some of the--the angst with this is we have intentionally prioritized as--and calling out digital equity as one of the key goals that we want to solve.

If we're going to be exploring a municipal broadband system, Pat and I feel very strongly, and I think it's based on Council orders that have been passed both related to do a municipal broadband, but the policy orders that you passed related to digital equity in the goals is that digital equity should be front and center in building a system.

You--I don't think we want to go through and explore how we could potentially build a municipal system and then back in how could this help our equity goals. I think we start with equity and that's where we're trying to come from and we don't have any preconceived notions about what that type of system should look at. And that's what we're



really trying to get.

So, I think that is important, and that may not be the approach that I'm hearing that the Council wants us to prioritize equity upfront in terms of the municipal broadband. And if we missed that aspect, um, I'm sorry for that, but I think if you really read through the RFP one more time, you will see it is looking for municipal broadband options.

It--it is in there, but we were very intentional about making sure that we were clear that digital equity was the first part that we really want to start with and have from a framing and then move out from there.

So, I--I feel strongly about that and I just really want to get out that if that is not the intent or the Council's wish for us to really have that strong focus on equity, um, then I apologize for completely missing that.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Well, I'm going, uh--we have other Councillors who wish to speak and unin--intent--unintentionally, I overlooked Councillor McGovern and I apologize, Councillor, you

have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Mr. Chair, given all you've dealt with today, it's okay. Um, I am--I am really torn on this. Um, and you know, last year, and I--and Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler mentioned that I--I'm not sure it was--I was the one that suggested not voting the IT budget, maybe I was, but I did vote against it at the time, which is the first time I've ever done such a thing.

And the reason I did it was because I felt we needed to send a strong message that we needed this process to move forward. And Mr. McCormick, you were correct. It--this predates you by many years. Um, and I guess, before, and I'd like to hear from Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who--who mentioned, you know--who wants to recommend and, um, you know--not moving this forward favorably.

I want to--I'm not sure what doing that accomplishes this time. Um, I think last time it was important and I felt strongly about doing it. Um, I'm not sure what we get out of it this time though. And what I don't want to do, is delay things any

longer.

And--and with--and through you, Mister--Mr. Chair to the Manager, you know, again, I--I don't--you and I have talked about this, um, you know, I get accused of being too easy on the city, but I think for the most part the city does things really well when I don't think the city does something well, I say it and I don't think we did it well.

Um, I don't understand why this took so long. Other RFPs get out much faster and they're complicated. And I'm not even talking about within the last year, I'm talking two plus years.

I mean, Councillor Nolan's been, you know, most recently, you know, leading this charge, but we've been talking about this before she was even on the--on the Council. And you know, to say that, you know, the city has, you know, made this a priority and put this word--I--I--I don't see it, but we're here.

Um, you know, it--I'm further frustrated that just a few weeks ago, maybe even less than that, on the news we see that Salem, Massachusetts is moving forward with installing fiber through a private

company that is gonna take two and a half years to install at no cost to the city because of the arrangement they made.

Salem Mass is--or Salem, Massachusetts is 18 square miles compared to--to us. We're far more dense, but we don't--they're larger and they took, you know, less than a year to put out an RFP, make an agreement, and they're gonna get shovels on the ground.

And here we are, several years into the process and we have an IEP--an RFP that people don't--is maybe not gonna get us any closer to really where we want to be. And so, you know, look, sure we can vote the IT budget down, again, I don't know what that does, it--you know, if we voted down in the final vote, we revert back, I believe, to the current budget, which would eliminate any increases or thing.

I mean, I don't know what that actually does, right? We send a message, but I don't know what it actually does and if it actually gonna be helpful. So, I--I--I don't know, I'm still struggling with

this as we talk about it, but I do agree with my colleagues that what I was hoping for was an RFP that talked about different options for municipal broadband and whether or not it made sense for the city or what were those op--what could those options be? So we can then debate, is it to do something like Salem is doing? Is it to do something, you know, different?

Um, I'm not sure we're gonna get that out of this RFP. And I--I agree with Mr. Uh--with Lee about, um, you know, he--you know, he had--he--he had said in his earlier comments about, um, you know, that the--that the Council, you know--that the Council had asked for different options.

That's a--that--he's right. But I don't think we're getting it. And I think, and whether this should have been two separate RFPs or two separate, Mr. McCormick is right? And as other people have said, digital equity and municipal broadband are clearly linked in some ways, but not in all ways.

And I don't know if we only wanted to do digital equity, would--could we reach some sort of agreement

with Comcast that says, "You know, we'll pay for everybody in below a certain income level to have internet service." I don't know, maybe that's a solution, that's different than what we're talking about with municipal broadband.

And so I, you know, I--I think, I don't know what voting down the IT budget actually gets us, and I'd like to hear Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler's goals in doing that. Like, what's the point, right? Where does that hope to get us? Is the hope to bring the RFP back and redo it? Is the--and again, that's not even our decision. That's the City Manager's decision. What--what is it that--what's the, you know--where are we trying to get to?

But I would be remiss if I didn't express my displeasure with where we are with this a year later. You know, the RFP just came out like almost 10 months after we voted down the IT budget last time.

Um, so I'm just very disappointed in this one. I am, and, uh, you know, I'm--I'm happy about a lot of other things, but this isn't one of them. And, um,

you know, I guess through you Mr. Ma--uh, through Mr. Chair to.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Can I just jump in first?

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Uh, well, yeah. Uh, but I--I would wanna hear from Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler. What--what's--what's the--the hope here? 'Cause I'm really on the fence.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Well, I--I just wanna tell you.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** The budget is gonna get us somewhere. I did it last time. I'll do it again, if it's not gonna get us anywhere. And it's just to make a statement, but it doesn't lead to anything. I'm not really in--I'm not really sure I want to do that dance again. So, I'd like to hear sort of what the end goal is here.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Well, I'd like to tell you what it is gonna do. Uh, because a year ago I had an option that I tried to move forward, and I'm sorry it's long and I'm sorry at this point, what it will do this year is the Council

cannot reduce the IT budget specifically.

They will have to reduce the finance budget 'cause that's the level you appropriate at. So, it'll reduce it by 10 million. And then at that point in time come July, I will have to figure out how I would live with a budget that's 10 million shot that usually means people. That usually means lack of services.

And that's the reality of it. Now, I know that's not what the Council wants, but the last time I had a way out of this, I'm not sure I have a way out of this this time. And the reality will be if you cut 10 million from the finance budget, I cannot legally over expend that budget.

I will have to reduce people, in the finance department and we'll have to have a long discussion with my team and how we're gonna--but legally, I cannot over expend the budgets and I will not.

So, I do think these are very serious ramifications. I'm sorry we got to this point. I know it took a while a year ago to get this moving. I really thought at this point in time we have



gotten it moving Pat and Lee have made this a priority.

I know it took long, but it was a lot of work getting there and I just don't know how touch-- cutting \$10 million from the finance department is gonna get us in any better place with this project. Last year I certainly could understand it.

I didn't agree with it, but I understand why it was done and we had a solution that I think allowed the budget to be passed. I'm not quite sure I have a solution, what I would even be asked to do in order for this not to happen other than the fact that the reality is if it does happen, it could have major ramifications on the finance department's budget.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, could I ask a question again? On--on such RFPs, there's a, uh--a meeting, and maybe this has already happened already, where interested people come, Ms. Unger and, and Mr. McCormick are there and they can answer questions. Has that--is--has that meeting occurred? Is it gonna occur? I guess, not. No response?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Liz, I'm not

sure what happened to Liz. Pat, do you wanna address it?

**MR. PATRICK MCCORMICK:** Um, that--that meeting hasn't occurred? I was hoping that, um, uh, through you, uh, Chair Carlone, um, I was hoping Liz would address. 'Cause again, I'm concerned about how we talk about the process, that's all.

Um, in fact, I was going to ask, um, Liz, if it--if it were permissible to even just read out some of the deliverables of the RFP because--'cause I--I do think there's some misunderstanding of--of what's expected, um, in response. But again, I--I'm not sure I--I just do not want to do anything that compromises the processes.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I think, Liz has joined us.

**MS. UNGER ELIZABETH:** Yep. Okay. Through you Mr. Chair. Um, I would just ask the Council to reread through the tasks as they have been laid out in the RFP, uh, with an eye toward the details that they are seeking answers to.

Um, so I would just, uh, redirect the Council to

the tasks as they are laid out in the RFP without going into too much specificity to see if that could help alleviate some of their concerns.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, Ms. Unger, I know this is a living hell kind of thing for your position when the politics get involved, but, um, hearing what Mr. McCormick said, and what you said, and the Manager, maybe we're closer than we think and um, I hope that once we re--all review it again, we feel that way. Thank you for your comments.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I appreciate that Mr. Chair. 'Cause I feel the same way 'cause our intent is to get to where the Council wants to be.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Ms--Mr Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, Councillor McGovern, please continue.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** We--we sure--um, you know, one of the oth--one of my other points or one of my other questions was through you to Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler, and this is specifically about the budget.

Um, is--is to understand, I know he wants to recommend a negative recommendation and I'm trying to understand before I make a decision where he hopes that leads us. Is it just about a statement or is it--is there a point to doing it that he thinks might get us further along? Because I don't--this year--last year I was willing to do it to make a statement this year. I'm not sure that I am. I think the statement's been made and I'm just trying to better understand what he wants.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor, uh.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** I didn't mean to cut the line. I knew other Councillors have their hands up so I can go cut the end actually.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Who--why don't you go ahead Councillor.

**COUNCILLOR JIVAN SOBRINHO-WHEELER:** Apologies to the--to the Councillors and uh, to direct response to Councillor McGovern's question. You know, I think we heard from from staff right now that what we could do, um, is an addendum, uh, to the RFP that

clarifies the Council's intentions. That this is, uh, about a plan for municipal broadband and--and how much it would cost.

Um, uh, as you know, the City Manager and--and staff said, we can't, as the Council, micromanage city operations and what ends up being issued and what ends up being done. Um, but we do have the power right here, um, over the budget and which departments we recommend favorably or--or unfavorably.

Um, so at this point today, we're just saying we send the IT Department to the full Council with a negative recommendation, um, for the budget. Ultimately, you know, we could say there has to be funding for the RFP that we're--we're satisfied with or, um, we're not gonna move forward with the budget. But that's--that's not the vote we're taking right now today.

Um, and last year when we voted this department negatively, it didn't guarantee that there was going to be an RFP. Um, but we did it anyway and--and we took a step in the right direction. Um, I'm hoping

that if we--we take this step today, we'll see another step in the right direction. Um, the--the last piece, I was just thinking of the--the sort of the RFP uh, focusing on digital equity versus municipal broadband.

And I just think of it as, you know, the--the City Council had issued an RFP for a school building or had asked for an RFP for a school building and the RFP that ended up getting issued, um, focused on school equity. Um, school equity is great, we should talk about it. That's--that's not what we had asked for.

Um, we have talked about it. Digital equity, we're going to keep talking about digital equity. We--we need an RFP for municipal broadband. So, I--I think that's the message we're--we're trying to send today. And I think if there's a specific piece and that's an addendum clarifying that that we can get to.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I--I do wanna say this is a dangerous message at the expense of city employees and that's the game we're gonna play

where we're trying to say we wanna work with the Council.

I wanna go on record and say I totally oppose that, because I am not gonna support something that risked me having to fire or layoff city employees because an RFP isn't perfect. I'm sorry,

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Mr. Chair. I think I still have the--the floor. I would just say that, um, you know, last year and I--and--and we, you know--last year when we initially voted unfavorably on the IT budget, we eventually voted favorably to pass it.

Um, so whatever, you know if--if it were to be forwarded negatively today, that does not mean that it's going to be voted negatively when we adopt the budget and we can adopt it later if--if we so choose so. Um, but it is good. You know, I asked the question as to what the implications would--would be and we got that answer.

Um, you know, I would--through you, Mr. Chair, to the Manager. You know, I think you've heard and--and maybe Ms. Unger or Mr. McCormick, you know, I

think you've heard pretty clearly from a majority of the Council at this point that, you know, we think there needs to be some, um, you know, some a--amend--addendum or some amendment or something on this RFP.

Uh, is that--is that possible? And if that is possible, are you--could--are you prepared to make the commitment to do that today? Because I would--if--if that is possible and that can be done, I would like to not vote this down and--and I hate to get into that power struggle, but I think you've heard pretty clearly that we need to see something different or something more. Um, what are the possibilities of that? And are you committed to that?

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I don't know the answer to that question. I--I need to talk to my team about that. Obviously, the intent was to work this so that the Council would be satisfied. What role now we can do to make that adjustment? I'm not sure.

So, at this point, I would say I will do



everything I can to try to get it in a place that makes this group happy. But again, if it doesn't and the votes, no, it will be at the expense of city employees. And I don't wanna take that lightly. I don't want people to think that's a--a trek that is reality 'cause I'm not gonna over expend the budget.

So, I just want the Council to understand if I can't work this out, that they will be telling city employees because of the broadband not being able to work out, they will be losing their jobs. So yeah, we wanna play hard ball. I have to tell the facts.

So, I wanna work this up, but not risking a no vote on a final adoption night. It will mean potential layoffs come July 1st. So, I'm all in, but I don't know if I have the answer. The last one was an easy one and we were able to respond quickly. I don't have an answer that I am insured is gonna satisfy the Council with this. So, I'm in a difficult spot. If I did I tell you yes, let's make it go away. I don't, well I do everything I can to try. Yes, I will commit to that.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** So, Mr. Chair, um,

just, you know, I think I'm gonna reverse what I did last year in that, um, I think I will vote in favor today, but that doesn't mean I'm going to vote in favor next time.

And I will give you the opportunity, Mr. Manager to act--to do an addendum, to do something that addresses his needs. But I will also say this, if you don't, and we vote against the IT budget later down the road, it's not just gonna be on the Council's shoulders, that positions will be lost. This is a two-way street. And so--

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Again, I'm not sure what I can do. So, I understand--I'm--but I can only do what I can do.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** And I--I hear you. But this is a--this is a two-way street, and I--I will give you the benefit of the doubt for this vote, but I--I need to see something better before a final vote. And I don't wanna lose jobs either. Nobody does. And that's, you know--it is a reality.

Um, but again, it's--the Council has to work with you, but you gotta work with us too. And--and

I--and I don't wanna get into this power struggle every time.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. We talk through the Chair, and I know you're having a great conversation among the both of you. I--I--I would--

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm gonna close out on this Mr. Chair. I just wish that we weren't having this discussion around this RFP--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I--I understand.

**COUNCILLOR MARC C. MCGOVERN:** I wish we had it several months ago. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I thank you for bringing up that this is not the final vote, and that allows us a little more time, um, to work this out and yet move forward. So, Madam Mayor, I know I stepped on your toe by asking a question that you had on your mind. Is there anything else you would like to add?

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. No worries. You know, I think, um, I generally agree with, uh, some of what's being said. I think back to

Lee's point, I think there just wasn't a meeting in the minds on some of this. And I think I, for one, I completely agree on the digital equity piece.

And, um, I think what you've heard from the Council and last year's conversation, um, you know, they're, uh, intertwined, but they're also not mutually exclusive. And so, um--or something like that.

So, I think there are two separate issues. And I think we--we tend to conflate and I have gone through the RFP and I think I won't mention it, but there are some sentences that I think do speak to I think what the council, um, you know, has espoused and so forth.

But I also see how, um, perhaps there, you know--there perhaps another further conversation, um, which is Councillor was Carlone and now Councillor McGovern's point around this, um, to really, uh, think about where the meeting the minds should happen on this, because it'll ultimately be a--be better for everyone, uh, in the end if we can get, um, on as close of the same page as possible.

Because what you're hearing is there is this disconnect.

So, um, I think all that I'll say is, you know, I think I--I agree with what, um, Councillor McGovern is saying, uh, around this. Um, and I had a different--another point, but, uh, I think it lost me. So, if I--if that point comes back to me, I'll raise my hand, but I'll yield for now.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please. Thank you. That usually happens at my age, not at your age. Forgetting a point.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Unfortunately.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor--Yes. So, Councillor Zondervan is next, then Vice Mayor Mallon, and then Councillor Nolan.

**MR. DAVID KALE:** Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes. Mr. Kale.

**MR. DAVID KALE:** Again, I--I think the conversation obviously will continue, but again, to remind everybody what the purchasing agent said about getting too deep in the weeds about addendums and what that may or may not include.

Um, 'cause I wouldn't want to put ourselves in a position where we just have to pull the whole thing back and reissue it. So, I--I would just caution everybody to be a little bit careful about their public comments about addendums and the like, just so that we stay on solid ground, please, thank you for your consideration.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, thank you for reminding us of that, that is important. With that in mind, we have Council Zondervan, Vice Mayor Mallon, and Councillor Nolan. Councillor Zondervan, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank you Mr. Chair. And, um, I--I appreciate the--the request. Uh, unfortunately, I--I don't think I'm uh, aware enough of what the--what the rules and boundaries are here to know whether or not I'm exceeding them.

Um, but I would like to offer a slightly different analogy from my colleagues because I--I think the--the challenge, at least for me, is that it isn't so much that the RFP is asking for something different from what we want. Is it ask--

it's asking for more options than we want. So--so by analogy, if we asked for a feasibility study on having a municipally owned, um, electrical utility for the City of Cambridge, which of course we used to have, but we don't have anymore. And--and then we got an RFP that said, "You know, that's one option.

And--and we can look at that, but there's also other options. Like, we could have Eversource continue to provide electricity for everybody." And that's basically what we got, right, is that we-- the--the RFP as I understand it, is asking for yes, feasibility of municipal broadband, but also other options to provide digital equity and, um, connectivity across the city.

And--and what I think you're hearing from the council, and certainly what I'm trying to communicate is that we don't want those other options. We--we want you to address digital equity however you need to and--and can best do at the moment.

And--and then we want a feasibility study on municipal broadband. We--we don't want a study of--

of whether Starry or Comcast actually address the, uh, broadband question in Cambridge because so far, for decades they have not been able to do it.

And--and we have no faith that they will be able to do it. So--so we're asking for a simple RFP that tells us whether and how we can do municipal broadband in Cambridge. And the answer may be we can't. Or the answer may be that, you know, there's three options and then we have to pick. But that's the only question we want to ask.

We don't want to ask a question about can Comcast solve the problem? Can Starry solve the problem? Can we do digital equity some other way besides municipal broadband? We're not trying to ask those questions.

So, I--I'm not familiar enough with the procurement process to tell you how to remedy it, but if there's a way to narrow the question so that it's asking exactly what we want, then I think we can move forward in--in much more agreement than what we have now. Thank you.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I would



agree. I just think, and again, I agree with Council--Councillor Zondervan here. I think we're going on a path here where we--it's difficult to know what we can and cannot say. And the more we talk about this RFP, the closer we're gonna be saying something we shouldn't. And I know that's nobody's intention.

So, I am getting Larry, that if we're gonna have these conversations, we're gonna put ourselves in a difficult situation. But I know they're important and I wish I had a better answer, but I think if the next three speakers are addressing the RFP, it's just without knowing what we can and can't say, we could be putting ourselves in a difficult--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Councillor Nolan's fault.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** I--I believe Councillor McGovern had a great point and that this is not the final vote on the budget. That gives us a window of time where we can talk about this, um, with the manager independently, together, a few of

us, and we can work out whatever needs to be worked out or we have that final vote. I think Councillor McGovern's point is the good one.

Now, I--I also agree knowing quite a bit about RFPs that, um, the city's absolutely right and the key is that one candidate who's applying learns something that others do not through our discussion, maybe it's what the Council favors, for instance. And that's unfair and can--we can't keep talking about that. So, with that in mind, I know the Vice Mayor and Councillor Nolan will not do that in their final comments. And then I'm going to move the vote. Vice Mayor you're up.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Thank you, Mr. Chair. Um, I certainly will not talk about the RFP, but I will agree with, um, some of the comments that were made before. I think we--we do have some time to work on this, um, given where we are with the budget, and where we are with the RFP process.

Um, I do have a question, though. It's kind of a--a more of a budget question than a, um, RFP question. So, I'm--I'm sure everyone's excited about

that in terms of if we did vote down the budget, um, not just for the IT Department, but for any department, what would happen was, and I just wanna make sure I'm clear, is that we would vote every month on a one 12th budget for the finance department.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I'd have to-- if you are voting to eliminate a dollar amount, that budget is reduced from the total, then we would have to make recommendations. But the immediate impact is that dollar amount is reduced from the budget.

So, come July 1st, if there were recommendations to figure it out, now remember, free cash will not be certified. So, we'll be tricky to then add back. It is up to me until that money is restored to make sure that we do not over expend the budget.

Because legally I can't let that happen. So, you're not voting a one 12th budget. If you were doing that, you'd leave one month in and then you would say, "Okay, we'll revisit it."

That's a little different. Now obviously, a one month budget is tricky 'cause if people do have to

be laid off, we're gonna have to figure that out. But that's what--that would be a different type of rescission.

It would be leading a one month's balance in there, but a rescission of a dollar amount means that that number is no longer in the total. And I have to figure out over a year if that number is not added back, how I don't over expend that budget.

And I--I have to take some time to figure what that would mean. But at some point you, if--if we did one month and we came back for the next month, we certainly could do it that way. That's tricky. But that is another way of looking at it.

**VICE MAYOR ALANNA M. MALLON:** Okay. I just wanted to make sure I had a clear understanding of what it would look like if we didn't vote for the budget, which I'm certain and confident that after this conversation everyone's sort of on the same page about where we need to get to with this RFP, um, in order for it to move forward in a way that we all feel comfortable with.

But I did wanna make sure I understood the

process around the budget, what would happen next, and then the one month budget that would move forward. Um, 'cause I certainly think that that's something that maybe not everybody understands. And, um, it's just--it's important to talk about when we're talking about maybe not voting per budget.

So, um, I did wanna, one quick thing I wanted to say is I just wanted to respond to Mr. Gianetti who said something like, um, you know, maybe he was misunderstanding the Council didn't want digital equity at the forefront of--of a municipal--municipal broadband study.

I think I've been very public about this. I think in our meetings, I've been very, very open and upfront about the fact that digital equity does need to be at the forefront of our work with the municipal broadband. I think everyone--I've been very clear, I just want--I know it was stated publicly that maybe the Council did not want digital equity to--to be at the forefront of this work.

And I just wanna be on record publicly that, um, I certainly have always thought that it should be at

the forefront. And that's why I am so passionate and adamant that we need to do this work correctly and make sure that we get to the desired effect. So, um, I'm gonna yield the floor at this time. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Madam Vice Mayor. I--I think all of us really feel digital equity is absolutely up there. The question might have been focused on broadband, but that was what was behind a lot of it.

Now, I've been told that two Councillors have to leave at five o'clock. Um, so, uh, and we--I have still to speak, uh, Councillor Nolan, and then I will call a vote. Um, and then we have three more departments and the clerk's office is the last and he's beginning to really worry. So, we--we have to move quickly. Uh, Councillor Nolan, your final comments on the issue.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you Council Carlone. Thank you all my colleagues. Um, I--I do wanna, uh, echo what, uh, the Vice Mayor said, however, I might phrase it somewhat differently,

that of course, we all want digital equity and we want municipal broadband. And they are--you can have both. It's like saying, "Do you wanna be people food or give them a house?" It's not a question.

We do need both. The comment that the goal is digital equity suggests the goal is not municipal broadband first front and center. And I think that's part of the conflation here that is difficult that the mayor and others have talked to.

I also wanna point out, it's critically important that we talk--how do--how are we defining equity from, it's not just about very low income people, it's also about middle class people who are totally struggling. It's also about small business owners who are paying \$500 a month for access to internet for utilities that they are struggling to pay for.

So it--it's really important that we keep the focus on municipal broadband, means literally every single person in the city. Um, I--I do wanna respond to something Mr. McCormick said about Upgrade Cambridge that--that does recognize the imp--the

work that went into this RFP.

However, they are the ones asking us to withdraw this RFP. That doesn't mean we're going to, but their ask was--we've gotten many, many emails from the leaders of Upgrade Cambridge saying the city must withdraw the RFP because it is not meeting the goals of the city. Um, which is something I--I certainly take, um, uh, very seriously.

And as Councillor McGovern said, this issue predated me. You know, this has been on, I think 10 years ago when I was on school committee Digital Divide was there. So, let--let's really work together and come together to finally get answers on municipal broadband.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** And I'll also say I have learned a lot from the folks at--at Upgrade Cambridge who have said as--as Salem was mentioned earlier, I'm not sure if ultimately that will be a city owned, um, uh, network.

However, there are other cities we are--it is not only cities that own their own municipal light plants, which we could consider in the future, but



we're not talking about that.

There are other examples of cities that have done this and have brought we--we could bring them in and have them talk about it. But this is--this is not something that is totally unique and it is something critically important for us to do. I feel for myself that I will be voting, uh, no on this.

I am hoping that in the meantime, we do have some kind of discussion in between now and the final vote, which I do hope to support just like I did last time. Um, and--and we are on the verge of really having finally a study that will give us hopefully, what we asked for, uh, not just a year ago, but this Council did, I think five years ago and the community asked for 10 years ago. So, thank you, uh, Chair Carlone.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. So, we're gonna come down to a vote that, um, will have repercussions. And I think the more I think about it in my mind is Councillor McGovern's suggestion makes sense. Uh, one second, please. Uh, the clerk reminded of me that there's three, uh, types of

recommendations that we could vote on favorably, unfavorably, and without a recommendation.

And, uh, I think I'm going to suggest that we move this forward--the department's budget forward without a recommendation. Um, and, uh, I believe we can catch up on anything that needs to be caught up on in the next two weeks. Um, as far--okay. We have 40, uh--literally 50 minutes to finish our meeting. Please, go ahead, Council.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** I believe the motion--thank you. I believe the motion is to, um, to recommend with a disfavor recommendation. So, wouldn't we have to vote on that? And then if it doesn't happen--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Who--whose motion is that?

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** We just--we've had a long discussion and then you have a motion. One second, please. There is no motion before the clerk at this time. I just made a motion.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Mr. Chair. I would--I vote--I would support you in moving this--moving a motion forward, and the motion can be directed by the Chair. Uh, I concur with you.

There's been a lot of discussion so far, fewer questions, and I th--and it's making the meet--meeting run very long, and there's other important departments to discuss and then--and maybe less than an hour. So, I would support in moving if I--if it--it's less, uh, cantankerous or, uh, controversial to move without making a recommendation, which the clerk has advised us as--as an option, it sort of comes down the mil--middle.

So, I would support you or make a motion to do that, to, um, move that we move this forward without recommendation.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Uh, the, uh, Manager, uh, Mr. McCormick, MS. Unger all got the message loud and clear, and it might very well be in two weeks that nothing changes, and then we go forward on that basis. But I have--my goal is to make things work. The message has been sent and, um-

-and I move the--the motion that I've suggested that we move the department's budget section to the full Council with no recommendation.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - No

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Absent

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - No

**Motion passed. Yes - 6. No - 2. Present-1.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** All right. We have three topics, employee benefits pulled by Councillor Nolan. Councillor Nolan, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Uh, point of order--

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Mr. Chair, before Councillor Nolan takes the floor, could you just

read out the last three or--or two items we had before us?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes. Uh, employee benefits. Electrical Department and the Clerk's Office.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** And so, Councillor Nolan has the floor with her employee benefit question.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Excuse me.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you. And I wasn't sure under what category this went, 'cause there's a few different parts in the budget, but that various numbers appear. But it would be helpful for me to understand why it was related under employed benefits, that pension was up 12%, 12.1%, which was much bigger than any of the other, uh, benefits listed.

And that actually, the, um, budgeted, uh, position there was, um--it went from \$6 million to 0.244, uh, in FY-20 to this year being expected to be 14.245. So, if there's an answer to that

question, that'd be great.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** Jump in quickly and--and hopefully, this is a very simple answer. Uh, in order to keep our 2026 pension obligation to have all our pension cleared, which would allow us to free up money, but hopefully opposite of the matters, we decided we would prefer to pay more and keep that date.

We feel that's an important date. It's been in the city objective for many years, rather than pushing that out, which you could have done to 2028. So, it was certainly a--a decision that we feel the importance of paying off our old pen--, uh, uh, pension obligations by 2026 or something that has been a priority of the city. So, that's--that's why we decided to make that increase.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Thank you. That does answer the question. It wasn't clear from the writeup. I'm sorry if I missed something, um.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** No, it's tricky. So, there--I don't--that's a good question.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Yeah. Okay. It

was--it was big enough that I wanted to call it out. Thank you so much and someday in the future, when we get it all off, we'll have a seminar on OPEB and many other benefits.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I agree.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Ideally, on some exotic island. Um, any other questions on employee benefits? Councillor Simmons, I'm sorry. Repeat that again, Councillor.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Move with a favorable recommendation.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** That--that's what I thought you said. Move with a favorable recommendation.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Motion passed. Yes - 9. No - 0.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. We're on a run. The Electrical Department is next. And Councillor Nolan, you have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Uh, thank you Chair Carlone. This, uh, might also be a quick question. I, um, know that the Electrical Department has been working, working hard in a number of areas. And my question is that I didn't see, and again, I may have missed it, uh, what the plans are and expectation for future growth, because we know that with the increased electrification of the city, we, um, expect within 20 years the entire city will have to be, uh--basically have, uh, so much of our infrastructure be switched over.

And I'm just interested in finding out what the plans and training are in expectation, that even in the coming couple of years, we're going to need to make sure that we are ready to--to meet that demand, both on the inspection side, which I realize is on



the city budget.

And perhaps in order to--to help, um, either residents or, um, businesses in the city actually make that shift. And I'm just interested in whether that is part of the plans for this particular department or there would be another part of the city that would, uh, handle that.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Mr. Man--Mr. Manager, I'm sure you know everything electrical, uh.

**CITY MANAGER LOUIS A. DEPASQUALE:** I--I would suggest that this could be a capital question, Councillor. And, uh, if you could send it to us in writing, I would certainly get you an answer for the next meeting, if that's okay with you. And it could save us some time tonight.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** That's fine. And--and I do apologize. I had not sent this earlier on. It was something that came up, but when I saw on the agenda, I will do that. Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Thank

you both. And now for the most difficult office to deal with-

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Move this with the favorable recommendation?

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Yes. Thank you. Thank you. Councillor Simmons.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr. - Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Motion passed. Yes - 9. No-0.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. And now, as I was saying, we'll go to the Clerk's Office, uh, Budget, uh, Councillor Zondervan. You have have the floor.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank--thank

you, Mr. Chair. I'm going to make sure that we fully utilize the next 43 minutes.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** No one's laughing.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** I--Well, I'm trying, but I appreciate that. Uh, maybe this is not my talent. Um, anyway, I--I have two quick questions on the Clerk's Office, um, budget.

So, the first one is, um, that the open meeting portal, uh, we've been facing challenges all year with the indexer being broken. And I--I would like to know if that's being addressed and whether we have the resources in the budget to--to address that.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** So, uh, uh, we've-- we've discussed this, uh, through you Chair, uh, Carlone, uh, Councillor Zondervan. We've discussed this, um, uh, a little bit earlier in the year.

Uh, we've been aware of the issue with the, uh, meeting portal for several months now. And--and really general issues with our current, um, minute taking, uh, and meeting software.

Uh, we've been in conversations, we, when I say

we, the Clerk's Office has been in conversations with the IT department through Patrick, uh, McCormick and his team. And we've had, uh, um, been having discussions with the vendor.

We are in the process of adopting a new software or looking for new software. We're at the stage now where, uh, we're waiting for, we--we've identified a product. We think it may solve the--the problems and will add additional functionality and improvements to, um, the issue you're talking about in the general, um, operations of the--of the meetings, agendas and minutes and so on.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Um, we are at the phase where we're looking for recommendations from other communities that are using the software and have in--in--in importantly, have migrated from one data software solution to another. And, you know, what are the challenges--challenges entailed there, the cost and so on. Uh, my current understanding, and Patrick McCormick, correct me if I'm wrong, is that the migration, um, from our current system to the one we've identified so far would be totally

free of cost to the department.

Um, and the pricing for ongoing operations for the new software would--would be in about the same range. So, it won't affect our budget too much. Um, and we are hoping to get this up and running and done, uh, by some time. Uh, I'll be optimistic here and say, uh, mid to late summer. Um, but again, it may be in the fall depending on how things--how things, um, uh, work out.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Part of that new solution is already kind of up and running. We've, uh, and again, Patrick McCormick talked--discussed this a little bit during the, IT his--his, uh, uh, um, conversation during the, um, information technology budget.

Um, we've got our video up on a new, um, video software. If you go into the main portal, there's a link that directs you to another website. Uh, it's a little clunky right now, but that's because we're integrating pieces of upgraded more stable software.

Um, but the hope is to be on one unified system, um, that works better, that does the indexing that

we've discussed, um, in the future. And again, the hope is that this is done, uh, this calendar year, which, you know, obviously goes in the next fiscal year.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor, any follow up?

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Great, thank you Mr. Chair. That's, uh, one of the best answers I've heard all day. And, uh, I wish the clerk much luck with that and--and hope that, uh, we--we will be able to meet that timeline. It--it is, uh, challenging for us to do our work, um, with the index of being broken.

So, I appreciate the, uh, the effort to get that resolved as quickly as possible. So, my--my final question is on the committee meeting minutes, I--I know the clerk and I have talked about this previously as well, and--and it does seem to be a resource constraint issue that--that's causing some of the delays that we're experiencing. So, again, my question is whether that, um, is being addressed in this budget.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Again through you, uh, Chair Carlone. Um, we've discussed this, I think I've discussed this with a number of Councillors, um, through the year, uh, and even though--through COVID we've tried a def--a number of different solutions.

We've looked at some software options, um, where we've got sort of a transcription software, um, again, with varying, uh--varying levels of--of, uh, success. Um, I think we've talked about whether or not to ask for additional people, so on and so forth. I--I have not raised that to the City Manager.

I do not plan to in the near term. Only because, and again, I don't want to talk out of turn, but I've been working with, um, the IT Department, the cable--the Cable Department, and the, um--and I think the PIO uh, the Public Information Office has also been involved in those conversations about close captioning.

Right now we've got close caption for City Council meetings. Really the close captioning is

only on the Zoom. And it's also a sort of a separate--you--you open a separate website, um, to go there. I know, or I don't wanna say I know, but again, David Kale, can you correct me if I'm wrong, but there was a budget allocation to the Cable Department.

There was--there's eventually once some, uh, technical and, um, other issues are resolved, there would be, uh, cable, there would be, um, uh--uh, close captioning for the--for, uh, um--for all City Council meetings, including the committee meetings. Um, and I think those would be the best avenue to quickly churn out, uh, effective minutes for the City Council.

Uh, if you look at the last two City Council meetings where you see the, um--where you saw the, uh, submission of the record that the Council approved, uh, those were generated using the closed captioning recordings from, uh, those two City Council meetings.

And I think that those turned out very well. Um, so I think that'll be, uh--uh, from the--from the



Clerk's Office Department, that'll be a sort of a cost neutral and very efficient method to fix that going forward. Um, again, I don't wanna speak, there's--there's a couple of moving parts there, a couple of other departments impacted.

So, I don't wanna say too much and get out of my area of expertise, but I think knowing that we're-- that we've generally moved in that direction, um, I sort of wanna follow that path.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Thank--thank you, Mr. Chair, through you, to the Clerk. Thank you for that answer. So, I don't know if anyone else can--can speak on how soon that might be implemented. I--I do agree with the Clerk that--that that would be great as a--a solution. Um, but I have no sense right now of how soon that could be up and running.

**CITY CLERK ANTHONY WILSON:** Uh, I can reach out to, again, it's a--it's a multi-department, um, effort. Um, and I can speak to--we've--we had--we've had--we haven't had too many meetings recently, but we've had several meetings about it over the past

year. And I can reach out to some of the people.

Again, the--the departments that I've been in contact with mostly been the Public Information Office, the IT Department, and cable. And, uh, it's really kind of been facilitated by, uh, uh, David Kale. And again, we can get together and we can, uh, get a response to, um, I don't know how long it'll take. Again, I'm not in control of these departments--

**MR. DAVID KALE:** So, Mr. Chair. We'll--we'll--so Mr. Clerk, we'll--

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please Mr. Kale.

**MR. DAVID KALE:** We'll regroup. We have our weekly IT, um, operations meeting, so we'll put that on the next agenda just to get an update and see what is still left to be done. Um, and we'll--we'll be able to fine tune this and I don't have a good timeline yet 'cause I don't wanna speak out of term without knowing what's--what pieces are left to finish.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you, Mr. Kale.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Okay. Thank you, Mr. Chair and through you. Um, thanks Mr. Kale for that answer. And is it--would it be possible to get an update at--at our, um, final budget discussions on this item?

**MR. DAVID KALE:** We'll provide an update and, um, yes.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Great. Thank you so much.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you. Any other comments on the Clerk's Office? Really don't hold back.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please.

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Too late.

**COUNCILLOR QUINTON Y. ZONDERVAN:** I wanted to thank the--thank the clerk for his efforts and, uh, really do appreciate the--the work that he does.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you.

**COUNCILLOR PATRICIA M. NOLAN:** Move the Clerk's Office budget favor--forward to the City Council, with a favorable recommendation.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you,  
Councillor Simmons. Mr. Clerk.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr.- Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Motion passed. Yes - 9. No - 0.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** So, our--our next meeting is, um, a week from today. And it will be as exciting as this past meeting. And, um, we all look forward to your input. If you have additional questions, please get it to us by Friday morning of this week. Um, so that the clerk has more than enough time, um, to disseminate them.

That could be an additional question. Or if you've not submitted questions on the departments of

next Tuesday. Yes, that's--I did say to the clerks, uh, the clerk is getting back at me and wants me to repeat that. These should be sent to the clerk's office in care of his attention.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Mr. Chair.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Please, Madam Mayor.

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Um, one thing, uh, or two things I had--I know that we had, um, in the beginning pulled Diversity Committee and Committee on Civic Unity. I--and I think we just--there's a lot that happened and, um, uh, all that to say the question that I had, I'll follow up later.

Um, there's no need to suspend the rules, uh, on that. Uh, the second thing was that we do have a school committee budget hearing, um, next week as well. And, uh, I will be asking members of the Council to, uh, email me questions, um, uh, so I can give, uh, a heads up to the school administration and superintendent to be prepared. Uh, and I think what we did last year, um, was keeping it to, you know, two, uh--two to three questions, uh, so that

we can get through everything. So, uh, I will follow up with an email on that as well so.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** And that meeting is Wednesday, I'm I right?

**MAYOR SUMBUL SIDDIQUI:** Wednesday the 19th at 6:00 PM. And the budget is, you should have hard copies and if you don't, is also online. And I believe Naomi sent out those links.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Okay. Thank you Madam Mayor. Any other comments before we end?

**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Move for adjournment.

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Councillor Simmons says--suggested we move for adjournment.

**City Clerk Anthony Wilson called the roll:**

Vice Mayor Alanna M. Mallon - Yes

Councillor Marc C. McGovern - Yes

Councillor Patricia M. Nolan - Yes

Councillor E. Denis Simmons - Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler - Yes

Councillor Timothy J. Toomey Jr.- Yes

Councillor Quinton Y. Zondervan - Yes

Mayor Sumbul Siddiqui - Yes

Councillor Dennis J. Carlone - Yes

**Motion passed. Yes - 9. No-0.**

**COUNCILLOR DENNIS J. CARLONE:** Thank you everyone. Thank you for your patience and your input and for good discussions. Have a good night.

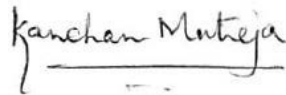
**COUNCILLOR E. DENIS SIMMONS:** Night.

**The Cambridge City Council Finance Committee adjourned at approximately 4:50 p.m.**

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 1st day of February 2023.

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

Signature of Transcriber