

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for a Budget Workshop on Monday, May 20, 2024, at 1:48 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Council members present were Dimple Ajmera, Danté Anderson, Tariq Bokhari, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Lawana Mayfield, Marjorie Molina, and Victoria Watlington.

**ABSENT UNTIL NOTED:** Councilmember Tiawana Brown, Renee Johnson, and James Mitchell

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## ITEM NO. 1: INTRODUCTION

**Mayor Lyles** said good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to May 20, 2024, and for the Charlotte City Council Budget Adjustments Meeting. Thank you for your patience. We were running a little bit late. I want to call this meeting to order and welcome those who are in the room with us that are participating and hearing what we're saying and doing immediately as well as those that are joining with the media. Whether or not you are viewing this on the government channel or the City's YouTube channel, thank you for taking the time to participate in our meeting today and view it. We're going to have introductions.

Mayor Lyles said Councilmember Mitchell will join us later. He has a conflict but will join us as soon as possible. So, this meeting is really one of the times that we work on the most important responsibilities that we have a City Council which is to review and discuss the proposed budget. The Manager presented his budget and thank you for all of the hard work of the budget team and the many people that made this possible for us to be able to begin this discussion. The Manager recommended to us and presented us the proposed budget that is balanced and incorporates the resources towards our strategic priorities that were decided at the Council Retreat. The purpose of this meeting is to think about any potential adjustments that members of the Council would choose to have incorporated in the budget before adoption.

Now we have a process for today's meeting and it's a little bit different because our budget is a little bit different this year. Since the Manager is recommending a tax increase this year, as we're talking about what adjustments Council members might like to make, we'd like to have a process that would follow this idea. That while we have a balanced and structured budget that keeps us in the good graces of our finances of being a AAA, and a AAA and a AAA and all of those things, in order to continue that kind of successful financial foundation, we would like for you to suggest if you have a change in the budget. There are a couple of ways to this. That if you have something that requires a cost differential that we can just turn it over to the staff to help you create something, then that means that kind of cost will come back at our next meeting. I'd also like to have you think about another one. There are ways if we want to make changes. There's always the opportunity to defer or delay another item in the budget so that we balance to where we were with the Manager's recommendation. In addition, for those that have changes and even though the cost may not be exactly correct, we will be adding that to the tax increase of 1.5. So, if you say, "I want to do this cost," then we'll say, "What is the cost to add that to the consideration of the tax increase?" So, they're three options. Again, if you have an adjustment that you would like to have, you can recommend a reduction or a delay or a deferral of another item or we will add it to the tax increase just to keep us in focus if the staff is going to have to make adjustments to that cost, they will, but we need to kind of get a handle on what we're talking about today so that we can be successful because we do want to adopt this budget on June 10, 2024.

Alright, so there will be two rounds for each of the discussions coming around. So, we can start off and have each Council member talk about any adjustments that they want to make. The staff will keep a running list of changes and then we can come back. Now remember in our process that we have always had a requirement that if five or more votes at the end of our discussion of everything that we're going to add, that it takes five

or more votes of the Council members, all of us voting to support any of the changes that have been recommended. So, for those of you in the room, that's a lot of budgetees which we are all capable of following, I'm sure. So, let's get to it to start off with our process for today.

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**ITEM NO. 2: DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL ADJUSTMENTS TO THE PROPOSED FY 2025 BUDGET**

**Councilmember Watlington** said can you circle back to me last?

**Mayor Lyles** said we can come around. Ms. Mayfield, are you ready?

**Councilmember Mayfield** said I would say we start on that side and come around because I've got a [inaudible].

**Councilmember Molina** said I actually was hoping to go last. So, I agree with the order it's currently in.

Ms. Mayfield said Mayor, instead of just trying to go around, I know some people have some questions they want to ask. May I suggest that we just do what we were doing today and just raise our hand if you're ready?

Mayor Lyles said I think that first of all this isn't just for questions. It is to actually ask what changes you would like to have for the budget. So, let's be more affirmative around what we're trying to accomplish here. I think we've had a chance for everyone to have a discussion with the Manager or the staff about this, but I do think that Mr. Graham has agreed that he would be the first and we'll go this way and come around. So, again just remember, it'll be posted up there, the item. We use the word add, but I'd like to say instead of deleting it could be defer or delay and then we'll keep going from there.

**Councilmember Brown arrived at 1:55 p.m.**

**Councilmember Graham** said thank you Madam Mayor and members of Council. I really don't have much. I've taken the opportunity to review the budget in its entirety, the Manager's letter and the executive summary as well as thumbing through the budget. As many of you have heard me say before, I think the budget reflects the value of the City. It reflects the growing nature of our community. While no one likes a tax increase, I think we have forecast this for years. For the last two years, the Manager sent warning signals and I think the investment he has made is spot on from my perspective. So, I support the budget as it is written. There's some minor things that I would like to support that many of my colleagues and I have talked over the weekend in reference to and at the appropriate time, I'll raise my hand to support some of those additional items that other Council members have in mind. I can support those. I'm pretty much solid and ready to go. One other that I would like to put on the board is For The Struggle, which is a nonprofit in the Beatties Ford Road area. We supported them last year. They did not submit a client application. I'd like to add \$100,000 to support the work for senior home repairs in the community. Other than that, I would urge my colleagues to support it at the appropriate time. Other than that, Madam Mayor I think the Manager and staff have done a wonderful job in terms of preparing the community. I look forward to supporting the budget.

Mayor Lyles said so, Mr. Graham I'm going to ask you to be the person that we walk through the process with.

Mr. Graham said okay.

Mayor Lyles said so, you've recommended For The Struggle for home repairs for people along the Corridors?

Mr. Graham said not only along the Corridors of Opportunity. They're base is on Beatties Ford Road, but now they're working throughout the City of Charlotte.

Mayor Lyles said okay. You would add \$100,000. So, if you had to say how you would see that being funded?

**Marie Harris, Strategy and Budget** said quick clarification Mr. Graham.

Unknown said [inaudible].

Mr. Graham said it's in there?

Ms. Harris said yes I was just wondering if it's an extra \$100,000. They did submit an application.

Mr. Graham said did they?

Ms. Harris said yes sir. If you reference page 24 on your handout at your desk. Thank you.

Mr. Graham said yes I'm good then. Take it off. I'm fine.

Mayor Lyles said okay, for those of you, remember this is just budgetees.

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said thank you Mayor and members of Council. Just a couple of things. I like the way you just dove right in there. Typically, we try to give you any types of updates in terms of our revenue or sometimes I'll say that there is a mouse in the machine and we made a mistake. So, fortunately there are no mistakes that we have to talk about, but we did get an update from the County, and this is on page one. The County's proposed budget increased the collection rate for police services reimbursement in the ETJ (Extraterritorial Jurisdiction) and those funds result in an additional \$231,678 for the City. So, while it's not in the budget, it's just a revenue update. So, we're starting off with \$231,678 more than when I proposed the budget on May 6, 2024.

Mayor Lyles said \$231,678. Alright.

**Councilmember Anderson** said I agree with Mr. Graham that overall, the budget does largely reflect our priorities, and I do support the funds out of the 1.5 cents sales tax to go towards the arts, go towards housing and towards safety. There are a couple of things that I would like to just lift up and have included in this process and I've spoken to several of my colleagues about this as well as the Manager. The first one is CMS (Charlotte Mecklenburg Schools) is embarking on a Workforce Housing Initiative along with the Mecklenburg County and County Commissioners and they're planning on building a Teacher Village to support affordable housing, specifically and exclusively for our teachers within CMS. So, they can afford to live in the City of Charlotte but also be proximate to the schools that they work at and support. I would like for us as a City to participate in that intergovernmentally to demonstrate our faith and trust with our teachers. So, this specific ask to go into the Teacher Village initiative is \$1 million. This is a Workforce Housing Initiative that has a workforce element to the actual planning as well. So, it's not specifically about Housing Trust Fund dollars or anything of that nature. I'm fully aware that we have depleted our Housing Trust Fund dollars successfully, but I would like for us to support that.

The second ask that I have is for the Charlotte Museum of History. I would like to have the Charlotte Museum of History be added to the list of the other arts institutions as a part of the former Infusion Fund list so that they can be included in any go forward potential asks and then I would also like for the City of Charlotte to support the Charlotte Museum of History with a one-time dollar infusion as well. Many of us already know we don't do that great of a job of protecting some of our historic legacy aspects of the City of Charlotte and far too many of them have been demolished and are gone. The

Charlotte Museum of History specifically works to ensure that the history of Charlotte is intact and that it is spread throughout the entire City and specifically with some of our communities that are underrepresented. So, I'd like to see support for that as well.

Lastly, I would also like for us in the spirit of supporting the arts, the Arts Plus organization has an initiative to create space for some of our artists in community that can't afford to display their art or present their works of arts and plays and things of that nature in some of our larger institutions like the Blumenthal and other platforms because it's just simply too expensive for them. So, they have an initiative that they're working on to transform the Plaza Presbyterian Campus into an artist space for that aspect of our arts community and I'd like for us as a City to support that initiative as well. So, Madam Mayor, those are really the only three that I have, and we can talk further about that.

Mayor Lyles said can we talk a little bit about cost and recommendations for the Charlotte Museum of History. Do you have a number?

Ms. Anderson said sure. As a part of this budget, I know there's opportunity to provide support in other aspects but as a part of this budget, I'd like to recommend \$100,000 as a part of this specific budget.

Mayor Lyles said okay.

Ms. Anderson said for the Arts Plus organization, I'd like to recommend that we support with \$500,000 and then lastly, I failed to mention this but as Mr. Graham was lifting up Block Love, there is a nonprofit organization here within our community that's called Home Again Foundation and they specifically work to help people who are underhoused and literally homeless find spaces to live. I would like for us to support them at the right time. Mr. Manager, I believe you have a time where we would be able to support organizations like this with \$100,000 as well.

Mayor Lyles said alright. So, let's go to the next category. Are there any suggestions that you have that would help us reach that \$1,700,000.

Ms. Anderson said yes. So, I believe that we have the opportunity to support the Teacher Village Initiative with some allocated dollars that have already been allocated Mr. Manager, if you can keep me honest about that. So, we wouldn't have to potentially defer or delete anything. Can you speak to that Mr. Manager?

Mr. Jones said yes. So, thank you Mayor and members of Council. Maybe this is the appropriate time to lay out what we're doing around workforce development. You may recall at the presentation on May 6, 2024, that I believe we have about \$5 million as it relates to workforce development, but again that's part of a bigger plan that was I think \$9.2 million. There's also \$3 million that we've always set aside for when Ms. Frasier came onboard for workforce development initiatives and there are no calls on that, but in terms of workforce development, again there's almost \$3 million unprogrammed that are part of the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) Funds that's been setting out there.

Mayor Lyles said I hope that we will not all decide that we're going to use the ARPA funds that are out there because I think that most of these programs for example, if we're going to work with the Charlotte Museum of History, that is a recurring effort. It is not something that is one time and we need to think about those kinds of issues as we're making these recommendations especially when we're talking about the use of one-time funds or funds that may not come with another action unless we get to that point before. So, I would like to say that if I look at this list, Mayor Pro Tem, I think that what we're really basically saying is that these are, at least the Museum and the Arts Plus are continuing opportunities for funding or would be in the review that the budget Committee is taking on next year for financial partners. Is that a fair assessment of how you would do this?

Ms. Anderson said that's correct.

Mayor Lyles said so right now I think that this would be one where the staff, you've suggested a certain amount of funding, the staff can do this but we would actually add that to see how far we're going with our tax increase. Okay?

**Councilmember Ajmera** said I only have questions.

Mayor Lyles said oh they're questions?

Ms. Watlington said I have a clarifying question separate and apart from my requests. So, specific to this conversation. As it relates to arts, I want to understand a little bit more because I have read in here, in the answer to our questions that whatever portion of the City's money would be dispersed via the Foundation for the Carolinas to organizations who are in the City and previously received annual operating support, the grant amounts would be determined by the City. I just want to make sure I'm clear because what I'd rather see is a decoupling of the who versus the how much. I just want to make sure that whatever we approve now is not a, "These are folks who are going to receive arts funding in perpetuity to some degree."

Mayor Lyles said I agree. We need to have those questions, but I think those ideas would be put on and the questions would be followed because the staff will come back and say, "This is how it actually works on each of these." So, I don't know that there's an answer right now.

Ms. Watlington said are we voting today?

Mayor Lyles said we are voting on the five people to move something forward.

Ms. Watlington said right, and so that for me matters as to whether or not, because I may not necessarily support \$500,000 going to an organization in perpetuity, but I might support a one time.

Mayor Lyles said got you. Good question. So, I think it's very helpful if people say is this one time or more.

Mr. Jones said sure. So, on your handout starting on page 18, Dr. Watlington, this is the way it's currently structured. So, you'll see a group of 30 plus organizations that have been a part of the annual funding stream from the City for years. What occurs in this proposed budget is if you go back to 2021 when the Infusion Fund was put together, that's the low point about \$4.3 million for these organizations, the last year of the Infusion Fund, the year that ends next month, that number grew to \$8.5 million. So, the concept, what's in yellow, would be those organizations that are in the towns and what the County is suggesting that they pay for those organizations that are in the towns and that alleviates the City of one, two, three, four organizations and the City would pay for the remaining organizations.

To your point that the thought process is all about stability in the arts and culture ecosystem with the concept being these groups that range from \$1.1 million all the way down to \$8,000 would be funded by that \$9 million coming from the City, and that concept is let's say over a five-year period. What's interesting, which brings into conversation the Charlotte Museum of History is the County also is going to provide a level of funds for those mid to large size organizations that the City has been funding for educational purposes up to about \$3 million. So, because the Charlotte Museum of History is not a part of this list, it precludes them from being able to get funds from the County for educational purposes but if they're part of the list, they could be eligible for part of that \$3 million for educational purposes. The concept is that this list is the list because it's been the list for a very long time. May I do one more thing? Then outside of that, there's \$2 million that the City would put into a pot where the County would put the majority of the money in that pot that would go to other organizations, individual artists that aren't on this list. So, if you put it all together, it's about \$21 million that's going into the ecosystem for a variety of organizations and artists.

Ms. Watlington said I've got a couple of follow up questions on that. It may be that I missed the arts discussion where this was laid out in detail, but there are some things about the how that impact the how much that I don't want to misconstrue or mislead folks into believing that I'm onboard for this particular way this is laid out without a thorough understanding and discussion with Council of how we actually want that to look. I don't necessarily want to raise my hand for these particular organizations for the next five or however many years, or I may would prefer a different sunset or I may not sign up for this idea that if you don't get on this list, you can't get on that list either. I just want to make sure.

**Councilmember Johnson arrived at 2:12 p.m.**

If I've missed it, forgive me, but I want to make sure that I'm not signing up and into this plan that's laid out without a full understanding of it. So, is that conversation coming back to us, or do I just need to get with somebody offline?

Ms. Anderson said so, Ms. Watlington if I could just clarify my specific request that's sort of separate than what the City Manager laid out. It's very true that the Charlotte Museum of History is not on this list, so that precludes them from taking part of any activity that the County would support, but this specific ask for \$100,000 is a one-time ask.

Ms. Watlington said okay.

Ms. Anderson said the specific ask for Arts Plus for \$500,000 is a one-time ask to help them renovate the space for small to medium sized artists for performance.

Ms. Watlington said okay.

Ms. Anderson said I am asking that the Charlotte Museum of History be added in perpetuity to this list that the City Manager spoke to on page 18, which is all of the museums and art institutions in our City. They're the only one that is not a part of this list.

Ms. Watlington said got that piece. Has it already happened? Forgive me if I missed it, this conversation about what this art structure looks like or is it just as a part of this budget process, these things will get shaken out?

Mr. Jones said sure. There's a governance structure, that hasn't been a lot of discussion about that, but in terms of the organizations, these are the exact same organizations that have been funded for the last three years.

Ms. Watlington said I appreciate that, but has it already happened, the conversation around the structure of this arts stuff. The reason I'm asking right now is because it has budget implications. So, I just want to understand do I need to try to pick that up along the way as part of budget or is there a separate?

Mr. Jones said no, I understand. So, this is what's been discussed previously, that \$9 million is hardwired to these organizations. It is not an application process. The money would go to the Foundation of The Carolinas, much like we're doing with the Infusion Fund and these dollars, these amounts would be to these organizations. Then under a different structure, the remaining \$2 million would be allocated much like the non-annual operating support dollars which is kind of like \$2 million now, gets allocated to other individual artists and other organizations with the hope that there's collaboration between the bigger institutions and some of the individual artists and other organizations not on the list.

Ms. Watlington said so, is this conversation about responding to what you just said, a part of this budget process or are we going to see that again before the budget is approved? Because to me there's two different conversations but it feels like it's baked into this one.

Mayor Lyles said you're allocating funding, and you have an opportunity for the process to be done.

Mr. Jones said correct.

Mayor Lyles said this is kind of like what we're doing here. Yes, you're being asked do you want to allocate funding but there's also a process that has not been addressed by Council and Council would have to go through that process and make decisions on it.

Ms. Watlington said okay, and that's happening ahead of approval of a budget?

Mayor Lyles said it's going to happen after the budget.

Ms. Watlington said so, what we're saying then is if we're approving this budget, we're also signing up for this process?

Mayor Lyles said no. I don't think you're signing up, you'll be ready to discuss the process. It'll be just like any other item that we debate. There could be conversations to change. I don't know the outcome for it right now. I know that we've worked on it in a way that has a path, but it doesn't mean that that's the path that we're taking. So, the Council will have to review how to allocate arts funding.

Ms. Watlington said thank you.

Mayor Lyles said alright. I want to do this before we go around again. I don't know who's doing the typing, but could we change it from delete to defer or delay or however we're making that decision. Is that okay? Can someone do that? Okay, thank you. We're going to come back around and we're going to have vote.

Ms. Mayfield said so Mr. Manager, we have \$9 million. Right now, the proposal for 2025 is \$8,850,000. That's \$150,000 just right now, but we also have a potential \$2 million that's sitting out there. So, if we were to move forward with these requests, in actuality, we only have, out of what's already been identified \$150,000.

Mr. Jones said absolutely. So, what has occurred, and you have to kind of think is \$150,000 even enough because at some point, as the Mayor said with how this thing is governed. So, let's start with the revenue that the \$11 million is really consistent with what has been in the Infusion Fund the last three years. The governance is something different. So, what I am proposing is that all the administrative stuff is handled outside of this City. So, what's happened over the course of the last three years, the Foundation for the Carolinas have taken like one percent which is really nothing as it relates to admin fees, sometimes it's like 15 percent. So, I would say that there's a little piece of that and then there's the \$2 million that's outside of this group and to what extent if any does it make sense for a little piece of that to come back over to this \$9 million, don't know, but those are some of the things that we would discuss if this thing continues on to give you back options as a Council if some of these get the additional votes.

Ms. Mayfield said so, this \$9 million that we're talking about with the current operating support, this operating support, Foundation for The Carolinas is who is actually the one that's cutting our funding. They're the ones that's actually managing the allocation of these dollars?

Mr. Jones said cutting the checks.

Ms. Mayfield said right. So, Foundation for The Carolinas is the one who's actually cutting these checks on this million on down.

Mayor Lyles said cutting the checks at the direction of the Council.

Ms. Mayfield said right. So, we have \$9 million right here. We potentially have \$2 million that is out there that we might be able to allocate because again, just looking at just this

first line of things that we have on here, the total, the \$1.7 million but if we're just looking at the \$600,000, that \$600,000 potentially will be coming out of that \$2 million?

Mr. Jones said I would say that I think it's premature to just race to that bucket until we have further discussion.

Ms. Mayfield said that's what I'm trying to figure out. What bucket you're talking about.

Mayor Lyles said so, Ms. Mayfield, I think that what we're doing is getting a list of what people want to have adjustments in this budget. The staff is going to have to do some work. Your point about where this process is, it is not defined well enough for us to do this in a way that we would do it ordinarily. It's like we want to do something for Habitat, we know exactly how it goes. This, we do not exactly know it goes. So, while you're in that category and there's money requested, it will depend on what the process is.

Ms. Anderson said I just wanted to mention one additional item that is already in the budget and that is our support of Tree Charlotte. We have supported Tree Charlotte. This is item 34 on page 23. We have supported Tree Charlotte over the years, and you know that they are wonderful stewards of our canopy. They have requested that we increase our support because as we all know as inflation has increased over the last year plus, their costs has gone up but our support of them has not. So, I believe Mr. Manager we have a proposal of \$250,000 to support them. I'd like for us to double that to \$500,000. So, I'd like to propose that as well.

Mayor Lyles said is it a one-time or do you see it as a recurring or is it something that can be delayed or do we add it to the cost of doing business in the City?

Ms. Anderson said sure. So, as we have on page 34 from 2020 to 2022, we have supported them with \$100,000 to \$150,000. In 2023, we increased it to \$250,000 with no increase since 2023. I propose that this is a one-time amount for this year. We can of course evaluate this next year as we move forward.

Ms. Ajmera said so I agree with comments and remarks that's been made by my colleagues. Mr. Jones, you certainly had many priorities that you were balancing, and I think overall I do agree with my colleagues that our budget reflects our priorities and our moral values, though I'd like to make some changes. I do agree with Councilmember Watlington and Councilmember Mayfield on some of the arts questions. I had similar questions. I think we just need one separate session just on arts and how the funding is allocated. So, just two very basics. Where we got this \$11 million in arts that you're recommending, did that come as a recommendation of the Advisory Council?

Mr. Jones said no, Councilmember Ajmera. When we were trying to put the budget together, we thought about what happens if it's just a go it alone strategy for Charlotte which we would hope that would not be the case. If we start to think about the last three years, there's been \$12 million each year pumped into these 30 plus organizations with a couple of million dollars like the Ad Hoc Committee. The workgroup around arts and culture wanted collaboration, wanted to make sure there were some additional opportunities in the ecosystem. So, the concept was if you took away the infrastructure at that time from it, the cost associated with delivering the dollars which was about a million dollars from the ASC (Arts & Science Council), it's about \$11 million if you left that at that level that would be consistent with the last three years. So, we always went into it just thinking about this as a go it alone strategy to replicate what the Infusion Fund did. There's an opportunity for collaboration with the County that that \$11 million becomes \$21 million with still, the City's money being very consistent with the Infusion Fund, and having the opportunity for the County to come in and also address some of the areas that are important to the County.

Ms. Ajmera said so, to follow up on that. So, the list that we have in front of us, it is not comprehensive. This is just the City's proposed funded list. There will be additional organizations that would potentially get funded through the private sector or through the County. Is that correct?



Mr. Jones said through the County, absolutely. So, if you start to think about it, again I'll be a broken record. This is almost replicating the three years of work from the Infusion Fund and so now while a lot of the guidance that we received from the Ad Hoc Committee and the work group was to make sure we're protecting the institutions that we're paying debt on and that different organizations are performing in. So, that was almost priority one. So, that's why you see this heavily weighed towards those organizations, but it's not just those seven or eight, it's 33 organizations. So, again, I wish that there was an opportunity to really put the two together and have the discussion because it's a much more robust plan than when you separate the two.

Mayor Lyles said I know that this is really something that we don't have on our agenda yet, about the arts, but I do want us to try to figure out how to get the budget things done.

Ms. Ajmera said actually I just have a follow up question because it is related to the budget. If we start adding on an ad hoc basis some of these organizations that are potentially going to have an opportunity to get funds from the County or the private sector, we do need to be thoughtful of that based on what the Manager said. Is that correct?

Mr. Jones said I would say if we could just go to page 17, the bottom. This is what the County presented back in April 2024 and if you take a look at it, it is the \$11 million that I'm suggesting from the City, \$9 million for those annual operating grants for the groups and \$2 million that you would add to those individual artists, small cultural groups and community organizations. On the other hand, the County, they proposed they have \$1 million set aside for those operating grants for those organizations that are in the towns. They have \$1.5 million set aside for venue assistance for individual artists and small groups, they have \$3 million set aside for education grants, mid to large groups, the \$3 million that I mentioned earlier that would benefit these 33 organizations that you're funding and \$4.5 million for cultural support to individual artists and culture block grants. So, its almost if you took the two middle columns out and looked at the total, you'll get \$21 million that's spread across these groups.

Mayor Lyles said what we're doing right now is putting things on the table that people want to adjust to. I think that we're going to give you a report before we go to the next step. So, I think it might be more clarity if we have it written so that everybody's talking about the same thing and there's also a better understanding because I think it's really hard to think, "Oh, Infusion Fund, the nine facilities that we own, how is the County going to use their money?" I think it would be better to have a report that's written that everyone can read. So, for example if the Museum of History is something that you think would be good, it could come back with a recommendation, but it could also come back and say where it would be in the process. So, if we can just get through the budget process, I think that will be good time well spent.

Ms. Ajmera said so I have a couple of items. I would like to add a line item for medical insurance for the City of Charlotte employees that die in the line of duty. I did request an amount for that. I think it's negligible, but I would like to add that line item. After the tragedy a couple of weeks ago, I worked with HR (Human Resources) to understand the benefits and how we are supporting the spouse and their dependents, I think this will go a long way in ensuring that we are covering the City's portion of the medical benefits for the spouse and for their dependents. So, our current policy is that the spouse is only covered just for three years. I would like that to be until they remarry or age 65. So, that would be just the City's employee portion. I do not know what the amount is, but I've been told it is negligible. So, I'd like to add that.

Mayor Lyles said alright. So, you'll get something. Do you remember anything ballpark?

Ms. Ajmera said yes. It says negligible, but because this will be a very rare situation, it says it could be observed in the employee health and life fund. I'll still add that.

Mayor Lyles said we'll just say that we'll get that number with the report back.

Ms. Ajmera said okay. The second item on Tree Charlotte to follow up on Councilmember Anderson's request, I did have a conversation with Jane Myers and some of the Board members at Tree Charlotte. The reason they're requesting additional funds this year is because they were counting on in-kind support that they are losing, but when I requested additional information on the in-kind support that they are losing, on page 24, it says that in-kind support is going to continue to move forward. So, I want to make sure there is a line item for Tree Charlotte in-kind support that continues because I think there is a communication gap and that's why they're requesting additional funds.

Mayor Lyles said okay.

Ms. Ajmera said so, as long as we continue that in-kind support, we do not need to allocate additional funding.

Mayor Lyles said let's wait and see what the staff discovers so that there's no confusion about it, okay?

Ms. Ajmera said okay.

Mayor Lyles said so, you're saying you support this as in-kind support?

Ms. Ajmera said that's right.

Mayor Lyles said then we'll find out what it is. Okay.

Ms. Ajmera said also I would like to request bike funding from \$4 million to \$10 million. When we look at our transportation funds and pretty much every single bucket in transportation has increased except the funding for a bike. Bike infrastructure is so important in order for us to meet our 2040 goals, but then also when you talk to people like James Lee and others, they use bikes to get from point A to point B. It's not for recreation, it's for the necessity. So, I would like to go ahead and request that.

Mayor Lyles said okay. Do you have anything that you would delay?

Ms. Ajmera said yes, I have a few more.

Mayor Lyles said I'm talking about on the bike funding. It would be a \$6 million difference. Do you have anything? Do you want to just come back?

Ms. Ajmera said no, I do not.

Mayor Lyles said okay.

Ms. Ajmera said then also I think we are making increased investments in our affordable housing to address the need that's out there, but I believe that we need to make increased investments in our workforce development to address economic mobility for the long term. So, I would like to go back and take a look at our financial partners and the ones that are specific to workforce development that are actually creating programs to tackle workforce development. I would like to fund those. I don't have an amount for that.

Mayor Lyles said let me just check in. We have referred to your Committee the financial partners.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, this is the one I'm talking about. The ones that have already applied.

Mayor Lyles said Ryan? I think that you funded everyone at the same level as last year. So, they have funding right now.

**Ryan Bergman, Budget Director** said yes, I think she's referring to the organizations that funded, that weren't selected, not the existing ones.

Ms. Ajmera said yes.

Mayor Lyles said oh, you want to add. Okay. I thought it was specific to the people that were already funded. So, Ryan can get that number.

Mr. Jones said Ryan, is that the \$2 million number?

Mr. Bergman said can you say that again?

Mr. Jones said page 24, is that the \$2 million, the new applications unfunded?

Mr. Bergman said [inaudible] right. There's a list of the ones that were not funded that applied.

Mayor Lyles said so, it's \$2 million.

Ms. Ajmera said I'm only referring to the ones in workforce development that aren't providing workforce development.

Mayor Lyles said okay.

Ms. Ajmera said so, we had to go back and take a look at all the organization's applications.

Mayor Lyles said okay, I want to make sure that I understand you Ms. Ajmera. For those that are in the queue, our workforce development, you want to fund all of those that have applied or applied and did not get funded?

Ms. Ajmera said that are only workforce development specific.

Mayor Lyles said workforce development specific?

Ms. Ajmera said yes ma'am.

Mayor Lyles said but you're not taking away the funding for the other groups that are doing other different purposes?

Ms. Ajmera said no, I'm not.

Mayor Lyles said okay. So, it's the \$2 million and more.

Ms. Ajmera said that's right. Because of the increase level of request and just the responsibilities, I would like us to add a dedicated support staff for Council and I do have a number for that. It's \$479,000. That's on page nine. So, we currently have six Council supports. So, only Councilmember Anderson has a dedicated support, the rest of us share support staff. I'm very appreciative of the work that they do to support Council and the Mayor, but I do feel that we are at a point where we do need increased support and that's why I'm requesting for us to have a dedicated support staff for Council.

Mayor Lyles said okay.

Ms. Ajmera said then last, I would like to add \$34,000 for this nonprofit that works on juvenile programming, Save Our Children's Movement. I think it's very important as we are trying to reach a targeted group to help us with our youth violence. It's a very small request that they have. That's all I have. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said okay.

Ms. Molina said it's one up there that I've been getting a lot of calls for, the bike funding, and again, I don't have a place in the budget where we would remove that. I do want to lift that up in this conversation.

Mayor Lyles said it's still the six.

Mr. Bergman said let me ask for clarification from Councilmember Ajmera.

Mayor Lyles said okay, thank you.

Mr. Bergman said there's \$8 million per bond for bikes which we had upped it from \$4 million last bond I believe. So, \$8 million is essentially over two years because we do a bond every two years. So, what is the level you're requesting? Is it \$10 million per year or is it \$10 million in a bond?

Ms. Ajmera said \$10 million in bond.

Mr. Bergman said okay. So, \$2 million extra.

Ms. Ajmera said thank you.

Mayor Lyles said an additional \$2 million to what the Manager recommendation was?

Ms. Molina said yes, \$12 million. Wow, I got afraid. Yes, so thanks for that clarification because like I said I know that there have been quite a few community members who've been in contact with various ones of us, even sending petitions to us with members of our community signed on. I think at last check it was over like 650 members of the community, the second highest being District Five in East Charlotte. So, I want to definitely raise that up. As far as the Charlotte Museum of History, I had the opportunity to speak to Ms. White because that's also an asset that's in the east area of the City. I think, although I don't have a specific funding amount that I'm asking for, I think the problem with that particular ask is that Ms. White, by her own admission didn't understand or know about the process to get involved and become a partner with us. That asset is in peril. So, I think that's a very important piece to lift up, is that that asset is actually in peril as far as operating expenses. So, actually it's in Councilmember Anderson's district specifically, but it serves community members across East Charlotte and the City hosting various events. So, I want to maybe afterwards have a specific conversation about how, what, if we become partners what that means. Again, there's a lot to talk about and I think this is such a short runway that even if we can't get them into the budget right now, what do we do? How do we make sure that this very important asset on the East Side is something that we don't lose? So, I would love to continue that conversation maybe after this session.

I do have also two small asks and one is actually a unique ask. There is an organization that has been in operation in East Charlotte for eight years, and it has never had any funding. The name of that organization is called Promise Youth Development and it's led by a registered nurse. Her name is Ms. Tesha Boyd, and she is amazing.

Mayor Lyles said she is. I've been out there. I see that CMPD (Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department) has participated. I've participated in their programs, and it is about making sure children are safe.

Ms. Molina said I mean she does a great job with those babies, and I am so surprised that we haven't considered her before now.

Mayor Lyles said she was quite a fund raiser at one point.

Ms. Molina said oh yes?

Mayor Lyles said yes, she did a lot. Things change.

Ms. Molina said the last time I met with her, she was wanting a van. Something that seemingly is simple and no ask. She was like, "You know, Council member, I don't have a way to get the babies around and a van would help me tremendously." So, I don't know how we'd do that. I asked her, "Well how much does a van cost?" She said last she checked, used, it was like \$50,000.

Mayor Lyles said we're going to let them tell us how much it is.

Ms. Molina said yes, tell me how can we help her? I don't know how much vans cost. I'm looking at Councilmember Mayfield over there because she was talking about vans. I remember your comment. Actually, it was stuck in my head about your surplus van comment. So, afterwards I thought about the same thing and that's why I'm saying it's a unique ask because we can't go on a pick-by-pick basis. I learned that at that meeting. So, I'd just like to put that out there and say how do we partner for support with that very important East Side organization? I do have a second, and it's Carolina Youth Coalition. That particular organization is led by one of our recent 40 under 40. His name is Aaron Randolph and what he does is he helps underrepresented children prepare for and make it through college. He himself has an amazing story that led him to Cornell and Harvard and now he actually uses his own model in East Charlotte right off of Monroe Road. He is on the ground in the community helping young people get to and through college. So, he actually provides to and through college support for East Side children and I'd like to lift them up. I don't have a specific number because those asks are also pretty unique. The support that they need for ongoing is pretty similar to Ms. Boyd's. So, I can discuss that with you, but I definitely wanted to lift that organization up for our consideration as well.

Mayor Lyles said okay.

Ms. Molina said that's all I have Madam Mayor.

**Councilmember Johnson** said may I see the list? I apologize for being late. I want to see if the other Council members have addressed any of the concerns. Okay. I didn't miss anything. The firefighters. We've all received emails from the firefighters regarding some issues that they wanted to address or some items they wanted addressed and I can name them specifically, but I know we've all received the email. So, there were three items that we received many emails. So, they wanted to expand the CFD (Charlotte Fire Department) budget to end off duty training. Fully fund the public safety pay plan steps. They're asking for a five percent cost of living in line with the Police Department. So, I guess you would put five percent. Then compensation for Kelly Days. So, I guess I would like the numbers, or we can talk offline.

Mr. Bergman said yes. I can provide a little bit of context. Fully fund the public safety pay plan steps. All the steps are funded for both police and fire. I think what they're asking for, I was fortunate, one of you guys did forward it to me, they get a market adjustment, and they get a step. The market adjustment is 2.5 percent for police and fire and they want it to be five percent. I think the cost of doing that for police and fire would be about \$7 million. For Kelly Days, that is around pay cycles essentially. So, fire has a 24 day pay cycle for overtime purposes and they're basically saying that for Kelly Days, regardless of what the pay cycle says, pay at a time and a half rate which would be unique in that we follow the pay cycles for all other employees. We did answer that on the Q&A that Marie sent out on Friday, the cost of that, number 15. So, that would be about \$655,000.

Ms. Johnson said how much?

Mr. Bergman said \$655,000.

Ms. Johnson said okay.

Mr. Bergman said then for the off-duty training, this one's a little bit more complicated. We provided funds last year to eliminate any off-duty training for specialized

assignments that they don't get extra funds for like a ladder company. What they're saying is that they want to be on duty for things like promotions from firefighter one to firefighter two which currently you have to do off duty because it's a promotion. So, I don't know exactly what that one would cost. We would have to do some analysis on that one.

Ms. Johnson said okay. I just sent you another email that I received this afternoon. It's another question that the firefighters had. So, I will discuss that with you offline if that's okay.

Mr. Bergman said okay.

Ms. Johnson said also The People's Budget, we had numerous speakers in the public hearing, and we've received numerous emails about The People's Budget. Is there information on what that would cost if we answered those requests specifically? I know you've seen it.

Mr. Bergman said yes. So, the \$100 million housing bond is of course out there, and they asked for a portion to be allocated. The other things I heard at the public hearing were about a \$25 minimum wage which we did answer in this Q&A, number seven and that would cost in the general fund about \$5.7 million ongoing. It would also cost about \$6 million in enterprise funds which could be notable as far as rates. So, that's the \$25 minimum. The also asked for an extra one percent 401k contribution for general employees. That's in the budget Q&A on page six, which would be about \$2.2 million in the general fund.

Ms. Johnson said okay. Then I wanted to ask for more money. I'll let you finish. Is that all Ryan?

Mr. Bergman said unless I'm missing something, those are the key ones I heard on Monday.

Ms. Mayfield said they also had [inaudible] organizations [inaudible] support.

Ms. Johnson said I wanted to ask for extra money in I guess it would be the Keep Charlotte Beautiful Fund or some fund to address litter and clean up, especially on the State-owned roads that are in the City of Charlotte. We need, in District Four and District Two, we need to be able to address that. There was a lady that's moving to Charlotte, and I told her to come to the University area and she said, "Give me a street to ride down so I can get a feel of the University area." I didn't want to tell her University Boulevard you know, because it should not indicate the beauty of the City. So, we really, if we can find a way to address the litter in our area. I don't know if we can work with the courts and maybe get community service or something, but we have to address it. So, I'm asking for additional money in the Keep Charlotte Beautiful Fund or wherever that would come from, sanitation or something so that we can be deliberate and intentional and consistent with the cleanup of the City.

Mr. Jones said sure. Councilmember Johnson, I want to make sure that I'm tracking. So, I think we put a quarter of a million in the budget for litter. Are you suggesting that you want that to be more, or you want something to be specific to Keep Charlotte Beautiful or Ryan, did the \$250,000 last year go to Keep Charlotte Beautiful?

Mr. Bergman said so, there's \$250,000 in the budget, which similar to this past year goes to the Center for Employment Opportunities which utilities people who were previously incarcerated to get work experience, things like that. So, we've partnered with them for the last couple of years. There's another quarter million to do it again and that's focused entirely on litter.

Ms. Johnson said so, the \$250,000 I want to double that.

Mr. Jones said okay.

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Ms. Johnson said yes, to \$500,000. Thank you.

**Councilmember Brown** said so Malcolm already addressed For The Struggle, Inc., but I did want to get on record saying that I do support that great organization and the things that they're doing for our seniors. They're in one of the Corridors of Opportunity. So, that's just amazing. I am one of the number one advocates for The People's Budget. So, I don't know what we're doing for The People's Budget, but I'm a big advocate for The People's Budget. They've been sending out a lot of information for all of Council to take a look at. So, I'm onboard with however we can allocate. They were pretty satisfied with the budget for the most part, but there were some things that they did ask. So, specifically I would like to say Block Love, I don't think they applied for any allocated funds. So, we have 489 pages of the budget. So, don't ask me did I go through everything because I'm an honest person. So, no I didn't. It's a lot. I skimmed through it, but you guys did a great job with putting it together for us to go back and look at it and ask questions as we need to be able to do so. So, I'm onboard with that.

Block Love, I'd like to see \$230,000 go to Block Love. Block Love does immaculate work all over downtown Charlotte with feeding our unsheltered population making sure that they are good, clothed, showered. They just got a new building downtown. So, they are showing that they are actually doing the work and executing results. So, I would like to see however we can do that for them. Save Our Children's Movement is in my district. They don't ask for much but they deal with the kids in District Three off of West Boulevard and Remount Road, another Corridor of Opportunity, \$34,000 which is in The People's Budget for them. They do great work with juvenile prevention. Boots are on the ground under the Executive Director Rodney McGill. So, I would like to see that. I'm a big advocate for increasing the bike fund. I don't know how we're going to do that, where the money is going to come from, but our roads are not safe. I drive out there every day, we drive out there every day, people are crazy on the roads. Nobody does the speed limit, everybody cuts out in front of you, runs red lights, stop signs, all of that. We need to try to figure out how we can get people off the road and vehicles. They're causing accidents, killing people's families. So, however we can maneuver that.

The animal shelter is in my district. I've been down there, Mayor Pro Tem has been down there. I know we may not have the funding, but I grew up in Southside Homes Housing Project. I wasn't around animals, but one of my get aways was the animal shelter that was on Toomey Avenue. As a child I used to go there after school and me and my friends used to go over there and just play with the animals because that was on the things we got to do. That is a real story. Every child in that neighborhood will get off the school bus, put their bookbag down wherever they put it down at and will go to the animal shelter. I didn't grow up around dogs because I lived in Southside Homes Housing Projects until 18. We couldn't have animals. You couldn't have a pet in housing projects in those days. So, I took the initiative to go out there and face my fear and do something that I wouldn't normally do and go to the animal shelter and see the work that they do. Surgery, euthanizing, putting the animals down. We can't continue to say that's okay, to continue to kill all those innocent animals because we don't have anywhere for them to go. We want our streets to be safe, neighborhoods to be safe. Animals are just wandering and they do great work down there. I did a story down there, I actually spent some time down there, going back down there, even offered to volunteer. It's in my district and it's been there and from my understanding there was some money that was going to be allocated to them one time before and then it went somewhere else. I don't know where it went, I have no idea, but at some point in this lifetime, we need to figure out how to upkeep that shelter and make it better and allocate some funds over there. So, I'm definitely onboard with them. I know that in the budget there's a place for 10 employees. That's just not going to be enough for them. I don't know what we're going to do and how we're going to do it, but I just want you to know I'm in communication with the people at the animal shelter. Again, they are my constituents, they're in my district and I do care genuinely.

Then the City employees. Oh, my goodness. They are the ones that keep downtown Charlotte beautiful and when the young man that came up to the podium to speak about not being able to have anywhere to stay, but he keeps the streets downtown clean, that

really is a red flag. We've got to try to do whatever we can to increase funding for our employees. I know we've done some great things. Charlotte does second chance employment. Thank you for that. Everybody should do that, everybody deserves a second chance, fourth, third, fifth, all of us in here have had more than one chance, let's just be real about it. Some of us have done things that if we got caught or if the cameras were on our back, then you might've took the path that I took in life. We have to make sure that we are really pouring back into our employees that keep this City beautiful and looking good. I touch bases with everything. I don't have all the answers, but these are some folks that have been pushing me and I've been communicating with them and if I'm here to represent the constituents and try to do the best job that I can do when they send out information and ask me to speak up for it, I can use my voice to elevate that. So, that's all I have. Thank you so much. I really appreciate it. Thank you for all the hard work you did Mr. Jones for putting this budget together. That's your area of expertise and I just really appreciate that. That's all I have. Thank you.

**Councilmember Mitchell arrived at 2:58 p.m.**

**Councilmember Mitchell** said the only adjustment I have would be a one time. The Charlotte Black International Film Festival. It's an event that does great [inaudible] in our community for a long period of time, helps small businesses and when you think about equity, you think about how many ethnic organizations that we support when it comes to entertainment. So, it would be a one-time adjustment for the Charlotte Black Film Festival.

Mayor Lyles said how much is it?

Mr. Mitchell said \$287,000.

Mayor Lyles said \$287,000. Got it.

Ms. Watlington said I have a couple of things. First of all, thank you to Mr. Jones and the Budget staff. You guys are phenomenal. Appreciate all of the work that you've done. I know that over the last several years, we've been talking about the need for a revenue increase at some point. You guys did great through a whole pandemic staying that off. So, we understand that we need to do something. That said, considering a lot of the other pressures that our residents are experiencing, I do think that it would behoove us to make sure that we're doing our due diligence on this particular budget and as we think about outer years, really what that means for our City. We know we've been talking for a long time that we are a region, not just a City and we're really trying to move to this Thursday to Monday approach and with that we've got to figure out how do we continue to grow smartly without overburdening our particular residents. Particularly those who have invested in where the City is today over the years so that they can be a part of the growth and the progression. So, that said, I know that it may not necessarily sit on this particular paper, but I would like to ask that we begin to evaluate different revenue structures for our City. There are some things that we would need to advocate for at the state level in order to allow us to do things, and in some cases like a commuter tax for example, because we are at a State line, would require some federal intervention. Those are just ones that I'm speaking of as examples. I'm not necessarily advocating for those particular ones right now, but I do think that it is high time that we reimagine if you will our revenue structure. Mr. Jones, you look like you want to say something.

Mr. Jones said no. I don't disagree with you.

Ms. Watlington said okay. So, I approached this Budget Review with that in mind. So, several of the things that I would like to address may not necessarily fit specifically within a budget line item, but I do think it appropriate to have this conversation at this particular time, because I think we need to be strategic about how we do this. One thing I will say that's a little bit technical is that as we think about this van for Promise Youth, I know that we've got it listed here as a van or a support. I did ask, and keep me honest Mr. Bergman, if this was something that if we had a van that has reached the end of its



service life that we could donate to organizations, that would be something that doesn't necessarily impact the budget. I know everything costs money, but doesn't necessarily impact the budget in terms of making it an upper. So, I would love for us to figure out ways that we can meet the needs of our community while also managing our assets and our disposals appropriately. It sounds like we may need a policy developed for that to be able to delineate when it's appropriate to do so versus when perhaps not, but I do think that's an opportunity to help meet needs. So, I wanted to lift that up and I don't know if it requires an amendment to what's listed here, but we can add it as an additional and consider it.

Mayor Lyles said we have worked through that issue often because of people in need. We've helped Johnson C. Smith; there are opportunities. So, I think that it's legal at least. So, it's just a matter of how we get it done.

Ms. Mayfield said [inaudible] last discussion. It did not get approved.

Ms. Watlington said it didn't get approved to get referred or didn't get approved out of the Committee?

Ms. Mayfield said apologies Madam Mayor. When the vote was not to approve the allocation, what was supposed to have happened, because it was a two-part question that I asked is that it was supposed to be referred to Committee for us to actually look at some language so moving forward we don't run into that situation again.

Ms. Watlington said so, Madam Mayor as an aside, I would appreciate a Committee recommendation on that. The next thing I wanted to go back to because we were having this conversation about the arts previously, and I'm glad to hear that that is a separate discussion because again I don't want to give the impression that I'm necessarily supportive of the process proposed without due diligence about what that really looks like versus the particulars for this particular budget. So, what I would like to request as I understand from staff is that we already have the \$13 million that supports our City-owned facilities, then we've got another \$4 million that has been supporting organizations. So, what we're asking for is a net \$7 million which is the \$2 million and the \$5 million. What I'd like to do, number one, is decouple that process from the budget conversation and I also would like to take a deep dive into these arts numbers because if we're going from \$4 million to \$9 million, I would really like to understand what that is we're supporting. The reason that I say that is because as we look at the needs of this budget, it's very, very important to me that we deliver service and that requires investing internally. So, if there are things on this list that we as a Council would like to see move forward that invest in our City employees and in our City operations, I would like to prioritize that before we support operating dollars in another organization. So, that's one that I would like to add. So, that would look like some kind of potential adjustment to the \$9 million for arts.

Along those same lines, as we look at the strategic priorities, there are a lot of things as I'm understanding in my budget discussions that we actually have dollars that are sitting in this budget, but what we see are the adjustments to the existing budgets. We don't necessarily see what's already programmed from previous years that many not have been spent yet and I think particularly as we look at The People's Budget, as we look at some of the items that we've said are important to us from a strategic perspective, I do believe that there are dollars that are already set aside to address some of those needs. So, before we go to a budget upper, I'd like us to have a clear understanding of what dollars we already have in the kitty that could be used for this particular program. Does that make sense?

Mayor Lyles said do you mean could or have been appropriated?

Ms. Watlington said have been appropriated, yes.

Mayor Lyles said got it. We're not trying to shift it, we're just trying to know what we have.

Ms. Watlington said exactly, because I think that'll impact some of these numbers. So, that's the second piece about the strategic priorities. Then as we think about the 23 additional dollars that we see for police and fire, absolutely I think that we've got a consensus that we support our police and fire folks, but I do think that we must do our due diligence in terms of ensuring that we've combed through that budget to make sure if there are any efficiencies that we can leverage, we can do that. I have spoken with the Chief and he's been gracious to accept that task so that we can just make sure that we can go forward to the people and say that we've done what we need to do to ensure that we're operating most efficiently. So, I do look forward to that. So, if there's anything that we can leverage going forward in those two budgets, I would like to see what potential adjustments we could make in this budget cycle.

Then lastly, as I think about this on the capital side of things, as I think about the bond specifically what we're calling the Housing Trust Fund bond. As I understand it, we've got right now \$100 million proposed and there's a portion of that that shows up in our operating dollars that services the debt. So, there's a ratio there.

Mr. Bergman said so, about 0.13 cents of the property tax increase is exclusively to support going from \$50 million to \$100 million. So, that's about \$2.9 million and basically that supports the debt ongoing.

Ms. Watlington said so, as we look at that, we've been having this conversation over and over that it's not just about housing. It can never just be about housing because in the City of Charlotte we cannot sustain poverty. What we can do is enable folks and invest in our residents to be able to grow through economically. So, what I would like to see staff analyze are two things. Number one, how much of our overall tax increase could be redirected for economic mobility? So, what might that look like? That may look like \$75 million specifically for housing and the offset of the \$25 million. So, \$1.9 million or whatever it's going to be ongoing that goes directly to workforce development. Those may not be the numbers we land at, but I think that we have to take a look at how do we couple those things together. I think that the best use of those funds is not necessarily in housing building, but in enabling our people to be able to earn more and also fill a lot of these roles that we know that we're going to have at the City and within the community. So, I would like for a staff analysis to understand that, and I think that couples nicely with the work that we're doing in the Housing Committee as we look at what the potential options are.

Then secondly, as I understand this Housing Trust Fund is about 21 years old and we've got affordability tethers that were 15, 20, 30. I think we're in to the 40 to 60 years now and please correct me if I'm wrong, but just clarify. Once that affordability period ends, we get that money back?

Mr. Bergman said yes, unless it's extended which has happened a couple of times. Because of the age of it, there hasn't been many instances where developments have reached that point yet though, but there has been a couple.

Ms. Watlington said so, I'd like to understand as part of the staff analysis when we might expect to start seeing those dollars and how that may impact bond capacity or what we could potentially do. So, those are the pieces. Then lastly, back to that idea of really prioritizing City employees. I am open to this idea of helping to invest in workforce housing for this Teacher Village; however, given what we know that our internal employees are advocating for and what we may be able to do and what we're not, if we're going to put up dollars into that, I would love to see at least a number of units open to our City employees specifically as well. So, that can be part of that discussion, but for me it's very important that if we're putting City dollars towards workforce development and we know that we've got solid waste workers who are homeless, we've got to advocate that they have an opportunity to be a part of that benefit as well. So, those are my top lines. Thanks.

Mr. Graham said so, a lot of those are policy driven items. So, are we saying that we're going to resolve those before the budget is passed or after the budget is passed? I have

some of the same concerns. I'm assuming that these are conversations we're having after the budget is passed.

Ms. Watlington said I think that some things are certainly going to run over, but I think to the extent that we can get the data on the front end so we know what levers are going to be impacted, that will help us make budget decisions for this fiscal. What I don't want us to have happen is that we get beyond this budget, we've approved things that commit us down the road and then we have a policy that doesn't match. So, we're not necessarily going to answer every single question ahead of raising our hand for the budget, but we should have sufficient information to understand how our decisions may impact our flexibility going forward.

Mayor Lyles said I do think that that's a great question because I think you've already got it in Committee right now and I do think that we cannot go out and ask people to vote for something when we don't tell them exactly what it's going to be and how it's going to be expended. We've done that in the past and I think that's an expectation that our voters would have, but I think that if we're getting to that place that we have to have more meetings for this effort, I think we need to and if the data is helping us along the way, that's very important. Just data primarily helps us do better, but I think that it's a short time between June 2024 and September 2024 when we'll start talking about these things at the Board of Elections.

Ms. Watlington said thank you Madam Mayor. You made me think of one more thing as it relates to spending. I know that we are not programming the ARPA interest today, but I did want to lift up from a juvenile justice involved support standpoint. We know that we've got \$3.5 million in the budget right now. It's very possible and even likely that we may need an additional up to \$1 million to support some of those programs. So, I just wanted to lift it up so it's on folks radar. I know that nobody is making a claim today to that, but we are trying to have a special Committee meeting in order to have additional conversations about that so we can get some more granularity around that and we can update this ask ahead of the budget ask. So, just wanted to give a heads up.

Mayor Lyles said alright. So, Mr. Graham, I think that Ms. Watlington and Ms. Mayfield are going to be really busy for the next three months. It is all policy. It's like what do you want to do with your money and where do you have the greatest impact and who are you serving best.

Ms. Mayfield said Ryan and team thank you, and Mr. Manager for presenting us this budget and giving us the opportunity to add our ideas in it. We're already over \$2 million in potential even though it takes six to say let's move forward. I do want to ask a question because my colleague Mr. Mitchell beat me to it, but I wanted to find out. For me, Charlotte Black Film Festival should be in our Hospitality and Tourism. They are a generator that not only brings people into the City, create an event, to me they should be already in that funding line item. So, I completely support this request, but I think this should not be this one time to get initiated, yet they should be a part of our Hospitality and Tourism dollars whether it's under University since most of their events are housed in the University area and the MSD (Municipal Service District) of University or just in the general through the Alliance. We need to figure out how to start supporting these events that bring, consistently, individuals to our City because our Charlotte Black Film Festival is in the running and in the list of international film festivals. So, there's a big draw that has been created from individuals and direct donations that the City has never financially supported. I would really love for us to look at what does that look like with them being a part of Hospitality and Tourism even though I do support the idea of this initial \$287,000.

If we go back up to the top, I'm trying to get a better understanding following up with Councilmember Watlington's comments regarding the workforce housing partnership with CMS, the Teacher Village. I'm not as familiar with it. You know, one, as a general rule, I'm a fan of our tax dollars need to be helping our residents because the County is two-thirds of the taxes. That's basically 70 percent of the funding goes to the County. The City doesn't even get 30 percent once the towns get their percentage, then we get

a percentage of that. We're really more like 25 percent, 27 percent of the taxes. We have a clear need with our staff. That is something that I would support as far as housing with a clear goal not just a small percentage because I don't feel that the percentage would be large enough. The County has a role in that conversation with CMS. We may have a small part to play in it, I don't know if that part is at \$1 million for me. So, Hearts for the Invisible, which we already have had conversations and know some of the work that they've already done, I would say that a one-time request of \$100,000 to get them in the system and then we move forward. We have some of our current financial partners. I've already asked previously, and I think it's supposed to be coming to our Committee anyway, where we're actually going to do a deeper dive on some of these long term financial partners to see if that's still beneficial as far as our goals.

Mayor Lyles said it needs to be done as soon as possible. We need to get into it.

Ms. Mayfield said so, that is in there and then the one that I'm going to say is up the street and around the corner a little bit, my ask, and I've already spoken to just a few members. Manager, how would I put it? Would I say it's a grant? Ryan, when we talked about the trees. It's not Tree Charlotte, but basically, we going to type it up. My request is for tree removal for Charlotte residents. We have recently been impacted by high winds and rains and 100-year weather impacts. The only caveat that I have in this request is for them to be Charlotte residents, owner occupied homes. We have seen a major impact. I don't want it necessarily being tied to Corridors and there's a very specific reason. We have people who have been in the Providence area for 30 plus years. That doesn't mean that they have the income of today's Providence area residents. So, a number of people, especially a number of our older residents are in areas that have grown and seen tremendous growth. They're not necessarily benefiting from that growth. So, this is a one time ask for \$500,000. This \$500,000 really could be in a grant form with a very specific target of utilizing our general services, MWSBEs (Minority, Women, Small Business Enterprises) that we already have in the system. It is not reinventing the wheel, but this is a great way for us to give back to our community and to our residents. A lot of people may have the conversation where they don't feel like they see what their tax dollars are doing for them. This is a great way for us to go in to the community because we're driving by as staff, as Council members, we're seeing these trees that have been uprooted from the roots that are in yards and/or on homes or sitting on vehicles that are not getting removed as quickly. Here's a great give back for us to assist with our residents with an immediate need to help and then later on have a different conversation, whether it's under the umbrella of Tree Charlotte or another umbrella looking at ongoing support.

So, we have funding when a developer can pay a fee in lieu when there comes a time for clear cutting for their development. What does the conversation look like where we have a fund that would help continue addressing some of our older trees in the neighborhood? Tree Charlotte does a bit of that, but this particular \$500,000 request is very specific to helping the individuals right now who have trees that have been downed and we can do that through our current process, and again, utilizing the services that we already have available. I do support the longer conversations that we need to have regarding policy language. Staff, I've asked this question previously when we first started the conversation regarding the funding that was asked for extending bicycles. I'm personally not ready to go up to \$10 million and my understanding from that meeting is what they were asking for was more than \$2 million a year to address this. I want to know exactly what are currently having. I believe Mr. Manager you identified some additional staff to help with code enforcement. It would be helpful to get a stronger idea of what those expectations of those roles would be, mainly because as I mentioned to you before, a lot of our bike lanes have people parking their vehicles in them. So, you don't have access to the bike lanes the way you would think that you should in the first place. So, I would like for us to get a handle on that before we just identify additional funds to expand something when we have some opportunities on this end. Those are the only things that I have at this point. Thank you.

**Councilmember Bokhari** said I've got four items that I'm going to walk through that I'd like to put for consideration. The first three are very tactical and specific and then the fourth one is a little bit more macro. As I get into these first three, first I want to give a shout out to Officers Campbell, Spiegler, Tolley, Blowers and Giglio. They are the five officers in CMPD who were wounded on April 29, 2024, but survived thanks to medical help from Atrium and Novant and others and the allowed me to spend time talking to them and picking their brains on what happened and what would've been made different from that day. I just really appreciate it. I also want to thank the Chief and all of his leadership team who did the most excellent job navigating us through these last three weeks that anyone could've ever asked for and the entire department. Also, a quick thanks to Officer Thanos [inaudible] who took me on Friday night in third shift Tryon Division. If you haven't been to the Rock on third shift and seen what they go through every day, I think 99 percent of Charlotteans would be shocked to see one, what's just happening, but two, what they're hardened and numb to and what they have to go through. So, these first three are about them and those situations.

The first one actually came from Officer Blowers who was in the Army Special Ops before all of this. He was one of the worst injured. His idea, which right when I started hearing it and asking him questions, he didn't think he was bringing this up for today, he was just saying this would've been helpful. It was so resounding to me that I did some more research and I'm bringing it to you. The first is an active shooter kit. It includes, and we don't have these today, a sling type over the shoulder crossbody bag with two compartments. He thinks we can get them and as we've looked, for around \$25. You can either get them from 5.11 or Galls. It includes two chest seals, two tourniquets, two Glock mags, one rifle mag and then a twin pack chest seal, a trauma bandage, the Israeli type, trauma shears and what's really important about these as you look through the pricing of the individual items is, one, it would have made a big difference on April 29, 2024. Two, if they're in the back of every single patrol car of around 1,000 that we have, this would cost about \$150 to outfit them, the would be completely understood and interchangeable so that it doesn't matter if you're near another patrol car or your own, everyone knows exactly what's in there and as they need them. So, the active shooter kit in that way for 1,000 patrol cars at \$150 per, would be a line item of \$150,000 and I think that would be worth every penny.

Number two is outer carrier vests and ballistic shields. The outer carrier vest has been estimated to potentially cost around \$500 and our current body armor will work with it. The rifle plates and things that we have might be additional things we look at there, but I think the punch line on the outer carrier vest is this. We've heard from our officers for a long time. There are pros and cons to this argument I know. It's very complex, but when you put aside those and you put aside even their own comfort, the weight that gets redistributed off of their belt and all of those things, there's two reasons why I decided to bring this up today. One, that active shooter med kit can be attached to it. So, they don't have to carry it individually. It can be hooked on. Two, as we found out, the drag harness can help carry people out of situations like that. So, there were a whole lot of reasons before April 29, 2024, why I think this was important, but I also understand why it's not an easy decision, but right now if we can take roughly about 1,000 of those because others have some from other parts of their training. The first half of this second budget item, \$500,000 to make sure that that outer carrier vest, everyone has it, it's paid for, there's a lot of work that we need to do and the Chief and his team need to huddle. So, what I'm asking right now is we put five votes to it so that then they can go and make sure that they have their time to go through all this, but I think it starts with us there. The second half of that is another \$97,500 and that is for ballistic shields. The three levels if you don't know are the baseline kind of bulletproof vest. We have these other rifle round rated shields that are active shooter things. This third level of these ballistic shields, they're expensive and I wouldn't expect us to buy one for every person, but if every division had three of these in rotation every night and they cost about \$2,500 apiece. There'd need to be 39 of these purchased, this is going to be something rated for rifle rounds that I think is going to potentially save lives and as I've heard from several officers I've asked, would've been priceless on April 29, 2024, to have. So, that total one of the second line items, outer carrier vests and ballistic shields has an allocation of \$597,500 that I'd like to put there. I think that's really important.

Number three. It's in your budget books and you've seen it. Something we're contemplating. So, everyone else, this has to do with a raise calendar. Everybody else in the City except for CMPD, because of the magnitude of the item, are getting their raises in July and November. The inconsistency is CMPD gets theirs in July and January. While a decision was made a while ago for budgetary reasons and changed for others, is obviously it's a hefty dollar amount. It's \$1.2 million roughly. I think this is the perfect time to bring them in consistency with everyone else so they can get the benefits of their raises being process in November and not January. Before I get to the last one, there's one I'll mention. It isn't one of my line items, it's one of Ms. Watlington's, the \$1 million increase for solutions for juveniles. Whether that's rehab services, mental health, whatever it is, I support that and I will support it because our officers and supporting them are one thing. The wraparound services, the things we need, especially with juveniles and then in the broader criminal justice system are all part of the same issue that we're facing there. So, my three right there have a total of \$1.95 million and I'll get in a second after I say my last one, how I think we can pay for that.

So, the fourth thing is the macro thing and I've debated heavily how to talk about this and how to bring it up. So, I'm just going to speak authentically to you my colleagues and I'm going to tell you as honestly as I can what I think is at stake and I want to plead with you to say let's try to figure it out after this. There's 100 ways we can figure it out, but there's one thing that won't help and that's if we just ignore it. So, right now we're in a position where we've struggled mightily trying to figure out a transformational investment through a sales tax for our transportation system. A lot of hard work has been done lately to clear a path for the first time in a long time to have that transformational investment. It may or may not happen on its own just to be quite frank, but I believe that there's an issue at hand here when you look at what we're proposing with a one and a half cent sales tax, what the County is now proposing on top of that and I think everyone you talk to would say that a sales tax, if we could have it, is a far superior mechanism to getting what we need long term for this City than us saying, "Well, alright, we have to do with what we can," which is a one and a half cent property tax increase.

So, just so you understand kind of how I'm viewing it, a one and a half cent property increases which was on the table before we made this list here today generates \$33.7 million of new general fund-like money that can be spent on different things. I think we all would agree in different ways that a lot of those topics are really important, but one of the things that's a challenge is if we go down this path and we raise a penny and a half of property tax now, putting aside my view of who that impacts more heavily than others versus what the ROI (return on investment) they get out of this budget, I think the bottom line is we're going to significantly hurt ourselves in our ability to make the case that Charlotte is all in on the sales tax. Charlotte understands that \$33.7 million of benefit today to do things doesn't outweigh the chance to have \$20 billion over the next 20 years. We know whether it's upward mobility or equity or whatever the topic is, we can do a hell of a lot more with \$20 billion and united as a region with all of the towns. So, is there any guarantee that anything happens if we, in my fourth line item which is very specifically, give staff the direction to figure out a way to reduce the one and a half cent property tax burden on our community. So, we cannot only do that and tighten our belt when we need to but show and send a strong message to our partners in the General Assembly and across the State that Charlotte is speaking with our actions, that we're all in on this other thing that isn't going to be easy or comfortable.

So, that's the fourth line item and my ask is I have specific lists of exactly how I would cut this budget, exactly, but now I've decided it's not the time for me to go through all of those. There's multiple ways to skin the cat. We can get from 1.5 cents to 0.9 cent sales increase relatively easily. It will be painful but relatively easy. To get that to zero gets a whole lot harder, but the question is, how big of a message do we want to send? We're at the one yard line in this outcome, and if I believe while there are no guarantees, us being able to show and say, "We tightened our belts," we're using our actions not our words to say General Assembly we are all in for this short session to get this ability, to tie up and have deeper long term relationships with the MTC (Metropolitan Transit

Commission) and the towns, all these different wild cards which are all pointing in the right direction. I truly believe while many great things have happened, and we are at this crux of a point where people might be thinking, "Yeah, we can teeter this over the edge," it is a complicated process and us sending a message now is super strong. I'm not saying it won't happen if we don't, I'm saying that last line item is so critically important to giving us the best odds humanly possible to make it happen. So, I've got ideas on how to cut that and the cuts that are there. My commitment is on my first three items. I'll work offline with staff and show them these items and bring the specifics needed to make sure that we don't add into this one and a half cent sales tax from those items. We prioritize, but I would just generically say there's a whole lot of way that we can direct staff to come back to us with here's how it happens and none of it will be easy, but some of it will definitely be possible and we can work offline as Council members with staff and together to figure out how we arrive at that number. I can't overstate the power of being able to send that message now in showing we're all in on this sales tax. We're all in on a plan to bring a transformational \$20 billion investment into our community that properly prioritizes rail and roads and everything else that properly sets up a governance structure between private and public sector and brings everyone together on the same page. This is something our children's children will remember us for if we get it done. There's multiple ways to get it done, but it's my opinion this is the strongest and best way. So, I appreciate you guys hearing me out on that. I really, really think it's important and think I'm doing my best not to show you what I want, but what I think I have analyzed as what we all need to get something done that we all agree with.

Ms. Johnson said I wanted to ask about the police protection gear. I don't know if the Chief needs to come up.

Mr. Bokhari said I think we should probably have the conversation as a Council and then when we decide to bring in the Chief.

Ms. Johnson said it's a technical or tactical question. One of the things I heard the Chief say is that we didn't have vests to protect against the automatic weapons. That was so shocking to me that I don't think much of the public knows that. That our police officers aren't protected against these automatic weapons.

Mr. Bokhari said I went deep into this and I think the easiest way to say it is I'm bringing up that story as a specific thing of why this is important. From what I've heard, and again, we're not getting ahead of any of the analysis or whatever, I don't think there's anyone that's going to come at the end and say, "We were deficient in what we did."

Ms. Johnson said no, I'm not either.

Mr. Bokhari said I just think there's things that we can do to know that this is a reality with these ballistic shields with some of these other pieces of protection and the med kits to make sure that we prioritize whatever is going to happen next. So, just to clarify, I know you're not saying that I don't think there's any critique that we didn't have what we needed then. I think this is a wake up call to say, "Here's what we need to make sure we're equipped with," listening to those people that are directly on the scene and what would've been helpful to them. So, just as a clarification.

Mayor Lyles said I want to say we're trying to get to this place where we can list this and I think we're going to have to ask because Mr. Bokhari also said there are issues and differences on how it works. So, maybe if we got more information we can figure out what is the best path and then we'd have this when we bring the list back or if we choose to have it, we'll bring the list back and have the comparisons.

Ms. Johnson said I'm not alluding or suggesting that we did anything deficient. I want to know is there equipment on the market that would protect against this type of weapon.

Mr. Bokhari said these ballistic armor shields are the best that you can get. That's why they cost \$2,500 a piece.

Mayor Lyles said technology is changing all the time these things.

Mr. Bokhari said nothing is perfect, but these are the best. they were not approved for funding, but they did make applications.

Ms. Johnson said I just think that that speaks to the need for gun control if we are sending officers around the nation out and there is weaponry that they aren't protected. So the same folks that are pro-gun and pro blue we really need to take a look at that.

**Councilmember Driggs** said well first of all as a former finance professional, I want to say how much I appreciate the quality of the work that went into this. The presentation. It is an excellent budget. I'm also pleased that there are significant investments in District Seven for Ballantyne Reimagined and Bryant Farms so grateful for that. I decided after thinking about it pretty hard there was probably no point in suggesting that we reduce or eliminate the tax increase, so I hope you all appreciate that. I will tell you also, the fact is we need it. If we are going to be spending like this, we need revenue. So, you couldn't even advocate for eliminating the tax increase unless you're also looking harder at the spending. The budget as it is, is structurally balanced, but in my opinion it's stressed. I'll call it stressed, meaning there is tension in this budget that's going to come out in future periods because in here we are actually exceeding our steady state borrowing capacity by \$240 million. We have some offset there because of the debt service component of the tax increase, but essentially what will happen, if you look at the outlook for the future, is that we will either have reduced capacity to borrow in the future or we will need another tax increase. More tax increases. I'm also concerned that if we put \$100 million in our housing trust fund and we say we're not going to do it again, you just wait. When the time comes, and we talk about going back to \$50 million, people will scream, "This is a cut!" That's what they'll call it. We went through something like this with the \$50 million which was supposed to revert to and never did. I'm curious to know, perhaps this is for Ryan, how much debt will we have outstanding in support of housing with the additional \$100 million?

**Teresa Elliott, Business Systems Coordinator** said I don't know that off the top of my head, but it's something we can get for you.

Mr. Driggs said so would it be fair to say though with three \$50 million cycles and a couple of 15s before that, it's going to be over \$300 million debt that we're servicing just for this trust fund?

Unknown said [inaudible].

Ms. Elliott said we'll grab that for you and let you know.

Mr. Driggs said so my point is that we're going to be paying for that a long time. This is long term debt, and what we're essentially doing is we're robbing Peter to pay Peter because a lot of the people who bear that cost are exactly the ones who are hurting. The trouble in my mind about the trust fund is a few people benefit. A whole bunch of people don't, the way we're doing it. I'd like to see more investment in workforce development. I agree with Ms. Ajmera about that. I would also like to see us target our housing investment a lot more carefully, so that we know exactly who's getting it, that it's for a limited term, and ideally that they are participating in some sort of program that gets them to a place where they can pay their own rent at the end of it.

So, I think, as it stands right now, we are setting the table, essentially, for more tax increases. Look what the County is doing. They are going to have to pay for a \$2.5 billion in school bonds which is about \$0.06 on the property tax rate in the end. As Mr. Bokhari pointed out, we're going to be going out and asking people to support a \$0.01 sales tax increase that creates about \$350 million in additional proceeds County wide. Mr. Bokhari mentioned the issue about the perception of the legislature. I would add to that the outlook of the referendum. I mean, people are going to be in shock because we will need more money in our property tax to cover everything that this budget has in it. They are going to then get told by the County that that is going to step up over time for



the schools. So, I appreciate the aspiration in this budget, but I think that we are kind of not paying our way. I'll just put it that way. Therefore, I'm not going to be able to support it. I will mention a couple of things. I believe that we are going to be able to fund Care Ring some way. Is that right? I would like to see us provide some support for Care Ring, which is a non-profit you may be aware of that it helps people that don't have access to healthcare because they're not Medicaid eligible or they don't have access to insurance. I think that's a critical part of our total commitment to people with needs. So, I'd like to see us be able to do that, and again if we don't need to put it up there because there is some capacity for it, that's great. The animal shelter, and Ms. Brown, at one time we had committed \$70 million to the construction of a new animal shelter. It got diverted because then we decided we needed a joint communication center, so the money was sort of moved over there, and that didn't happen. So, it's not clear exactly where it went, but I'm curious to know is there anything in our capital capacity right now for the animal shelter? I know we have additional employees; I get that.

Mr. Bergman said yes, so the additional employees. We've put I think about \$10 million over the last few years to make the existing shelter better. Last year during budget adjustments, or maybe it was during a workshop, it was said, figure out how much it would cost to build a new shelter, so that's the path we went down. We sent information out to Council a couple months ago. It's a hospital for animals essentially. It was about \$200 million, which would either come from some other priorities or would take additional revenue. So, what we've done is we've, not hearing that there's full support for a cost that big, we've tried to shift to, if we continue operating at the at the current area, then what would it take to be able to have a satellite shelter, an adoption center type situation that would basically expand capacity overall. There is \$30 million dollars of out year capacity in our COPS (Certificates of Participation) program that could be used. Just to kind of set expectations, even if there was construction dollars added to this budget, it wouldn't be far enough along to actually do anything in this budget.

Mr. Driggs said so Mr. Bergman, we've had the conversation before, but I don't entirely agree with the logic that says just because we don't have \$200 million, we can't do anything in the near term, and I believe there are investments we could make in facilities that would alleviate this situation at the animal shelter. I feel it's a core responsibility of the City and I've said this before. I think we're shortchanging some basic infrastructure investments that are needed even though we've stepped up on resurfacing and \$50 million. If you look at the actual need that's identified in the budget for those investments, it doesn't get us there to any kind of stable situation, and we're crowding out the things like the animal shelter and that's another reason I have a problem with the trust fund investment because, even though I recognize that it is a high priority of this Council, in my opinion it is also something that a lot of people respond well to. In reality, the impact that we're having there, the return on that investment is not very good, especially not as it's currently constituted. So, it sounds great to go out and say, "Look what we're doing!" At some point people are going to show up in the chamber and say, "Where's my housing?" The fact is we're creating something like 1,500 units a year against a need of 38,000. So, I think those are my comments.

I guess on the arts thing, by the way, I just wanted to mention we are making an allocation of funds in this budget. We are not making commitments to anybody. We are not tying ourselves down. So, I believe we should proceed. I think the amount of the allocation is appropriate. I'm personally very much in support of clarifying that we do want to have these institutions that cost us \$14 million a year in debt service and maintenance, we want to put gas in that tank so they can operate. So, I think we need to secure that reliable funding source for them, and the rest of it we will have time to talk about without being under any obligation. That's all I have. Thank you.

Ms. Ajmera said I have a follow up question. I just want to make sure I understand the budget, because this is important from the budget discussion because Mr. Driggs mentioned that we're not committing from the arts perspective to specific organizations. We all got a list of how this \$9 million has been allocated. It's hard lined. So, Mr. Jones, organizations that are in our packets, page number 18 and 19 to be specific, are we not hard lining these organizations in our arts funding?

Mr. Jones said so, Councilmember Ajmera, and I think I'm aligned with Councilmember Driggs. What will occur, is whatever that group is, and right now its those 33 organizations, and this is what I believe the Council wanted, was not to make individual decisions moving forward about these organizations, i.e. being in the chamber each year asking for an allocation. This allocation, the \$11 million, \$9 million hardwired, what's recommended is before you, the list of folks that have been funded in the past. I believe the Mayor Pro Tem even suggested maybe there's somebody else that could be in there, even if it's one time. So, I don't want to send mixed message if Council decided in this budget process that they didn't want to fund them all, or they want to do something different, but the concept has always been to get the Council out of individual awards for these groups over time.

Ms. Ajmera said so to follow up on that. These 33 organizations that you have on page number 18 and 19, could be considered, but that doesn't mean they will get funding. Am I hearing?

Mr. Jones said I would suggest that the concept is it would be this list, but during this process if you change the list.

Ms. Ajmera said got it. We could change the list.

Mr. Jones said yes.

Mr. Driggs said and if I may, more importantly they do not have a legal claim against us for these amounts. It's not a liability that we have, so it's a statement of intent, and we have good reasons for wanting to go in that direction, but we are not excluding the possibility for further discussion.

Ms. Ajmera said I understand that. In terms of the opportunity for us to change anything in this page 18 and 19, its now, opportunity is now. Is that correct Mr. Jones?

Mr. Jones said yes.

Ms. Ajmera said okay, in that I just want to make sure that we somehow figure out funding for BOOM Charlotte. I don't see that on the list. I was under the impression that this was considered.

Mr. Jones said just for clarify, Councilmember Ajmera, so this list has been back as far as 2008, if not even before. So, when you start to think of BOOM Charlotte and some other organizations that have received money from the infusion fund, it's been outside of this list. It's been a part of the other, at that time, \$4 million. So, there's going to be funds for those types of organizations. This is clearly the Council's Budget. I would just be careful of all of a sudden throwing a bunch of new organizations in this list of organizations that you've funded over time, but to be more intentional with the other bucket of money that's available for collaboration with all of these other groups.

Ms. Ajmera said okay.

Ms. Anderson said and if I may I did have the specific request that we add the Charlotte Museum of History to this list.

Ms. Ajmera said to this list, yes. I think I just made a request for this list specifically to Councilmember Anderson's point. Thank you.

Ms. Watlington said in the interest of time I'll be brief because I know we are coming back to this conversation, but I will say for me, and it was probably before my time, but for me, I thought our goal was that we weren't creating annual partners every year. When we have this financial partners discussion we talk about at what point do you reticulate into self-sufficiency. So, it would seem that this would be opposite of that, in that we would be locking ourselves into this particular list for years and years to come. Even if we have been supporting them since 2008, I thought that the discussion was

that we want to give other organizations the opportunity to be supported publicly. So, that feels a little bit different than what it sounds like the assumption has been going in, and again, that may have been before my time. I just want to say as we que this conversation up, that for me, I'm not necessarily aligned to locking in a list for perpetuity.

Mayor Lyles said would that be the case for the institutions that we own and maintain?

Ms. Watlington said no. The \$13 million for maintaining the City, that to me is a no brainer.

Mayor Lyles said yes, we really have to do well by keeping those institutions. Okay, so we've now gone around and so this is the next step in the process is that you see the number of changes.

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### **ITEM NO. 3: CONSIDERATION OF ANY PROPOSED ADJUSTMENTS**

**Mayor Lyles** said I hope that the staff has had a little bit of time because we talked about where, or how, or if, and we've said that one it's pretty simple to know that if we're going to do things that impact employees in any way, that always comes back to the tax rate. That's what we would have to use to fund that because it's an ongoing expense. Then we have some other items, so I don't know if you've got any real categories for these? I do think that we should at least try to determine, Ryan, which ones of these fall into certain buckets. I know that some of them are one time. I think everybody kept saying one time, but I'm not so sure that one time actually works, but maybe we have capital.

**Ryan Bergman, Budget Director** said I would recommend there's one time, ongoing, and then I think there's just one, the bond funding. The bike funding is a little bit different and would be a third category.

Mayor Lyles said right. So, is it possible for us to do that really quickly so that we begin to vote on those things that we want to keep in play?

Mr. Bergman said yes. I think Marie did a pretty good job of capturing some of the intent. If you go down, one unique one, if you go down to Councilmember Bokhari's one about when police gets paid, that's actually one time in nature because we have to pay 12 months of that increase the following year anyway. Some of them, we probably need a little bit more information before we decide what the cost would be the second year.

Mayor Lyles said okay. So, the idea is that everyone had a chance to throw up what's on the screen, and that we would have a response by this team, by the staff so that we can come back, but we would also be able to look at this to say which ones of these are serious to be looked at and possible, feasible and possible, and I think that a lot of that just depends on how the cost and one time or continuous funding. So, Ryan, do you want to start us at the top or do you want to start us at BOOM Charlotte?

Mr. Bergman said start at the top.

Mayor Lyles said so, in this case, our practice and policy is that if there are five or more votes the change will move forward for the staff to actually frame and comment and refine. I will call it that way.

**Councilmember Watlington** said point of order, I just want to understand, column E, delete, defer, delay are we voting?

Mayor Lyles said no that was an option that no one I think chose. It was an option. You may hear some of that in the discussion if you want to get something done, and you say well I'll defer another project, then that would be okay, but if you say I want that and all

the other projects, then we're going to be here for a while. We have a Zoning committee meeting, I see some Zoning people coming in already. We are going to start at the top and if you support having the staff refine and define and do more calculation, please raise your hand and it takes five votes. So, the first item is workforce partnership with the CMS Teacher Village.

The vote was taken on Workforce Partnership CMS Teacher Village and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Anderson, Brown, Graham, Mitchell, and Molina

Mayor Lyles said the next one is Charlotte Museum of History.

The vote was taken on a one-time Charlotte Museum of History allocation and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Graham, Mayfield, Molina and Watlington

**Councilmember Anderson** said I just want to be clear, so that one is specifically for the ask of \$100,000, but there was also the ask to have them added to the list of our annual operating support institutions on page 18 and 19. We should really have a separate vote for that.

Mayor Lyles said yes, I believe Ms. Watlington suggested we have a separate vote. Thank you for reminding me. Alright, so the first one was the Museum of History which would be one time. The second one was Museum of History ongoing support. Adding it to the list of the 11 or 12 institutions that would be a discussion of our policy coming up, so to say.

**Councilmember Graham** said and this is just for more information on that particular, not a commitment to that.

Mayor Lyles said I think one of the things, and I'm just going to say this, we are always at the top and its very close and the numbers are really soft enough to do everything, but remember there's big numbers coming up and so it shouldn't be just for information. It's something that you're committed to if it comes back that you're going to support.

Ms. Watlington said oh, well that changes things.

Mayor Lyles said, well no, I don't mean it in the way that you're saying yes, but I think enough information that you are getting a really good grounding of what you need to see for it. Does that make sense?

Ms. Watlington said willing to explore [inaudible].

Mayor Lyles said willing to explore.

**Councilmember Bokhari** said if I clarify, just to help us knowing how this process works, it would be a lot better if everyone's mindset was unless I find out something drastically different, I'm prepared to vote for that.

Mayor Lyles said yes. I think that is a position that you can take that I am going to need to vote for this if I raise my hand now, because we are going to do work, and it depends on what it is. It's probably a lot easier for something we've never done before or Tree Charlotte which we've done all the time. If you vote for it this way probably people would have an expectation that it's serious. Because, we know what it's about. Some of these others we don't now as much about. I would say, let's just go with the five and see where we land.

Alright, so we are on the Charlotte Museum of History and it would be to add it to the list of agencies and institutions that we have that we support generally very actively to maintain who they are.

The vote was taken on Charlotte Museum of History Ongoing Support and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Anderson, Brown, and Molina

Mayor Lyles said the next one is arts plus create space for artists. This is for \$500,000 one time.

Ms. Watlington said clarifying question. Is it \$500,000 in this budget cycle or is it a multiyear thing like spread out over.

Ms. Anderson said one time in this budget cycle.

Ms. Watlington said one more clarifying question. If the \$500,000 might not necessarily be the number, but I would be open to a number do I raise my hand?

Mayor Lyles said I think you're raising your hand for the \$500,000.

The vote was taken on Arts Plus and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Anderson and Brown

Mayor Lyles said our next one is Home Again Foundation, \$100,000 one time.

**Councilmember Mayfield** said clarifying question. Since we've gone through a number, Councilmember Anderson, can you tell us again what Home Again Foundation is?

Ms. Anderson said sure. The Home Again Foundation is a non-profit organization that operates here in Charlotte, specifically to assist our residents who are homeless, and unhoused. So, they build small houses, if you will. They have an entire area off of Statesville Road, and they build small houses that allow individuals to get off the streets, and to help them with workforce development, etc. So, they've been in the community for years and they're doing incredible work, and I want to assist them as we are talking about other institutions that we all like to assist.

Ms. Watlington said just one more clarifying question. Manager, can you please speak to this? This may not necessarily be a budget upper. It may just be earmarked within funds that are already programmed for general housing. If we find this somewhere, we already have \$10 million in previous years from housing that have already been allocated but not specifically programmed, and you can find \$100,000 for this, we could do it. It doesn't necessarily mean that we are losing something, or we are raising the overall budget. Is that correct?

**Marcus Jones, City Manager** said I want to make sure I don't overly complicate it. There are areas of funding that have not been totally allocated around like workforce development. There's \$3.5 million in the [inaudible] budget dealing with juveniles in crime. There are places and spaces where things may fall into. Is that helpful?

Ms. Watlington said yes. Which doesn't mean a net increase to the budget. It just means an earmark.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you Mr. Manager for that clarification. I do agree that, I am aware, and visited many years ago, Home Again Foundation, but I think through our current housing trust there's an opportunity there. I just want to make sure that we're identifying it for the right potential line item, because we also have a conversation of some one-time interests dollars that we haven't really talked about in here that's a

separate conversation. There might be an opportunity there. So, I just want to make sure we're having this conversation in the right line item as far as if this is something that would potentially become in our partners or where this \$100,000 without them having to come to the table and putting in an ask. Because they do amazing work, and the impact is there. Honestly, I don't if \$100,000 is enough for what they are doing, but we also have our faith in Housing. We have what we're doing in that space. That can easily tie into what is happening at their organization.

Mayor Lyles said and that's what I think. All of these people working in housing and homelessness and all of that, at some point they're all going to have to get in a room and someone is going to have to lead an effort to say who can do what and best deliver the services. So, I don't know that this really makes a big difference, because at some point they will have the opportunity to participate. The question is will you get more information from the staff. The staff will call them. There will be more conversations, then you'll have a little bit more of a report.

The vote was taken on Home Again Foundation and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Anderson, Brown, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington

Mayor Lyles said the next one is Tree Charlotte, an additional \$250,000 for, how much did they get, another \$250,000 so it's an increase.

Ms. Anderson said one time.

Ms. Mayfield said its an additional to make it \$500,000.

Mayor Lyles said it's \$500,000 for this year.

The vote was taken on Tree Charlotte and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmember Anderson

Mayor Lyles said the next one is medical insurance for City employees who die in the line of duty. This would be an ongoing expense we would have to apply to the tax rate.

**Councilmember Mitchell** said question, what's the dollar amount?

Mayor Lyles said we don't know; remember we would have to find that out.

**Councilmember Ajmera** said no I did ask [inaudible] answer.

Mr. Bergman said so this is very specific. This basically pays the employee portion and so for a year it's like \$4,000 for the spouse, like \$1,000 for a dependent so thankfully this situation doesn't happen too much so it's not a significant cost related to the size of our self-insured health insurance fund. So, I mean if you want to put a number up there, it would be something like maybe \$30,000.

Mayor Lyles said it would be great, I think, for the Chief to tell us a little bit more. I want the staff, \$30,000 should go up there and then I'd really like us to talk about this because all of us have seen significant efforts over the last, I mean from people's mortgages being paid to all kinds of, really this town has been so very much supportive and strong, and I think we ought to get some information from CMPD and fire as to how we do this.

**Councilmember Johnson** said so this says City employees. So, this is not just for police and fire, this is for any City employee who died in the line of duty?

Mayor Lyles said right.

Ms. Anderson said \$30,000 sounds very low, right?

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Mr. Bergman said this isn't the cost of all insurance. This is the just the employee premium portion of it.

Mayor Lyles said okay we have the number of votes for that.

Ms. Watlington said just because it may change the meeting, for the employees that may live across the line, where marriage equality may not necessarily be legal, can we just make sure this captures domestic partnerships that would meet the qualifications.

Mayor Lyles said well I think if you're married. So, you should say for people that are married.

Ms. Mayfield said the challenge is that I'm not sure. North Carolina recognizes marriage. I'm not sure if South Carolina does and we have a number of employees who live in South Carolina, so we want that defined correct. We're clarifying that it's for all employees and not for some because some employees feel if they are in same sex domestic they cannot.

Mayor Lyles said it says City employees.

Ms. Watlington said as long as South Carolina recognizes same sex marriage.

Mayor Lyles said well I don't know what you would do.

Ms. Mayfield said or is this a different conversation.

Unknown said what about are currently covered. That would mean anybody that is currently covered they're continuous.

Mayor Lyles said alright, thank you.

The vote was taken on Medical Insurance for spouses and dependents of City employees that die in the line of duty and recorded as unanimous.

Mayor Lyles said let's go to the next one which is Tree Charlotte with continued in kind support.

Ms. Ajmera said if you look at our Q&A. We just want to continue that so I'll tell you the page number. Tree Charlotte was concerned about our current support that is retiring. So, they wanted to make sure that in kind support continues after their employee retires. So, that's why that line item came about.

Unknown said [inaudible].

Mayor Lyles said evidently, Ms. Ajmera said that there's an employee that works here that's about to retire and they do work with Tree Charlotte, and they want to be sure that when they hire the next person, someone that is there to work with them as well.

Ms. Ajmera said it's on page 24. Question number 34, under how is the in kind support model changing for Tree Charlotte.

Mr. Bergman said page 23.

Mayor Lyles said you're not changing anything, it's just a new person. Is that right?

Ms. Ajmera said yes, we have a new person that we'll be hiring. So, we want to make sure that person continues to support Tree Charlotte in helping us meet our 50 by 50 goals.

Mayor Lyles said yes. Okay.

Ms. Watlington said is this to go in the budget, or is that an operational thing.

Mayor Lyles said it is an operational issue.

Unknown said its operational, so do we need to vote on it.

Ms. Ajmera said no I think we do. The reason Tree Charlotte requested higher amount this time is because they were getting \$250,000 from the City of Charlotte. They requested half a million this year because they were concerned about an employee that is retiring and not getting that in kind support moving forward, and that's what they were told. So, this in kind support line item will make sure that whoever gets hired will continue to provide that in kind support.

Mayor Lyles said Ms. Ajmera, the Manager assigns people where they work if they're hired as employees, so I think [inaudible] he would continue to address that so I don't think we need anything more than the Manager is going to have a new hire.

Ms. Ajmera said so the reason I'm saying that is because there might not be 100% allocated to City responsibility. Let's say 20% of it is allocated to OUR Tree Charlotte, then that would have budget implications. So, for an example, if this employee makes \$80,000, just hypothetically, and out of \$80,000 let's say 50% of the time is being spent on supporting Tree Charlotte then \$40,000 of that would be.

Mayor Lyles said I think the Manager understands what you're trying to do. So, is that acceptable? That we would have an employee that's getting a new person that is retired that they would continue to work with Tree Charlotte.

Unknown said [inaudible].

Mayor Lyles said okay, I don't think we need to vote on that.

Ms. Ajmera said so Mr. Jones you got that?

Mr. Jones said yes.

Unknown said [inaudible].

Mayor Lyles said the next item is bike funding from \$8 million. Ryan how much is it now for two years of funding?

Mr. Bergman said \$8 million in the bond which takes us two years.

Mayor Lyles said the \$4 million per year. Is there a way that that's the allocation for the work or could the work go to \$8 million?

Mr. Bergman said yes, you could go \$8 million to \$10 million in there would be [inaudible] for them to deal with it.

The vote was taken on Bike Funding and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmember Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Johnson, and Molina

Mayor Lyles said the next item is workforce development specific to the workforce development fund up to \$2 million. This is one time.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, so in our financial partners application, you know it's a long process. We all got a package, and as part of this process, there are several partner organizations that did not get funding. What I want to make sure that budget staff goes back and takes a look at organizations that did not get funding if they do fall under workforce development. I do want us to prioritize that. We want to make sure that we are investing more in our workforce development.



Ms. Johnson said so there's a workforce development, I think it's NASHIA, I think that's the name, I think. They did not apply. They didn't know the process. They provide CDL training for formerly incarcerated individuals, and just vulnerable populations. So, if we approve this, are we allowing organizations who didn't apply to be considered? Would we do that?

Mayor Lyles said my understanding is from those that are on the recommended budget list now.

Ms. Johnson said okay, that weren't approved.

Mayor Lyles said they were not approved for funding, but they did make applications.

Ms. Ajmera said that's right.

Ms. Johnson said okay. Alright, thank you.

The vote was taken on Workforce Development and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Brown, Driggs, Johnson and Molina

Mayor Lyles said the next one is dedicate support staff for Council. It's an ongoing so it would be added to the tax rate. It's \$479,000 for that effort.

The vote was taken on Dedicated Support Staff and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmember Ajmera, Johnson, and Graham

Unknown said [inaudible].

Unknown said [inaudible].

Mayor Lyles said I think this is that everyone has one staff support person now and this would be a second one?

Ms. Ajmera said no.

Mayor Lyles said well tell me what it is.

Ms. Ajmera said yes. So, currently we share. So, there are six support staff for 11 Council members. So, most of us, almost all of us except one share a support staff. So, this will allow us to all have one support staff to meet the needs, growing demands that we have on our time.

Mayor Lyles said so, it would be the adding of another six or five staff?

Ms. Ajmera said five.

Mayor Lyles said five staff people for the Council, and they would be assigned.

Unknown said what's the dollar amount?

Mayor Lyles said \$479,000.

**Councilmember Brown** said \$479,000?

Mayor Lyles said next is our Save Our Children's Movement, one time, \$34,000 and that was from Ms. Brown and Ms. Ajmera.

The vote was taken on the Save Our Children's Movement and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, and Molina

Mayor Lyles said our next one is Promise Youth Development for the van. We're going to take care of that with surplus policy discussion. It might mean a little bit more of a delay, Ms. Molina, to get the policy done, but I think it's kind of nice to have a delay in the column there.

Mr. Mitchell said clarification. Is that the same organization Councilmember Mayfield was requesting we donate a van to?

Ms. Brown said Tesha Boyd.

**Councilmember Molina** said so, I even mentioned that when I brought it up, but I don't know if hers was in general, but I looked at her because this was one of those requests and I got specific, but it wasn't for that particular organization. Ms. Tesha Boyd operates on the East Side. Actually, she's in the Executive Center Drive. We have a petition right now. That's another conversation where she may even have to move, but right now this is just for a van.

Mr. Mitchell said I'm just trying to be consistent.

Mayor Lyles said that's why we're going to have a policy discussion in Committee about that so that we can start being consistent.

Mr. Mitchell said okay. So, not a [inaudible], but I don't want us to choose winners and losers and Councilmember Mayfield had made a request. We were talking about the surplus list and I think we kind of boo-booed that. So, I just want us to be consistent.

Mayor Lyles said that's a great point.

Ms. Molina said I had put a financial amount to it. Basically, what I said was what the financial amount was for. She's been operating for eight years on the East Side. She actually operates out of our rec center right now. So, she goes and uses the rec center. She works with teens and troubled youth on the East side and she's been doing it for almost a decade with no support.

Mayor Lyles said okay, so I don't believe this requires a vote. I think it's a question of getting the policy and then getting to the van.

Unknown said [inaudible].

Mayor Lyles said if you'd like to raise your hand, please do so, okay.

Ms. Johnson said can I ask a question? So, there was a bus stop that was removed in front of the federal half way house and we had a meeting with CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System) and we were talking about donating a surplus van possibly as one of the options. So, there is a process for that already through CATS I believe. I agree with Councilmember Mitchell as far as putting something in the budget and having winners and losers. Can we find out what that process is?

Mayor Lyles said I think that we don't have a process. We have the request that people can make, but we don't have a process and the Committee is going to do a process for like how to request something from the City, as surplus property or for your van, it's going to be a process that we don't have right now.

Ms. Johnson said thank you.

Mayor Lyles said okay. So, I don't believe that that requires a vote but I saw those that support it and heard from them. So, the next one is Carolina Youth Coalition.

Ms. Molina said that was also another nonprofit that's on the East Side. The young man actually takes teens from local schools, and he takes them from college entry through college, yes.

Unknown said what are we voting on?

Mayor Lyles said we're voting on getting more information to fund Carolina Youth Coalition.

Mr. Mitchell said oh okay.

Ms. Molina said I actually already requested that staff reach out. They already are in conversation with them as well.

Mayor Lyles said you'll get more information for the next round.

Ms. Mayfield said clarification. We're voting on more information versus [inaudible].

Ms. Ajmera said the funding.

Ms. Mayfield said [inaudible]. Give us more information [inaudible] dollar amount?

Mayor Lyles said well the best thing that we have is to actually ask about the dollar amount and have the information as well. So, that's what it is. So, they'll explain what they do and the cost of what they want to do and that will be the report that we would get.

Ms. Mayfield said correct. So, therefore I'm asking why are we voting when we don't have a dollar amount? The only thing we need to do is to not [inaudible].

Mayor Lyles said because it takes five people of Council to support it.

The vote was taken on Carolina Youth and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Mayfield, Mitchell, and Molina

Ms. Watlington said I have a question. There were a couple here that because of the specific dollar amount, I did not raise my hand, but I would be open to a dollar amount. So, if you're better off not putting a dollar amount because you'll get it explored, that feels a little bit inconsistent. You know what I mean?

Ms. Mayfield said contradictory.

Mayor Lyles said I do know what you mean but I don't think that these other numbers are just out of the hat. I just don't think we have the complete numbers, but most of these numbers are pretty close.

Ms. Watlington said okay. I just don't want somebody to get dinged because they [inaudible].

Mayor Lyles said if it's radically different, we can start talking through it. The next item is expand the CFD budget to end off duty training, pay for all training.

Unknown said [inaudible] \$7 million.

Mayor Lyles said I think the example Ms. Johnson read, you heard what it said. Ms. Johnson, do you want to read the example that you used for the off duty pay?

Ms. Johnson said we all received the numerous emails, but I'll read it again.

Mr. Jones said Ryan, I think the way it was explained is that we did this this year but there were some other programs like promotional programs where they like to get the same treatment. Is that correct?

Mr. Bergman said yes. So, I think a lot of the information is around the promotion from firefighter one to firefighter two. They want it to be when you're going through the classes that you need, they want them to be paid. We have not done that for consistency across the City because firefighter one to firefighter two is a promotion.

Mayor Lyles said okay. Alright.

Ms. Johnson said I'll just say that I've been on Council since 2019 and every year the firefighters come to us and talk about inequities in pay. So, yes, I'm going to support this, I'm lifting it up and I'm supporting it and I ask my colleagues for the same support. Thank you.

**Councilmember Driggs** said I just want to say I have a concern about negotiating labor relations directly between Council and the Fire Department. I believe we should act on recommendations from the Manager who's responsible for overseeing the staff and for that reason I won't support it. I think it's a bad precedent.

Ms. Johnson said we just unanimously supported something else that didn't come from the Manager, it came from a Council member who met with police officers.

Mr. Driggs said I'm saying I think when it comes to labor relations with people who work for the City, we should be acting on recommendations from the Manager and not engaging in a direct dialogue with labor representatives. [inaudible].

Ms. Johnson said if we rewind the video, you just voted for something, the same situation.

Mr. Driggs said I mean, I have a lot of history with the Fire Department and their demands and I really think, and particularly in this case, it's critical that we let our management and the leadership of the Fire Department work things out and make recommendations to us on which I'm very happy to act. I think the idea of us responding directly to input from employees is a bad precedent.

The vote was taken on Expand the CFD Budget and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Brown, and Johnson

Mayor Lyles said the next item on that list is to pay for public safety, fully fund the pay plan steps with the two and a half percent COLA (cost-of-living adjustment) and it's a \$7 million expense.

Mr. Bergman said I didn't catch this. We are fully funding all steps. What they're asking for with this is the market adjustment we give to all steps is currently two and a half percent and the request was to make it five percent. So, that's what that cost is. So, I just wouldn't use the terminology of fully fund steps. This is basically make the market adjustment which is the across the board before steps for public safety to be five percent rather than two and a half percent.

Mayor Lyles said so, that's not our practice now?

Mr. Bergman said right now, well no. It's just an allocation. Right now we're doing two and a half percent market adjustment plus whatever their steps are. This wouldn't change their steps, it would just make the market adjustment five percent rather than two and a half percent.

Ms. Mayfield said question. Mr. Jones, I did have a chance to speak to Chief Johnson over the weekend. The question for you, the budget proposal that came from Chief

Johnson, did it ask for five percent or did he support this two and a half percent? What he shared with me is that he got almost everything that he asked for, emphasis on almost.

Mr. Jones said yes. This is I guess the complicated conversation annually. So, we have a public safety pay plan group that we work with and we try to do a good job of understanding what the needs are, and we try to come up with a plan that we introduce to you. Which I think Ryan, it's safe to say this was consistent with our conversation?

Mr. Bergman said yes, I think to answer your question, I'm very confident that Chief Jennings and Chief Johnson would love to get as much money as possible for their employees, but directors don't necessarily make a request of across the board salary. That's a City-wide decision based on resources, everything else that we're doing. So, there wouldn't have been a request from Chief Johnson specific to this.

Ms. Mayfield said we're saying if we were to move with this additional two and a half percent which would bring them to a total of five percent, that would be an additional \$7 million increase?

Mr. Bergman said correct. So, if you did this, all police and fire would get a five percent increase plus they would get a step increase which for most at this stage is five percent with the exception of people at the very top. Then we've done some things this year to expand the top for those people as well. So, it's very complicated, but basically the best way to describe it, like a fire engineer and a fire captain, they would get this market adjustment plus they would get their step. So, you'd add them both. At the very top, an engineer and a captain would get this plus we increase their pay two and a half percent outside of this. So, firefighter twos just received this. People don't like coming to my office because I make them go to the whiteboard and I explain it, but it's kind of hard to do it explaining, but this is just one piece of their salary increase. It's a market adjustment and it's the step. They go together.

Mayor Lyles said alright. So, let's go ahead. You see it on the list for the fund.

Ms. Watlington said quick, order of magnitude. \$7 million equates to what from a tax increase standpoint?

Mr. Bergman said like 0.3125. It's the same as the arc, that's why I knew it.

The vote was taken on Fund Public Safety and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera and Johnson

Mayor Lyles said the next one again, some of this is just I think from the email that Ms. Johnson read to us. It's the compensation for mandatory Kelly Days and that's \$655,000 and I'm sure that the same complications and the same kind of system issues. So, all in favor of the compensation for mandatory Kelly Days at 1.5 rate.

The vote was taken on Compensation for Kelly Days and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Brown, and Johnson

Mayor Lyles said so, let's go down to The People's Budget. I think that was a guess number, Ryan was it? Or has someone done the analysis?

Mr. Bergman said yes. No, this was asked during the Q&A that we did. So, we did do analysis on what this would look like and to avoid compression where people doing different levels of jobs are paid the same amount, you would basically have to do this in a way where all hourly employees got the same dollar increase and boost them up essentially. So, that's where that cost comes from.

Mayor Lyles said okay. So, all in favor of The People's Budget, please raise your hand.

Ms. Watlington said just this line item.

Ms. Molina said I was raising my hand for clarification. So, basically, I agree with Dr. Watlington. I think we have to be specific because it's not that we're against The People's Budget, I want to be clear about that. This is the \$25 portion only. Is that right?

Mayor Lyles said when it was presented, I can't remember who did this one. Ms. Johnson explained it was The People's Budget that was submitted to Council, and I assumed that it was all of it. I don't think that we had a one line for \$25. We did not.

Ms. Molina said okay.

Mayor Lyles said okay. So, The People's Budget?

Ms. Mayfield said Mayor for clarification?

Mayor Lyles said yes please. Mr. Jones wants to help us out here.

Mr. Jones said so, it was just part of the right up and we can always do better. Part of the write up is 95 percent of our employees earn \$25 an hour or more. So, I just wanted to make sure that the Council knew that.

Mayor Lyles said okay. So, you've heard the discussion, \$6.3 million for The People's Budget.

Ms. Mayfield said I was trying to get a clarifying answer on what is the plus \$6.3 million enterprise fund.

Mr. Bergman said so, this impacts hourly employees across the City. So, the \$5.7 million is the general fund component of our non-public safety hourly employees, but there's also a significant amount of non-public safety hourly employees in water, stormwater, CATS and aviation. So, what that \$6.3 million means is if this went forward, part of the analysis would be specifically how much of that is water and stormwater, and absorbing that would do what as far as rates?

Ms. Mayfield said so it's really \$12 million between the two buckets?

Mayor Lyles said yes, it would be \$6 million plus \$5 million, yes, you're right.

The vote was taken on the People's Budget and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmember Ajmera, Brown, and Johnson

Mayor Lyles said okay, let's go to the next item which is the 401k additional one percent.

Ms. Ajmera said we didn't vote on number 31.

Ms. Molina said yes we did.

Mayor Lyles said yes we did. I just asked.

Unknown said my hand was in the air.

Ms. Ajmera said oh actually I didn't raise my hand.

Mayor Lyles said alright, two, three.

Mayor Lyles said so the next one is the 401k, an additional one percent. It's \$2.2 million on top of the existing raises.

The vote was taken on 401k addition and recorded as follows:  
YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Brown, and Johnson

Mayor Lyles said the next item is Keep Charlotte Beautiful Fund for \$250,000.

Ms. Mayfield said additional.

Ms. Watlington said additional to the Keep Charlotte Beautiful fund?

Mr. Bergman said yes, this is in addition.

Ms. Mayfield said to make it \$500,000?

Mr. Bergman said it was \$250,000. Councilmember Johnson said to make it \$500,000. So, that's just the difference.

Mayor Lyles said it would be \$500,000.

Ms. Molina said I just want to clarify really quickly because I feel like a lot of us can relate to this request across the City, and again I'm coming back to something that Dr. Watlington mentioned earlier. If we didn't specifically have a number in there, I think it would be a little bit easier for some of our colleagues to say let's explore this. Not to discount your ask, but just to make sure that we have full consideration and more of a consensus from our colleagues in that this is something that's important that's been lifted up to us multiple times.

Ms. Brown said my hand's going up. The City needs to be beautiful; I don't care what it is.

Mayor Lyles said I agree with you and it's shame that we don't have the kind of labor. The things that have really changed for Keep America Beautiful has been the ability to have more people hired. It is very tough.

Ms. Brown said it is.

Mayor Lyles said I was driving through over on Brookshire and it was Sunday and they were out there with tractors and all those things. I just don't know how you get enough laborers to do the work.

Ms. Brown said I volunteer to clean the City.

Mayor Lyles said well we do have the volunteer services. Maybe we ought to do more of those signs to say please sign up to clean this lake or creek or whatever it is.

Ms. Johnson said Mayor, if I can, one of the things that this does, we contract with the company. I think it's called CTE it's the Second Chance Employers. So, this is twofold. It keeps the City beautiful, threefold. It funds a nonprofit organization and also gives individuals who have a difficult time finding a job, a job.

Ms. Watlington said to that end, if we were to look at something like this, Keep Charlotte Beautiful may not get \$250,000 additional dollars to support a workforce development program because that means it comes out of the other \$2 million that we already said we were going to explore for workforce development. You see what I'm saying?

Mayor Lyles said yes, I completely see what you're saying, and it does apply different ways. If you're doing this, you probably don't get the enthusiasm, but you apply the other place and you probably do.

Ms. Johnson said exactly. So, do we just want to call it litter cleanup?

Ms. Watlington said probably workforce development.

Mayor Lyles said alright. We are way behind. So, I'm going to just say that we need to move through this now. So, we've had a lot of questions answered in advance of this and I'm going to say just go with your gut. You've got as much information as you're going to get probably because we're just repeating ourselves. Litter clean up, you're saying call it litter clean up, but I still think it best fits under the idea of how do we work with young people especially those that need jobs.

The vote was taken on Keep Charlotte Beautiful and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Brown, Graham, Johnson, and Molina

The vote was taken on Block Love and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Mitchell, and Molina

Mayor Lyles said alright, Animal Shelter upkeep has no numbers and we've talked about the cost. You've heard what Mr. Driggs said, you've heard what Mr. Ryan has said, you've heard what Ms. Brown said. So, where are we on that? I think it's a little bit more in depth because this is all happening as so many people are adopted animals and some people are just leaving them alone now, but this is a hospital as Ryan said. So, I think this really requires more depth.

The vote was taken on the Animal Shelter and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Johnson, Mayfield, Mitchell, and Molina

Ms. Brown says it passes?

Mayor Lyles said yes, it passes. More depth. Okay.

Mr. Bokhari said can you [inaudible] the number out for them after you vote [inaudible].

Mayor Lyles said okay. City employees. That was Ms. Brown and I think we covered that with the 25.

Ms. Brown said we covered them, but I'm missing one. I don't see Save Our Children's Movement. Was it up there somewhere else?

Mayor Lyles said yes.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, that one's there.

Ms. Brown said oh sorry, I didn't see it. Okay.

Mayor Lyles said alright. So, let's go down, we're now at the evaluation of revenue substances. I think that's something that the Council could have at the next retreat because it will take that long to kind of get a really good idea of how we stand. So, we're on item 37. Charlotte Black Film Festival.

The vote was taken on Charlotte Black Film Festival and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Mitchell, and Molina

Ms. Watlington said the parentheses or no?

Mayor Lyles said what?

Ms. Mayfield said initially, one-time \$287,000, ongoing from Hospitality and Tourism.



Ms. Molina said I support the one time. I think we have to have additional conversations about the HTF.

Mayor Lyles said I would encourage you to have additional questions as soon as the reports come out to talk about it, because when we add this up, it's going to be a lot of money. So, somewhere we need to start thinking through that. Okay, the next one is the evaluation arts. We know we need the deep dive. We're still working on the model. Review current projects.

Ms. Watlington said yes, I just need to understand what we already have in the kitty because some of this stuff might fall in there.

Mayor Lyles said okay. Police and fire efficiencies. I don't know what that was.

Mr. Mitchell said so, what are we doing with 38 through 41? Are we deleting them or are we keeping them there?

Ms. Watlington said I hope the assumption is that we're going to get this data.

Mayor Lyles said it's not a request for the budget, it's a request to get some data.

Mr. Mitchell said oh, just information.

Mayor Lyles said yes, to analyze the taxes another one is just a request for data and a report as well as the deep dive into how do we have tax structures. There's a lot of conversations around that.

Ms. Watlington said just to be clear though Madam Mayor, because what I don't want to have happen is the next time we meet for straw votes, we say, "Well that was just data," and there may be some changes that we would like to make to the budget on account of this data. So, I just want to make sure that I'm not just capturing this here for a future policy discussion. What I'm saying is for instance for the police and fire efficiencies for example. The Chief may come back and say, "Eureka, because of technology advancement, we've been able to reduce our cost on this particular side."

Mayor Lyles said I think Ryan wanted to address you.

Mr. Bergman said yes. So, this has happened in the past where the things that move forward for a vote with dollars, we of course will evaluate, but then we'll also attach a Q&A to it and get as much information as we can in a short time frame for the ones for the policy driven ones and a lot of times it's going to be where we are now. We're not going to be able to start a whole new process or anything, but we'll get you whatever information we can between now and May 30, 2024.

Ms. Watlington said so, I just want to make sure that these are still on the board for discussion.

Mayor Lyles said I think they are. We're not erasing anything, we're just putting a number beside those that have voted. Okay. Alright, so the next one is juvenile justice support, \$1 million.

Ms. Watlington said just to be clear, that is what I was hoping to earmark for ARPA interest. So, if we're not talking about ARPA interest today, then.

Mayor Lyles said not today.

Mr. Mitchell said so, you're deferring that?

Ms. Watlington said you can put ARPA interest in there because I know that's a separate process.

Mayor Lyles said it is a separate process. So, it would come back when the Manager comes back. Okay, the next one is Hearts For The Invisible.

Ms. Brown said so, are we voting for that on Juvenile or not?

Mayor Lyles said we're having the ARPA money. The Manager is going to do that as a separate system.

Ms. Brown said okay.

Mayor Lyles said alright. So, the next one is Hearts for the Invisible.

The vote was taken on Hearts for the Invisible and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Johnson, and Mayfield

Mayor Lyles said alright, our next one is Storm Response, tree removal from private property for Charlotte residents so that they can see that we provide services like this to them. Alright.

Ms. Mayfield said Manager, that one can actually fall under the same conversation of the ARPA one time because it's just a one time allocation. I put it up there to get it in the room, but it definitely [inaudible] ARPA conversation.

Mr. Bergman said thank you ma'am.

Mayor Lyles said okay. Alright. Expectations of support for bike lanes, code enforcement.

Ms. Mayfield said that was just a follow up to the request from earlier.

Mayor Lyles said alright, active shooter kits.

The vote was taken on Active Shooter Kits and recorded as unanimous.

Unknown said we do have the [inaudible] medical kits. It requires training to go with the officers as well. So, we could use more. I think that's what probably the conversation [inaudible].

Mr. Bokhari said there are some things that exist. This is to make sure there's a consistent complete product in every single squad car.

Ms. Johnson said Mayor, I think it's more appropriate if we hear from staff than directly from a Council member who's been negotiating labor.

Mayor Lyles said so, the Chief will come back with the report that will help us in doing that. The next items are outer carrier vests and ballistic shields. Can you combine those areas in there Chief and get back to us? Alright.

Mr. Bokhari said are we voting on these or not?

Mayor Lyles said we are voting that the Chief will do the report with the Budget office.

Mr. Bokhari said I am voting in the same way everyone else has put their items up here to see that there's Council support for staff follow ups.

Mayor Lyles said yes.

Mr. Bokhari said everyone thinks it's real funny.

Mayor Lyles said I don't know that that's really accurate Mr. Bokhari. I don't think everybody thinks this is funny. This is too serious. All in favor of the police issues that we've talked about for active shooter kits, outer carrier vests and ballistic shields, please raise your hand.

The vote was taken on Outer Carrier Vests and Ballistic Shields, items 48, 49 and 50 and recorded as unanimous.

Ms. Ajmera said what item are we on?

Mayor Lyles said we're on 48, 49 and 50.

Ms. Ajmera said so, all of them together?

Mayor Lyles said yes because they all fit together for what they're trying to accomplish.

Ms. Anderson said the raise calendar.

Mayor Lyles said raise calendar.

Mayor Lyles said item 51, raise calendar for CMPD.

Ms. Mayfield said that's labor related.

Mr. Bokhari said it's inside everyone's books from staff recommending two options for us to consider. It's option one and it puts CMPD, which is the only department in the City who is not on a July/November timeline of their raises because they're on July/January back to July/November to be in line with everyone else on their pay cycle and there's only a one-time issue and then they are on the schedule with everybody else going forward for the annual impact.

Mayor Lyles said the estimated cost is \$427,000. All in favor?

Ms. Watlington said just a matter of principal. Is this a recommendation for staff or this just information that we receive?

Mayor Lyles said it was a question from Mr. Bokhari.

Ms. Ajmera said that was from me.

Ms. Watlington said I see that, but I want to know is it a part of a recommendation.

Mayor Lyles said no, we haven't gotten a recommendation from staff.

Ms. Watlington said that's what I thought. So, I'm trying to be consistent across departments.

Mayor Lyles said yes. We're not getting recommendations until we get information.

The vote was taken on the Raise Calendar for CMPD - SPOIV & Sergeants from January to November and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Bokhari, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Mitchell, and Molina

Mayor Lyles said direct staff to reduce property tax by recommending reductions. I though Mr. Bokhari said hat he was going to take this and work with the staff. I don't think it was [inaudible].

Mr. Bokhari said I have already done my part and I have found that it's possible, but it is not probably palatable in the way I've done it. So, this is just with the plea I made at the

end. Will this Council direct staff to go try to do this and find cuts that enable all the things that I've said and it doesn't have to be predefined. That is the message of this Council [inaudible].

Mayor Lyles said that would go to the Budget Committee I think?

Mr. Bokhari said that would go directly in the offline to staff to work with individual Council members to find a way to cut these one and a half cent property taxes.

Mayor Lyles said offline staff. Okay. So, we're directing the Manager to give us a revised budget that cuts the tax rate.

Mr. Bokhari said working with all of us to find a revised budget option to consider that is palatable for six people.

Mayor Lyles said Council members would be able to present their choices to the Manager as well.

Mr. Bokhari said everyone needs to work with staff. I've got a list. It isn't going to work for everybody here.

Mayor Lyles said okay.

Mr. Bokhari said so, people would need to work on what would be palatable and if there's enough will here, then we will go forward and if not, then it's dead.

Mayor Lyles said okay. Alright, you heard that.

The vote was taken on directing staff to reduce property tax increase by recommending reductions and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Bokhari, Brown, Driggs, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Watlington

Mr. Graham said [inaudible].

Mayor Lyles said alright, Mr. Bokhari just said it Mr. Graham. You've heard what he's said. He's asked the Manager to showcase a budget without the tax rate in it. Okay, the next item after that is Boom Charlotte.

The vote was taken on BOOM Charlotte and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Brown, Mayfield, Mitchell

Ms. Ajmera said Mayor, there's no amount. It's \$100,000.

Unknown said [inaudible].

Ms. Mayfield said so you did give an amount.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, I did give the amount, it didn't make it.

Mayor Lyles said okay, guys I believe that's the last one of them. We are now going to go downstairs. We have zoning to do.

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**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:51 p.m. to move to the Meeting Chamber for the Zoning Meeting.

  
Billie Tynes, Deputy City Clerk

Length of Meeting: 3 Hours, 3 Minutes  
Minutes completed: December 9, 2024