

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for an Action Review on Monday, December 12, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Councilmembers present were Tariq Bokhari, Edmund Driggs, Malcolm Graham, LaWana Mayfield, Marjorie Molina, and Braxton Winston, III.

ABSENT UNTIL NOTED: Councilmembers Danté Anderson, Dimple Ajmera, Reneé Johnson, James Mitchell, and Victoria Watlington.

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Mayor Lyles said thanks everyone who's watching. We're beginning this portion of our agenda where we talk about items that are coming before the Council so that there's time to explain how they work and to have a discussion around them. Before we begin this meeting, I'd like to start with our Deputy City Clerk and do introductions. This meeting is being held virtually in accordance with all of the laws that we have to follow regarding electronic meetings. The requirements also include notices and access that are being met electronically as well. You can view this on our Government Channel, the City's Facebook Page, or the City's YouTube Page.

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ACTION REVIEW

ITEM NO. 1: MAYOR AND COUNCIL CONSENT ITEM QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Mayor Lyles said alright. We have I think six Councilmembers here. We usually would consider our consent agenda items. Ms. Marie, come on up to the podium. Are there any questions or comments that we need to follow up on?

Marie Harris, Strategy and Budget said no Madam Mayor, unless anyone has any at this time.

Councilmember Molina said I actually just want to comment on one that I saw that I'm excited about and so are the people of District 5. Consent Item Number 14, which is Eastway Shamrock Intersection Project. It's an action to approve a contract in the amount of \$1,335,300. I don't need to read the whole thing, but basically my comment is that we're pleased to see that it's a project that's going to improve safety and we're really happy about it.

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CONSENT

ITEM NO. 5: CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS 14 THROUGH 34 MAY BE CONSIDERED IN ONE MOTION EXCEPT FOR THOSE ITEMS REMOVED BY A COUNCIL MEMBER. ITEMS ARE REMOVED BY NOTIFYING THE CITY CLERK.

Motion was made by Councilmember Driggs, seconded by Councilmember Graham and carried unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda items 14 through 34 as presented, with the exception of Item No. 34 which was pulled by staff.
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The following items were approved:

Item No. 14: Eastway - Shamrock Intersection Project

(A) Approve a contract in the amount of \$1,335,300 with AECOM Technical Services of North Carolina, Inc. for design services for the Eastway - Shamrock Intersection Project, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

Item No. 15: Sidewalk Planning and Design Services

(A) Authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute unit price contracts for various sidewalk planning and design services with the following firms for five years: American Engineering Associates-Southeast, P.A., Dewberry Engineers, Inc., LJB Engineering Professional Corporation, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to amend the contracts consistent with the purpose for which the contracts were approved.

Item No. 16: Derita Branch Tributary Sewer Construction

Approve a guaranteed maximum price of \$22,754,433.45 to B.R.S., Inc. for Design-Build construction services for the Derita Branch Tributary Sewer Phase 2 project.

Item No. 17: Soil and Debris Hauling Services

(A) Approve unit price contracts with the following companies for soil and debris hauling services for an initial term of two years: K&C Transportation Group LLC (MBE), UL Excavating and Grading LLC, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contracts for up to three, one-year terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contracts consistent with the purpose for which the contracts were approved.

Item No. 18: Stowe Regional Water Resource Recovery Facility Construction Phase 2

Approve a guaranteed maximum price of \$91,426,495.00 to Crowder/Garney JV for Design-Build construction services for the Stowe Regional Water Resource Recovery Facility project.

Item No. 19: Utility Relocation Agreement for Dixie River Road Watermain

(A) Approve a contract for up to \$800,000.00 with Duke Energy for the relocation of power facilities for the Dixie River Road Watermain project, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

Item No. 20: Vacuum Truck Receiving Station

(A) Reject the low bid submitted by Brushy Mountain Builders for the Field Operations Zone 2 Facility Vacuum Truck Receiving Station project, and (B) Approve a contract in the amount of \$3,366,235.00 to the lowest responsive bidder Hall Contracting Corporation for the Field Operations Zone 2 Facility Vacuum Truck Receiving Station project.

Summary of Bids

Brushy Mountain Builders*	\$3,177,100.00
Hall Contracting Corporation	\$3,336,235.00

*Brushy Mountain Builders was found to be non-responsible for failing to meet the CBI Good Faith Efforts; therefore, the contract was awarded to the next lowest responsive bidder.

Item No. 21: CATS Mobile Video System and Service Contract

(A) Approve the purchase of a mobile video system by the sole source exemption, (B) Approve a contract with Transit Solutions, LLC for the purchase of a mobile video system for the term of three years, (C) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contract for up to two, one-year terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved, and (D) Authorize the City Manager to purchase such additional software licenses, services, hardware, maintenance, and support as required to maintain the system for as long as the city uses the system.

Item No. 22: Airport Exterior Surface Cleaning

(A) Approve a unit price contract with Sunshine Cleaning Systems, Inc., for exterior surface cleaning for an initial term of three years, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contract for up to two, one-year terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

Item No. 23: Airport North End-Around Taxiway Project Design Amendment

Approve contract amendment #3 for \$1,021,388 to the contract with Talbert, Bight & Ellington, Inc. for additional design services of the Runway 18C/36C North End-Around Taxiway project.

Item No. 24: Airport Corporate Hangar License

(A) Approve a five-year license for hangar and office space with Duke Energy Business Services, Inc., and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the license for up to one, five-year term.

Item No. 25: Airport Concession Warehouse Lease

Approve a five-year lease agreement with Host International, Inc. for a warehouse/office facility which will provide support for its concession operation(s) in the terminal.

Item No. 26: Airport Office and Warehouse Lease

(A) Approve the lease agreement with Trego Dugan Aviation with a three-year term for offices and warehouse space at the airport and, (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the lease for up to two, one-year extensions.

Item No. 27: Aviation Property Lease with QuikTrip

(A) Adopt a resolution to approve a fifteen-year lease agreement of city owned property at the northeast intersection of Todd Road and Wilkinson Boulevard with QuikTrip Corporation, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the lease for up to six, five-year terms, and one, four-year term.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 554.

Item No. 28: Digital Navigation Services

(A) Authorize the use of American Rescue Plan Act funds for Digital Navigation Services, (B) Authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute a contract with Queens University of Charlotte for Digital Navigation Services for an initial term of three years, and (C) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contract for up to one, one-year term with possible price adjustments, and to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract was approved.

Item No. 29: Set the Finance Officer's Faithful Performance Bond Amount

Adopt a resolution to set the Finance Officer's faithful Performance Bond Amount in accordance with state law and authorize the payment of the premium for a bond with coverage in that amount.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 555.

Item No. 30: Federal Lobbying Services

(A) Approve a contract extension for two years to the contract with Holland & Knight, LLP, for federal lobbying services, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contract for up to two, one-year renewal terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract and this extension were approved.

Item No. 31: State Lobbying Services

(A) Approve a contract extension for two years to the contract with KTS Strategies, LLP, for state lobbying services, and (B) Authorize the City Manager to renew the contract for up to two, one-year renewal terms with possible price adjustments and to amend the contract consistent with the purpose for which the contract and this extension were approved.

PROPERTY TRANSACTIONS

Item No. 32: Property Transactions - Shamrock Drive Improvements, Parcel # 12

Acquisition of 673 square feet (0.015 acres) Utility Easement, 165 square feet (0.0038 acres) Sidewalk/Utility Easement and 842 square feet (0.019 acres) Temporary

Construction Easement at 3116 Farley Street from Ronald Charles Dodge and Shawn Marie Dodge for \$13,304 for Shamrock Drive Improvements, Parcel # 12.

Item No. 33: Property Transactions - South End Rail Trail/I-277 Pedestrian Bridge, Parcel # 1

Resolution of Condemnation of 1,177 square feet (0.027 acres) in Sidewalk Utility Easement and 3,344 square feet (0.077 acres) Temporary Construction Easement at 615 South College Street from CSHV 615 College, LLC for \$334,525 for South End Rail Trail/I-277 Pedestrian Bridge, Parcel # 1.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 556.

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ITEM NO. 2: ACTION REVIEW AGENDA OVERVIEW

Marcus Jones, City Manager said so, thank you Mayor and members of Council. As you may recall, we had our City Assessor come to you earlier this year to give you an overview of the process in terms of the reval and he will be back tonight to provide you an update of where he is and what he is seeing in his team. Then also as I mentioned at the last meeting, we will have an update for the overview of the North Carolina Opioid Settlement. I do believe you had a pre-read that came out maybe today, but Brian will provide you with that update.

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ITEM NO. 3: ACTION REVIEW ITEMS

Mayor Lyles said alright. We welcome you Mr. Joyner. Thank you for the work that you and your team are doing.

Ken Joyner, Mecklenburg County Assessor said appreciate the opportunity to come back tonight. So, again, as the Manager said, we were here earlier this year giving you basically just a simple overview of the process as City Council has changed over the years and just wanted to make sure everybody understood. Now we are back as we're approaching our appraisal date of January 1 of 2023. Wanted to provide you an additional update and some information relative to the city.

So, again we do conduct revaluations in North Carolina at least once every eight years. Our last one here in Mecklenburg County was in 2019. At the conclusion of 2019, the Board of County Commissioners advanced that to a four-year cycle so that we could keep values closer to current market, keep our public, our government officials more educated on the revaluation process. The hopes were to mitigate large increases seen over eight-year cycles. The purpose of the revaluation. Redistribute the property tax base, keeping those as fair and equitable as possible as certain values and certain areas will increase at different rates than others.

Now, the most important thing here I think for our customers is that the revaluation is not a means to increase property tax revenue. Back in 2019, this Council lowered their rate, a revenue neutral rate. So, for those residents looking at 2023, it is not to increase property tax revenue, it is more a means of keeping them fair and equitable. So, Mecklenburg County as we reported the last time was close to 400,000 parcels. Over the summer we eclipsed 400,000 parcels. Our median sales price right now is \$450,000 and when you look at our statistical of numbers, our sales ratio which measures our mathematical models, the values that we produce divided by their market related sales prices, we are right at 100 percent, 99.6, which is that target requirement by the statute. So, right now we're looking at a 52 percent increase. Residential at about 60 percent and commercial coming in at 39 percent. That is across the entire county.

Councilmember Johnson arrived at 5:07 p.m.

The city is a 51 percent, just slightly lower; 59 percent residential, 39 percent commercial. Now again, these values are subject to change. We will look at all market transactions through the end of the calendar year because our valuation date and our requirement is to hit the market at January 1.

Councilmember Watlington arrived at 5:08 p.m.

So, we will be monitoring to see how the fed changes that took place in November effect transactions all the way through December. So, we are actively working on that process, notification review and the appeal process. I think it's always important because I know that when the notices go out, all of the calls will not be to the county. The city will receive those as well. So, when the notifications are sent out, and right now we have backed that date from the end of January into sometime in mid-March. Everyone will receive their notice of value. We'll mail those. Property owners at that point have the opportunity to review their information. They can if they wish file and informal review online, by mail, in person on the phone to our office. Last time around, we had about 30,000 informal reviews. The majority of those I think a little short of 25,000 were done on our online portal. We want that to be accessible and easy to use again. We realize that not everybody is tech savvy. So, we mail with the notice, a form that they can mail back in to get that process started.

We can accept people walking into the office. We will have staff available to sit down with them and walk them through the process or by phone. Then the formal process. If during the informal review we're unable to find common ground and a common value, everyone still has that due process where they can file to go before the county's Board of Equalization and Review or BER. That decision can then be appealed to the North Carolina Property Tax Commission. Out of the 30,000 informals, the 360,000 parcels the last time we had it, around 750 appeals go to the state. So, a very small percentage go all the way to the state level.

Some of the important questions. Do you need an attorney? No. As I tell my staff no one knows the property better than the customer. So, at the informal level, do we have your property characteristics correct? Do we have your square footage correct? Do we have the proper level of depreciation? Maybe they haven't updated their kitchens and bathrooms to the level of the transactions that are taking place in that neighborhood, they can work with us and get us pictures and we can adjust that depreciation to make it fair and equitable for them. So, especially during that informal process, I think it's best for everyone to just work through our office.

Do you have to take off work? As we said with the 24/7 online portal, you can send that information in. You can call and we will try to call you back, but we don't want anyone to have to take off work during this part of the process. I think it's always good to say that there is no filing fee to do an informal review or a formal Board of Equalization review appeal.

So, this is what the notice will look like. We got a lot of the template information in there, but it will give everyone their parcel number, parcel address, market value and assessed value. We've added, I didn't know what it was four years ago, but a QR code right here in the middle of the page. It'll take them directly to the page where they can look their information up. On the back of the notice, we talk about what is the notice, what is it doing, how are we going about the process. We include that people can appeal for if their value is substantially higher than market if their value is substantially less, we do get those sometimes, if there's inequity among similar properties to theirs. So, those are your major reasons. Unable to pay your taxes unfortunately is not a valid appeal reason. We provide information on our relief programs as we always try to do.

Then as I said, we're going to provide them with an informal review form. If they do not want to use the online portal, they can fill this out and mail it into us. So, it's just some simple questions here. They can tell us what they believe value is, provide as appraisal, comparable sales, issues that may be taking place with the property.

So, then we start our online. Just a quick tour of the online system. So, if someone goes with that QR code off of the front page, here, they take their parcel number, their name and their address. They enter it in and that's going to pull up their property record. It'll have their value, a photo of the property, the aerial photo and then at the bottom of the screen down there, you can see land building features, value changes, more, tax bills and then you've got comp over there. This will take them to all of the comparable sales within their neighborhood that we're using. That way we want to be as transparent as possible throughout the process. If there's 15 sales, we're going to show all 15. They can then choose the ones that are most like their property. Here they chose comp one and two. You can see it gives them distance from their property, sell price, sell date, finished area, full bathrooms, full bedrooms, all of that information there that does provide that level of comparability.

Here they can file their informal review at the button down there. Then they choose how do they want notifications from the system. By email or by text message. So, they can file whichever one works best for them. Just a few simple questions. Residential versus commercial. Reason for your inquiries. Square footage is incorrect, bedroom bathroom count, recent appraisal, whatever their reason is, hit next and they are in the system. They're going to get a confirmation that they are in the system because as it says here, it may take up to four weeks when we get those initial bursts of informals. It's going to take some time. So, we don't want everybody anticipating to get a call back, but you can see here on the side, they can talk with us. It's a chat feature. They can send us questions we can answer, ask them questions. They can provide us files. This is where they can send us photos, engineering reports, appraisals, whatever information they have to us.

Then the last two items. We're just going to, as we always do, talk about the relief programs. One of the most important functions that my office does is handling these. Our elderly or disabled exclusion program. January 1 deeded owner, North Carolina resident, 65 years of age or older or totally and permanently disabled and any age. The income requirement for 2022 is set by the state at \$33,800. I can tell you Mecklenburg County is again trying to get that income threshold raised and are hoping to get some support from around the state.

Then our disabled Veterans homestead. This one only excludes the first \$45,000 to the home. Again, deeded residents as of January 1, North Carolina resident, honorably discharged 100 percent disabled, service related. There is no age or income requirement. This one is a lower exclusion. In my career, it's been explained to me that any modifications to the home, the program is there to help keep someone from having to pay taxes on modifications made to their home. So, our important dates. As we've mentioned, we're still in that community engagement. Right now we've visited and spoke at over 80 venues over the past probably 9 months. We're going to mail those notices in March. Informal appeal period begins. April will be the Board of Equalization and Review. They will start the acceptance of the formal appeals and then that period will end in June, the acceptance. We will be hearing those appeals if it's like 2019 all the way to early 2024. Then the first time these values will be used will be on those Fiscal Year 2024 bills mailed in July. So, at that point, I will turn it back over to the city and I'm here to answer questions.

Mayor Lyles said alright. Thank you very much. It's always great to see this process unfolding.

Councilmember Driggs said Mr. Joyner, thank you. So, this review process goes on until 2024. The bills are mailed in July and the payment date is the end of the year. Is that right?

Mr. Joyner said yes sir.

Mr. Driggs said without penalty. So, if you have a pending process on an appeal, how much does that homeowner pay?

Mr. Joyner said it is basically up to them. If they're in that formal appeal process, they can pay the full bill and get a refund after the process. They can pay to the value that they believe is correct or they can pay nothing and wait until it is finally settled. There will be interest included on whatever value is finally there, but the statutes give them the ability to choose how they want to pay.

Mr. Driggs said okay. What are the actual determination dates, like the valuation as of when and when was the last one effective?

Mr. Joyner said the market of January 1 of 2023 and the last one was four years prior, January 1 of 2019.

Mr. Driggs said right. Do you have any impression yet of how diverse the rates of increase are? The taxpayers see big changes in their tax bills if there is a huge difference in the rate of increase of say one type of property versus another. If everybody went up in unison, then people's tax bills would be pretty much the same. So, do you have sense now of whether there will be large changes particularly in lower income housing?

Councilmember Ajmera arrived at 5:20 p.m.

Mr. Joyner said I would say information that we've seen, it would appear that there will be larger increases on the lower valued properties this time. In comparison with the higher properties, we also see that commercial properties are not going up at the same rate as residential. So, there will be a shift there. It's a matter of what area. Certain areas are going up at higher rates than others.

Mr. Driggs said the last question has to do with the appeal. So, in the past, we've tried to estimate our property tax based on the revaluation and the reset of the rate, but in fact there has been a tail end of appeals pending and that in one instance was big after the really bad revaluation. Do you have any idea of what the magnitude typically would be in a well-executed revaluation of those appeals and the possible adjustments?

Mr. Joyner said I didn't when I got here. That was one of the first questions that I asked is what is the typical appeal lofts and I got, "Well the rule of thumb is." The rule of thumb doesn't break it down to different regions and different areas and different values. So, the last time through in 2019, we've got the level of appeal broken down by each municipality so that we know the final percentage of loss and value at the informal, at the formal level, at that conclusion at the state level so that we can be in a better situation to provide factual information to the city when we provide those assessment estimates in the spring.

Councilmember Mayfield said thank you, Mr. Joyner, for the presentation. So, for clarification, the new site that you just shared with us, this goes live when?

Mr. Joyner said this will go live as the notices are going out. They can get to that QR code area now, they just can't file an informal review until then. We're still working with the vendor. We've given them a list of enhancements. We're trying to improve on what we had the last time to make it easier and simpler for everyone. The list of questions to get into it has been shrunk. So, it will not go live, the informal review portion until the notices are in the mail.

Ms. Mayfield said 2023?

Mr. Joyner said the site, they can look up their property information where I showed you the physical characteristics of the property and all that. They can get to that information now. We just have not updated the sales data to the current sales data. That too will be updated as the notices are mailed.

Ms. Mayfield said question regarding the sales data. Did your office take into consideration the multiple purchases of corporations of single-family homes? If we're

talking about house value, well if I have a home that was built in the 30s, 40s, or 50s and have not been able to make beyond basic investments, new roof, windows, things like that, I haven't done an addition. Yet an investor came in and paid \$250,000 to \$300,000 over what was next to me, tore it down, rebuilt, that sold. Was any consideration taken to the impact versus putting it on the homeowner to have to figure out how to maneuver the process? One of the challenges is if you have your property taxes paid through your mortgage company, the mortgage company gets the notice before you do. So, the mortgage company will go ahead and pay it based on that September due date that you have versus some residents will pay January 2024 before the deadline.

Mr. Joyner said right. I will say that based on the statutes, we have to consider all of the transactions, even the ones from the corporations. We look at within each neighborhood, we're going to take all of those transactions and we're going to try to find that median, that middle ground. We're not going to use the highest sale price or the lowest. We're going to use that median. So, in those neighborhoods, that's what we're trying to get to, that fair and equitable and consistent value that we can use within the neighborhoods. So, we're not able to exclude corporation sales. Just as in 2019 in many of our areas, what you were explaining where they pay that price and then they tear it down, in many cases that becomes the land value in that area because that's what people are now paying for the land.

So, we as an office will look at the transactions within that neighborhood. If there's homes that are selling and not being torn down that are maybe a little larger, we have to adjust and determine the size homes within that neighborhood that are being bought and torn down. Then even those larger ones, we have to put a significant amount of depreciation on those so that they're only accounting for that area that's above what is the typical tear-down size. So, we do a lot of analysis in those neighborhoods to try to not just add a value on top of it, and the older homes are going to have a significant level of depreciation over and above those newer homes coming in.

Councilmember Winston said actually the question I have is for the Manager. Our residents, this is obviously a difficult time. It's a time period a lot of our folks have certain fears over when they see tax value of their home can change 60 percent. After they've kind of reckoned with that number, they want to know what can we do to stay in our homes. I think Mr. Joyner mentioned one policy decision that City Council made in 2019 with reducing the tax rate to virtually keep it neutral. I'm wondering if Mr. Jones, if you could speak to some of the work that City Council has done or some other tools that the citizens might engage with the city with if they have certain concerns with increases in tax bills.

Mr. Jones said sure. So, thank you Mayor Pro Tem. I guess I will start off the last time that there was a reval, it had been more than four years and there was a lot of concern about what we would call aging in place, individuals being priced out of their home because of the increase in the value. So, whether you call it a success or a failure, I'm going to start off by saying that the City Council on two budget cycles set aside \$1.5 million to help individuals stay in their homes. What was interesting, we combined with the county. I think actually Mr. Jerrell had a town hall meeting dealing with it and we went out into the community, and I think we mailed something like almost 20,000 postcards, did a bunch of door knocking, things of that nature.

The uptake for it was about 142 unique households with the average payment being a little bit over \$500. So, what occurs is that you roll that money over into what we call staying in place and you have three pilots. I remember two budget cycles ago, I would say the Mayor and Ms. Johnson and Ms. Watlington had a lot of questions about how we could make sure that people could stay in their homes. So, right now there's a pilot in three areas. Hidden Valley, Washington Heights, and Winterfell where Shawn I believe came to you almost a year ago and took some of the money that we had set aside in PAYGO for housing. It's a little bit over \$4 million and they're different tools. So, it's not just tax relief, but there's the comprehensive rehab housing, something Ms.

Mayfield that you'll recall when you were on Council the last time, emergency repair, acquisition, rehab resell, ADU (Affordable Dwelling Units).

So, again, there are a lot of things that are happening now. While there are 3 neighborhoods, there could've easily been 30 of them in this pilot, there's still roughly half of that \$8.5 million that are still there as well as what you have in housing from ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act). So, again some things have been tested, some opportunities to make sure that individuals can stay in their homes.

Councilmember Johnson said Mr. Jones, can you explain how residents in those neighborhoods would apply for those grants in those pilot neighborhoods?

Mr. Jones said right. So, I need to make sure that I acknowledge with Sherry Smith and Julia Martin and Sarah Hazel did in the past in order to have this community engagement. We really have partners right now. For instance, the United Way is supporting a quarter back agency to help information out. Atrium Health is providing community health workers, something that we talked about last time that we were together. We talked a little bit, Shawn did the last time we were together about Duke Energy. They're awaiting regulatory approval, but we can invest in energy efficiency retrofit across the entire community as well as Lowe's Foundation is providing funding for community grant pools.

So, what I would like to do is lean on Shawn maybe next time to be more specific, but there are grants out there. It's more than just let's call it a supplement for lack of a better word, to address what's happening in terms of the assessments. One of the things that people really need to stay in their homes, sometimes, it's a tree removal. There could be a costly tree removal that could be the difference in staying in your home or not. So, again we talked a couple of years ago about tools in the toolbox. You made the toolbox smaller and we're seeing how these are working in those three pilot areas.

Ms. Johnson said okay. Thank you. This is toward a gentrification 101. I was just looking at the statute and I saw that local municipalities are very limited on what we can do, but let's think about an area like Cherry. It's the one that comes to mind. I'm fairly new to the city, I've been here like seven years, but I was helping someone in one of the tax credit properties and I saw a house for sale next door. This was a tax credit property. They told me the house was like \$700,000 and I couldn't believe it. So, let's say there's someone that's owned their own for 30, 40 years in that area and houses in that area are selling for \$700,000 and \$900,000 and their taxes are being assessed based on those sales.

How is that being addressed? I heard you mention depreciation on older homes. Are we considering that? Like Ms. Mayfield said, the corporate investors kind of inflated the market because they were able to pay thousands and thousands over list price. So, I understand the state statute, but there has to be some consideration for that. So, what tools does your office have to consider the economy here in Charlotte?

Mr. Joyner said well I think the biggest issue is that the county is very limited in what they're able to do as well. The market value determining that market value, we as an office have to ensure, that's where we take this education process and getting out into the community very seriously, is we want everyone to understand they can file an informal review. These values are not final when that notice goes out. So, if there are errors, we want to solve them. We want to get to what that fair and equitable value is. So, we do 400,000 properties. There's no way I can stand here and tell you that we've 400,000 assessments correct.

So, we went out and visited all of the properties since 2014 to try to update those records and get everything as correct as possible, but if there's something that we're missing because we're walking the exterior of the properties. We're not going in. If there is additional depreciation on those homes, that's where we want to get that information so that we can get those values in those neighborhoods as fair for each of those customers as possible because we know they're not going to be at the same level of those news. Really, in Cherry, it's a great example. The structure on there probably has

no value at this point. Those older homes are there and if they were to sell in our current market, whoever was buying them would probably remove the home and build something that you're seeing in the market today. That is the problem. Trying to live out and stay in your home while at the same time, everything around you is just changing.

So, it is a major issue. Like the city's staying in place, the county started a Homes Program in 2019 and that program is still going forward. It is a grant program to help. It helps any age. It's not just those that are 65 and older, it's any age based upon your family size and what your income is compared to the AMI (Area Median Income) levels that the county has set through HUD (Housing and Urban Development). So, that program, four years is still a new program. It is run through the Community Resource Center over at Valerie C. Woodard, the CRC and we have the opportunity to talk with them and with the county management on how to set those grants at each revaluation. So, I'm sure it will be tied to what the increases are in residential properties so that we can at least, for those individuals, hold them harmless on what their increases are. At least up to what the median in those areas are.

So, it's a difficult situation because we all want our investment to go up in value. I think everybody buys a home hoping that it will one day bring them some financial gifts, but at a certain age, you're just wanting to stay in your property, and it just gets to where there is a huge burden there.

Ms. Johnson said so, do you know of other tools in other areas that consider an explosive growth or fast-moving area? Are there other tools that we're limited by because of state legislation? Are there programs in the country that consider this type of growth and protect the legacy of folks that have worked, and this is their asset? It's interesting and I know what you meant when you said there's no value, but these are people that have worked and this is their home, there's pride in paying that off to leave their legacy for their family. So, it's unfortunate that this market has caused their hard work to be of essentially no value. So, what are the creative solutions from other places that you've heard of?

Mr. Joyner said you've got Proposition 13 in California which basically sets your value at the price that you pay for it and then increases are very minimal. If the house next to you sells, they're now going to be taken to their market value. So, there's a solution for certain people, but then there's others that it becomes more of a burden because the house next door sold 20 years ago and you move into the neighborhood today and pay at the current market, you're paying a portion of their services because you're the, as I would call it, the welcome neighbor. You moved in and you're now paying at a higher level. I think the solution that you're describing would take special legislation in North Carolina to look at neighborhoods that are going through the gentrification process to ensure that all considerations are given. That's just not something right now that the statutes hold. I'm not aware of any states that have programs like that. I think it's something that if we're going to think out of the box that we need to start exploring how do we handle the gentrifying neighborhoods outside of the normal process if we're going to be able to make any type of an impact there.

Just being held to raising those values to 100 percent of market value does nothing. Gentrification doesn't occur because the assessor is raising values. All it does is bring it to the forefront where everybody sees what is happening in those neighborhoods through whether it's corporate owners or other investors or even just individuals who are buying a location and want to start their new home. So, I think it's a very interesting idea that at least I heard parts of it from what you were describing, that it's something that maybe we can look into. Until somebody comes up with an idea, it's just the same as it has been.

Councilmember Ajmera said Mr. Joyner, thank you. I had an opportunity to go back and look at all your slides. Certainly, the 59 percent increase, really that number jumps at me. This number doesn't necessarily represent a property tax increase. I just wanted to make sure that message is clear and loud. So, we have seen some market change in the past month or two. How does that factor into the reval process? Traditionally we

would see the notices go out by the end of the year or the beginning of January. Obviously, that has been adjusted which is great. So, I'm trying to figure out. Obviously there has been some slowing down in the market especially with the high interest rates. So, sales that happen in November, December, January, February timeframe, how does that weigh into the overall increase and just the property revaluation? Hopefully that would give some homeowners some relief.

Mr. Joyner said right. What you're describing, we discussed earlier. We have moved the notices back to March to allow us time to watch all of those market transactions up through December 31st. Our date of valuation is the market as of January 1, 2023. So, we have to evaluate and look at and determine how these transactions in December that are probably mostly influenced by the 75-point basis increase that was made the first week in November by the feds. Those are going to play out in December. So, that's why we pushed the notices back because unlike 2019 where we were just watching where the curve was going up and just trying to identify where it would be on January 1, we've got a different market.

So, we are pushing those back to try to evaluate all of those sales. We're working with some of our partners, SAS out of Cary, Spatialist, another company that we use to help us identify changes that may be taking place in that market to help us determine adjustments that would need to be made. That's why we clarified 59 percent, that's just as of the end of the November. We don't know what it'll be for January. So, just trying to give you a point in time and reference at least instead of just showing up the next time in the spring and saying, "Well, here's where we landed." The increases are still significant. Even with the slowdown, we're seeing transactions that are well above what we saw even in 2020 and 2021. So, it's still a situation of where we just want to take as much time and care to find the right landing place for those values.

Ms. Ajmera said fair enough. So, in our revaluation process, does your team drive by or sort of survey all the parcels? How does it work because I know we have had one revaluation year that was a company from out of state where the property revaluation wasn't really aligning with what the market trend was. It was significantly higher, and I know that last time when the revaluation process took place, there was sort of more attention to ensuring that the property reassessed value truly reflects what the market is. So, how many parcels do you all survey in your sample?

Councilmember Mitchell arrived at 5:45 p.m.

Mr. Joyner said well since 2014 we visited every parcel in Mecklenburg County. There's a small number that we have not, but they're most likely parcels that have been created since last January 1.

I think the last time I saw, we were somewhere in the neighborhood of about 3,000 parcels left. Some of those probably have new construction on them that we're visiting right now. So, we will visit every parcel other than probably some of the vacant new parcels that have just been created so that we can ensure that we've got the most accurate information on there. That's again what we were describing earlier is that I can't stand here and tell you that we're going to hit 400,000 parcels correct. So, that's where we want our customers to understand that the process is open and free for them to be a part of it so that we can land on the most correct value in every situation.

Ms. Ajmera said got it. That's where you need our residents' help with the informal review. I remember your team actually had done a town hall a couple of years ago where we invited residents to sort of walk through an informal review process which was really hands on. A lot of residents did benefit from that who were struggling, because obviously not everyone can afford an attorney to do informal review or to submit an appeal. So, that was very helpful. We certainly appreciate your work. Thank you.

Councilmember Watlington said I just have a couple of quick things. You already spoke to the recent sales and that impact. It sounds like if it was sold that's the numbers that we're using at least as a jumping off point. I wanted to ask, we talk about the

vulnerability to displacement in certain neighborhoods, also an area that has come up has been this equity in assessments. Can you talk a little bit about what exists within Mecklenburg County's process that ensures equity in the assessments?

Mr. Joyner said that's a great question. You're exactly right. Just like the entire appraisal profession right now, there's a lot of information out there trying to ensure that people are aware where there are inequities. We contracted with the School of Government last year to do a study on our informal and formal appeal process the last time to see if we were making equitable changes in value so that if we were not, we could put changes in place to try to do that. Probably the most glaring, and Brad my assistant assessor back there, he may even have some things from there that he would like to speak to, was the inequity in appeal rates. Wherein higher end neighborhoods, you saw a greater number of appeals. They've got a greater means, they may hire an attorney, they may hire an appraiser. So, we have made a point to try to go into as many of our lower income areas to talk about the process and what the informal review will do.

We are in conversations with Habitat for Humanity, DreamKey to set up some forums after the notices go out where we can reach customers in those area and talk about the informal review. We've had conversations and we've not been able to finalize anything even talking with the local realtor's association and local appraisers about whether they would have volunteers there if someone was maybe less trusting of government. So, that they can have someone with no skin in the game there that could walk them through what their value is, here's the comparable data, and yes it does look like you might have a reason to appeal.

So, we're trying to take those steps to ensure because I would love that when I walk away from the profession one day that I can truly feel like everyone had an equal opportunity to those equitable assessments here in Mecklenburg County. So, that's a great question and probably something I should've brought up earlier.

Ms. Watlington said thank you. I appreciate you addressing it. My last question and maybe it's more speculative. As I think about the commercial property and coming out of COVID, we see a lot of office buildings now that are not getting necessarily the utilization. How do you think that this tax evaluation and the assumption of higher taxes in properties that may not be fully occupied, how do you think that might impact our vulnerability in the market?

Mr. Joyner said well I can tell you that they can see rates have gone up in offices across the county, but so have rents and other things. There's still going to be an increase in the office market. It's just not going to be the 77 percent that we saw back in 2019. It'll probably be more like 20 or 25 percent, somewhere in that neighborhood. So, you're still going to see Uptown going up at significant increases, it's just not going to be at the same level we're seeing residential properties at this point.

I got an email from the Wall Street Journal last week wanting to talk about the office market that they had heard that they needed to talk with Mecklenburg because we hadn't made any changes since the pandemic and basically that values were going down. We responded and I set aside some time. They never got back in touch with us. So, the only thing I can think is that we didn't really fit the narrative of their story because there's so many people still moving into the region. So, we're still seeing houses go up, we're seeing new construction and office structures, apartments, you name it across the county. So, they're not going up at the same levels that they were, but we're still trying to measure exactly where they're going to land.

Mr. Driggs said I think it's worth emphasizing because there's a lot of apprehension whenever there's revaluation going on. If your property went up by 60 percent in value, your tax bill is not going to go up by 60 percent. State law requires in fact that we do a calculation, and we look at what the appreciation has been in the properties and then we calculate a new tax rate such that the amount of tax that we collect is the same as before. We have to disclose to the public what that number is. Council will then decide what the new tax rate is going to be with reference to that, but the public will be aware

what that number is. Just as an illustration, if your house went up by 50 percent and that is the overall appreciation, your tax bill stays the same.

If the value of your house went up by more than 50 percent, your tax bill goes up and if it went up by less than 50 percent your tax bill goes down. As a number example, if your house doubled in value, your tax bill because of the rate reduction is actually only going to go up by about 33 percent. So, we need to interpret this information carefully. If you happen to be a lower income owner of a home, then you're going to benefit from the appreciation of that home and your net worth is going to go up. Your ability to move somewhere else is going to be assured because you have a tie in between the appreciation of the home you're selling and the one you want to buy.

The people who get hit the hardest frankly are the renters because they will see rents go up as those taxes are passed through in the rents and they will not themselves realize any benefit from the gain and value of where they live. We need to just navigate this whole landscape carefully and just try to make sure that the public understands you know, 60 percent in the value of your home doesn't mean a 60 percent increase in your tax bill.

The other thing I did want to ask Mr. Joyner was they're talking now about a recession next year. We could see a lot of volatility in the housing market. So, is there any possibility of doing another reval less than four years from now?

Mr. Joyner said no sir. It took a good two years. We started in the summer of '20 with this revaluation, going through and establishing the neighborhoods. If we were in one of the states that had less intensive requirements on disclosure and showing exactly how you come up with the value, we could annual assessments. We could go in very quickly and identify neighborhood and move values, but North Carolina statutes, the way they are written, and we have to go through that schedule of values, trying to go less than four years as I discussed with the county would mean a significant number of new staff having to be brought on. Right now, we're having enough trouble filling the vacancies that we've got. So, I think that what we've got is once those values are established, it will be that point in time as the equitable distribution and then 27, wherever that market is, we'll do it all over again at that point in time.

Mr. Driggs said right. Given what we went through 10 years ago, I appreciate your thoroughness. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much Mr. Joyner. We're looking forward to this process. Ryan will be very busy. The Manager will be very busy and all of us as well, working to keep affordability in the forefront and fairness as well. Thank you very much for your presentation.

Alright. Our next presentation is an overview of the North Carolina Opioid Settlement. I believe you got some information on that today and Ryan's going to present that to us.

Ryan Bergman, Strategy and Budget Director said good evening, Mayor and Council. Ryan Bergman, Budget Director. I'm going to talk to you tonight about opioid settlement funds that the city has received. I just have five slides for you. We did send you yesterday a pre-read with some information. We wanted to send it to you online because there are a number of different links to the state website for more information on a number of these.

Okay. So, there was a nationwide settlement agreement for opioids. The state of North Carolina signed on to that agreement and then the state of North Carolina turned around created a MOA (Memorandum of Agreement) for local government to receive funding from this. I want to thank the City Attorney and his staff who has taken the lead on making sure that we receive the funds. We did have Council approve the MOA last year and we now are at a point where we've received the first year of funds.

Okay. So, let me walk you through the funds quickly. This state of North Carolina received \$750 million. Of those funds, they sent 85 percent of them to local governments. Now the local governments, all 100 counties received funds and only 17 cities. That would be the 17 cities that have a population of more than 75,000. So, you'll see the disproportionate nature between the counties and the cities, here where the counties received 96 percent of the funds. That's really the result of the nature of what these funds are for, for opioid services which in many regards is more of a social services public health court system type issue which is more closely aligned with what counties do.

So, on the right there, you'll see Mecklenburg County which of course helps our residents as well. We'll receive \$32 million over the 17 years. The City of Charlotte will receive \$8 million over the 17 years, and you'll see it's kind of a disproportionate payment schedule. We did receive our biggest chunk already this calendar year, then we'll receive another half a million dollars the next calendar year. It kind of trickles down by 2026 through 2038. Our average over that timeframe is \$472,000.

So, details on some of the allowable uses. The state MOA defined allowable uses for local government, and they had it into two different categories. Category A and Category B. So, Category A are the already preapproved evidenced based programs that we are able to do now. If we wanted to do something with some of the Option B categories, we would have to go through a pretty extensive collaborative process to be able to access those to prove that's what the community wants, to prove that their evidenced based and things of that nature. For the most part, the Option B categories aren't terribly different, they're just more narrowly defined, and we did include a link to them in the pre-read if you want to look at it.

If you look at the Option A uses, you'll see 12 different preapproved categories. I just wanted to highlight two of them. So, this is just a staff note. The city could use its funds in any of those categories, but when we looked at it we did see that there are two categories that seem to be more closely aligned with some of the work that the city does as opposed to some of the social services, public health, court system work that might fit some of the other categories. You'll see recovery housing support and employment related services. So, you can see with the recovery housing support, as long as it's treating opioid disorders, we would be able to partner with somebody to provide rent, move in deposits, utility support, down payment assistance. For employment related services, again as long as it's wrapped in with opioid recovery, we would be able to do things such as job skills and job training.

So, the last slide here talks about the advantages of working through a partner. As I mentioned, at \$470,000 on average the city's allocation would be at risk of being watered down if we had to create a new program with staff and overhead. So, the state MOA kind of accounted for that fact and they actually wrote into the MOA that cities do have the option of providing their funds to the county. They can do it in a way that is all future funds go directly to the county or they can do it through an interlocal agreement. There's certainly advantages to us doing it that way. The county has some of the reporting infrastructure because they do social services and public health already. We do have some history of collaboration with them, especially recently. Thinking of the Alternatives to Violence Program, which is really the other direction where because it's more closely aligned with us, they provided us a quarter of a million dollars that we would then report on.

If not the county, we could try to find a nonprofit partner. Ideally it would be a nonprofit partner where our funds would be concentrated on the beneficiary rather than staffing if we could do it that way. It would involve more extensive reporting requirements for us. I can tell you that we tried to look at some of the bigger cities and what they've done so far on this. I can tell you that Raleigh and Cary and Gastonia have already made public declarations to give their funds to the county in the future into their county. There's at least two more that I'm not going to say because they haven't formally done it that looked to be going that route. There's a couple that look like they're going to partner

with nonprofits and then there's a whole group of them where they're not entirely sure what they're going to do yet because they also haven't talked to Council.

These funds, it actually says in the MOA they were sort of intentionally designed for a collaborative approach. There's not an end date on these funds. So, there's no ask tonight other than feedback. This is something that we could incorporate into a budget process. This is something we could bring back sooner depending on what you guys wanted to do. I'll go ahead and stop there for questions.

Mr. Winston said thank you. So, in this age of fentanyl and synthetic analogs is not going anywhere, the street supply is heavily contaminated and it's more difficult than ever for people who use drugs to meet the current parameters for most treatment centers, housing organizations as well as other public assistance. I think our city should seek creative and helpful ways to support people in active use by offering them care that meets their most physiological needs such as housing, food, shelter, unconditional of their regard. There are progressive models found in other areas of the nation which include respite housing and alternative group homes that have more inclusive and safe policies and procedures that offer critical safety nets for people who use drugs and who are also experiencing homelessness as well as other co-occurring conditions such as justice involvement and mental health illnesses.

The Center for Prevention Services and Queen City Harm Reduction are currently piloting a harm reduction housing first model to do exactly this. I think we should turn our attention to these experts in substance use prevention and evidenced based care in order to effectively find ways to offer sustainable solutions that support the overall well-being of our most vulnerable citizens. Thank you.

Ms. Ajmera said so, in previous light Ryan, you had shared with us really two areas that really aligns with what City Council does, housing and employment support. So, even if we were to focus our efforts on this too, would it require additional hiring of staff Mr. Jones?

Mr. Jones said so, Councilmember Ajmera, what Ryan has provided is a pathway forward that would not require additional hiring of staff if you determine how you'd like to deploy the funds in which buckets. We either use a nonprofit or we use the county.

Ms. Ajmera said okay. So, I understand that if we go with a partner, we don't have to hire a staff member to support, but I guess I'm trying to figure out if we focus our efforts on housing and employment related services that we already have, that we already provide, do we still require additional hiring of staff?

Mr. Jones said I'll let Ryan go into that a little bit because there are reporting requirements that we would have to do.

Mr. Bergman said yes, because it's so closely aligned with opioid treatment, we did talk to staff. We don't feel that we have anyone on staff right now that could do the extensiveness that it would take for these programs.

Ms. Ajmera said got it. Okay. I understand in terms of the reporting requirements. So, I'm okay with having us utilize a partner that aligns with our goals as long as the Council sets the goals, like here is how we would like these funds to be spent. Then have an oversight. I'm okay with us leveraging a partner to do that, especially county. This is what they do every day, health and human services. That's what they're good at. So, I'm okay with us going that route. Thank you.

Ms. Mayfield said so, for a little bit more clarification, you stated that a number of cities have already decided to transfer the funds to the county services?

Mr. Bergman said yes.

Ms. Mayfield said do you know if there was any conversation? So, for me what I'm considering is the county seems like a natural partner, but since we do have some very specific goals, do you know if in some of those other areas their Council had some very specific requests with the funding prior to transferring it over to make sure that the goals were being identified and being met?

Mr. Bergman said so, for Cary, Raleigh and Gastonia who have done it already, I'm not aware of anything public. We will check on that, but what I will say is that the way that staff has kind of envisioned this, it would be us approaching the county the way you guys would like if that's the route you wanted to take where we could try to define it. The way that this is set up, there are predefined areas and as long as you are sticking in those areas for your recommendation, it would seem to be something that they could report on fairly easily.

Ms. Mayfield said so, would the conversation move from tonight, Mr. Manager, hearing from Council and then your staff will go and start those conversations with the county based on the parameters that's already been set? Or will there be an opportunity for this Council, since those parameters were set by previous Council, to have an update of here's where we identified priorities, this Council says here in that parameter that we agree with, then you go and speak with the county?

Mr. Jones said thank you Councilmember Mayfield. As Ryan said earlier, the county has been a great partner with their Alternatives to Violence where we were taking the lead and they're coming along. I did have a conversation with the County Manager. They were ready to have an agreement on their docket tomorrow, but I said we really have to have this conversation first. Dana was very clear that if you chose the county, they would allocate the funds in the manner in which you desired.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you for that clarification Mr. Manager and thank you for answering the questions. If we're going to have an actual vote, if not, if it's just to feel the energy from the Council, I do support the idea of us working with our partner which is Mecklenburg County.

Councilmember Mitchell said thank you Ryan for giving us a great report. Just a follow up on the first one. You said the allocation for 2022, we have already received?

Mr. Bergman said correct. We received the allocation, the \$987,000. We have not appropriated it or spent it or anything.

Mr. Jones said Madam Mayor and Council, one thing that could be helpful for us is I think we're going to have the State of CMPD (Charlotte Mecklenburg Police Department) in January. It would be nice to get feedback from them. Where has been some of the hotspots for opioid issues facing our community, and what do they see with some of the trends? I think having their input can help guide us on what will be priority areas for us. I just wanted to make sure that I don't misspeak. One of the reasons why the county was ready to queue things up tomorrow is, I'm not going to put anybody on the spot. There was a concern, and they have been working with legal, so thank you Patrick. There is some concern about making a declaration of where the money goes before January of each year. So, there could be a situation, again I'm not 100 percent sure. We have to do something special to get that \$987,000 to them, but I just didn't want that to be left without speaking. We're trying to figure out how that works.

Mr. Bergman said if I could just mention one clarification on that. The \$987,000 we can still give to the county. The first year we would have to do the reporting on it. They would essentially be a subrecipient. It's the next year and every year after that where we could essentially pass a resolution that allows it to go straight to the county for every year thereafter. I should mention that City Council would be able to get out of that at any point. So, in five years if you decide you want to do something different with it, you would be able to do that.

Councilmember Graham said I just wanted to lend my voice also to supporting one, the windfall and then secondly the recurring nature of it every year and they're a lot of discussions around the dais relating to some of the issues that we can use the money for that are not really in the city's wheelhouse but certainly the county has the expertise, the know-how, the resources and the manpower to deliver the service. So, I think that's the right way to go as long as we can direct the funds because sometimes from out of this dais there's a lot of specific requests that falls within the zip code of other usage of the dollars that goes well beyond the two that were listed. I think all of them are allowable usage, right? You just highlighted two.

Mr. Bergman said yes. I just highlighted two. We don't have a full plan from the county, but presumably the county who gets four times more than we do to begin with will be heavy in a lot of these different areas.

Mr. Graham said some of the other areas, yes. I know we talk a lot about reentry programs, and we talk about this ideal reference to single room occupancy housing, which is putting money to building affordable housing at the lower end. So, as long as Council every year has the ability to send an earmark of where we want the funds to go, I feel really comfortable with that, and/or if there's a specific nonprofit organization like the United Way that we do a lot of work with on some of these same programs. I would support that as well.

Councilmember Bokhari said I'm in general agreement with the sentiment I think we've heard which is for the city to approach the county. I'd just give two little asterisks because I think there's going to be some deal making and deal structuring that needs to happen here. I think you'll lead on the right foot given that we're kind of proactively going with a relatively large chunk of money to our partner that something is in their wheelhouse and not in ours.

We've had these conversations. There are more opportunities to do this and I think number one, I'm hopeful this is a bit view as an olive branch for us recognizing their expertise and us not trying to reinvent a wheel or give a nonprofit some money where we can all get together and structure some shared outcomes that we care about. So, I think number one is there, while figuring out where can this conversation lead in other topics that might go on the other way on that road. Then two, this is a long-term thing, not amounts of money balk at, and an important topic. I think you'd probably want it structured in a way where you start down this path, but you have milestones and measurements where we all come back, and we could take a look and readjust as necessary to make sure that Mecklenburg has a wide scope of concerns. We are focused on Charlotte. There's a lot of different needs that probably will be different as years change. So, just the ability for us to partner with them and adjust those things based on this scope of where the money came in, versus us executing it.

Mayor Lyles said so, Mr. Bokhari just expressed my first point about the collaboration and the understanding of our roles and the responsibilities that we have with the county. This is an opportunity for us to actually work in a way that really improves this process for all of us at the same time. The other thing I think about this is that when we talk about who the clients are, you don't want them to have to go to two portals to get services. That's a lot of times what happens when we divide things up. They say, "Oh you have to go to the county for this and then you have to go to the city for that, or you have to go someplace else." So, it's tough enough to be in this vulnerable situation as the Mayor Pro Tem has said. So, I think when we look at this, it ought to be really what the commitment to collaboration and strategic planning. The real meanings of these words and that's because we have to do this for people that need it so desperately. We should think about this from a client centered approach. How do you make sure? I think the Mayor Pro Tem, no harm. It's tough and we need to have some expertise. Milestones, measurements I think are just in every aspect of our work now. We ought to be doing that.

Ms. Molina said just really quickly. If I did say anything for being redundant, but I just would say this is a great idea. Thank you for the presentation and thank you first of all Madam Mayor. Thank you for the presentation. Particularly in District 5, I've been talking

to the colleagues that will eventually be working closest with me which is Commissioner Mark Jerrell and the schoolboard member. What I've heard from the people who I represent specifically is that the average human that we deal with on a regular basis who gives us their opinions, they aren't thinking of civics when they have an issue. They just know that someone represents them. So, what they feel when they contact one of us, even if they're contacting the person that they shouldn't be, is that this person can resolve my issue.

So, I am very heartened to see us extend this olive branch to our partners in the county, and I am absolutely on board with allowing them to do what they do best and set some deliverables that can help our constituents and our city and county know that we're a united front with different deliverables, but we're here to work together.

Mayor Lyles said I think Mr. Jones you're hearing a sentiment to go in that direction. I think having the conversations and coming back with something that's more specific around the priorities that the Council have aligned, that would be very helpful as we do that and a step forward.

I think this is the very first time that we've had a workshop since Ms. Molina joined the Council that we actually have time to walk down the stairs, time to start on time and actually do it with some grace instead of like running out from the back of the room to the dais. So, I appreciate that very much. I think the conversations tonight have been exceptionally well done and stated. So, thanks everyone. I think also we had the opportunity to talk about this a little bit more at our housing and jobs conference because that's where we can have some impact for people that need a place to live and a job to keep them up. So, okay, we're going to go downstairs and start on time guys. Thank you so much.

The meeting was recessed at 6:22 p.m. to move to the Meeting Chamber for the regularly scheduled Business Meeting.

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BUSINESS MEETING

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina reconvened for a Business Meeting on Monday, December 12, 2022, at 6:33 p.m. in the Meeting Chamber of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Lyles presiding. Council Members present were Dimple Ajmera, Danté Anderson, Tariq Bokhari, Ed Driggs, Malcolm Graham, Reneé Johnson, LaWana Mayfield, James Mitchell, Marjorie Molina, Victoria Watlington, and Braxton Winston, III.

Mayor Lyles said alright, thank you. We begin our meetings with an expression and an inspiration. This is an opportunity for one of our Council members to help us center ourselves as we begin this meeting. We understand that we're trying to solemnize our own deliberations and recognize that our community is very diverse in religion and faith as well as those without religious faith. So, tonight, if you choose to participate, feel free to do so. I want to recognize Councilmember Graham to give a message to us this evening.

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INVOCATION AND PLEDGE

Councilmember Graham gave the Invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

Mayor Lyles said before we begin our meeting, I'd like to recognize Councilmember Mayfield for a special message this evening.

Councilmember Mayfield said happy holidays to everyone. To my colleagues, we have one more meeting. So, I would like to encourage all of us who will be in attendance to wear a holiday sweater or something festive including the antlers if you feel so. I see Councilmember Ajmera has on a holiday sweater, and I do, but it would just be a great sign. Since we're going to be working next Monday, it would be great if we had on something holidayish.

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PUBLIC FORUM

Mayor Lyles said alright. So, you heard that request. We will not be voting on that request. So, we now are going to declare our next business. Now we will go to our public forum where we have people from the community that would like to address the Council as a whole. These speakers will have three minutes each to speak to us. Our practice is to have you speak and to have our staff take notes for it and to look at what you've asked for or to address the issue that you have and send you a reply through the city clerk's office with the information that you provided for us later on this week. It may be a little bit later in the next couple of weeks, but you will have a communication as a result of coming to speak to the Council.

Media Coverage about Hindus

Snehapriya Rao, 1328 Ordermore Avenue said good evening esteemed members of the Charlotte City Council. I, Snehapriya Rao, would like to thank you all for allowing me to speak about the issue of Hindu phobia which has negatively been impacting my community. Hindu Americans seek what every American seeks. Freedom to practice our traditions, safety, to provide for your families and acceptance in society. Today I come here because I observe that Hinduism is being demonized in the media and our educational system. While attacks on Hindu places of worship and bigoted hate incidents are being ignored. I'm here as a concerned Hindu American, mom and a resident of Charlotte who is witnessing the rise of Hindu phobia.

What exactly is Hindu phobia? Hindu phobia is a set of antagonistic destructive and derogatory attitudes and behaviors towards Sanātana Dharma Hinduism and Hindus that may manifest as prejudice, fear and hatred. Hindu phobic rhetoric reduces the entirety of Sanātana Dharma to a rigid of passive and regressive tradition, prosocial and reflexive aspects of Hindu traditions are ignored or attributed to outside non Hindu influences. This discourse actively erases and denies the persecution of Hindus while disproportionately painting Hindus as violent. These stereotypes are used to justify dissolution, external reformation and demonization of the range of indigenous [INAUDIBLE] traditions known as Sanātana Dharma.

One example I can give you is recently there was an attack on a Hindu temple in New York City where a Gandhi statue was demolished, and the word dog was scrawled across. What people might not know is the word dog is a slur for Hindus. Another example is there was a recent study published by Network Contagion Lab which showed a rise in the word on social media spaces by supremacist groups. The word was pajeet, this is also a slur for Hindus. I have a four-year-old daughter who is growing up in this world and I am also a Hindu American mom and I'm concerned about what environment she's going to be growing up in. As a teenager after I immigrated to the U.S., I experienced a lot of Hindu phobia. Today I'm here wearing a bindi, but for a long time I took off the bindi because I experienced a lot of discrimination and targeting. I was very attracted to social justice and progressive ideas. Feminism and LGBTQ rights because I had hoped that Hindus would be included in that narrative, our colonial history, our colonial struggles would be included in that narrative, but what I'm finding is in fact, it's the social justice space that is creating Hindu phobia by claiming that Hinduism is inherently casteist and inherently discriminatory. I wanted to say that Hindus are not perfect.

Councilmember Anderson arrived at 6:38 p.m.

Mayor Lyles said I want you to know that in our value system in this organization, we believe that respect and dignity belongs to every person and every group that's in our whole environment and what we do and see. So, thank you for sharing that information with us.

Ms. Rao said thank you so much for having me.

Mistreatment of Renters

Jasenکو (Jasen) Suljetovic, 15620 Bellaire Ridge Drive said good evening esteemed Madam Mayor and Council members. My name is Jasen Suljetovic and I live in District 7. I would like to bring awareness to an issue that is affecting 47 percent of the Queen City's population. The housing crisis and almost the complete lack of landlord accountability leaving almost half of the city's population in a constant state of David versus Goliath battle, and here David will always lose. According to an August report from rent.com our state has seen an almost 60 percent increase in rent prices in 2021 rent averaged at \$935 but as of 2022, that price is at \$1470 to over \$2000 for two-bedroom units. As North Carolina does not have rent control laws, us tenants are left at the mercy of our landlords or companies and rare are the tenants get any mercy.

Those of us coming up on renewals have limited to no options and we must agree to a 20 percent default increase if we want a place to live. However, neither of those increases are providing upgrades to the quality of life for the tenants or even mold free and sanitary homes. In your folders, you will see pictures of Bexley Crossing at Providence owned by Virginia Property Corporation and the conditions of my unit at move in date, A/C issues which were me and my mother's first encounters since I moved to the U.S. The plastic bucket placed in her bathroom and unsanitary condition of our breezeway as well as the email correspondence with the property.

Please note these are the living conditions in a luxury community whose parent company receives around \$10,200,000 from North Carolina tenants alone. My property alone receives \$50,000 in trash fees, more than our teachers and police officers are paid on a yearly basis. As of 2022, 44 percent of Charlotte's median income is going towards rent. How is this money not monitored and how are tenants charged more and more with each renewal with no end in sight. It seems like we're targeting \$3,000 by 2024. This mistreatment, tenant exploitation and retaliation are just one example of what Charlotte tenants are dealing with on a daily basis. If we bring the aspect of racial bias and inequity to this, we'll stay here all night. Several Better Business Bureau complaints indicate racial bias present which resulted in baseless overnight evictions, irreparable credit damage and inability to buy a home.

This is without bringing into discussion the issue of homelessness of former felons as presented by Ms. Shakiyla Pickens on November 28th. It is beyond worrisome that as consumers, we can get immediate solution to get our money back with almost any business, but we have almost zero control when it comes to the most important part of our lives, our home and our sanctuary. A landlord or a company can impact our lives and homes with a bat of an eye with very little resources for 47 percent of us living in Charlotte. It is my hope esteemed Madam Mayor and members of the Council that this will initiate and act and ongoing discussion and presence in the public discourse is order for the city and state to reach some steps to help half of us who are at the mercy of our landlords, that unmonitored, can alter the lives of half of our city. Thank you for your time and I wish everyone the most wonderful holidays.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much for your presentation and the clarity and your documentation that you provided to us. This conversation has started. It's not an easy conversation, it's a very difficult conversation as you're aware. We wish the very best for all of our residents. Safe and decent housing and sometimes we don't really get to that point, and it takes a lot of us. So, thank you for coming down and sharing the information.

Mr. Suljetovic said you're welcome. Thank you for your time.

Safety in the Beatties Ford Rd. Business District

Waled Alboga, 2121 Beatties Ford Road said okay. Good evening, everybody. Thank you for this opportunity. I'm from Beatties Ford Road area. I'm the owner of Buy Wise Beauty Supply. I've been in that location for 23 years. We see the up and down in that area. I'm here for safety. That area is getting deteriorated with the neighborhood all. From homeless and drugs and safety, the businesses are leaving the area. We're getting into a very dangerous situation. To my business and other businesses right there, it's getting to the point where we're shutting down. The homeless and the drugs and the safety. We know how that area goes up and down from Johnson C. Smith University all the way to 85. I've been there 23 years. We've seen the good and we've seen the bad and hopefully right now we want it to be good, but it's going down. I've been calling the police many times a day, but they cannot do anything unfortunately because the situation with the homeless is very deteriorated.

I've been dealing with it and many businesses dealing with it. There's no end to it. After that, we know how the scenario. First of all, the homeless, then second supplying the drugs and after that, the crime happens. Then you guys came in and the media came in. Hopefully we prevent all that right there from happening with drugs and safety in that area right there. It's never ending. We're struggling and people in Beatties Ford deserve more than that, believe me. You guys know it more than me. The people in that neighborhood deserve to be as good as any neighborhood in Charlotte. We don't see that. It's not the police problem, it was also you guys' problem. We elected you to see this problem resolved for the community and for the builders. You cannot trust business to open on Beatties Ford Road right now.

There's nothing for the people that live there. No business. We don't see any restaurants. Where's the family restaurants for that area particularly? There's nothing. I've been in 23 years in that location, this is my first year I have lost money on it. If it's going to be like this, might as well just put the plywood on my window and shut it down. Where are we ending it? We need hopefully help from you guys with the homeless situation, with the drug problem because it's never ending. After that, when you have the homeless, we feel sorry for them. We want to them, but we want to prevent that from happening. The area is not improving. You guys bring a couple of businesses for the corner and LaSalle and Beatties Ford, Chase Bank, but where is the small business for serving the community? We don't have anything like that. Never growing, 23 years and it's never growing.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much. We really appreciate it. We'll have someone contact you in regard to your problems that you presented to us. As you said, all of us around this dais understand these issues.

Mr. Alboga said I appreciate all the help.

Mayor Lyles said thank you for expressing them to us in a very personal and conscious way of doing it. Thank you very much.

Mental Health, Substance Abuse and Housing Needs

Stephanie Shine Morrison, 10130 Mallard Creek Road said hello. Good evening, Council and Mayor. I'm Stephanie Shine Morrison, owner of Alternative Living Solutions of North Carolina. It's an outpatient mental health and substance abuse company. I've come today because like the gentleman that just left here, I was born and raised here in Charlotte, North Carolina off the west side, Beatties Ford Road and like everyone before me has said, it's a lot of homeless issues. I come to let you guys know that my company, I've been asking for funding and applying for funding but of course I've been overlooked. Small businesses don't get as much attention as larger corporations.

So, we provide outpatient mental health dealing with serious mental health issues, housing. We partner with other housing outside of Section 8 such as Targeted Unit Housing Program. We provide nonemergency medical transportation, home health and also case management services here in Mecklenburg County and surrounding areas. We just have a lot of people not only homeless, but they are homeless due to their mental health issues. So, it's not just because they can't keep housing or they don't want to work, it's dealing with serious mental health issues, and they don't have the resources to back them up. You may have them placed in housing, but who is there to make sure they stay housed?

We have a lot of people in my program that get housing and they get put out because their mental health is not there, then they have nowhere else to go and they're starting from ground zero again. So, we provide those services, but we don't always have the means for the in between time, meaning while they're on the waiting list, where's the temporary services that they can get? Where's the additional help they can get without being on a waiting list. They can of course contact area mental health or Novant or whoever, but they may not be able to be seen until three or four months later. Then next thing you know, the suicide rate goes up.

We have people like myself and other small businesses that get overlooked for the funding for it and therefore you have your suicide rate go up, your homeless rate goes up, and we provide all these additional services for the community. So, that's why I'm here today to let you guys know that there are other companies out here that does provide these services and they are here to help individuals get housed. Not just housed but stay housed for the long term not just short term and in between time there's help, even while they're in their longer term.

Again, we are partnered with the Targeted Unit Housing Program and it's for individuals that's living with social security and social security disability income and individuals making \$300 or less a month.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much for sharing your information and your business progress as well.

Ms. Morrison said thank you.

Safety in Charlotte

Teywonia Byrd, 3123 North Davidson Street said thank you. Good afternoon, Madam Mayor Lyles, Pro Tem Winston II, Charlotte City Council members as well as staff. My name is Teywonia Byrd and I reside in the municipality ward of District 1 and I've reached out to most of you at some level before. Just a little bit about me. I've been in the nursing profession for 24 years. So, a little over half my life and then practicing anesthesia for half that time as a certified registered nurse anesthetist or CRNA. I am a very active and concerned constituent and my purpose this evening is to ensure that our elected officials are aware of some of the safety and equitable housing concerns happening in our community like a lot of us here.

Being a single Black female who is a survivor of a 2020 sexual assault after being drugged in my very small NoDa condo building, I truly value our CMPD and resources that are not only locally but federally in place for the community's protection. I'm concerned when some of these resources fail us or seemingly ban when we're not allowed to implement basic measures because of an invasion of privacy. I know no greater invasion of privacy than a rape, vagina. Excuse my transparency. Moreover, a particular group of people, Black women are being continually compelled to move from this Charlotte neighborhood despite multiple cries for help. I appreciate the aid of Councilmen Egleston at the time when I felt threatened by CMPD and no support for my safety at that time.

Yet, an even greater concern lies when I felt forced to leave my home over safety on May 9th despite filing a fair housing violation as put in place for certain situations. I am

left with concerns of whether commercial real estate landlords and developers, and in this particular case, Lat Purser and Associates, LPA, could've been influential to the decision makers Willie Ratchford at our local HUD (Housing and Urban Development) office on Parkwood Avenue. Lat Purser and Associates had an active affordable housing and HUD project in progress and is also a major part of our community and our condominium association where these issues are occurring. I respect each entity and every jurisdictional decision, but there are checks and balances especially in government for a reason. Fair housing and safety has been longstanding issues. All fair housing issues do not always follow the typical template either.

My understanding that there are City Council Committees instilled by Mayor Vi consisting of housing, safety, and community as well as budget governance and intergovernmental relations. We will greatly appreciate if a closer look is taken at what is potentially happening in these programs. Thank you so very much for your time.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much. We will follow up with you. Thank you very much.

Woody Point Road

David Hannes, 13441 Woody Point Road said for new Council members who don't know me, my name is David Hannes. For the past 13 months I've been trying to get the street I live on classified properly to prevent the construction of a fire station on it. Except for Councilmember Watlington, no one else on the previous Council thought Woody Point Road deserved their attention. I hope this new Council is more open-minded. While I realize that Woody Point Road is not a hot button topic or issue, it is of vital importance to the city and its reputation. Its improper classification by the Council will adversely affect the lives of hundreds of residents on this street.

Woody Point Road is a state owned quiet narrow tree lined dead end strictly residential street approximately one mile long in southwestern Mecklenburg County. It fits the zoning ordinances definition of a local street precisely. The Charlotte zoning ordinance strictly forbids commercial land development on a local street such as Woody Point Road. According to C-DOT (Charlotte Department of Transportation), it's the Council's responsibility to correct this mistake to protect Woody Point Road from improper land use and development that the present classification would allow. I don't understand why the Council refuses to investigate this situation. In over 12 months of looking into this situation, I can't find a shred of evidence to support the zoning administrator, C-DOT, and planning's contention that Woody Point Road is a collector street.

If I felt the city was justified in their actions, I would not have spent the last year fighting this injustice. No matter how many times the city declares Woody Point Road is a collector street, it doesn't make it one. A lie is still a lie and the truth should matter to the Council. In my efforts to resolve this situation, I've invited numerous officials to come to Woody Point Road, meet with me and explain to me why Woody Point is a collector street. They all ignored my invitation. I don't understand why these officials are so intent on destroying Woody Point Road and why the Council refuses to act. The city is supposed to have a code of ethics that its employees are bound by and these actions by city officials go way beyond violating this code.

This is my fourth visit to Council and no one but Ms. Watlington has even questioned what the city is doing to Woody Point Road. It's very frustrating to see the disinterest by Council members for such an important issue. Not one question has been asked of me in all of my visits to Council. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said thank you. Mr. Hannes, I just want you to know we'll continue to communicate with you and thanks to Ms. Watlington for reaching out. Often among the Council, because she's very familiar with her district and what she does, that's one of the reasons that she has this ability to connect on this and also she can continue to communicate with the remaining members of Council as well. So, give us a little bit of grace and we'll continue to communicate with you and Ms. Watlington will I'm sure

continue to work with you as well. The Charlotte Fire Department and the Steele Creek Volunteer Fire Department are actually in negotiations right now to try to move the fire department, but the street classification is still a problem. Thank you very much Mr. Hannes.

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ZONING

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PUBLIC HEARING

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ITEM NO. 7: PUBLIC HEARING AND DECISION ON CARDINAL CREEK AREA VOLUNTARY ANNEXATION

Mayor Lyles declared the hearing open.

Motion was made by Councilmember Winston, seconded by Councilmember Bokhari, and carried unanimously to adopt an annexation ordinance with an effective date of December 12, 2022, to extend the corporate limits to include this property and assign it to the adjacent City Council District 5.

There being no speakers either for or against, a motion was made by Councilmember Winston, seconded by Councilmember Bokhari and carried unanimously to close the public hearing.

The ordinance is recorded in full in Ordinance Book 65, at Page(s) 349-353.

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ITEM NO. 8: PUBLIC HEARING FOR MSD REDUCTION BY OWNER

Mayor Lyles declared the hearing open.

Adam Rhew, 525 Marsh Road said Mayor Lyles, Manager Jones, Council members, good evening. My name is Adam Rhew. I'm the president and executive director of SouthPark Community Partners. We're a nonprofit organization missioned with the vibrancy of the SouthPark Municipal Service District, MSD6, which we serve through a contract and a partnership with the City of Charlotte. It's my privilege to be with you tonight representing our board of directors and on behalf of the more than 25,000 employees, 5,500 residents and over 300 shops and restaurants who make the SouthPark district such an outstanding place.

As you know City Council established MSD6 earlier this year following a thoughtful stakeholder led process supported by city staff. The boundaries were carefully considered, and we believe they're appropriate as adopted. We're grateful for the partnership we enjoy with the City of Charlotte and with the SouthPark association of neighborhoods. We're excited to leverage dedicated focus and funding to build upon SouthPark's rich history and ensure it is well-positioned for an extraordinary future. We do this through a professional staff focused on advocacy, economic development, marketing and events, placemaking and urban planning. It's our job to wake up everyday thinking about how we make SouthPark and even better place to live, work and visit.

I'm excited about the work we've already started and will continue. All of that work will create value for our commercial and our residential stakeholders. Our vision for

SouthPark includes things like great streets with safer intersections and enhanced walkability including the SouthPark loop, a three-mile urban trail that will be a defining asset for this community. Thriving retail and restaurants supported by a strong commercial and residential base. Public space that is beautiful, safe and well programmed and a compelling identity so SouthPark can stay relevant in an increasingly competitive landscape.

We've already begun fruitful partnerships with public and private sector partners on these and many other initiatives, but it's early days. We're a brand-new organization still in startup mode. Today is my 85th day on the job. We've got a lot of work to do to build this organization and build the community's vision for SouthPark and what we're going to accomplish together. It's a privilege though to be on that journey with the city, with our great partnership that we enjoy with the city and with our community of commercial and residential stakeholders. I'm excited to come back to you at the end of the fiscal year and report on the progress that we've made on the objectives that we've all set together as a community as we work together to advance the vitality of this important economic anchor in the City of Charlotte.

Motion was made by Councilmember Winston, seconded by Councilmember Driggs, and carried unanimously to close the public.
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POLICY

ITEM NO. 9: CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

Marcus Jones, City Manager said thank you Mayor and members of Council. Tonight, we're doing something a little bit different, and we will have a 911 update. I know that over the course of the past month or so, we've provided some write-ups to the City Council in terms of where we are. We thought that because there were a number of requests from Council it'd be better to have Deputy Chief Robinson come in and give you an update. I'd like to frame it a little bit as Deputy Chief Robinson comes up. We've been trying to provide core services and exceptionally during the pandemic. We have struggled in some areas with hiring.

So, while tonight we're talking about 911 telecommunicators, there have been situations in whether it's CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System) or CMPD or even aviation. What we have been doing is tracking the progress that we've been making in terms of retention and recruitment. We have been making some progress over the course of the last few months. I think it's important. Again, hopefully over the next few months I won't have to say this again, but as we transition from one Council to another Council, one of the things that was approved in this last budget was how do we address our hourly employees. If you go back during the Fiscal Year 2023 budget process, we realized that we were having a higher vacancy rate with our hourly employees than we were with any other employee group across the spectrum.

So, there are some things that are in part of this Fiscal Year 2023 budget that we believe is going to be helpful. The Mayor Pro Tem will remember that maybe two years ago you talked about shift differential. That's something that's kicking in where there's a 2.5 percent difference between shifts. I think it's also important that what we did with hourly is we basically had an 8 percent compensation increase for Fiscal Year 2023, 4 percent in July and another 4 percent right as we get to January 2nd. I think also what's important is we had retention bonuses that were the equivalent of 1 percent. I think one was in July, one was in September. So, the concept would be over the course of the year, maybe when you get up to January, at a minimum for the hourly employees, there's the equivalent of a 10 percent salary bump. Again, that doesn't take in account shift differential as well as another 2.5 percent we provided for individuals who have a CDL (Commercial Driver's License) and need the CDL to perform the service.

So, again, we believe that some of those actions have taken a situation that could be much worse and had us tread water if not make a little bit of progress. So, I just didn't want you Deputy Chief to believe that you're the only person that has questions regarding this area. There're some things that CMPD have done over and above that, that we believe is going to help make a difference. So, unless there's some questions for me Mayor, I'd like to turn it over to Deputy Chief Robinson.

David Robinson, Deputy Chief, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department said thank you Mayor. Thank you, Mr. Jones, for the continued support and to Council for public safety in the City of Charlotte. It means the world to every one of our employees. We've been through a tough time as a nation, as a world in coming out of COVID-19 and learning the new normal. I can tell you as we talk about our 911 issues, we're never satisfied. We have been on top of this problem for a number of months, almost 24. Indeed, as our numbers began to slip, and those metrics were part of our understanding that something was going and we have addressed it.

I would be remiss if I didn't thank and recognize Councilwoman Mayfield for the opportunity to engage with you ma'am at your town hall the other day as well as Councilmember Johnson. Really enjoyed the opportunity to not only hear from you, but to speak with our community members. It's at those moments that you see what community is really all about. What I'm here tonight to talk about is a continuation of that conversation that we've had and to let you know that we share in the concerns of the Mayor and Council and the City Manager. We're taking immediate steps with your support and help to address that.

So, with that, we have experienced some staffing issues that have resulted in longer than we would like hold times. We have a standard called 90/10. What that means is that we want to answer 90 percent of our calls within 10 seconds of that person placing that call. To us, that's not even good enough. We don't want the phone to ring to ring one time. We want to be able to pick it up and to deliver services to the person on the other end. Nobody, save for a few people who may call to ask what the weather is or upset about something, most people who call 911 are there to do two things. Report a crime, generally speaking a crime in progress. So, there's an urgency there or somebody who is in absolute crisis. When we talk about the word crisis, we talk about the exposure to the things that people go through.

Tonight, what we're going to talk about is our telecommunicator. Our person behind that headset, behind that desk. We're going to talk about our goals, our demographics. I know there were some questions from Council pertaining to our demographics, and then the measures that we've taken to retain and increase our staff. We need bodies to do this. This isn't a job that a robot can do. We need human beings, and we need people who are committed to this. I talked a little bit about our performance and the volume of calls that we have and then our next steps.

So, I would ask Council, and everyone gathered tonight to take a look at this lady here, one of our telecommunicators wearing her headset. She's paying attention to four screens. This is her workspace. So, we'd all like a room with a window. This is her window into the world and the calls that come in, and we receive on average about a million calls for service a year. That's about 2,700 calls per day answered by men and women who signed up to do this job. Think about the calls that come in and as she's sitting there taking a call for service, one in particular comes to mind that we want to profile for you tonight involving a gentleman who called just a few short months ago and spoke with our operator about a homicide that he had committed, a body that he had hidden, and that body had not been found for two weeks. In fact, the victim of this homicide had been missing for two weeks and had come in from another county. It was a crime that occurred, and he had buried her body in a place that would've been very difficult for us to find. That call took over 20 minutes. I can't hang up on that person. I can't hang up on somebody who's giving information about a homicide.

Our dispatcher stayed on the call for over 20 minutes talking with somebody who she knew and had reason to believe he admitted that he had committed a homicide and that

he knew where the body was buried. He led officers to the body. He also was able to receive instructions from her about how to act when officers approached. Talking about hands and talking about being calm. I believe this saved his life and brought closure to a family who was in desperate need of that. So, as we talk about support, imagine you're that police telecommunicator and you just took that call. What kind of support would you need? Because when you hang up that phone, you're on to the next call and it doesn't stop. The 8 hours and the 10 hours that you're there, let's say you picked up some overtime because your kid needs shoes for school. Those calls never stop.

So, when we talk about supporting the person who took that call for example, think about it, trying to make conversation with somebody who just confessed to a homicide. It's very difficult. So, we build a very robust networkwide, enterprise-wide peer support system. We have three of those heroes who are assigned to communications as telecommunicators who are able to help debrief and to go over and to talk with, hold the hand of, walk around the building to kind of decompress from a call like that. I can tell you, I don't know if you can hear the emotion in my voice, but I can tell you it matters to me and it matters to our Chief and it matters to everybody who does this work when you think about the human component of that and the magnitude of what these folks deal with.

So, we all know about EAP (Employee Assistance Program) and counseling. We also know that we're intentional about providing our employees with down time within their eight-hour shift. That's a very appropriate and very reasonable thing to give them two breaks in addition to a meal break that's paid and that allows them to decompress and put the headset down.

For our goals. So, when we talk about this, I just shared with you the human side, now we'll talk about the metrics and about the technical side. Our call flow, we want to optimize that every time. Like I said, we want that phone to not even ring one time before answering it and we're delivering service. I understand when you get a call from a constituent saying that they waited on hold, honestly, five seconds or a couple of minutes or whatever it is, it bothers me. I take it personally and it bothers everybody. Not that you're letting us know, please be clear on that, but it bothers us that somebody did not get the service that they deserved.

What we talk about, when we talk, the call flow is that we want to get the person, find the information, assign those resources and get those resources in route. To do that, obviously when call volume peaks and I'll give you an example, when we have a major incident. So, think about the helicopter crash a couple of weeks ago with the news station. We probably received several hundred calls inside of five minutes answered by the same number of people. That was just a normal day for us. Our highest call volume is between 1 p.m. and 6 p.m. Monday through Saturday. Sundays are pretty much a lower call volume day, I'm assuming because everybody's home. It's a day of rest. The bottom line is that when you've got hundreds of calls coming in, by the time the person who's waiting on hold for 30 seconds saying I need to get through to 911, we've already got resources on the way.

So, out of a million calls last year, 300,000 were duplicate calls. So, when we're saying, "Hey, we had to wait on hold," not saying it happens every time, but at least 30 percent of those calls are duplicate calls. Is it acceptable? No, but it's context. So, we want to minimize the impact to that resident. I think about it myself. If I call 911 and say, "Hey, I just witnessed an accident or somebody just got assaulted or I need a police officer asap," I don't have time to listen to voicemail and I certainly don't want to listen to the phone ring and ring and ring. So, we're taking some steps to address that.

So, how are we getting there? We are intentional about hiring. One thing we never want to do, and our Chief has been extremely, in fact crystal clear on this, that we will not lower our standards in order to just fill a seat. We're going to be intentional about putting the right people in the right seat at the right time. Once we get people there, how do we retain them? How do we get them to understand that we care about all the things that they see. We talk a lot about the filter. Imagine if you bought a brand-new car and you

never changed the oil, never changed the filter. Pretty soon you'd get clogged up and you couldn't breathe. That's what we focus on with our folks to say, "Listen, you've got friends, you've got people you can talk to." We have resources within the CMPD. We have a department psychologist that this Council and the City Manager very graciously approved for us. It focuses on employee wellness.

When we talk about wellness, it's looking at the wraparound, the entire person. The person inside of that headset who's not just a statistic to us, not just a hire. Then when we emphasize optimal service delivery, it focuses on understanding that the metrics of those calls are very important. Get the people what they need, handle that and to move forward.

So, there was a question a couple of days ago about demographics. We can't control nor do we know the demographics of anyone who we hire, but we're very proud of the diversity that's shown throughout our ranks. If you see on this next slide, when we talk about hiring, we have to talk about it in fluid terms because our relationship with the folks who recruit, hire and train, this is a machine that works. So, we're able to tell you, when we did this report even on Friday afternoon that that 20 telecommunicators is now down to 16. Today we were able to hire four people that we had been talking to. So, we're very proud of our people. Very proud of the men and women who do this work.

So, as we talk about this, I want to be clear. This is not specific to CMPD. What I'm about to tell you is not necessarily our fault, but it is our problem. It's our problem as a community. It's a nationwide trend that with call centers around the country dealing with police, fire and medic that there are shortages. Shortages of people willing to do that work. That's where the support of the City Manager and this Council have come in huge. I will say that we've been reviewing over 150 candidates this year. Now, think about that for just a minute. That's not just 150 applications and we talk to everybody. That's 150 people that made the first cut, the second cut, the third cut. It's not just about, "Hey Dave Robinson, I want to be a dispatcher. I want to do that." I've got to pass a variety of test and there's a North Carolina Sheriff's Standard Commission, they're typing tests, there's a physical test, there are all kinds of test that the state makes us do that exacerbates the process.

So, as much as I'd like to bring people in and welcome everybody with open arms, it just takes time. So proud to say that we have hired and retained 32 telecommunicators year to date and that's a big deal for us. That actually is 36 today. So, I'm very proud to say that. Part of the thing is to put ourselves out there a little bit more. We've focused on police officers and that's a great thing, because the police officers are out there doing the work that they do. When we talk about our telecommunicators, we've got to be intentional about trying to recruit them and showcase that kind of work as well. So, hiring fairs have been a big piece of what we've done and has gotten our messaging out.

So, this is where I come across to you with gratitude and just to say thank you because with the City Manager's help and with this Council's help, we've been able to really change the game for this narrative and to articulate for not only our people but the community where your priorities are and where the priorities for public safety are. So, when we talk about the hiring bonus of six months in, that bonus went from \$2,000 to \$4,000. It's very important. We've also looked at creating more promotional opportunities, making senior telecommunicators. I will say this just on an aside. When we lose people to jobs within CMPD, we don't consider that a loss. We just consider that a move within the family. On Friday, we have two former telecommunicators who are very proud to say that we are graduating them out of our police academy. Now think about the kind of police officers they will be knowing the empathy that they've learned in the many years that they've done this work.

The one percent retention bonus that was earlier talked about by the City Manager, the 5 percent pay increase effective December 5th, the shift differential ladies and gentlemen has been a game changer for us and for our business across the board. I thank you from the bottom of my heart on behalf of the men and women and the Chief

to say, hey, this has been huge for us. It's not the same not working 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., 9 p.m. to 5 a.m. There's a big difference just in the a.m. and the p.m., and then the 4 percent salary increase that's going to take place in January. If you speak a language that's on our secondary language incentive program, then there's another 2½ percent that we've been intentional about hiring folks in that way.

So, when we talk about career path and the things that we've done, we are intentional about treating every person as an individual and understanding that not everybody processes information the same. Case in point, I go back to the helicopter crash. Our supervisors recognized that that call taker and that dispatcher had had a very stressful day. So, there was an intentionality behind going to have conversations with them, to pull them off the channel to be able to have those resources. Peer support was deployed, and I believe in talking with that dispatcher that very day, there was just a peaceful calm about her after that took place. The roundtables. I want to say this. I've attended those roundtables and I have listened to the concerns our telecommunicators and reported them back to the Chief who's had conversations with Mr. Jones and this Council. So, their voices are being heard. Are we perfect? Absolutely not. I don't know of any entity who is, but I can tell you that we're so far down the road when it comes to our trajectory, the future is bright for us even in the midst of challenges. We feel very good about that.

So, I can't say enough about our mental health support. We've talked about that. If you remember talking just about that filter and about how those calls come in at such a rapid pace. I already talked about the paid breaks during every shift and our peer support people. We do have a life coach. I'll tell you what, the life coach is one of the most popular people because that life coach is able to give our folks legitimate things that they can do to become healthier across the board, both mentally, physically, emotionally, financially as well. Marathon Health Behavioral Services. That's been a huge plus for our folks and our folks use that.

So, let's talk about the numbers. When we talk about it, we receive almost a million calls annually. Our call volume has gone up 1.2 percent. This Council deals with numbers all the time and percentages. We say that only to say that it's going up. In COVID we had a dive. More people are home, you're not getting as many calls, but we also experienced the staffing shortages from that.

So, our performance, this is where the rubber meets the road for us. This is what keeps us up at night and honestly creates an anxious feeling in every one of our hearts who care about public safety. So, when you talk about 60 percent of calls in 10 seconds or less that's a good number. It's not great, it's not anywhere close to the 90/10 that we want. 90 percent of the calls are in 1 minute or less. Again, I'm not talking about outliers. 97 percent of the calls in 2 two minutes less than. 99 percents of the calls in less than 5 minutes. So, let's be clear. 99 percent of the calls in less than 5 minutes, no one's spiking the football about that. There's nothing noble about that. It's just the reality. When we talk about 99 percent of the calls, that just means that there's only 1 percent of the calls that make it past 5 minutes. So, when you have a constituent say, "I waited on hold 20 minutes," we investigate every single one of those calls. I'm not going to say it doesn't happen, again, we investigate every single one.

Typically, we find that people will call and hang up. Call and hang up. Call, can't get somebody, hang up. That provides a cumulative effect to them, and they go to the very bottom of the queue when a person calls back in. Again, our industry standard, 90 percent of the calls answered in 10 seconds or less. That's our goal, but it's not CMPD's goal. CMPD's goal is to have no delay whatsoever. I believe we'll get there.

So, when we talk about priority shift assignments, we looked at when our calls for service are coming in. Instead of it being a one, two, three, first shift, second shift, third shift, we looked at fourth and fifth shift as being opportunities to cross over those shifts to where we bolstered folks at the right time. That's helped us. It's helped us tremendously. Again, I talked about our trajectory being very positive. So, we reclassified supervisors with the help of the city to being nonexempt which allows to

earn overtime. That's a big deal because they can go from being a supervisor to being a call taker just like that. Once their shift is over and they can earn overtime, we have authorized overtime, again throughout the year to get us through these staffing issues.

In fact, I rode the elevator up with a woman that works in our communications unit today. I said, "Hey, what day is it for you?" Because in our business, you never ask somebody is it your Monday or your Friday. You say what day is it for you? She says, "You know what, I don't even know." She goes, "I've banged out as much overtime as I can because Christmas is coming." So, I think about her because I don't want her to overwork herself just because she can, and I don't want her to think about us in a way that we're going to work somebody to the bone and then off they go. We care about the person behind that. We've got some good quality people there who are doing some terrific work.

The other part is that we're looking at when you have an officer assigned to light duty, it's taking that officer instead of working at a team office doing follow ups, we want to put them on a console to where they're actually answering 911 calls. There's a difference between training somebody to be a telecommunicator which is the pinnacle or the highest standard, and somebody being a call taker. So, we've looked at a couple of things that have to do with those part time folks. So, when we talk about a teacher who's working in her classroom, 90 percent of the teachers I know work a part time job somewhere. Why go to a retail store when you can come work with CMPD? Do something. It's already somebody who's committed to service, committed to helping people. We've had good luck so far with that narrative and we look for continued growth into 2023.

So, our next steps. Obviously, we're not stopping, and we appreciate the support that we feel from each of you in this room. I can tell you that nobody cares more about this than our Chief of Police, Johnny Jennings. When we talk about the safety of our city and I believe he shared this quote with you before, and with his permission, I'd asked to say it. "Charlotte is not a preferred city if it's not a safe city." That's the mentality and the mindset of your Chief of Police and all of the men and women who work here. Sworn and civilian who do this work every day. So, I'm happy to entertain any questions that I can. I certainly appreciate the opportunity to engage with you tonight and to share this information.

Mayor Lyles said alright, thank you Deputy Chief Robinson. I really appreciate it. I want to say thank you for your service too. You've probably held so many jobs in this, that you come to this with a level of expertise and empathy and understanding that you clearly showed in this presentation. So, thank you first.

Councilmember Watlington said thank you. A few questions. I just want to make sure I understand some of the data. When you talk about the hang ups, how does that impact the numbers that we saw here? Are you all capturing those?

Deputy Chief Robinson said we do. So, when I take you back to the constituent call that says I waited on hold 20 minutes, we go back and we're able to run that number and see when and where that call was made and the number of times that call was made and hung up. If they connected, obviously we don't want anyone to hang up and obviously we want you to use 911 for emergencies and things like that to promote 311 and other opportunities that don't result in an immediate need for police or fire or medic. Yes, we do capture those.

Ms. Watlington said do you know how many hang ups we receive?

Deputy Chief Robinson said I don't have that right off the top, but I can get that and provide it back to you.

Ms. Watlington said okay. The next question I have is I saw the slide that had all of the salary pieces. I'm wanting to understand stacking on top of each other and if so, what is

the average increase in dollar amounts as a result of all of those salary percentage increases?

Deputy Chief Robinson said so, let me put it to you this way. Most of our folks make well above what we could consider the entry level. Now just a few short months ago, we were at about \$42,000 for an entry level telecommunicator. With the support of this Council, we're very proud to say that in January into February and as we move forward, that entry level has moved with a 5 in front of it, to where we're talking about \$50,000 just to be right there in line with a police officer. When we talk about to attract folks who want to come do this work, I think that's very important. You know, when I can go work and drive an Uber car and make near that or I can work from home and not do shift work, this is an opportunity for us to talk about shift differential. If you speak a foreign or secondary language or if you want to do this kind of work. I know it was kind of a jumbled-up slide, but when we talk about the percentages. if you consider the 5 percent that just happened with the 4 percent that's going to happen in January, plus the shift differential that's an 11½ percent swing.

You talk about retaining people, and again, let me be very clear. Money will not cure this. This is not a money grab. This is not a money play. This is a people play. This is an intentionality behind understanding the human element that goes into answering these calls. I wish it was all machine. I wish it was all just a computer, but that's not what anybody would expect when you're in crisis. You don't want to talk to that.

Ms. Watlington said you said something that goes right into my next question. As far as it relates to remote work, given technology capabilities these days, what is the thought process behind remote work and is that something that has been lifted up as a potential incentive?

Deputy Chief Robinson said that's a wonderful question Council member and I will say that I hope and believe we'll get there at some point with technology. Remember in the 70s, we had the big mainframes? Now we've got it an in iPhone. I think that we're going to be able to have people plug in and to log in with the right equipment in years to come. We're just not there yet. It's a great idea. A lot of call centers now don't exist. They're all just folks at home who are able to plug in and do what they do.

Ms. Watlington said what do we need in terms of technology to make that a reality?

Deputy Chief Robinson said again, I'm not a technology person, but I will say that what outweighs the technology at this point is the human side of that. As much as we talked about the peer support and the talking with each other and the EAP, we don't want somebody to be buried in their house. We've got to flesh that out a little bit. I don't believe we're there yet.

Ms. Watlington said so, we do have the technology today it's just a matter of figuring out the rest of our system?

Deputy Chief Robinson said no ma'am. I don't know of any technology that allows us to do that. What I'm saying is that I believe in the coming years we're going to see that be an option. The market always builds to the capacity where we are at that time. I think people are going to recognize the importance of public safety and how, if we can position people at home to do that, it wouldn't be a stretch in my opinion.

Ms. Watlington said okay. I'd be interested to understand from a technical standpoint what's available.

Deputy Chief Robinson said I'll follow up with that.

Ms. Watlington said awesome. Thank you. Then second to finally, you mentioned part time call takers. Question for you. I'm sure you've thought about this. You mentioned teachers I believe, and you mentioned light duty officers. How about our EMTs and nurses? Is it open to anybody or are there particular professions?

Deputy Chief Robinson said Council woman, I will take anybody who can pass the test, who has a genuine servant's heart and a desire to serve and to lead in this way. There may be people out here listening to this very discussion tonight who say, "You know what, I don't know that I want to be a police officer, but I sure would want to give it a shot to be a telecommunicator and to serve in that way." When we're talking about part time work, we're talking about literally coming in, you could work four, five or six hours a day and have an opportunity to contribute to something very positive in society.

Ms. Watlington said thank you for that. Then finally, as it relates to your roundtable discussions and even if you all are conducting exit interviews, are there any items right now that you need help from us to address?

Deputy Chief Robinson said no ma'am and I'll tell you why. The support that we receive from this body and from the Manager has been immeasurable in terms of what our opportunities have been. I'll give you just a small example. Even something that seems as small as changing our supervisors from salary to hourly was a game changer for them because instead of working them 70 hours a week for the same pay, they're able to contribute to the mission I think in that way. So, it's similar to what happened with patrol sergeants. So, what we're seeing is, not only with salary, but the parallels that have come up between our sworn and our civilian side, that merger is a sight to behold.

Councilmember Anderson said thank you Deputy Chief for your presentation. I just have two things for you. First from a telecom perspective and what is forthcoming, it might be interesting to see what certain companies like Verizon do where you have dedicated land lines for people who provide customer service. So, it's a never out perspective and I'm sure that Ms. Askew and others could probably lean into that in addition to security. I would encourage you to think about now, while that is coming down the pipeline, how you would roll out all of the peer wraparound services once that hit. So, when it does it, we would be prepared to actually take that on.

I also wanted to just say looking at your numbers, you had 150 candidates this year that sort of got through the end of the process and you hired 36 years to date. That's a 24 percent yield of hiring which is pretty high for any role, right, but with that space of coming up short 30 effectively it's going to take you another 9, 10 months to hire at that same yield. So, my question would be how can we expedite the yield? How can we build your funnel out? You didn't share how many candidates you actually had to interface with to get to 150.

Deputy Chief Robinson said so, let me say this and if anyone is listening and thinking about this, you can go to cityofcharlotte.org and apply. It is a moving wheel as we talk about the hiring process. So, in years past we've waited until we got a certain number of applicants and then we would process those applicants and we just can't afford quite frankly to wait on that anymore. So, it is not a revolving door by any means, but a revolving opportunity. So, when we get several candidates, we move them through the process. Now here's the catch though. There are so many steps along the way. Let's not forget. We're competing against the places that do allow work from home and that do allow people to do whatever people do when it comes to weighing out their options. So, we're committed to getting the best of the best people and not lowering our standards by any means to get that right person who's there for the right reasons. I think our retention strategy, particularly when it comes to just the personal side of how we do business and welcoming somebody into the CMPD, and the City of Charlotte family is critical to that effort.

Ms. Anderson said I like all of the work you've been doing as it relates to retention and hiring. I would just like to see us think about other ways that we can increase your candidate funnel so we can reduce the time to fill these 30 vacancies that we have.

Councilmember Bokhari said the one thing I would say is if we're looking for throughput, I think on the digital divide stuff the city's CIO (Chief Information Officer) is doing connected to the HIRE Program that Economic Development is doing, that's where we get scale. So, ultimately, we know we need to hire a lot of jobs in CMPD right

now. We understand that's challenging beyond any other department that is trying to hire and having those challenges right now. So, I really think it's probably a mix of a communications and PR (Public Relations) campaign paired with the throughput that is going to be coming through programs like HIRE. So, I think that's where we're going to get the connection where thousands of people see it, get up trading opportunity to make their way into a funnel where they can be hired in those programs.

Deputy Chief Robinson said that's a very nice point sir, and I will say this. When I talked about the two police recruits who are about to graduate the academy, that for us is a success because we talked about the family, we talked about CMPD and the city as a greater family. I think there are opportunities within CMPD from a career development standpoint. We've got plenty of people in management who started out as dispatchers. So, Councilmember Anderson back to you just a second. When we talk about what we can do, at Councilmember Mayfield's meeting, to engage with people who say, "How can I help? How can I be part of something bigger, something that will help provide a career," or something to that nature. Not everybody thinks about this is a career choice and I think it takes, again, a special kind of mindset. Imagine the power if each one of you in this room just told one person at your next community event about CMPD and about being a telecommunicator. I think it helps us change the narrative on policing and certainly what community service looks like.

Councilmember Driggs said yes. So, Chief, appreciate you and the people in the call center. I'm sure it's very stressful for them in that line of work to be so overwhelmed that there are calls they can't answer. I mean it's a critical situation. I know they're very caring. So, whatever we can do to address this. I wanted to look at these numbers. It's a million calls a year. You can bet the ones we hear about are the ones lower down and we don't hear about 60 percent that get answered in 10 seconds or whatever. I will note that for example 97 percent of calls in 2 minutes means that there are 30,000 calls a year that aren't being answered within 2 minutes. That's a concern.

Do we have a means of somehow separating those life and death personal injury situations from the property crime calls? I looked at your triage thing for example and you talked about we could divert to police/fire, but could people call and have a machine just say, "Do you have a personal injury or safety situation? Or do you have a property situation?" Maybe triage that way because what happens is you have an accident or something and there's a huge amount of time sensitivity and from what you're describing, I'm not sure if your operators can tell. The calls are coming in and then they have to pick up before they find out. So, is there some way that we can improve the triage? You mentioned it on your slide.

Deputy Chief Robinson said yes sir. I will say that when we talk about the metrics behind it, we've gone so far to just throw ideas on the table to see what other agencies are doing. Agencies that are in way worst shape than we are. I say that not to say we're better or worse, I just say that in this industry it's tough sledding right now. The press one, two, three, it sounds like a brilliant concept, and I was like, "That's great! Let's try that," but the problem is that therefore eliminates our 90/10 as a standard. Our goal is to have a human being answer that call on the end and say, "Hey, what do you need?" The problem too is that we have people who often use 911 and ask about the weather. We had a guy, no kidding, he called police 911. Police, fire or medic. He goes, "I'm having an argument with my girlfriend. Is it illegal to kill a praying mantis? Is it a protected species?" I'm not kidding. Our dispatcher, he said, "What are you talking about?"

The point is that we get calls all the time that don't ever need to come to anybody, let alone 911. I wish there was a way for us to say if it's truly an emergency, call this number, but the problem is that we've ingrained 911 such into the fabric of our society. Now, it does give us the opportunity to talk about 311 certainly during the day. Expanding 311 would be something that we would love to talk through because then those property crime and those nonemergency calls that we could easily route to our people ready to take the report would not tie that line up for 911.

Mr. Driggs said so, one more question. I think we appreciate based on everything you've told us the difficulty of getting the people at addressing this. Nonetheless, if we wanted to offer some outlook, do you have any kind of objective, like a target in mind and a timeline where we can say, "Okay, this is our plan and this is what we hope to accomplish?"

Deputy Chief Robinson said I'm glad you asked that Mr. Driggs and I'll tell you why. I'd like to come back in 90 days and report back to this Council and this body exactly where we are because I don't want you to listen to anything that I say as much as watch what we're trying to do. I don't mean what the police department is trying to do, but what we're trying to do together. I think that's the big thing. That our folks feel supported and if they say that and feel that, then they're going to tell somebody else. So, my hope is that in 90 days I come back, and I say, "Mr. Driggs, we're happy to say that we're only 10 people down now," then in another 90 days, "Hey, we've retained X percent of people and we're helping our people get through this, and hey, we've got a couple more in the police academy." Those are things that get us excited.

So, we're not going to stop, and I think you can hear it in my voice. This is such a critical need and piece for us. The very fabric of community trust begins with if I call you, will you answer the phone? It's that simple. If I call you and you answer the phone, will you show up? Because for somebody in crisis in whatever situation it is, public safety requires that. So, our intention is to keep the intensity through the roof until we solve this problem and I believe we'll get back there. I do.

Mr. Driggs said so, I look forward to hearing any ideas you have and please, I think on behalf of all of us, communicate to your people our appreciation for their work. Thank you.

Councilmember Graham said no comments other than thank you for your work. Anything I say would probably be redundant at this point. Thank you for your work and I'll see you in 90 days.

Councilmember Ajmera said some of my questions have already been addressed Chief Robinson. On slide number 14, you went over multiple measures or steps that CMPD has taken. How long as it been since some of them have been implemented? If there are any metrics that we can have as to how we are doing, whether this is working or if it's not working or if we need to do something more because you made it very clear that pay is not an issue and that's not going to fix the problem. It's the human component of it. I think Mr. Driggs touched on it. It's a very stressful job. It's a difficult job. You have to be mentally prepared to take on this responsibility.

I'm just trying to figure out if you can set a timeline of goals and milestones that says we have an industry standard of 90 percent of the calls within 10 seconds or less has to be answered. So, from three months from now, here is our goal, or six months from now or nine months. How are we going to get there? Because Mr. Driggs is absolutely right. 100,000 of our calls based on this data, based on the numbers that you provided are being answered after five minutes. That is concerning because that could be a call about someone's life in danger. That could be someone suffering from a heart attack. I understand there is an industry wide staffing shortage. I'm trying to figure out if there is any way we can figure out if any of the steps are not working or we need to go in a different direction?

Deputy Chief Robinson said well that's a very thoughtful question Councilwoman Ajmera. I will say that when we talk about our goals, two years ago previous to COVID, and you'll never hear me blame COVID for any of this other than to say it's been a challenge as we all as human beings have experienced the challenges of that. Two years ago, we were meeting and exceeding that 90/10 rule routinely. I'm not going to say we got cocky about it, but I can tell you that it wasn't a problem and in our business we go to where the problem is. Once we saw those numbers begin to crest and to come down, we recognized the need to address that.

Now, what I will say is that I'd love to sit here and have a crystal ball and be able to say we'll be back to where we need to be. We'll be fully staffed and we'll have a healthy happy environment within the com center, but I can say that there is no stone that we're not willing to turn over and have turned over. Again, I'll just put it out there. In 90 days, I'll come back if this Council asks me to come back and we'll talk again, or if we do it in a memo or we do it in a way that keeps you up to date on what our metrics are and kind of where we are.

I can tell you, I spent some time with the Chief today and this is the one area when he talks about his employees, you can feel the difference in the tone of his voice, second only to when he talks about the community and what the expectation is for the CMPD and for service delivery. You look at his customer service program, that is all about making sure the customer is happy and satisfied and getting the services that they need. So, when we're missing that mark in any way in those 30,000 calls, not to minimize any of that, one call is too many. So, I don't know that we're ever going to be satisfied. I don't know that we're ever going to be to a point where we're saying, "Ahh, we're back to where we were pre-COVID and we're in a good place." I just don't think we will. I'd like to come back.

Ms. Ajmera said thank you. Yes, I would like to see Mr. Jones if you could get some sort of periodic update on this to see whether any of this is working. Or if it's not working, if there is anything else that we need to explore. So, just monitoring the data would be very helpful. The other thing I'd like to also find out. So, we're talking about the response time now, but how are we doing on by the time the call has been made and answered to officers showing up? Obviously, we also have a shortage of police officers. Has that been an issue. I know that's not something planned for today, but I would also like to understand that, if that's an issue that we need to also look into.

Deputy Chief Robinson said so, imagine if you will, this would not be a linear process. So, for example with the call that was made by the gentleman who reported that he had committed a crime, as he's talking the dispatcher is able to multitask and is entering that call for service. As she is talking to him, officers are in route because they're seeing what that is. That call taken by that call taker is put into the CAD (Computer-aided Dispatch) system, the computer, it goes directly to a terminal where the dispatcher is and they say, "Here's what we've got," and they're reading that call off. So, officers are in route. I will say, back to the duplicate calls that come across, again I think that's a big piece of it. It doesn't tell the whole story, but again, if 10 people call to say that a house is on fire and 8 of those folks had to wait on hold for any amount of time, it's going to seem like we didn't care about the house being on fire.

I will say that the two people that got through already had fire trucks and CMPD and medic rolling to that scene. So, again, one concern about our operational ability is one too many in my opinion and the Chief of Police shares that. I share his vision on that quite frankly, but when we talk about the delivery of that service, we investigate like I said every single one that comes across. That sounds bad or is bad or whatever and we hold ourselves accountable for that. Generally speaking, like I said, there's always context that seems to be important, but we run down the facts and try to return those back to the Council.

Councilmember Molina said I don't have many comments other than to say thank you for your service to our community. I think that the work that our men and women who serve us in public service whether it be someone who's dispatching an emergency or a crisis or the men and women who serve as for public service. I think it's a tremendous effort and I really appreciate it. I'd also just add while I'm speaking, I love to hear that we're speaking in a qualitative and quantitative manner. I think they're inextricable. I think that the quality of service shouldn't suffer because we're chasing a quantitative metric. So, in order to make sure that those two are cohesive, as we intend to rise to the occasion or rise to the metric that is quantitative, we also have to hold as a standard the quality and service that we deliver to the constituents.

So, I'm delighted to hear that there will be an update in 90 days. I don't anticipate that we're going to hit that mark in 90 days, but like any project, it's kind of we're establishing a baseline that's a milestone. A milestone to check in, a milestone to continue to monitor and control what expectations that we have and continue to strive towards excellence. So, thank you again for your service and that's all I have.

Councilmember Mitchell said I just want to say thank you for the staff who are working 911. They play a very important role for our service to our citizens. I look forward to your report in 90 days. Thank you.

Councilmember Johnson said thank you Deputy Chief Robinson. If you all don't know, he's one of my favorite public servants in the city. He has a heart of gold, a heart to serve and I thank you for your work and thank the work of the 911 operators. CMPD is doing the best that they can with the tools that they have. These outputs, the responsibility is on us. So, you're doing the best that you can, but if I look at slide 13, we have to take into consideration that the industry standard is 90 percent of the calls answered at 10 seconds or less when we're at 60 percent of calls, that's a crisis when residents are hold for 2 minutes or 10 minutes or however long, for 1 minute.

We also know that we're short staffed in CMPD officers. We're losing over 100 officers I think this year, you can correct me if I'm wrong, in retirement and we're short staffed. So, you said something about not lowering the standard for hiring. I would say that changing the standards may not be lowering the standards and I've asked Chief Jennings this before, and maybe we can talk about this with the City Manager, we need to look at where we're losing candidates. We need to look at the process and find out where we're losing candidates. Ms. Anderson said there's 24 percent that we're hiring versus interviewing is not a bad statistic, but we could certainly improve that, especially if they made it through all of the steps.

So, we had a meeting with the Assistant City Manager about this statistic and we talked about different options. One of the things I'd like to see in 90 days is perhaps an employee survey from the 911 employees. Let's hear from them. I think those are great resources. The peer support and the downtime and the EAP and all of that, but let's hear from them. Maybe there's something else that we can offer. I don't know what that is. I mean, do they need childcare? Just throwing that out there. I don't know, but that's one of the things that we talked to the Assistant City Manager. So, I'd like to see a survey from the employees Mr. Jones in 90 days. Again, this is a management issue. We know they're doing a great job. They could be doing the best job, but our residents, they expect more from us than 60 percent of our 911 calls answered within standard time. So, you said something great. Charlotte is not a preferred city if it's not a safe city.

Deputy Chief Robinson said that's Chief Jennings.

Ms. Johnson said so, with the shortage of police officers and the shortage of 911 operators, I think we need to look at our hiring standards and our recruitment and where are we losing candidates in the CMPD hiring process and also in 911. I've had a report pulled before. Maybe an updated report Mr. Jones from CMPD as far as the process. Which step are we losing officers, minority officers? It was a really detailed report. We can take a look and maybe changing some of the processes or standards. Another thing with 911, can you talk about the change in the statute or testing process that's going to increase the hiring process from 4 weeks to 10 weeks?

Deputy Chief Robinson said yes ma'am. Thank you, Councilmember Johnson, for your kind words and I will say just to clarify, the industry standard is the gold standard. I don't even know a parallel correlation, but the 90/10 is what we hold as the industry standard. It doesn't mean that Charlotte's at 60 and everyone else is at 90. It just means that's our standard and two years ago we were meeting that routinely. So, I do think that across the board, and we have looked regionally, to your point about the testing When I say we're not going to lower our standards, what I didn't say was and what has happened I think very correctly. So, if you sign up to become a telecommunicator with CMPD, the first think you do is you fill out your application, the clock starts for us there. Then if you

pass the initial screening or requisite application, then you go and sit for what's called CritiCall test. CritiCall is an industry kind of a test. Well, for years you had to score like an 85 percent. Again, forgive me for not knowing, but we looked at that and said, "Why is that?" A couple of people took the test and even people who were actually doing the job now didn't score very well on the CritiCall test.

Listen, I'm one of those people. I don't test well, but you give me a problem I can solve it, but I don't test well. My mom can tell you that even to this day. As we look at what makes people fall out of the process, we did not want to have CritiCall be part of that reason. So, we looked at other cities. We looked at Atlanta, we looked at Fayetteville, we looked at Columbia, we looked at Washington, D.C. We realized that our scores, what we held as our top-level score and the minimum to get in was way above what the industry standard was, certainly regionally. So, lowering that has improved that process. Now, I will say that in the job process of trying to get people hired, it did not help us at all, the Sheriff's Standards Commission, those new requisite requirements that came out for our dispatches. Think about it. You've been a dispatcher for 20 plus years, the Sheriff's Standards Commission comes out and says you're not grandfathered into anything. You have to go for a drug screen, a psychological test, a physical test, and you've been doing this job 20 years. So, that threw a lot of people into a retirement mode to say, "I don't want to do that," and quite frankly it just lengthens the process.

Now, that's for the telecommunicator. When we talk about a call taker, that is where our sweet spot is I believe because telecommunicators, we hire you, we train you, we get you where you need to be and it's a process. The call taker, that process is not as long. So, designating it as a call taker versus a telecommunicator is going to help us with that process.

Ms. Johnson said so, the 4 weeks to 10 weeks, you think that's going to affect if you will being able to recruit more people, or it's going to decrease it, right?

Deputy Chief Robinson said sure. If I could hire somebody in four days, I would do that. Here's the thing. If my mortgage is due and it's going to take 10 weeks to get hired and I don't have a job, then I'm going to take the first job I can get, and as much as I want to work for CMPD, I'm not going to wait around to do that if I've got babies to feed. I'm just not. So, we're willing to even early hire people, to give them a job, to get them through the door as we work through that process because we've got opportunity within CMPD that could bring somebody in quicker, but again we still have drug screen and background checks and things like that.

We do everything we can to hire as many people as we can from anywhere, anytime. If you want to serve this community, we want to talk to you. That's just how it is. I think my overarching comment was just to say that when it comes to our standards and what the expectation is within Charlotte being the largest agency between Atlanta and D.C., I think that's something we've had a luxury for a long time of being able to be very selective in who we wanted. I'll just leave it at that.

Ms. Johnson said one of the things that I saw on Facebook I think was a video educating the public, 911 versus 311. So, I don't know if our communications department, if we can increase that and maybe put it on the government television station or really educate the public, if that would help to reduce their calls, if that would help.

Deputy Chief Robinson said we'd be happy to assist with that in any way.

Councilmember Mayfield said thank you. Congratulations Deputy Chief Robinson. I'm glad that I was able to attend the graduation and thank you for attending my community town hall and working through the breakout sessions to explain some of this. I do look forward to the update from you. Councilmember Johnson invited me to participate on a call and it was surprising to learn that the state created some new requirements regarding testing and those requirements as you just mentioned, we didn't grandfather

those who have been with us for a very long time. So, that was a lot of institutional knowledge that we lost and that we're losing very quickly without a transition.

So, I think what I hear from my colleagues is there's an opportunity that for what you all need, there's support and I was glad to hear you say that it's not a money problem. We're not just trying to attempt to throw money at it. I do want to make sure that we do continue to focus on the most qualified and the best candidates. I do not want us to just choose an individual to have a body in the seat because this is a very stressful position and we want to make sure that we're not only protecting our community, but we're also protecting the mindset and the well-being of the individuals. So, thank you for what you have done and what you continue to do.

Councilmember Winston said thank you. Congratulations Deputy Chief. Amazing to see your insignia change over the years. So, as you said this isn't just a Charlotte issue, it's a national issue and I have about three questions. I'll ask them all and maybe if you can answer them now or follow up that'd be great either way.

We often think about how technology can help, but I wonder if we have a technology problem on the opposite side. Have we quantified the effect either locally or nationally about the effect of the pocket dial, that 911 call that happens? How do you discern the difference between a 911 call in somebody's pocket or in a pocketbook versus somebody who's hiding in a really bad situation? How long does that take and what kind of bandwidth does that take up on a 911 system?

Deputy Chief Robinson said so, let me just say I did that the other day. I did, I called 911 by accident and I realized what I'd done, and I hung up immediately. It didn't connect, but the simple fact is that it happens more frequently because certain ways that phones are pressed, buttons and whatnot. I think when we talk about the bandwidth for what that looks like, I think that when we get a call and there are cues that they're trained on. To listen for breathing or for taps or there are things that if you're in a situation that you're being held against your will or any number of things, but just that, "If you can hear me, just tap the phone," or whatever. You can tell the difference to a degree about that engagement to where if it's just a pocket dial.

Now, what we do offer and what we do from a triage perspective is as these calls come in, we will call the number back if it disconnects and also are able to triangulate the last known position. So, for example if we got one that we believed was in some form or fashion a crisis situation, but we couldn't get that information, we're already looking at where that call is being made. So, we're sending officers to that location.

Mr. Winston said I just wonder if we're talking about a situation where every second counts and just looking at even the existence of 911 is an example of where the public need combined with technology and the private sector to provide a tool. I'm wondering if this might not be an opportunity maybe. Again, not just on a Charlotte level but on a national level to improve technology to help with a problem, with an issue. Maybe there's a way the technology can work better to help contribute to a better solution for people getting help. Again, in this same kind of context of how this 911 service was created in the first place. Maybe we should just look a little deeper in that over the next few weeks or months.

Something that came up here. Again, we can get back to this. Just the conversation in some of the slides. I wonder what the equity in response times is to folks that are calling 911 that are using our language access services. Just wondering maybe if there's an opportunity to dive a little deeper into those numbers to learn more about how effective or better effective, we can be as we grow those services, as it is a priority of this City Council.

Deputy Chief Robinson said yes sir. I will say I just had the privilege of serving as the department's ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) liaison for a little over two years and I can say when you think about the disadvantages that people would have to call 911 who are let's say they're hearing impaired. So, our TDD (Telecommunications Devices

for the Deaf) for example, has to do with our ability to have somebody on staff who can answer those calls. If it's a language line, either we've got people in the room to answer those calls and to get that information or we immediately transfer to an outside third-party vendor. So, if somebody calls and they're speaking, I don't know, pick a language, but if we don't have somebody in the room, then we transfer that out.

So, yes. That's a very good question because I'd often wondered that too and being a street cop for 25 years. I'll tell you what else, and I want to invite each of you to do this. I know you're all very busy people and have things to do. I believe you might've done this, is to come and sit and to see what they go through. I want to be clear. Not as an apologist mindset, but to say hey, "This is the real world." I mean imagine how powerful that'd be in talking with your constituents to say, "I sat with our dispatchers and I listened on the headset." I'm going to tell you, I'll go in any dark alley in any place in Charlotte, doesn't faze me, but you listen to some of these calls and the sheer terror that's in somebody's voice and it'll make the hair on the back of your neck stand up. So, those are opportunities. We'd love to have you and again, to show what that work looks like and to help us continue to develop solutions that are sustainable.

Mayor Lyles said so, thank you very much Chief Robinson. We'll see you in 90 days and look forward to hearing the next steps.

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BUSINESS

ITEM NO. 10: EXTENSION TO OPTION FOR A GROUND LEASE FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Motion was made by Councilmember Mitchell, seconded by Councilmember Anderson and carried unanimously to (A) adopt a resolution approving an extension to the option for a ground lease of city-owned property located on DeWitt Lane and South Boulevard (parcel identification numbers 149-012-47 and 149-012-51) with DreamKey Partners, Inc. (formerly Charlotte-Mecklenburg Housing Partnership, Inc.) through March 31, 2023, and (B) authorize the City Manager to negotiate and execute all documents necessary to complete the extension to the option for a ground lease of the property.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 548-550.

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ITEM NO. 11: RESOLUTION TO CERTIFY AND DECLARE THE RESULTS OF THE NOVEMBER 8, 2022 SPECIAL BOND REFERENDUM

Motion was made by Councilmember Driggs and seconded by Councilmember Winston to adopt a resolution certifying and declaring the results of the November 8, 2022 Special Bond referendum.

Councilmember Graham said just want to thank again the voters for approving this particular agenda item on their affirmative vote on the election day. It's still with transportation, housing and neighborhood and as we approach our infrastructure meeting later this month, certainly the dollars for transportation and neighborhood goes to improve some of the infrastructure in our community. So, I think that needed to be noted. Thank you.

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as unanimous.

The resolution is recorded in full in Resolution Book 53, at Page(s) 551-553.

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ITEM NO. 12: AUTHORIZE FLOOD MITIGATION GRANT APPLICATION

Motion was made by Councilmember Winston, seconded by Councilmember Anderson and carried unanimously to approve (A) authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to apply for a grant in an amount of up to \$2,196,711.90 with the North Carolina Department of Public Safety for the Craighead-Tryon Flood Mitigation Initiative, and (B) authorize the City Manager, or his designee, to accept a grant in an amount of up to \$2,196,711.90 from the North Carolina Department of Public Safety for the Craighead-Tryon Flood Mitigation Initiative, and (C) adopt a budget ordinance appropriating \$2,196,711.90 from the North Carolina Department of Public Safety in the Storm Water Capital Projects Fund contingent upon being named a successful grant recipient.

Mayor Lyles said I think that James Mitchell has a note that he would like to address concerning why he is wearing a NASA jacket today then we'll go into the appointments and then we'll go into the closed session.

Councilmember Mitchell said Madam Mayor. Thank you for this personal privilege. Sixteen years ago, the third African-American female went into space and she spent 13 days at the space station and I'm happy to say she resides in Charlotte and more importantly she's my lovely wife.

Mayor Lyles said we're proud that you made her a resident of Charlotte. Thank you for your hard work.

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APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

ITEM NO. 13: APPOINTMENT TO THE ARTS AND CULTURE ADVISORY BOARD

Mayor Lyles explained the rules and procedures of the appointment process.

The following nominees were considered for one for a partial term beginning upon appointment and ending September 30, 2024.

- Destiny Crawford, 1 vote - Councilmember Graham.
- Melody Gross, 8 votes - Councilmembers Ajmera, Driggs, Johnson, Mayfield, Mitchell, Molina, Watlington, and Winston.

Ms. Gross was appointed.

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ITEM NO. 4: CLOSED SESSION

Motion was made by Councilmember Watlington, seconded by Councilmember Winston, and carried unanimously to go into closed session pursuant to NC General Statute § 143-318.11(a)3 to consult with the City Attorney in order to preserve the attorney client privilege in the matter of Daedalus, LLC versus City of Charlotte.

Mayor Lyles said alright, we will go into closed session, and we will adjourn from that closed session. So, thank you for all of you that have watched this meeting. I really appreciate that you attend and listen and thank you. Any feedback next time.

The meeting was recessed at 8:18 p.m. to move to a closed session.

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ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:59 p.m. at the conclusion of the closed session.


Stephanie C. Kelly, City Clerk MMC, NCCMC

Length of Meeting: 3 Hours, 7 Minutes
Minutes completed: March 6, 2024