

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for a Budget Straw Votes Meeting on Monday, June 2, 2025, at 6:02 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Council members present were Dimple Ajmera, Danté Anderson, Tiawana Brown, Malcolm Graham, Renee Johnson, James Mitchell, Edwin Peacock III, and Victoria Watlington.

ABSENT UNTIL NOTED: Councilmembers Ed Driggs, Lawana Mayfield, and Marjorie Molina

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ITEM NO. 1: INTRODUCTION

Mayor Lyles said good afternoon, everyone. If you would join us and get settled. I want to call the Charlotte City Council Straw Votes Meeting to order, and we will start with our call to order. So, I just want to start this meeting. It's the meeting for the Council's Day, and its purpose and intent is to have voting on amendments or adjustments to the City Manager's recommended FY (Fiscal Year) 2026 Budget that was proposed at the May 19, 2025, Budget Adjustments Meeting by Council. So, this is the opportunity that we have. Today, we will review and vote on any proposed adjustments to the proposed FY2026 Budget. Council will then vote to direct the City Manager to prepare the necessary documents and resolution for the FY2026 Budget Ordinance. As a reminder, the adjustments from the May 19, 2025, meeting, I believe that they were all provided to the Council members on Thursday of last week, and so we are going to work from that list as we continue to begin to develop the budget that we want to have going into the new year. So, today, based on the information we receive, we'll further discuss any proposed adjustment, and vote to determine if any will be included as an actual adjustment to update the proposed FY2026 Budget that we vote on, on the June 9, 2025, at the June 9, 2025, Business Meeting. For the process, I propose that we hear from the Budget Governance and Intergovernmental Committee on any recommendations that the Committee has based on their review of potential adjustments for the financial partners for funding. Then, we can go ahead and discuss and vote on other changes as seen by the Council.

Councilmember Driggs arrived at 6:04 p.m.

Councilmember Molina arrived at 6:04 p.m.

Councilmember Mayfield arrived at 6:05 p.m.

So, with that, I'm going to turn that over to our Chair and our Vice Chair.

ITEM NO. 2: CONSIDERATION OF ADJUSTMENTS FROM THE MAY 19, 2025, CITY COUNCIL BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS MEETING

Councilmember Ajmera said so all of you should have Fiscal Year 2026 Proposed Financial Partners presentation in front of you. If you could look at slide number eight. This is what was discussed at our May 19, 2025, Budget Meeting. It includes everything that our colleagues had brought up on May 19, 2025, and we approved this list at our meeting earlier today. This is a comprehensive list of all the partners that were raised on May 19, 2025. The only partners we did not approve are on slide number nine, because some of those partners did not apply for the Financial Partner Program, and I know that we had made a commitment to each other that we will be fair in our financial partner process to those who have gone through this application, have attended the orientation, and have followed all the rules of our process. So, with that, our Committee approved all the financial partners on slide number eight, which will require \$1.2 million in one-time funding, that will come from ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) bucket. So, I hope my colleagues would support that. It was approved 3-1 at the committee level. So, I'm here to answer any questions that you have about this specific slide.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mitchell, and seconded by Councilmember Brown to accept the BGIR Committee recommendation on our financial partners for this Fiscal Year.

Councilmember Anderson said just a point of clarification. That motion is just for this particular slide?

Ms. Ajmera said that is correct.

Ms. Anderson said okay.

Ms. Ajmera said specifically for slide number eight.

Ms. Anderson said okay, so we have not gotten to slide number nine yet?

Ms. Ajmera said so, slide number nine is not something approved by our Committee, because slide number nine includes partners that did not apply to the program. So, we only included the ones that went through the process, and that's on slide number eight, and you would see Roof Above, Save Our Children, Hearts for the Invisible, those participants that have applied on this slide are included on slide eight, because they went through the formal process.

Ms. Anderson said okay, thank you, that was my question, because I wanted to make sure that we were addressing this specifically, and on slide nine I had some specific questions if that was a part of the motion.

Ms. Ajmera said no.

Ms. Anderson said thank you, Madam Mayor.

Marcus Jones, City Manager said so, I want to make sure that I'm tracking also. So, slide eight is additive to slide six?

Marie Harris, Strategy and Budget said so, I did want to clarify a point to the Manager's recommended Budget, which is now your Budget to adjust and review. The partners that were on that page, I believe it's page 16, plus these were additive to that. So, just slide eight, plus what was already proposed.

Councilmember Graham said I'm a little slow today, I'm sorry. So, we're approving everything that I see in front of me, right?

Ms. Ajmera said that's correct.

Mr. Graham said okay, alright. So, that's Hearts for the Invisible, the History Museum, For The Struggle, and because it's not on slide nine, so we're not approving Block Love Charlotte and/or Hearts for the Invisible? Is that what I'm hearing?

Ms. Ajmera said Hearts for the Invisible is on slide number eight. They are approved for \$100K.

Mr. Graham said did I miss it. Okay, again, I'm slow today, I'm sorry.

Ms. Ajmera said, and Block Love did not apply to this program, so that's why they are not recommended. So, if you look at slide number eight, it includes everyone that formally applied and recommended by Council on May 19, 2025.

Mr. Graham said okay. So, we can vote for this as a package, and if I want to make another recommendation, we can vote that up or down?

Mayor Lyles said yes, we'll have adjustments after. We wanted to complete this one, and then we'll go into what any other Council [inaudible].

Mr. Graham said yes, I'm going to support all of this for sure, and I might make another amendment to the budget for another organization, then the Council can vote that up or down, but I'm certainly 100 percent for all those organizations, and then we'll debate maybe one or two others.

Councilmember Driggs said so, this would leave unused capacity for future use from ARPA of \$4 million or so? Is that right?

Ms. Ajmera said \$1.2 million.

Mayor Lyles said Marie, can you tell us the total sum, as the motion includes the total sum of money from ARPA? Can you give us that?

Ms. Harris said yes, ma'am. Out of the \$5.3 million of ARPA revenue replacement, in addition to the proposed financial partners, this would use the \$1.2 million out of that money, and Cherie's pulling up a spreadsheet that tracks it.

Mayor Lyles said okay, we love spreadsheets, Cherie, so we'll have that coming up.

Ms. Harris said yes.

Mr. Driggs said and the \$1.2 million, that is truly one-time? We're not just calling it one-time and with the expectation that it's going to be requested again?

Ms. Ajmera said so, our Committee approved this one-time funding. As you know, Mr. Driggs, as a former Chair of the Budget Committee, financial partners, they have to apply every year. So, it's technically a one-time contribution, because they're going to have to apply again. What we have done this year, we did not just say, let's go ahead and approve all the financial partners that got funding in the past. We have this new process that looks at the value that each financial partner contributes. So, yes, it is a one-time funding, that's why we used ARPA source.

Mr. Driggs said so, I'm waiting to hear the remainder of this conversation, like Mr. Graham. One-time funding means you have a particular project that is one and done. Operating funds, if that's the use to which this money will be put, is not one-time funding. So, I appreciate that this offers us a potential speedy solution, and I'm in agreement with these recipients, but if it now turns out that there are 10 other things, then we're going to have to look more critically at how much of this is actually operating, and therefore, not intrinsically one time. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said alright, thank you, Mr. Driggs, as a reminder. So, now I think we have a motion on the floor to approve the proposed recommendation from the Budget Committee for the following items that are listed on the screen. Alright, anyone with further discussion?

Councilmember Mayfield said so, I have stated previously, and I am going to restate again tonight, we had two criteria, the first criteria being scoring, the second criteria being not 30 percent of the budget. I worked with Marie. Staff initially identified a scoring that started at 50 percent. We were able to redo those numbers and bring it down, in some cases, to 47.77 percent, 42.99 percent, 45.51 percent, based on the five categories that each organization was able to self-select for. I had said, and I am glad to hear, that my colleagues are not trying to add organizations that did not apply. Yet, based on the scoring, some of the organizations that my colleagues have identified, did not score well. So, if we go back to the printout that Marie had shared at our last Budget Meeting that had specific items highlighted in red, they were highlighted in red for my proposal based off of that 30 percent. I find it difficult to say that I'm going to fund an organization that did not score as well as other organizations, when we have limited funds. We all know we received 50 applications. We had over \$8.8 million in requests. I

initially asked, how much do we have to even have this conversation, and I was told \$1.5 million. In actuality, it was less than that. Staff's proposal was \$812,000. When we're talking about the one-time funding, and we're talking about the opportunity to move forward, in the proposal that I had submitted and recommended, we actual had additional organizations that were being funded, because they actually did score well, and that would've cost us only an additional \$444,800 and some change, because one organization was left out. What is this additional cost now from the original \$812,000? We're still like at \$400,000 and some change. How much are we asking for of ARPA dollars? What's the total amount?

Ms. Harris said so, the ARPA dollars is up on this spread sheet. It's \$1,237,000 million.

Ms. Mayfield said to fund what is being proposed tonight versus the \$444,000 and some change that I requested out of the \$5.3 million of ARPA, that we know we want to try to last for the next few years when we're looking at shortfalls. We're looking at over a million-dollar request in ARPA, as well as funding organizations that did not meet the two basic criteria. Even though there are organizations in here that I personally love, and I would love to have funded, I have to stick to what I initially said last year, and the beginning of this year, that if we create these two criteria, then I'm going to stick to these two criteria. So, therefore, I am not going to be able to support some of the recommendations. The yellow on this sheet are ones that were actually identified in the proposal that I made. So, three of these actually did score well and they were already in the proposal that I made before the ones that did not score well, if the minimum was 47.77 and you scored a 46.5, or you were over 30 percent of the budget. I cannot support it, and I'm not going to be able to. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said thank you, Ms. Mayfield. I do want to ask if you would like to make a substitute motion?

Ms. Mayfield said no.

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mitchell, Molina, Peacock, and Watlington

NAYS: Councilmember Mayfield

Mayor Lyles said I think that was a great point, Ms. Mayfield, and I think that one of the things that we didn't clarify was referring the actual graph that you had put together to a committee to make that decision. It probably would've been a little bit smoother, but we've got another time and another day to start. So, thank you very much. Alright, so what's our next step, Mr. Jones.

Mr. Jones said I think, Madam Mayor, Marie has now queued up different questions that were asked at the adds and deletes with price tags associated with it. I'm not so sure you've moved off of financial partners, and if you have that's great.

Ms. Ajmera said we still have that policy that's still [inaudible].

Mr. Jones said okay, okay, great. Well, that being case, Marie then has cost out a number of the questions that were raised at the adds and deletes.

Mayor Lyles said alright. So, would it be easier to start out with each Council member, so that if there's an add and delete? Oh, you've got it up there, thank you, alright.

Mr. Jones said she'll go line and line.

Mayor Lyles said let's go with this.

Councilmember Watlington said I'm sorry. I should've said this before the last vote. I serve on the Board of CMR (Carolina Metro Reds), so if it's possible to recuse me from that particular vote for funding for that organization?

Mayor Lyles said so, again, if could hear, what's the board?

Ms. Watlington said Carolina Metro Reds.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mitchell, and seconded by Councilmember Ajmera to excuse Councilmember Watlington from the vote for Carolina Metro Reds as a financial partner.

Mayor Lyles said alright, from just that particular one vote.

Ms. Ajmera said so, the budget adjustment was for the whole list, so do you want us to separate that out?

Ms. Mayfield said it's already been voted on.

Ms. Watlington said well, I ask to reconsider the motion.

Mayor Lyles said alright, so this would be \$50,000 that we would remove from.

Ms. Watlington said not remove from them, just remove from that vote, the separate vote.

Mayor Lyles said that's a separate motion for the \$50,000 for Carolina Metro Reds, okay? Do we have a motion?

Mayor Lyles said we have a second. Any discussion? I think everybody understands this is because.

Anthony Fox, Interim City Attorney said let me just clarify. The motion would be to remove out of your prior approval that item, and to have a separate vote on the recusal, and then have a vote on the item.

Mayor Lyles said so, it's going to take a few steps for us.

Ms. Watlington said then let me just ask this. If there is a conflict of interest, then you don't have to ask to be recused, correct? You have to be recused, because you have a conflict of interest?

Mr. Fox said the conflict doesn't automatically give you the recusal. There has to be a vote recognizing the conflict, and then to allow you to be recused.

Mayor Lyles said okay, we have a couple of people that have questions about this.

Mr. Driggs said so, a manifest financial conflict is a cause for a recusal. You may ask to be excused if you're concerned about the appearance of a conflict, and the Council can vote on whether you should be excused.

Ms. Watlington said exactly, that's what I understood. So, my question is, does being on a board necessitate that, because I'm making a decision?

Mr. Driggs said in the past it hasn't. I remember going back to Harold [inaudible] and so on, that he some of you may recall. So, being on a board of a nonprofit doesn't constitute a ground for a recusal. If you are concerned about the appearance, you could ask us to vote to excuse you.

Ms. Watlington said okay, well in that case, as long as it doesn't fall under actual conflict, then I will rescind my request.

Mayor Lyles said well, as much as I love our Council, Mr. Driggs, I'm going to ask our City Attorney if you would tell me the answer to that question.

Mr. Driggs said you've done it several times before.

Mr. Fox said but sometimes, you're right, Councils will allow people to recuse themselves to avoid the appearance of a conflict, even though it may not be an actual conflict. Here, though, the Council member requested to be recused based upon her service on the board. The law provides that a recusal technically is required, and you're excused from voting, where you have a financial or pecuniary interest in the outcome. Board service doesn't necessarily confer that upon a board member, but it's the Council's discretion to allow her to, and to honor the Council members request for recusal, but now the Council member has withdrawn that request, and is comfortable with the analysis, so therefore, you can let the vote stand.

Mayor Lyles said alright, everybody understand what Mr. Fox just said? So, because it was a question more than a statement, I think that's really what we found out here. So, with that, we're going to take this first motion, and then I want to recognize Ms. Johnson. So, we're going to be at the same place.

Councilmember Johnson said I was just going to add to that. We all serve on boards that are included in the budget. I mean, there's University City Partners, there's Blumenthal. We all are appointed to boards. So, that will be clarification.

Mr. Fox said but the answer will be, whether or not your board service [inaudible] to your financial interest. You can serve on a board, but some boards are paying boards. So, if you have a financial interest, then that does suggest a conflict.

Ms. Johnson said so, that's the difference, if it's a paid board. Okay, that's good to know.

Mayor Lyles said okay, everybody squared away? Alright, thank you.

Mr. Jones said so, Mayor, I think where we're headed now is that Marie now has all of the other items that came out of the adds and deletes with a cost associated with them that's available for discussion with the Council.

Mayor Lyles said and I guess one of the questions that I have, would it be okay if we started around? I believe that we said that we would have the ability that you could have an adjustment today. So, I'm just asking let's go around and just make sure, does anyone have an additional adjustment to the things that are on the wall.

Ms. Johnson said so this came from the community. I'm not sure if anyone else received this, but there is a request for \$300,000 in ARPA funding for Helping Hands Foundation to provide assistance for water bills. The Charlotte Water, Director Charles, has a vision to ensure clean water is accessible to all through assistance in paying their water bill, and they ask that we bring that up. I know with Duke Energy and other utilities there is opportunity for assistance. So, if we could have something for our residents to assist with the water bill, I think if there's an opportunity for that, I think that's important, especially when we know how unaffordable housing is in the City. So, thank you.

Councilmember Mitchell said I'd like to add, we're hosting the NAACP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) 116th National Convention here July 12, 2025, through the July 16, 2025. Mecklenburg County has said that whatever we do they would match, so this is a great potential partnership for us. So, I'd like this Council to consider a one-time to support NAACP Convention for \$200,000.

Ms. Anderson said just a point of clarification. I know we're going around and adding entities that have not submitted any application for financial service to the City. I just want to underscore the comment that was highlighted by myself, Mayfield, Ajmera, and Johnson, as it relates to the fire department and police department. I firmly believe that we should only be using these funds for a one-time use and not any ongoing use, but I want to just be clear that, if we're funding an entity that has not gone through a request, an application process, to be a financial partner, I want to make sure that we're taking care of our fire and police department as well in some way. I think it's a slap in the face really to the civil servants to say, someone that hasn't gone through the process can usurp the process, jump in front of the line, when they're putting their life on the line every day. Literally a fire just happened in the back, so. I just want us to be mindful of them. I know, City Manager, you try to take care of them as much as possible in each budget, but they do face these healthcare benefit costs that are out-of-pocket and a burden at times to them. So, just wanted to underscore that, Madam Mayor.

Mayor Lyles said I appreciate that, Mayor Pro Tem. Alright, so let's start over at the beginning again. We're going to start. Everyone on this side of the dais. Anyone on this side of the room that would like to add anything or change anything?

Councilmember Peacock said this was related to the financial partners, and I just was trying to get some clarification. Councilwoman Ajmera, you can help me to understand. We've got DreamKey Partners that's asking for \$390,000, but yet we gave them \$231,000. We have Roof Above that asked for \$243,808, and they got \$100,000. Those seem to be from a priority standpoint. We go from housing someone to many of the services below that, and so, my recommendation for an add would be, add \$159,000 for DreamKey Partners to bring them up to \$390,000, and then add \$143,808 for Roof Above to match that request. Those are my two adds to the request here, and I'm simply saying I feel like they should get the full request.

Ms. Ajmera said so there are two columns. One is the request, Fiscal Year 2026, and the second column is the May 19, 2025, meeting, which was our Budget Adjustment Meeting. So, at our Budget Adjustment Meeting, Council members that made this specific request, whether it be for DreamKey or BOOM Charlotte, it was to match what was approved in the previous year, because not every partner received what they requested. So, we matched the last Fiscal Year's approved funding. So, DreamKey Partners got \$231,000. That was what was requested at our May 19, 2025, Adjustment Meeting. Same thing with Roof Above, that was the request that was made by our colleagues on May 19, 2025. So, we pretty much approved what was requested at our Adjustment Meeting.

Mr. Peacock said Councilmember Ajmera, I've obviously come on to this dais here very recently, but I find it hard to believe that they would ask for less than what's actually here.

Ms. Ajmera said not their request, I'm talking about the Council member's request. So, May 19, 2025, was our Budget Adjustment Meeting. So, budget adjustments were something that was requested by a colleague or two. Some of these requests were specifically made by our colleagues on May 19, 2025.

Mr. Peacock said right, and that's what we're doing now. I'm making an add right now. So, I'm making the request that we add the money to that. I'm asking that you add this in the adds and deletes, \$159,000 and then \$143,000, to round it out to exactly what's here. Why? Because when you look at the numbers here as it relates to everything else, to me from a ranking standpoint, and I know a lot of these organizations, they do amazing work, but you've got DreamKey Partners and Roof Above at the top for a reason. I think that they should be funded at the full level that they've requested, just like Crisis Assistance is going to \$825,000.

Ms. Ajmera said I hear what you're saying. I guess this is not in specific order, the list that you see here. This was just based on what was first requested by my colleagues.

So, I hear what you're saying. In fact, I was one of the Council members who requested DreamKey and Roof Above to be added, because in the proposed budget.

Mr. Peacock said they should get more, that's what I'm saying.

Ms. Ajmera said I hear you, but I guess at our Budget Adjustment Meeting we did not.

Mayor Lyles said so, I think that it is acceptable to ask for the addition, and then that would be [inaudible] when we have the vote.

Mr. Peacock said that's why we put it up here. That's what this whole exercise is about.

Mayor Lyles said that's exactly right, to make sure that everybody has the opportunity that they choose. So, what Mr. Peacock has asked that we have, let me see, I'm not doing the math. Do you have the math?

Mr. Peacock said \$159,000 for DreamKey Partners and \$143,808 for Roof Above.

Mayor Lyles said alright, so we will continue this discussion, okay??

Ms. Mayfield said Manager, I have a question for you. So, I recognize that right now we might not be able to do it with this current budget, and especially with the way this \$5.3 million is going very quickly. Can you look into, over the next few months, and identify, and really, it's going to be your team, ways that we can help specifically to increase the compensation for our employees who are below the median for City of Charlotte employees? So, I took on the fun job of looking at our open data portal, and which we already know HR (Human Resources) has put some funding. I had initially made a comment to request \$1.5 million to go to that, I'm not going to put in a formal because we don't have any money left, to try to figure out how we continue to help our lowest paid employees. If we can look specifically at all employees that are making below median, not the median of the City, for our City of Charlotte employees, because we have employees out there that make \$30,000 \$40,000, \$50,000, we have employees that make \$280,000 plus. So, for the median of our City employees, what would that look like if we were to bring them up, as we're talking about \$23 or \$24, for our lowest paid employees, and including our Council Constituent Services staff? We recognize that they are serving two Council members. They work weekends. They work evenings. They're doing our town halls. There is a challenge, which is why I had asked previously about the grades and how that is identified. I didn't necessarily get that information back, but making sure that we are being equitable, because we have new employees that's under Constituent Services on one side of the building as paid considerably more than our staff that has been with us for a while, based on our public data information, and I'm not going to go through the numbers. So, it will be helpful to know if we are able to do that.

Also, over the last ten years, we have been able, really the last few years, to increase staff in Animal Services and Control. We've also identified some funding, as well as a realignment. I want us to look at Housing and Neighborhood Services. We are not 300,000, 500,000 residents anymore, we are a million. We still have a very small staff, and I recognize, even with the Faith In Housing initiative, that is even more work, but to have a designated investigator, because Housing and Neighborhood staff, and I believe some Council members outside of myself, are receiving a lot more calls from these multi-family's, specifically our senior multi-family units, regarding quality-of-life, and we don't really have the staff to just designate on those investigations, but they're also working weekends, evenings. Warren Wooten and I are going to be going out to a senior development in a week or so for an evening conversation, and I've already reached out to the North Carolina Finance Housing Agency. They are receiving a lot of complaints from Charlotte with these developers that know how to work the system. So, we have some challenges going on, so I would really love for us, since I believe Marie told me, it's about 70-plus percent of our budget is in employee and in staff wages, but we have some departments that have really seen an impact from the growth of the City, and the needs that we haven't necessarily added on. I have not reached out to our

Director, Ms. Hefner, so she doesn't even know that I'm asking you, and she's probably back there scared right now. I know, for all the meetings I'm having and all the emails that I'm having to send to staff, I would love for us to really look at what would the impact be for us to look at hiring the necessary additional staff, I think it's maybe like two to three people, but having a designated investigator for everything that's going on, along with the initial recommendation that I made where I did ask, what would be the dollar amount if we were to create a grant, much like HR is doing for other employees, to help with offsetting the costs and putting requirements around it, so it's not a free-for-all, but to help our public safety employees, since we have wages from \$40,000 on up, and the cost of insurance could be a barrier? Thank you.

Councilmember Brown said so I was getting into the proposed budget that we're looking at, and I know that staff did a very good job of going back and shuffling and trying to make sure that we could appease everyone that's on this list. So, where I saw my colleagues, Roof Above does great work. I advocated for them, so did Councilmember Ajmera. They do great work. We just don't have the money to stretch that wide. So, if we get into the list, if we go to saying what a person or organization asked for, but we didn't get them to [inaudible] but we have them on. I definitely am advocating for Roof Above as well, but I'm also advocating for Save Our Children Movement, as well as For The Struggle, Inc., great. I don't want to get into Hearts for the Invisible, Just Do It. It's so many organizations. Our staff worked, and they pulled, and they toiled, for a reason to come up with this for us so that it would be reasonable, and we can move forward trying to spread the love everywhere. We get into The People's Budget, and I'm the number one advocate for the City workers, and their income coming up to \$25 per hour. That's not even enough, because they work their fingers down to the bones, so we won't even speak about that, but if we also go to our Constituent Services, yes, I agree with that, but I also agree with people that are on salary. You can't put a price tag on a person's worth. When people come to work, they work their fingers off. Everybody deserves to be paid their worth, and you can't put a price tag on that. So, the order of operations would be, I support The People's Budget 110 percent, and so our City workers on the front line, police officers, fire chief, everybody. So, we try to come with some type of structure. While we won't all walk away and agree to what we're saying, it's going to continue to be ongoing. Our staff worked really hard to put this together for us. So, I'm not going to keep going on and on and on, but for the record, it's The People's Budget for me, and I yield back to you, Mayor.

Mayor Lyles said okay, thank you very much. So, I know that there has been some discussion about some things that people would add. I just want to make sure that we're all on the same page, because anything that we do in addition will have to come out of the ARPA money. So, I want to make sure everybody's comfortable with that, because that's where the changes will be made for additional funding that Council members have requested, alright. So, with that, let's go line by line to make sure that we're okay, and I'm going to start, I believe, Marie is going to take.

Ms. Brown said and Madam Mayor, this is going to be for another motion that we're doing, or we're just discussing line by line?

Mayor Lyles said I wanted to make sure, unless you have something that you want to put on the table, we're ready to now assign where we would get the funding and look at whether or not we can make it fit, that's what I'm saying. We need to make sure that we are doing it in a way that everybody understands that additions can be made, and that will be voted on, and if it's voted on, it will come from ARPA money to fulfill anything that was an addition.

Ms. Brown said and so what's the amount in the ARPA money right now?

Mayor Lyles said the ARPA money is one-time \$5,300,000, and that's where we would go.

Ms. Brown said which is untouched right now, right?

pti:pk

Ms. Harris said so, no ma'am, I'm sorry. To answer your question, Ms. Brown. It's \$5.3 million, but you voted earlier.

Ms. Brown said the 1. [inaudible].

Ms. Harris said yes, ma'am.

Ms. Brown said okay, just wanted to be clear on that, okay.

Mayor Lyles said alright. Okay, Marie, what we're looking at now is the \$5.3 million in ARPA funding, and the request that we had earlier, when we started on this side, let's go through what you have listed.

Ms. Harris said thank you, Madam Mayor.

Mayor Lyles said and rolling it as we vote, okay?

Ms. Harris said yes, ma'am, thank you. The next one would be Ms. Molina brought up previously to fund, and this is separate from their financial partners' application. The Charlotte Museum of History requested us to sponsor an exhibit coming forward for them for \$350,000.

Mayor Lyles said alright.

Councilmember Molina said just really quickly, the exhibit. I know that we have already approved \$100,000 for operations for Charlotte Museum of History, but this separate ask, would this actually have to come from ARPA, Mr. Manager, or Marie, can you answer that for me? Is this something that would have to come from ARPA, or is there any other way for us to procure this ask?

Mr. Jones said so, thank you, Councilmember Molina. As long as it's one-time in nature, I would say that there's that \$5.3 million, it's ARPA related. There's also some money that I used in the proposed budget that was, I believe, ARPA interest, if I got that right, and we did some things, like the bonuses for the police, or what have you. I think what's most expedient is to use the \$5.3 million for tonight's purposes. I think in the information that was shared earlier, I think the County has put \$350,000 in their budget for this purpose. I would look at this more like tourism, that we're bringing something to the City, much like the Picasso Exhibit, that provided something that we did not have beforehand. So, that's just the way, I believe, that this has been positioned.

Ms. Molina said oh, okay. So, just to add to this, because I know that, from my discussions with the leader of the Charlotte Museum of History, the total cost of that exhibit is like a million dollars. If I'm not mistaken, and I don't know it to be true or not, but I think the County has actually already provided them \$300,000 for that exhibit.

Mr. Jones said I think that's what's in the proposed budget.

Ms. Molina said \$350,000. I think the County has already given them a portion of the exhibit cost. So, I think they're doing private fundraising, they're asking us for a portion, and I think the County has already decided that they would give them \$350,000 as well?

Ms. Harris said it's included in their budget, but not decided yet, yes, ma'am, from the County.

Ms. Molina said okay.

Mayor Lyles said alright. So, that's what you would like to have? What's the amount again?

Ms. Molina said it's \$350,000, is the total ask for the exhibit. It's a separate ask, yes, ma'am.

pti:pk

Ms. Johnson said I just want to be consistent. Mr. Manager, you mentioned that this exhibit could fall under tourism, and even in looking at the recommendations, I said the last meeting, the Charlotte BOOM, that's definitely tourism. So, I just want to say consistently, that we as a Council really should take a look at utilizing our tourism fund for things that are tourism related. I know it's not something we've done in the past, I know it happens in Raleigh, but if we as a Council, really start looking at it to consider these dollars to be utilized before we have a deficit or before we look at increasing property taxes. If there are items that really fall under tourism, we should really start to begin to take a look at making changes or talking with our colleagues in Raleigh in expanding the use of the tourism dollars. I don't have the numbers in front of me. We went through a whole exercise the last meeting, if anybody wants to take a look at that, but we know that there's extra dollars in our tourism funds, and these are the dollars that pay for the improvements to the stadium and NASCAR. So, if we start to take a look at tourism activity, such as Charlotte BOOM, and such as the Traveling Exhibit at the Museum, and other items, I think it would allow us to leverage our dollars a little further, and pay for items that benefit the public, we could use those from General Funds. Thank you.

Mr. Mitchell said I just want to remind Council; this one is a tough one for me from this standpoint. We currently have six facilities we currently own, and those six facilities have exhibits all throughout the year. I'm afraid if we start this process, I don't know how our six partners would feel, that we would give money to exhibits as long as people would ask. Here, and I've got to yield to Pro Tem and Marjorie, I think there needs to be a conversation, how do we sustain the Charlotte History Museum? If you all are open to it, I think this needs to be a conversation we can refer to a committee. A, we need to make a decision, are they going to be a City-owned facility, that'll make seven, and how do we sustain them in the future? I'm just a little leery about us supporting an exhibit, when our other six facilities that we own, they never come to us and ask for a contribution. So, I'm just a little worried the direction we are going, when I know the Harvey Gantt Center and the Levine Museum, and I just want us to be a little cautious about this one. Thank you, Mayor.

Mayor Lyles said alright, thank you for that comment. Alright, so now I believe, Mr. Jones, if you can get the staff so that we can get this.

Mr. Jones said right, okay. I want to make sure I can be helpful with this. So, it seems like it's not necessarily funding the exhibit, but where the money comes from. So, I believe that as that Infusion Fund, which is now gone, there was more money raised than the money that was distributed. So, I guess the question is, now that the Arts and Culture Board is dissolved, is there a discussion to be had about what remaining funds, that were over-raised by the private sector, that could be used for some things similar to this exhibit, and maybe some other things that our partners would love, and I would love to have that conversation with Laura Clark.

Ms. Anderson said we're having recurring conversations about the Charlotte Museum of History, and I recall our conversations last year around this time about them. There was an opportunity for us to add them to the list of the Infusion Fund entities, and that opportunity went by unsuccessfully, but I would like to just raise that back up to the Council. I don't want to repeat everything that you've heard from me and Ms. Molina, but they do a great service to the community, to the entire City, but specifically there's some double-clicked emphasis on East Charlotte residents. I would really like for us to consider, if we could City Manager, have the Charlotte Museum of History added to that list of blue bloods, if you will, that have access to those Infusion dollars, because it's a recurring need that they have. I happen to serve on the Blumenthal Board, but just like the other museums, they bring a service, they bring an element of tourism, and they bring a level of culture to the fabric of the City of Charlotte. So, I just want to bring that back up from last year. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

Mayor Lyles said so, I am assuming that you would support this initiative for the \$350,000. We'll come back around, but I just want to make sure that I've captured that correctly.

Ms. Anderson said right. Well, what I would say, just for clarification, is I think what the City Manager said about Infusion Fund dollars that were directly targeted towards Arts and Culture, I think that would be a great source for this type of ask, rather than our ARPA dollars. I'd really love for us to be good stewards of these ARPA dollars, and to not spend the total amount during this budget cycle, because it presents an opportunity for additional interest to be compounded and present more opportunities. So, thank you, Madam Mayor.

Mr. Jones said I would like to add one point of clarification. So, the Infusion Fund is over with, and now it's the collaboration between the City and County, about \$21 million. What the County has done with their \$10 million, for any entity, let's call it the [inaudible], that the City provides operating funds for, they have a bucket of \$3 million for educational programming. So, last year, the County Manager and I had a conversation, and she said, "Well, Marcus, if you guys are able, with the Charlotte History Museum, to provide some of the operating funding, then that's like all of the other organizations that could have access to this \$3 million." So, I will say that, by you putting another \$100,000 in the straw vote earlier, it does open it up for access to educational funding from the County. I'm not saying it'll be for this, but it's a connection to how these dollars work together, and I think it's important that the County did recommend \$350,000 for this exhibit.

Mr. Graham said I, like Councilmember Mitchell, probably won't be able to support the exhibit fund for the Charlotte History Museum. I think the \$100,000 will help them go a long way to getting what they want to do, and I think we're headed there slowly, in terms of really having a comprehensive evaluation about the organization, and then making a decision on how, and to what extent, do we weigh in. I'm not sure we just put them on the list. I think they've got to find a way to get on the list, and we should try to find a way to assist that. So, I think there has to be criteria [inaudible]. I think just some work has to be done before we take on that lifelong commitment, because it will be a lifelong commitment for sure. So, I think we need to kind of figure it out, not saying that we shouldn't do it, but I think we just need to figure it out and be forward thinking, diligent, and ask some tough questions beyond the fact that they're not in the group, they need money, so we should give them money. I think that, for me, is a little bit more complicated.

Secondly, I do like the ideas about maybe them being in the Infusion Fund. I need to make an informed decision for me to say yes. Councilmember Johnson, I'm just going to say one more time, with all due respect, about the tourism fund. These are relatively small numbers that we're looking at in comparison to our operating budget. Today, we had an ED (Economic Development) Committee meeting, and when we talked about spending \$25 million out of the Tourism Tax for the NASCAR Hall of Fame, and we got more requests than we have money. So, I think even with that, there should be a way to support arts through our general operating budget. These are small expenses that I think we can find within our budget to accomplish the same goal and the objective, without using the Tourism Tax as a credit card, because we deal with big numbers, and it would, again, just open up so many cans of worms. As your Chairman of the Committee, I just advise us just please not do that. We've already asked and answered that question on so many occasions. I just hope that we could find a way to solve the problem without that being an option. Thank you.

Ms. Molina said first off, I want to say to my colleagues, I definitely appreciate the input. First of all, I cannot tell you that I disagree with the need to have a deeper conversation. Some of the correspondence that I know that I've received, and I'm sure that the Mayor Pro Tem has received from residents that live on the East Side, they have looked at this and seen support for other institutions and not really understood that we have a responsibility to the other institutions, because we own those institutions. We do not own the Charlotte Museum of History; therefore, these are funds that we are extending to a private institution, and it would make it comparable to any other decision that we make for private institutions. I'm open to, and I think it would be wise of us, to have a deeper conversation on how, and in what way we will support that institution going forward. The challenge for us on the East Side is that they're not many locations for

people to host events and to do things, and to have gatherings, and so the institution has centralized itself as a place where people gather on the East Side. So, to that extent, I think as a Council, especially with us now putting them on a potential list where they can now have access to other funding, and things of that nature, I would like to, Mayor or Council members, have a deeper conversation on what that means for us. Since we have extended the \$100,000, those are one-time funding opportunity amounts, but then there will be next year, and there will be how do we address this next year? The challenge for us is that we look like we're not meeting the ask, but the ask is individual, like any other private institution, as opposed to it being a side-by-side ask, with the City-owned assets that we have. So, I definitely agree with the idea of maybe BGIR having an additional conversation at some point about this particular institution or institutions like it, to decide what do we do as a body when we have similar asks? Mr. Manager, I love the idea of us looking at them as an infusion partner potentially. I don't know if that means that they somehow compete with the others or how that process goes, I don't know, but I agree with my colleagues, in that I think that we would be a wise way for us to support them in this one-time endeavor, since we have a specific bucket for arts. I don't know if that's possible. As far as our ARPA dollars, can someone tell me when they expire? When do we have to spend them by?

Mayor Lyles said they don't expire.

Ms. Molina said they don't expire, okay.

Mayor Lyles said once you use them, that's it.

Ms. Molina said okay. So, they don't expire.

Mr. Jones said because you did revenue replacement.

Ms. Molina said okay, and that's all I have. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

Mayor Lyles said so, I want to make sure that as we're going through this, that so far we have the Museum of History at \$350,000 for a discussion, but I think referring to Committee is important. I also think it's important for us to be clear and not just ship the funding out. I know that we have, but we may need to have some discussion around what information is necessary in explaining, so that everybody knows what they're getting and why, and I think that that's something we can do, without having some idea of how people can understand this. We want them to have something in writing. I think that's one of our things that we ought to try to do and accomplish when we're doing these. This is in writing. This is what it's going to be. So, what we have here is, I think, all of the speakers for this have been around yes, Infusion Fund, but also yes, discussion and referral to our Committee. Okay, if that's acceptable, let's go to the next item.

Mr. Jones said let me make sure. So, the Infusion Fund is over. There are some dollars that were over-raised. I just don't want us to walk away tonight thinking that \$350,000 is going to come from the Infusion Fund. They'll be a discussion about some of the leftover dollars, and could it support something like this, and I hope that that's what the takeaway is.

Mayor Lyles said okay, everybody.

Ms. Molina said is that what would be best for [inaudible].

Mr. Jones said well, I think you get a vote.

Mayor Lyles said you get a vote on the \$350,000 from ARPA.

Ms. Mayfield said Marie, question. Since Council's already approved that \$1,237,000, should that not be removed so that we can see an accurate running tab of what the requests are?

pti:pk

Ms. Harris said yes, ma'am. Cherie added it at the top beside the \$5.3 million, so it's now.

Ms. Mayfield said so, right now, minus the \$1,237,000, you're saying based on all of the adds that have been recommended, what's that total?

Ms. Harris said oh, sorry, yes, ma'am. If you'll scroll down, Cherie, please. It's within the amount. When I say that, there's one in there that's, when we get to it is ongoing, and that would make the budget structurally unbalanced, because it's an ongoing fund. I just need to put that caveat out there.

Ms. Mayfield said so, which one is that one?

Ms. Harris said that is the one that is to understand costs to increase minimum wage to \$25 an hour. That's the only ongoing one on the list, ma'am.

Ms. Mayfield said so, as of right now, minus the \$1,237,000, what we're looking at is \$5,000,281.56 of all the adds, since we've had no deletes, and right now the majority of that is being requested from the \$5.3 million of ARPA dollars that we had left that we thought would be able to fill some gaps for the next couple of years.

Mayor Lyles said that's correct.

Ms. Mayfield said just wanted to clarify.

Mayor Lyles said alright. Okay, so the next item that we have, I think, is the pay plan. I know that you're moving this, but can we stay at this one page here, unless somebody asks for something specific?

Ms. Harris said yes, ma'am, just so I understand your process. I believe you said you wanted to go one by one. So, I don't know if you were wanting to make a vote.

Mayor Lyles said so, the next one is allocating funding over a three-year period, we've talked about, to support City Staff Supportive Services, and I think Ms. Mayfield just addressed that, is that correct? Okay. Do you want to continue to have that, Ms. Mayfield, on the list? I want to make sure. I don't want to remove anything that you don't want to.

Ms. Mayfield said so, it's two separate questions, Mayor. The \$1.5 million was in theory a recommendation over the three-year period based on what our HR Director has already been doing through a pilot, since we have employees that have needed additional assistance. Whereas, the separate question was in regard to finding out what would that dollar amount for healthcare be, and whether or not we have the ability to have a grant, for lack of a better word, to help those, where if they hadn't met their deductible, because their deductible was so high, but they still need assistance, it potentially can be out of that million, because the question, the \$1.5 million I was asking for was over a three-year period. I'm hoping that the needs of our employees aren't at this million-dollar level, that it's pretty much been around \$100,000 so far, but if we have it over the three-year period, hopefully the interest will help us build some of the funds. So, that was my initial thought with that particular request. Manager Jones, does that seem feasible for me to leave the \$1.5 million in for that three-year period, but also the possibility of the offset, if it's a grant model, that it can be for food or medical or medicine, whatever it is, we create an umbrella, so that if there's a need that has been proven, that staff will be able to access it?

Mr. Jones said wow, okay. So, yes, I'm never going to turn down an opportunity to do things for staff. So, the \$1.5 million over a three-year period makes sense. A few rows down, the \$980,000, that is what concerns me a bit, because that's our best guess at a group of people who may select healthcare that doesn't begin until January of 2026. It's super, super complicated. I know where you're trying to go. It would be very helpful if we

could figure out something other than the grant, and I'm not sure that \$250 for everybody, because that's the way it's going happen, and I don't think that's your intent.

Ms. Mayfield said and see, that's not the intention of it. The intention is on an as-needed basis, for the simple fact of July 1, 2025 even though you're under your insurance, if you have not met that \$4,000, \$6,000 deductible, but if you have an emergency event that costs \$2,500, and that's going to be a hardship, is there a way for us to assist, because it's a much longer conversation regarding pay and the cost of insurance. The biggest question was, do we even have any options out there? The initial comes back at potentially \$980,000. What I'm asking is, if I were to say now, I will remove my recommendation of the \$980,000, if we think out of the \$1.5 million, we will be able to provide assistance if needed? Unless there's legal ramifications, and Attorney Fox would, or our HR Director, who I saw step in if she's still in here, if they say that legally that's something we wouldn't be able to do, then that's a challenge in itself, but it might fall under the current program that is happening through HR.

Mr. Jones said and that's where Marie was trying to save me from myself, is that what are some legal ramifications of carving out a group of employees.

Ms. Mayfield said to have it just for first responders, which was my initial whereas the current program, and that's why I wanted the clarification, so that we know what can and cannot be done.

Mr. Jones said sure.

Ms. Mayfield said the \$980,000 that we have up there is an estimation, but there very well may be legal ramifications for why we cannot do that.

Mr. Jones said and I believe what staff tried to do is find a way to do something that could pass the test, but once again, \$250 for everybody in public safety related, is not what you have asked for us to do. So, I hate it that we have something up there with a number that doesn't come close to what your issue is.

Ms. Mayfield said so, Marie, for me you can red line the \$980,000, because it's not going to get to the core of what I'm trying to address, but Manager, I want us, once we get through the budget, to have a very realistic conversation, because one of the other asks that came specifically from discussions with our fire department is, the previous rate was a rate that was manageable, the new rate is a rate that potentially could cause some challenges. We pay 80 percent of the insurance, even though the costs are still relatively high. I think if we're able to go back to the question that I asked at the beginning of the meeting regarding our City of Charlotte AMI (Area Median Income), lowest paid employees, some of them that are in that \$40,000 range versus those who are much higher, if we're able to make appropriate adjustments, because that 2.5 percent pay increase does nothing when the cost of insurance went up 3 percent, or went up 3.5 percent. So, what does that look like to ensure that our employees have access to quality healthcare? Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said thank you. So, that means the adjustments have been made, a delete. Alright, so we're going to take off review healthcare benefit costs for police and fire and delete that. Okay, thanks very much. We're going back to 31, allocate services over a three-year period to support City Staff Supportive Services.

Ms. Mayfield said that one was mine and that was the continuation of, if we can allocate \$1.5 million for that three-year period to help our staff, since we learned staff have needed assistance, whether it was for rent, groceries, medication, whatever it was, and a pilot was started. This is a recommendation for us to actually have a bucket available. I do not anticipate all \$1.5 million being spent, but if we have it over a three-year period, hopefully that will help create sustainability as we continue to work to increase the salary of our lowest paid City employees.

Mayor Lyles said so, Mr. Jones, where does this sit inside the organization if it's approved?

Mr. Jones said it would be HR. We started a couple of programs this year, and they have been very, very helpful for our employees.

Mayor Lyles said okay, alright. So, number six is up. So, let's go to item, how much would. I'm sorry.

Ms. Ajmera said are we not doing.

Mayor Lyles said I was just getting the list and going through every one of them. For allocating funding over the three-year period, is that the one?

Ms. Ajmera said yes, we're not voting on it?

Mayor Lyles said well, I wanted to make sure we got through all of this, because we're taking money from the ARPA money, so I want to make sure that we're still good for that, and then we would have a vote totally for the next sections. Is it easier for your vote immediately?

Ms. Ajmera said yes.

Mayor Lyles said okay.

Ms. Ajmera because it's fresh in our minds.

Mayor Lyles said but I just want to make sure that if it gets short, and we don't have the \$159,000, we're going to have to make some adjustments, okay?

Ms. Mayfield said I mean, we need to know how much money we have first, right?

Mayor Lyles said alright. Ms. Ajmera says let's go ahead and vote each time as we have the discussion.

Ms. Molina said I've just got a comment. These are all great opportunities, but once we spend this money it is gone, and I think that has to be the lens that we're looking at this from, and I mean, not to say that we are not making good decisions at this moment. Like I said, I think everything here is stuff that we all feel very, very passionate about, but to understand that, because in my mind, somehow, I had the assumption that I thought we had a deadline for ARPA. I thought we had to spend it by a certain date. The very fact that we could literally keep some of this funding for future opportunities or something we need next year, where we want something discretionary done, next year I feel like if we're empty, we're going to regret it. I think that's something that, I mean, I'm not imposing any importance in one over the other, but I'm just saying that literally everything on the screen, if we voted yes to all of it, then all of the ARPA funds are done. That's a big statement.

Mayor Lyles said yes, and that is accurate, and I think at the same time, we had people that said we wanted to make this adjustment, and we're walking through this to get to that point of everybody saying [inaudible] adjustment.

Ms. Molina said I like what you're doing where we have the discussion. I think individually, so that maybe we can grab some context on each one, and then we go and vote. I know that may be a little bit longer, but I think if we can contextualize each one of these and then make informed decisions for voting purposes, as opposed to having a conversation and voting, having a conversation and voting. I think, like you're doing kind of right now, contextualize them and then have a vote, I actually think that's a better way considering that this is to empty out the bucket for ARPA. That's my suggestion.

Mayor Lyles said I think what you're saying is continue on, and if we start moving more quickly, perhaps, it would be easier. So, why don't we go ahead and start with, how much would a request for proposals and contract with an outside firm cost? So, the next item 32, are there any changes or any questions about that one?

Ms. Molina said which one is that one?

Mr. Mitchell said 32 is the proposal to submit an RFQ (Request for Quotation). Council, that is to protect our 26 percent that we agree we're going to get on the Bank of America Stadium, since we're funding it at \$650 million.

Ms. Mayfield said 27 percent.

Mr. Mitchell said how much is it?

Ms. Mayfield said 27 percent.

Mr. Mitchell said oh, it's 27 percent. So, that's a five-year contract, and I just think it's important for us to send the right message to our small businesses that this is the largest investment we'll ever make, and we want to make sure you're participating on this project.

Mr. Graham said I want to take a different perspective, Councilmember Mitchell.

Mr. Mitchell said okay.

Mr. Graham said we've got an agency in the department, CBI (Charlotte Business INClusion). This is what they should be doing.

Mr. Mitchell said we've got to have a real conversation.

Mr. Graham said I'm aware, I know what's happening around me. Even that expenditure should be paid for by the Panthers. I'm not sure we should bear the burden of that. We've got resources that we're spending for tracking and sourcing internally already, and a million dollars, that should be something that they should bear, and we should have quarterly or bi-yearly check-ins to make sure that numbers are being achieved. I'm not sure I could support that.

Mr. Mitchell said so, Mayor, could I do a follow-up? I just want to make sure everybody has the same information. We went down this road, to Councilmember Graham's point, probably in July 2024, and there wasn't a lot of interest on behalf of our Panthers for minority participation.

Mr. Graham said that's not true.

Mr. Mitchell said so Councilmember Graham, I'm just saying we need to make an investment of what we're trying to accomplish, if they're not willing to step up and be committed to small business participation. So, they have hired Clark Construction. Clark Construction has hired Carol Lilly. We all know Carol. I'm just saying over a five-year period, and City Manager, if we think we can do an RFQ, and propose it at a different rate, I'm okay. I think the intent is what we need to be clear on, they we're intentional of making sure our small business community participate on the renovation.

Mr. Graham said and again, with all due respect, Councilmember Mitchell, I think they are committed to reaching the goal, and I've been in constant contact with them significantly since the vote, and I care about minority participation too. I'm glad that Carol is on the job. I've been talking with Carol for weeks to make sure that happens. So, I think things are in place to ensure that those goals will be met, without us spending a million dollars.

Mr. Driggs said so, on this point, I agree with Mr. Graham. We have a lot of contract compliance monitoring processes. It's not just about the 27 percent. We are tracking their performance in all dimensions. There's a whole procedure for reporting and so on. The 27 percent is a generous offer by them, 27 percent is a lot, and so, for us to go back and sort of act like we don't trust it, and we therefore need somebody on the outside to verify that they actually do it.

Mr. Mitchell said that's an accurate statement. [Inaudible] speak for one person, that's an accurate statement.

Mr. Driggs said alright, I know, but I'm just saying, I don't agree and having been through a lot of this discussion as well on the thing, I believe that they demonstrated good will by committing to the 27 percent, and that we should just be able to rely on ordinary contract compliant processes and not spend money to demonstrate that we don't trust them.

Ms. Johnson said so I keep talking about the hospitality tourism dollars, and the fact that there's this exclusive fund that we won't even talk about using. So, surely, if we spent \$650 million out of this fund, any oversight of that money could come from that fund, at least. So, I would not support spending a million dollars to ensure that they do what they said that they were going to do, especially when we do have a CBI Department, but if there isn't an audit, I would definitely hope that this Council would support using the oversight funds from the fund that the original expenditure came from. Thank you.

Ms. Mayfield said Attorney Fox, question for you. So, have we completed the negotiations on the contracts with TPE (Tepper Sports & Entertainment)?

Mr. Fox said we're still working with outside Council and the Panthers on the contract and contract terms.

Ms. Mayfield said so, to my understanding, what Council approved and what hopefully you and your team are negotiating, is we had the clear expectation of what construction would look like moving forward. What we committed to is we would pay as projects are completed. We have some triggers along the way, or are the triggers being negotiated now, because I hear Councilmember Mitchell's concern with making sure that the diversity our local community benefits from this multi-year \$650 million investment? Do we have the language in place that gives us the claw backs and the protections to ensure that happens?

Mr. Fox said, again, we're negotiating the final language. It has not been finalized yet. There was an agreement that relates to the practice facility that is underway. There is the request for Council action as I understood, that was adopted prior to my time, did and was specific with regards to the 27 percent, 12 percent SBE (Small Business Enterprise) and 15 percent MWBE (Minority and Women Business Enterprise), and we are ensuring that the language in the agreement reflects that commitment.

Ms. Mayfield said so, as of right now, Manager Jones, we have not spent any money, because the contracts have not been completed yet. So, there should be no money from what was allocated, spent towards anything with TPE while we still have a contract that has not been signed and completed. So, we have not spent any money?

Mr. Jones said I'm going to make sure, Matt.

Matthew Hastedt, City Treasurer said that is correct, no funds have been released yet since no agreement's been finalized.

Ms. Mayfield said so, as of right now while we're having the conversations, we're still in negotiation, you have a clear understanding as unfortunately having to step in after the fact, as our Interim Attorney, of what the expectation from Council was regarding opportunities with development. You're negotiating that for us, but right now, nothing has been spent, no final contract has been executed?

Mr. Fox said that is correct, and the terms that were directed from this Council we're attempting and will carry forth those terms in contract language.

Ms. Mayfield said that helps. So, Councilmember Mitchell, I definitely hear the concern regarding making sure that our intentions are met and exceeded, especially in this current political environment, because we are seeing a lot of challenges that are happening, specifically for minority-owned businesses, and be very direct, specifically African American and female-owned businesses. So, there is a lot of challenge. I do have a hard time with us funding versus them funding this oversight, especially when the contracts have not been completed yet, because once the contracts are actually completed and it's clearly identified what the expectations are, I am also under the anticipation that what is going to be presented back to us is going to have some very clear claw backs in there if these certain checkpoints are not met and/or exceeded. So, the million is a hard one to just set aside when we don't even have a contract in place yet and we're in June 2025, and we approved this initially back December 2024 or January 2025?

Mr. Jones said June 2024.

Ms. Mayfield said June of 2024. We're in June of 2025, and we still don't have this actual contract. Mr. Manager.

Mr. Jones said okay, thank you. Mayor, members of Council. So, I'm looking at this a little differently, and it's just like the \$1.5 million in the proposed budget to help small businesses with the opportunity for the transformational mobility project, same thing that Danielle Frazier has money set aside to help the workforce be prepared for the opportunities that come with the one cent sales tax and what comes with that. What I read into that is, we have consultants all the time that help us negotiate deals and things of that nature. I look at this a little differently, and maybe a million is not the right number, but it is, over a period of time, how do we make sure that small businesses are getting the opportunity with the \$650 million? How do we make sure that the workforce is getting the jobs that are associated with the \$650 million? It's bringing in additional help to make sure that we're aligning the opportunity with the investment.

Ms. Mayfield said so, Mr. Manager, I agree with part of what you said. We have an Economic Development Department. We have an Economic Development Director. Now that we've identified the scope of what her work is, because HR was already taking care of City employees with employment, your focus and your work is around community, as well as small business growth and development, that is a great opportunity for you to actually dig in on what your role is as our Director of Economic Development and job creation versus us finding another dollar line item to pay someone else to come in, when we pay staff well to do amazing work. This falls under your umbrella of your scope of work in partnership with our Assistant City Manager that is over CBI, with them working closely to make sure that we hit those targets. That falls in the category of the staff person that we already have within the City of Charlotte, in my opinion. You know, like a rump, we all got one.

Ms. Ajmera said I agree with some of the comments that's been made by my colleagues. Councilmembers Mayfield and Graham, I agree with you, we already have a department, but I guess my question is for the City Attorney. Mr. Fox, in the contract that you're currently working on, you're negotiating, are there any mechanisms around accountability for the minority small business participation?

Second question, followed by that, for our City Manager, Mr. Jones. I know we have an internal audit team. After Mr. Fox is done, if you could help us understand if there is any audit work being done on small business participation for contracts above certain dollars? Okay, that's all I have.

Mr. Fox said well, first of all, the 27 percent goal is aligned with and incorporates the CBI program, and the CBI program allows for the goal as a commitment, but it also allows for exceptions to the goal attainment, based upon good faith efforts. So, we have

to keep those processes in place. As I mentioned, the contract language will reflect the Council directive for the goals, and I will add a caveat, consistent with state and federal law, because that's an evolving area right now, but we will carry forward the message and the edict from this body with regards to the goal attainment and achievement.

Ms. Ajmera said thank you.

Mayor Lyles said alright.

Mr. Jones said yes, and so there was an audit of CBI last year, and there's going to be a follow-up with it. So, yes, the internal audit has looked at our CBI program, and how we are accounting for spend, yes.

Ms. Ajmera said so, Mr. Jones, to follow up on your comment earlier about consultant, if you already have the department CBI, as well as the Internal Audit Team, then we have external auditors that does render an opinion, then we have City Attorney's Office. Do we still need a consultant to do an assessment?

Mr. Jones said I'll leave it alone. I will tell you there are other cities. They're hiring Ice Miller, they're hiring a bunch of consultants, because this is a patch that we haven't been through before, but that's it. We would not be unique in bringing in outside assistance.

Ms. Ajmera said okay, that's all I have. Thank you.

Mr. Graham said here's the thing. I am not opposed to oversight for sure, Councilmember Mitchell. I think you're absolutely spot on. What gets measured gets done, so I get it, but I also said the same thing about The Pearl, a lot of commitments that we made. We should be auditing and having these big firms come back to us at least bi-yearly to report on where they're at, and that internally inside CBI or wherever, supply, diversity, the commitment is really, really important, but these big projects that have a big spotlight on them, like The Pearl, like Spectrum, like the Panthers, like when we do any major renovations at the Convention Center, if we were to do Bojangles, very high profile projects, big dollar amounts, there should be an internal component tracking those commitments that were made and signed upon by both parties. So, this is not unusual, but Mr. Manager, we need for that department, not only to connect the vendors with the end users internally and externally, but also to have an auditing function, especially in these very high-profile projects that we shouldn't have to go out and spend a million dollars. Again, if someone's going to pay the bill, it should be the other guys on the opposite side of the street, and Carol Lilly is an honest broker, Lilly and Associates. She knows the vendors. She can talk with them from truth to power. You know her, right? She's an honest broker, and having them on that construction team is amazing, and there's more news to come from what's happening over there. So, I think there are enough measures in place with the City Attorney's Office and others. I just hope that we take away from this conversation about a greater spotlight on, not only the matching of folks, but also making sure that on these very high profile projects, that goes well beyond just the Panthers, there are others, that they deserve the same level of scrutiny, oversight, and that they should be required to report back to the Council to let us know what's the score.

Ms. Anderson said City Manager, I do remember the audit of the CBI function last year and our discussion around that, which I think is helpful. There are a couple things here. There's a tone of the conversation that we have a department that we have little faith that can really oversee this process with a level of accountability to achieve those goals. I think that is a separate conversation, and I did hear that throughout all of my colleague's comments, that that's a separate conversation. This is a place that we have not been, Mr. Mitchell and City Manager. This is a large amount of money. It's a significant capital outlay, and if we were making commitments, I think we need to ensure that we are tracking those commitments and ensuring a level of accountability of how extensively we are pursuing the spend with underserved companies. I think that onus is on us. I understand that we might want others to pay for it, but the onus, if it's

really a City program, that it's on us to oversee, to administer, to enforce, and to audit. So, when we begin to hand off those types of responsibilities to other entities, like this responsibility or others, then it loses its integrity, and we really lose the opportunity to make modifications or to even make changes as we go through the process. So, this is our program. This is something we want to do as a city. This is the largest spend we've done in a very long time. We are accountable for that process and we're accountable for the auditing process of it. Now, having said that, I do believe we need some outside help, and that's clear, just from our conversations over the last couple of years, and given that this is such a high spend, we might want to be strategic and thoughtful about how do we go this process and allow this process to then inform how we would oversee the spend on a go forward basis. So, I just want to say that this is a big deal, it's a big moment, and it is fully up to us. It's not up to any other partner that we're working with. It's up to us, and if it fails, we will be accountable for it. We can't point the finger at others. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

Ms. Johnson said I think this brings up a very important point. Yes, the \$650 million, we need oversight, but for every dollar spent when we're expecting minority participation. We talk about this in Council meetings constantly. So, if we have to ask how are we going to ensure that this is done, how are we ensuring that this is done generally? I think that that's a question that we should be able to answer, and that oversight should be across the board.

I also wanted to ask, where in our budget is the CBI? Can someone give me the page number, the CBI Department? While you're looking that up, the \$650 million that was approved last June 2024, where will that be reflected as we are spending it in the budget, Mr. Manager? So, is it going to be captured as one allotment, or is it going to be captured as we write those checks, or how will we and the public be able to see those funds allotted?

Mr. Jones said sure. Let me start off by answering the first question. CBI is not going to be reflected in the budget the way it was reflected in the current year. That's one of the proposals I have in front of you, is to take procurement and CBI and merge them together, because clearly, we can do better, and this is part of the process, raising that up to a department level. In terms of the funding, Matt, help us out with how that's going to be reflected, the spend, for the \$650 million?

Mr. Hastedt said as far as how the dollars will go out? So, General Services will receive monthly pay applications through the construction manager, and they will review all pay applications to ensure that they meet our understanding of what the work that's been done or verify the work that's been done. Once Tepper Sports & Entertainment and the City have all signed off on the actual pay application, that is when funds would be released. So, no funds would be released without General Services being able to verify that the work has been done, and that would include all subcontractor work. So, that'd be an opportunity to sort of have a tracking of the MWSBE (Minority, Women, Small Business Enterprise) commitment on the actual payment out to vendors.

Mr. Jones said Matt, I think more specific to the question, it'll come out of your, what particular fund?

Mr. Hastedt said that would be coming out of the Convention Center Fund.

Ms. Johnson said okay. So, if someone wanted to track that any point, they could look at the actual spend, next Fiscal Year in that fund, right?

Mr. Hastedt said there is a Bank of America Stadium Project that would have ability to track all spending on it at any time.

Ms. Johnson said good, okay. So, you just said, before those checks go out, that's an opportunity to make sure that they're meeting the standards, and if we could do that across the board that would be awesome. Before those dollars are spent, there's these checklists and these outcomes, because surely for that type of money, there's

outcomes and outputs, and reports that we're going to be expecting, and not just for that money, these are all public dollars for any public dollars that are spent, we need to be tracking. Thank you.

Mr. Mitchell said so let me just share all this with my colleagues just so we can kind of level set where we are. There's a practice facility being built right now for about \$42 million. They sent over to our CBI a waiver for \$21 million. So, I want you all to hear those numbers clearly. There's a practice facility being built right now that costs us \$42 million. The Panthers and the current GC (General Contractor) sent over to our CBI a waiver for \$21 million. So, some people say, what's a waiver? A waiver is, you ask, we are not going to get any small business minority participation on those trade partners. So, let me give you another number. We're talking about making a million-dollar investment to get 27 percent of \$650 million. We're talking about putting \$175 million spending with our small businesses. So, we're talking about return on investment. If we say a million dollars over five years will generate \$175 million for our small business in the City of Charlotte, I agree with Mayor Pro Tem, then the buck stops with us. So, Mayor, thank you. I wanted to give you the numbers, so everybody understands the magnitude of what we're trying to create in our city.

Ms. Johnson said [inaudible].

Mr. Mitchell said oh, good point. Councilmember Johnson, what happened to the waiver? So, the CBI is pushing back on the waiver, because they believe in our program, and it's not been received very well.

Ms. Ajmera said so, CBI is doing its job.

Mr. Mitchell said but they need help, they are.

Mayor Lyles said okay, alright. So, now I think that we close this out. You've heard the remarks and you've heard what people's positions are. So, the next item on our agenda, there's one that's on 33 and that has been deleted, Ms. Mayfield, thank you. So, now we are at 34, understand costs to increase minimum wages to \$25 an hour. This is an ongoing request. The staff does not recommend that we do this with ARPA funding, because it is not going to be available on an ongoing basis. So, with that, any questions or comments on that one?

Ms. Mayfield said Manager Jones, when I asked about the increase, are we saying this \$25 for, again, our lowest paid workers for the City of Charlotte, based on our Area Median Income, so those that are making \$14, \$15, \$16, \$17, getting them to \$25? Because we were able to get some employees to \$23, \$24 over the last few years. So, that is giving them an additional dollar, but also giving up to \$5 to \$8 for our lowest paid. Who exactly is our target in this?

Mr. Jones said so, let me start off where the target was with the proposed budget. So, the proposed budget got everybody up to \$25 an hour. There may be some with apprenticeships.

Ms. Harris said \$24, excuse me.

Mr. Jones said \$24, I'm sorry. There's no full-time general fund employee that's making \$40,000 a year today. So, \$24 an hour as of November 1, 2025, would essentially get everybody up to \$49,920, did I get that right? Okay. That's all employees that are 40-hour a week employees. So, going to \$25, what happens is, it's this thing called compression. So, you just can't all of a sudden bump it up to \$25 without making adjustments all the way up. So, if you approve the proposed budget, as of November of 2025, everybody would be at \$24 an hour, 40-hour a week employees. Guys, if I'm missing something, I don't want to be wrong. What this does is, instead of it being \$24, it moves it to \$25, and with that, the reason why it's almost a million is because you have to make adjustments to deal with compression. The only other thing I'd say about this is, we would highly recommend that you don't do one-time for this, because one, we

would have the first structurally unbalanced budget since I've been here, and secondly, it's going to cost you that again in FY2027, which we haven't budgeted for, because we always do a two-year lens with a structurally balanced budget. Again, as I started off earlier, Councilmember Mayfield, I try never to say anything that doesn't support employees. I just want to make sure that the proposed budget did take another leap forward, in terms of getting folks close to \$50,000 for our City employees.

Ms. Mayfield said so, our minimum pay right now is \$23?

Mr. Jones said \$23, yes.

Ms. Ajmera said I don't see the item that I had requested for parental leave on here anywhere.

Ms. Harris said yes, ma'am. Cherie, will you scroll to the bottom please? It's answered in your packet on page 17.

Ms. Ajmera said okay, I got it, it's all the way down. Thank you.

Mayor Lyles said alright, so our next item, and we get back to it, is Helping Hands Foundation, one-time \$300,000.

Ms. Johnson said so, I'm not sure if the board reached out to all of the Council members about this, but if you have any questions, Ms. Charles is prepared to answer questions. Can we bring her up for just a second?

Mayor Lyles said are there questions for Ms. Charles? I don't think there are any questions.

Ms. Johnson said well, I have a question for her.

Mr. Jones said and maybe, Councilmember Johnson, I can help you and Ms. Charles out. I think this came up in one of the committee meetings today. When we started talking about the ARPA funds, maybe in October 2024, there were a number of opportunities for ARPA funds. One was Do Greater, another one that we listed was Helping Hands, another one I think was the Boys & Girls Club, which actually applied to be a financial partner, and another one was Care Ring, which didn't apply. So, the only reason I say that is, as we go through this tonight, those entities will still exist, and there may be questions about funding those, and many of these things are one-time, but what I'm saying is that, Helping Hands has been something that was discussed as opportunities for one-time funding, yes.

Ms. Johnson said okay. I still have a question for Ms. Charles.

Angela Charles, Charlotte Water Director said good evening, Mayor, Council, Manager, Attorney Fox. I'm Angela Charles, Director of Charlotte Water, and I will now take your question.

Ms. Johnson said thank you, Ms. Charles. Currently, if someone is behind on their water bill, what are the resources?

Ms. Charles said there are many resources in the community, like Crisis or DSS (Department of Social Services). The objective of Helping Hands is to streamline getting to those resources. So, for example, what we found out in COVID, is that many people in our community don't know to go to Crisis, don't know to go to DSS. If you live in Davidson, you go to The Ada Jenkins Center. If you live in Matthews and Mint Hill, you go to the Matthews Help Center. So, there are many different agencies that serve people in our community who are in need of water bill assistance. So, in COVID, we made over 19,000 phone calls, 15,000 individual phone calls, with the assistance of General Services and 311, to figure out what was going on in our community, in terms of why people were delinquent, and were they knowledgeable of the different resources.

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The other thing that happened during that time is we got over \$4 million from different agencies in our community, different churches, different organizations, in addition to the traditional organizations that exist. Charlotte Water serves 1.2 million people. It's time for us to streamline the assistance for folks in our community. This is not a new concept. We're the 13th largest water/wastewater utility in the country, and there are large utilities right now who have a relationship with a nonprofit, because people do know to contact Charlotte Water if they have problems with paying their bills. So, you can go to many websites and pages of other utilities, and there's a link to a nonprofit that is associated with the utility, and that nonprofit then can refer that particular individual to a nonprofit and/or with Helping Hands, also have funds itself, because we also found in those 15,000 phone calls, not everybody's going to the meet the federal guidelines. So, that's a long-winded answer, but that's the goal.

Ms. Johnson said so, it would be a direct partner with Charlotte Water to help, okay. So, it's something you would support?

Ms. Charles said and the agencies in the community.

Ms. Johnson said okay.

Ms. Charles said yes. So, it's not to replace anything that's existing. It's to facilitate folks in our service area with getting that assistance, and it has to be large enough to cover the customer base of Charlotte Water. So, it's not just City of Charlotte only, it's the eight different jurisdictions that we serve, knowing that there are nonprofits all over our service area. So, it's disjointed.

Ms. Johnson said okay, and I know you weren't expecting me to call you up.

Ms. Charles said well, I've got a speech, but I won't do the speech.

Ms. Johnson said well, you sure were prepared, thank you.

Ms. Charles said I can tell you that this is needed in our community, and I feel qualified to say that, because we made over 15,000 unique calls in COVID. We led the nation in this.

Ms. Johnson said okay. So, see that's the benefit of staying ready, so you don't have to get ready. So, she was ready. So, question. Do you know how many disconnections there are per month, we'll say?

Ms. Charles said about 2,000.

Ms. Johnson said okay, and this would help to streamline that.

Ms. Charles said yes, that's right, about \$130 overdue, about 2,000. We have brought that down since COVID. In COVID, we had over 18,048 disconnections.

Ms. Johnson said well, thank you. Thank you for the work that you do.

Ms. Charles said so, I can get on my soapbox, don't mean to do that. I just want you to understand this is, and I have to be careful, because I don't want to give the perception of a conflict of interest. I am ex officio on the board. We created this nonprofit 13 months ago. We had legal counsel from Parker Poe. We created it, but we knew we had to step away from it. Some of you have heard from some of our board members, and they have taken that vision and they're taking it to the next level for our community. It's going to be transformational.

Ms. Johnson said thank you.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you, Ms. Charles. So, I want to make sure that I'm understanding. It's a new organization that was started. Charlotte Water is an Enterprise Fund.

Ms. Charles said right.

Ms. Mayfield said Charlotte Water's an Enterprise Fund. We increase the fees on Charlotte Water annually. We see that in our taxes. We also receive in our bills the ability for individual residents to overpay or offset to help others in community. When people do donate extra, are those funds being directed through Helping Hands Foundation for them to go back out, or are they coming through Charlotte Water?

Ms. Charles said okay, Councilmember Mayfield, we don't have that provision yet, but that's where we want to go. That's like a roundup program that other utilities have, and we've contacted our folks in IT (Information Technology) and with our billing system to do that, because that is a way that other utilities are getting funds to the nonprofit to help folks in their communities, though, certainly we want to implement roundup. Right now, we don't have it.

Ms. Mayfield said so, you're in the process, and when and if the roundup program is implemented, it's going to be through partnership with Helping Hands Foundation?

Ms. Charles said absolutely.

Ms. Mayfield said so, currently, is the County funding Helping Hands Foundation?

Ms. Charles said not yet. I can tell you that I have discussed Helping Hands with the other political bodies that we serve in Mecklenburg County, but I always get asked how much has the City contributed. It's like everybody knows we're managed by the City of Charlotte. So, part of this is also being leaders in our community, so that when we talk to the County and we talk to the other towns, we can say, hey, we've already got the support of the Council we report to. Also, understand that any funds that the City of Charlotte gives would be for City of Charlotte residents only. So, your point is very well taken. County funds can be used all over our service area. Matthews' funds can be used in Matthews. So, there's opportunity there with where we need to go.

Ms. Mayfield said so, because I'm trying to understand. We have an application process where we actually get the chance to vet whatever organization it is that's seeking funding. If I'm hearing correctly, and I want to make sure I have clarification, Councilmember Johnson. This is a request for a one-time disbursement using the ARPA dollars, that same \$5.3 million, to allocate \$300,000 to Helping Hand Foundation. Is that this request for it to come out of ARPA as a one-time? Because one time isn't going to help based on what I'm hearing from you as the ongoing need, but is your, on item 35, for a one-time \$300,000 request utilizing the ARPA funds?

Ms. Johnson said I want to support the project. I want to provide assistance for residents and streamline. If there's a more efficient way, then I'd like to discuss it. I mean, if you have another recommendation, Mr. Jones.

Mr. Jones said I think that is what some of the members of the Helping Hands Board wanted from this Council, is \$300,000 one-time from the ARPA funds.

Ms. Mayfield said so, the request is one-time from ARPA dollars. So, where I have a challenge, again, Charlotte Water's an Enterprise Fund. Seems like there would be a conversation within Charlotte Water for you to identify some funds to go towards this.

Ms. Charles said can I respond to that?

Ms. Mayfield said please.

Ms. Charles said our funds that we collect are restricted, and our bond covenants prescribe how you allocate funds that come in into the utility. Now, there was a revenue contract on tank funding that this Council passed, I guess it was last month, and so that's the only source of funding that is not restricted by our bond covenants. So, Charlotte Water, in other words, we cannot fund Helping Hands. It's restricted by state statute.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you for that clarification. For me, I still would prefer Helping Hands to actually go through our process in order to be in the system to get vetted. One of the challenges we saw last year is, a number of our organizations, it seemed like it took a long time for them to get their checks, and that is because they were brand new, they had not been vetted, doing the paperwork and doing everything to get them caught up, because again, we're short staffed in a lot of these departments. It took almost eight months for some of the organizations to get the funding, because we didn't do the prework that would happen if you actually applied. I would prefer for Helping Hands to apply when it opens up in 2025, so what is that October, when we open up the new cycle, and actually go through that vetting process versus looking for one-time funding, when we have no information on an organization that's been around for 13 months. We have other organizations that's been out here doing amazing work on the ground in the community, and I still said no to them, because you're not meeting the minimum requirements. So, to not even have the requirements in place is difficult for me just to ensure your long-term viability.

Ms. Charles said yes, and that's something that the board has been very intentional with, because we understand that Helping Hands needs to be around 20 years from now. As a matter of fact, the Foundation For The Carolinas has stated, Jessie Hermann, VP (Vice President) of Nonprofit Services, that Charlotte Water should do a class on setting up a nonprofit. So, we have set this up with a spirit of professionalism, knowing that 20 years from now, when we're serving 2.4 million people, there needs to be an entity that has a relationship, dotted line, with the utility for water bill assistance, and the mission of the organization too is to also facilitate new connections. So, we're starting out with water/wastewater, water bill assistance, but we also have people in our community who are wells, septic. It's quite expensive to do that, and so that's part two of the mission of the organization.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you, Ms. Charles. Thank you, Mr. Manager.

Ms. Charles said yes.

Ms. Molina said Ms. Charles, thank you for coming and speaking to us. This is something that I think all of us can agree with. I think we're all looking for ways to be good partners with the humans we represent across this City. I think this sounds like it's operational in nature. Not to say that it's not important, because like I said, and I think to Councilwoman Mayfield's point, if we do this one time, understanding that this particular entity sounds as though it has a mission that should be in alignment with what we consider on a regular basis, I think this would be probably one of those organizations that is entertains during this BGIR conversation, as far as, what do we do with partners that are maybe adjacent, but not internal to the City of Charlotte's organization. I mean, not in the same lane of conversation, but to say from a sustainability perspective, how do we make sure that something that is this institutional to what we deliver to our residents, it's continuity. So, not to say that I'm against helping, but I think the one-time help is not going to be, in my opinion, the best way to meet this challenge. I really do think that this should be something that we have an additional conversation around how we orient around the help. Again, it's not internal to us, and it's a challenge. Because we do have discretionary funding that we're able to administer, we've put ourselves as policymakers in the lane of being more of philanthropist, and although there's a lane with the policy and the institution that could be understood that we have, it's not the emphasis of what we do. So, our fiduciary conversation is really about the continuity of this institution on an ongoing basis, the 14 different departments. How do we ensure their vibrancy? How do we maintain our assets? How do we promote economic stability, so that we continue to grow and not fail, but then in that, we have this small ability to

have a philanthropic lens in how we do that. Because again, I have institutions that I would love to support that aren't going to be supported. So, I think we all feel that, but like I said, I feel confident that we should support, but it sounds as though the help is more a need for an operational longevity conversation, so that this institution can continue. That's just an assumption, based on what I'm hearing so far.

Ms. Charles said okay.

Ms. Ajmera said Ms. Charles, thank you for your work on this, and for your leadership and your vision. Certainly making 15,000 calls to understand and assess the need, it's a huge undertaking. I did receive a message from board member, Mr. Greg Phipps, a former Council member, for supporting this ask. I'm going to support this ask, because the need is there, knowing that you already have done deeper analysis, but I also agree with the comments made by my colleague, Councilwoman Mayfield, in terms of our policy, which was recently adopted, and this doesn't quite fit into our policy. So, I wonder does that mean do you open the doors to other organizations. I know this financial partner policy is still something that's being worked on, and we are going to fine-tune it. Because this is a perfect example of where we will need to revise the policy, because this is an organization that would benefit from it, but also not just you, but other organizations that might be in the same category. So, we look forward to having that conversation, to Councilwoman Molina's point, at the committee level, and we'll certainly keep this organization in mind as we are developing the policy and try to perfect the policy that we have for financial partners. Thank you.

Ms. Charles said appreciate that.

Mayor Lyles said thank you very much. I think we'll go [inaudible] Angela always, thank you so much for your leadership.

Ms. Charles said thank you.

Mayor Lyles said so, let's go to our next item, which is item 36, NAACP Convention. I'm beginning to remember that we no longer go double A. It is NAACP. I am very much aware of that, and this is about their convention being held in Charlotte.

Mr. Mitchell said this is a great opportunity to partner with Mecklenburg County. They've already put it on their agenda, because they said whatever the City will do, we will match. So, I just think, once again, return on our investments, \$200,000, but they have projected to spend about \$16 million in revenue in our City. So, once again, great opportunity. We do have the two blue ribbon co-chairs in our presence, two corporate well-known icons, Mr. Lenny Springs, a retired Wells Fargo Executive, and a Senior VP at Wells Fargo, Ms. Gigi Dixon. So, Council, I hope that we will move forward and continue to sell our city.

Ms. Ajmera said so, this convention that's upcoming, this specific ask is for that?

Mr. Mitchell said yes, July 12, 2025, through July 16, 2025.

Ms. Ajmera said so, is this one from tourism or from the ARPA bucket?

Mr. Mitchell said from the ARPA bucket, yes.

Ms. Ajmera said okay. So, would this convention bring visitors to our city?

Mr. Mitchell said yes, they're projecting, youth-wise for the [inaudible] over 2500 to 2600 youth across the country, and adults about 12,000 to 14,000.

Ms. Ajmera said so, we are looking at significant economic impact.

Mr. Mitchell said \$16 million dollars.

Ms. Ajmera said which is one of the criteria for our tourism dollars. Mr. Jones, would this be something that qualifies for tourism bucket? I know we have done that for other festivals that bring tourism. So, would this qualify for tourism ask?

Mr. Hastedt said thank you, Councilmember, for the question. It's certainly a project that I think that we could certainly look at. Typically, we work with the CRVA (Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority), because they do have programs and procedures, as far as recruiting big events. So, I definitely think it could be something that we could work with the CRVA to make sure it sorts of fits within sort of their bucket, and look at the Convention Center Fund, because this would be a convention, so it would be something that's potentially eligible for that. It could also be something, depending on how the Council wants to look at it, sort of do the ARPA as a backstop while we explore the Convention Center Fund as well.

Ms. Ajmera said okay. Yes, I think that's fair, is for us to look at the Convention Center Fund.

Mayor Lyles said Ms. Ajmera, I think the question is that this is coming up in the next couple of weeks.

Mr. Mitchell said and we've got the County who's voting tomorrow.

Mayor Lyles said we've got the County that's going to support, and it will mean much to have that support from the County and the City. This is an important conference in our community and in the City. I think if you can look at who's going to be here and the number of faith-based folks, and people that are consistently looking at equity and inclusion. So, I believe it is of value, but I think that I would really want to have the money out there. If you can get a reimbursement from the CRVA later, that would be much better.

Ms. Ajmera said so, what Matt suggested is that we can look at it. If it's not, then ARPA would be the option. Did I understand that correctly, Matt?

Mr. Hastedt said so, what I'd say is that it's a possible use of the services. I think Councilmember Graham may want to speak to this as well. I think the timing of this and sort of doing the due diligence to make sure, because one of the things that becomes more of a challenge with these is making sure where our money is actually going, and if we don't have time to develop the contracts and sort of tracking procedures, that can become quite challenging on actually utilizing the Hospitality Funds, because their uses are so restricted, based on a timing and being expedient, that the ARPA funds would likely be better for this particular project, but as a going forward basis, we always work with the CRVA on their recruitment of these types of events.

Ms. Anderson said thank you for that understanding there. This is a time sensitive issue. What I'd like to say is, we have these packets at our desks here, and if you just go to the second page here where it talks about the numbers, just let alone, for \$200,000 to be matched by the County to have the NAACP Convention here, the economic impact of \$16.7 million, even if you took a haircut off of that, still well over \$10 million, a little over 5,000 in-person attendees. What's really interesting to me is this notion around the livestreaming and the social media impressions, which all will say, NAACP in Charlotte, North Carolina. I can tell you just from having run marketing teams before and spend money on adds and impressions for \$200K, you could not get this amount of impressions and eyeballs for \$200,000. So, not only would it be a fantastic opportunity for our City to host the convention, and to work intergovernmentally with the County Commissioners to provide this ask, it's a tremendous spotlight on the City of Charlotte for several days throughout the summer. So, I think this is a no-brainer, falls right into the one-time spend as well, as we're only asking ARPA to be one time and not ongoing. So, I definitely would support this particular ask, Mr. Mitchell. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

Mr. Graham said I too see this as a no-brainer. I do believe we ought to keep it simple and make the one-time allocation from ARPA. It'll probably be the only item that I will

support tonight coming from that fund, because again, I do believe we need to have a rainy-day fund with those dollars for sure, and I don't think we ought to extinguish it. I respect Councilmember Mayfield, while I understand her earlier vote, in terms of putting parameters around what we're doing, and I think we will be best served to be consistent with that, notwithstanding your vote, I get what you were saying, but I think we ought to do this one and it'll be the only one that I'll be voting on tonight.

Mayor Lyles said okay. So, we're going to go ahead and move on. We have two items that were submitted by our newest colleague, item 37 and 38, adding funding for Roof Above and adding funding for DreamKey Partners. It is \$143,808 [inaudible] for Roof Above and [inaudible] for DreamKey Partners.

Mr. Peacock said I do not have any comments. I think they speak for themselves. So, if my colleagues have questions please ask me.

Ms. Mayfield said no question, I just want to have a real conversation and acknowledge, we have \$1.3 million already allocated to DreamKey. I love DreamKey, I also love Laurel Street, as well as several other organizations that we have in this City. Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership, now INLIVIAN, we are passed through basically for the funds that have come through. DreamKey is the only organization that we have a designated dollar amount allocated, plus you can go through the process to receive Housing Trust Funds, and we will still fund a project as well, plus have a designated grant line item. That can be a conversation down the road, but they are our only development partner where we in essence have three different designated line items to them. We do not offer that to Laurel Street. We do not offer that to Crosland or to any of our workforce housing development partners. We do not offer that to Historic West End or any of our organizations that have created a trust that have created CDCs. We do not offer a designated funding line item for you, plus money for grants, plus tell you that you can apply for Housing Trust Funds and still potentially get funding. I support the \$1.3 million, because they do great work and they are one of our greatest partners, but they are not our only partner, not to mention our Down Payment Assistance program, which they have an amazing program to get you ready for homeownership. I need us to have a real conversation that this is the only partner where we have designated dollars that are in essence allocated to them, and none of our other development partners have that same opportunity for us to have money that is designated for them to tap into.

Mr. Driggs said so, I have an issue with the one-time description. Just because we're talking about doing it only once, doesn't mean it's actually one time. One time means, I want to buy a bus, will you help me out, and we buy the bus, or whatever, but if this is just operating support and it doesn't have a unique nonrecurring purpose, then that's not one time. So, I have an issue with that from ARPA funds, and I would love to see us preserve more of the ARPA funds for strategic use in genuine nonrecurring situations, instead of putting an end to uses that are likely to be the same next year. Thank you.

Mr. Peacock said well, I'll just simply say that the test of a good decision is the test of time, Madam Mayor, and I've noticed that DreamKey Partners, in my 14 years prior to being here, have continued to do just that. On the nominal side, again, I'm trying to shore up what I saw from the Committee, and what I saw it at the Committee, I know that it wasn't set up in a manner in which it was alphabetically or scored above. I just didn't see a whole lot of equity in how we were distributing those funds. I felt like we should start with housing first, start with services and other things, and again, it just didn't have parity for me. I share my colleague, Mr. Driggs, comments, as it relates to being one time. I think that one-time label here is probably being broadly used, if I'm just guessing what the Committee worked on today. What I'm hearing from my colleague to my left, is she's very supportive of this organization, so much so that she wants to fund \$159,000.

Ms. Anderson said I appreciate the comments from all of my colleagues on this particular issue. I do agree that they're both wonderful partners, they do phenomenal work. I do also firmly believe that we support DreamKey Partners in a variety of different ways, Ms. Mayfield. One could never look at the City of Charlotte and say we don't

support DreamKey Partners and the work that they do, because their work is integral to our growing City. The same can be said about Roof Above. Tremendous work, and we support them and we will continue to support them. On this particular issue, these are both financial partners that went through a process that was established, and the outcome of that process is what we saw come out of the Committee. Now, totally within your right, Mr. Peacock, to add them here, because we were adding people, but I believe that we have addressed both Roof Above and DreamKey, and I would not support these additional funds for these two entities. Having said that, I in no way, shape or form want to color my comments as not supporting these two entities, because I fully support them and the work they do, and I think we show up with our purses and manifest that through support throughout the year. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

Ms. Molina said actually, mine is totally unrelated, although, I guess I'll go ahead and add an addendum to say I echo the sentiments of the Mayor Pro Tem in that, again, one-time ARPA related is one total thing. We have actually had a full scope conversation around Roof Above, DreamKey Partners, they do great work, but it's just not a one-time implementation. So, for that, I'll rest that there.

Also, Madam Mayor, just for a point of clarification, we have a member that was actually present in our meeting, and she has now left, and so for voting purposes, I would like to make sure that we clarify with our Attorney clearly what that means as we go through this exercise. I know that we've had some issues. So, I just want to make sure that we add that in for reporting purposes or anyone who is on the outside looking in, where we are and what that means. So, Mr. Attorney, will you humor me, please?

Mr. Fox said yes, just quickly, as I've stated before, 160A-75 of the North Carolina General Statute is pretty clear. When a member of the board who was present, and leaves without being excused, that member's vote is counted in the affirmative.

Mayor Lyles said okay, thank you.

Ms. Ajmera said so, just real quick. While we are at this, I just want to reaffirm our commitment to Roof Above and DreamKey Partners, because we have members from organizations in the room. In the first line item that was approved, \$1.2 million additional funding, Roof Above was allocated \$100,000 and DreamKey Partners was allocated \$231,000. So, the Committee made a decision, because we have limited funding, but we wanted to show our commitment to these organizations that do great work. So, I will be continuing to support what was approved by the Committee. However, they can certainly bring in additional requests for housing. Whether it be different housing programs that we have, whether it's new development, NOAH (Naturally Occurring Affordable Housing), and so on. So, there is obviously an opportunity for both of these organizations to apply for additional housing dollars that are specific to a project, which I would be willing to review and support if it meets our criteria. At this point, for the operation dollars, I think we've already made our commitment and shown that in our first line item. That's all I have. Thank you.

Ms. Johnson said okay. Councilmember Peacock, I just want you to know that I will be supporting these organizations with you, and that's because I work in the field, I have a peer support organization. We rely on Roof Above and we rely on DreamKey and organizations like that. We know we have, I don't know, if it's \$16,000 or \$40,000 or whatever that deficit is for affordable housing, people are hurting, and organizations like these really step up when needed. So, I will be supporting these organizations. Thank you.

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ITEM NO. 3: CONSIDERATION OF A MOTION DIRECTING THE CITY MANAGER TO PREPARE THE NECESSARY DOCUMENTS AND RESOLUTIONS FOR THE FY 2026 BUDGET ORDINANCE

Mayor Lyles said thank you, everyone, for taking the time to go through all of this information, so that we can have our votes now. So, this is the way I hope that Marie will help us and Hannah will help us. I've got them numbered by the way that we went through this board, and so I'm just going to ask for a motion.

Councilmember Mayfield said Mayor, before we get to the motion, may I ask a clarifying question of the Manager?

Mayor Lyles said yes, please.

Ms. Mayfield said thank you. Manager Jones, so I didn't put it up here, and it looks like we're at \$4,000,063, but here's the question I have. You, myself, staff members, different members, have had conversations with Mr. William McNeely regarding Do Greater. There was a presentation to Council last year, November 2024, December 2024, sometime, but it did not have a dollar amount. City staff, throughout 2024 and parts of 2025, repeatedly have, during presentations in community and different events, highlighted the work that Do Greater has done. The conversations were then expanding into Uptown and taking the training and the programming that they started over on the West Side in partnership with Shiloh Institutional Baptist Church and expanding that. They got their corporate dollars and other funding, and there was an understanding of support from the City, and then conversations stopped. We've all received quite a few emails. I have responded to some of them, because I was also under the impression that this is an economic development partnership. This wasn't just a financial partner. This was economic development, as well as education partnership, where we were having conversations of working together through the City. Somewhere that conversation changed. Has this turned into something that needs to be on the financial partner list in order for them to get the funding in order for them to move forward, because I believe in the conversations they were having, some of the corporate funding was also in line with City support based off of communications that were happening in 2023, 2024?

Marcus Jones, City Manager said thank you, Councilmember Mayfield. So, I believe what occurred over the course of the last year, were conversations just as you said, with \$750,000 coming from the City, \$750,000 coming from the County, and the rest being raised. I don't know where that is, as of this date, but it was very consistent with what we were doing at that time. It hit workforce development, it hit training, and even vacant office space. So, I don't see it as anything that's inconsistent with any of the discussions we've had along those lines. I don't know where the other fundraising would come from, but as I mentioned earlier, there was one of a handful of opportunities that we mentioned last year, and I do believe it should stay in play at some level.

Ms. Mayfield said so, just for clarification, because I think for myself, where some of this was lost in translation, is I thought we had already did this last year. So, we've been having this conversation now for eight-plus months. So, now that we're in the budget cycle, we only had, past tense, \$5.3 million in theory to work with. Well, doesn't even make sense saying that the remaining ARPA is \$4,000,063. That still hasn't been updated based off of everything we talked which is what I was hoping is that we we're doing a running real-time, as we were talking about these numbers to see exactly what it is that we're looking at having available once we take out that \$1,237,000, because we've already allocated that, to know exactly where we are. I didn't interpret the conversation with Do Greater and support of Do Greater as a one-time ARPA deal. I really thought the conversations were an Economic Development conversation. If I'm hearing you correctly, you're saying the conversation is still at play, but they need commitments and need to move forward yesterday, and we, the City, have been the holdup with this conversation, because this conversation's been happening for a while. So, are you saying that in order for us to move the conversation forward, I need to do a recommendation now of another add, which I don't like the idea, or you're saying we have an opportunity to really move this conversation forward through another funding source?

Mr. Jones said I would say both. I would like some direction from the Council. So, what do I mean by that? There's Workforce Development funds. There's funds in Corridors. So, there's a combination of being able to pull some resources together. I just have not gotten the nod from the Council.

Ms. Mayfield said so, we got a presentation, but that presentation didn't ask us anything from last year. So, for clarification, for those of us that are here, in order to have a real conversation around Do Greater, which does touch Economic Development, Workforce, Education. It touches at least four, if not five, of our key areas. We have to then have a real conversation within the next few weeks, as I'm having the conversation with the Manager, we've got to have a conversation within the next few weeks before we go out for July 2025, when we're off for a month. So, Mayor, does that mean we have to have a recommendation, because we've got to have this conversation yesterday, which is the next three Mondays, in order for us to make a clear decision and give staff a chance to come back and say, here is where we can support it? I just want to make sure we're on the same page, and for clarity. Councilmember Graham, as our Economic Development Chair, did you have?

Mr. Graham said send it to Committee, and we'll scrub it up, and make a recommendation. I think that should be Workforce Development, small business, it fits a lot of buckets, Corridors. So, send to the committee, and we'll scrub it up, and have a conversation with you as well as Do Greater. He was here, I think.

Ms. Mayfield said so, I'm not going to add it to this process, because I want to keep this process as clean as possible, but if we can get it recommended, so that we can have that conversation.

Mayor Lyles said it'll go to the ED Committee, and I think it would be helpful for all of us to have as much wisdom, because that's a long time ago, and they are probably some people that have not experienced [inaudible].

Ms. Mayfield said and because I was with it a little longer, I just want to make sure that we are as transparent and as accountable as we possibly can be. So, thank you, Madam Mayor and Mr. Manager.

Councilmember Molina said mine is just clarification. So, for Charlotte Museum of History, just to be clear, is there a possibility for us to look at another avenue for funding this request outside of ARPA, just to make sure before we vote, so that my colleagues know where we are?

Mr. Jones said, again, going back to the Infusion Fund, which is over, but there are funds still remaining where the private sector over fundraised the \$18 million or whatever the number was, and I'm willing to have that conversation to see if there's something we could pull out of that residual amount for this purpose.

Ms. Molina said so, just for my colleague's purpose, and for the public and for consumption, so that I don't get eat up on Twitter, please, we are looking at the possibility of this funding coming from another avenue that is specific to arts, if we do not allocate ARPA dollars tonight, is that fair?

Mr. Jones said absolutely. If you can give me a little leeway that a portion of this, and just like we talked about Do Greater, is there an opportunity to cobble together enough to meet this request?

Mayor Lyles said now you know, Mr. Jones, the first item on here was saying \$350,000. Now, that, I think, is the question, that it may not be \$350,000. Is that the question that you're asking?

Ms. Molina said well, no. I'm just saying for voting purposes, if we vote ARPA then we don't look at this funding, right, because then we're allocating it from ARPA, but if there are other funds that are available and specific to this particular type of funding

mechanism, then if we can look at that I think it would be a better way. I know that there was a total ask of \$750,000, Ms. White, [inaudible]. We did the best we could. I know you're watching [inaudible], but the \$350,000, if we can get that from another avenue, and there's a strong possibility and that's great, and it won't come from ARPA tonight.

Mayor Lyles said so, Ms. Ajmera, is everyone ready to begin to vote? Alright, so the first item is the Charlotte History Museum for a decision to be made somewhere around \$350,000, somehow after a conversation with the Manager, to say that there will be some funding in that area. So, yes.

Ms. Molina said can we clarify that saying yes means, are we giving him permission to look for that funding?

Mayor Lyles said yes.

Ms. Molina said okay, good. So, not necessarily [inaudible].

Mayor Lyles said not to allocate the funding. When we're reviewing these items and people vote on them, they are going to go into the Manager's final Budget for Council to vote on next week, and that's where we'll end. So, I think, what I make sure is that, when each Council member is voting, that you are recorded for your vote, and as well, the team is going to record you for the total vote by everyone.

Ms. Molina said so, just to make sure we're clear. If we say yes, we're authorizing him to look into the other funding mechanism as well. This is just giving him permission to say yes, or is this saying yes to ARPA funding? I need to make sure that we're clear. What do you need from me, Mr. Manager?

Mr. Jones said I think you made it very clear just now. Whether or not this is from this bucket or from some other place.

Motion was made by Councilmember Molina, and seconded by Councilmember Johnson to authorize the City Manager to seek funding sources for the Charlotte Museum of History to be reviewed by the City Manager in this year's budget.

Ms. Mayfield said I'm waiting for staff to update the language, so that we're very clear, because right now, I'm not voting to allocate \$350,000. What we are voting on is for the Manager to seek other funding sources, that's what we're voting on.

Mayor Lyles said I think we're getting staff support over there.

Councilmember Ajmera said so, Manager, to review alternative funding sources, am I correct?

Ms. Molina said other than ARPA.

Ms. Ajmera said okay. So, Mr. Jones, if you do not find an alternative source, what happens?

Mr. Jones said it doesn't get funded.

Ms. Ajmera said okay, got it, alright.

Councilmember Johnson said other than ARPA dollars.

Ms. Ajmera said okay. Seek funding source other than ARPA. I just want to make sure. Okay, that's good.

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

pti:pk

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

NAYS: Councilmembers Brown and Graham

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, and seconded by Councilmember Brown to allocate funding of \$1,500,000 over a three-year period to support City staff supportive services.

Ms. Ajmera said so, for this, this is ARPA source, correct, and Supportive Services, could you elaborate on that? Does this include healthcare insurance premium that the firefighters had requested?

Ms. Mayfield said actually, what the Manager clarified is, by law, I can't separate it for first responders for insurance purposes. This is going back to the original request based off of what we learned three Monday's ago, that through Sheila Simpson's office and HR, we started a pilot program where we had employees that needed assistance, whether it was for groceries, bills, whatever. This is a request of \$1.5 million, to last over a three-year period, to help if we have employees of the City of Charlotte that run into financial challenges, and they already have an application and identification process, and Ms. Sheila is here if we want to have her share a little bit more if she can about the program. It's a program specifically to help our City of Charlotte employees that are facing financial challenges, but not for the insurance piece, because there's legal ramifications through the North Carolina General Assembly and Insurance Commission that we can't do that.

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Mayfield, Mitchell, and Watlington

NAYS: Councilmembers Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Molina, and Peacock

Councilmember Anderson said Madam Mayor, just a point of clarification. We have to make sure that we include Watlington in the count as a yes for all of these.

Anthony Fox, Interim City Attorney said her vote would count as an affirmative. On the motion that was made by Ms. Mayfield, seconded by Ms. Brown, the vote was recorded as five in favor. Ms. Watlington has left the meeting and was not excused. Her vote would count in the affirmative, so that's six votes. For the staff, when you record the vote, the actual vote should include an affirmative vote added for all matters for Ms. Watlington's absence.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mitchell, and seconded by Councilmember Brown to approve \$1,000,000 ensure small business utilization targets are met on Bank of America Stadium.

Ms. Anderson said I just have a question for the City Manager. City Manager, you mentioned that line item 33 would be one that would make your budget unbalanced. Would any of these other line items make your budget unbalanced?

Mr. Jones said so, 34 would make it unbalanced.

Ms. Anderson said okay. I just wanted to make sure. Thank you, Madam Mayor.

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Anderson, Brown, Mitchell, and Watlington

NAYS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Mayfield, Molina, and Peacock

Mayor Lyles said okay, let's go to the next one. I believe that was deleted for that plan.

Ms. Johnson said can I ask a question about that. So, how was that deleted? Was Mayfield the only one that recommended that the first time?

Ms. Ajmera said well, actually I did too.

Ms. Mayfield said I initially proposed, and I believe there were a couple of other Council members whose names were also on it. For my proposal, after speaking with the Manager and learning where we have legal challenges, and we are not able to legally identify just support for our first responders and have money set aside just for healthcare, I removed mine. So, that's how the delete got up there. So, we can just remove my name off of it for those who still want to continue that conversation. I just removed my name off of it.

Ms. Johnson said okay, if I can finish. If we could just leave that on there, and then if we move it forward and then we have a week to figure out if there's something else that can be added, or something else we can do. Or we can vote on it today, but I didn't want it removed either. Thank you.

Mr. Jones said so, I'd like to make sure we understand, because we're going to put the project document together. The option, I believe, that's before you give \$250 for every person that's in the Public Safety Pay Plan that has insurance.

Marie Harris, Strategy and Budget said it was, and it's been updated, based on further discussions with HR and legal. It's for everybody in the Public Safety Pay Plan, because again, we can't carve out.

Mr. Jones said so, this is whether you have insurance or not, if you're in the Public Safety Pay Plan, you're going to get \$250 bucks. That's what you're voting on.

Ms. Mayfield said and that wasn't addressing my original intent.

Mayor Lyles said right.

Ms. Ajmera said so, if I recall this from budget adjustment meeting, we did not discuss \$250 for Public Safety Pay Plan. So, a motion that I remember supporting is when we had a couple of firefighters speak at public hearing, they expressed concerns around rising cost of healthcare benefit. The cost for this year is significantly higher than previous years, so they requested one-time ARPA dollars to assist with this rising healthcare cost. I don't know how this \$250 came about.

Ms. Harris said if I may, I can help with that.

Ms. Ajmera said yes, please.

Ms. Harris said thank you. So, yes, we definitely heard the intent, but then looking with legal and HR, we discovered that where healthcare, self-insured, you can't carve out different subsets of your population. So, we proposed something that maybe could get towards what your intent was, because we could give a lump sum bonus to those people, but we can't directly offset healthcare costs.

Ms. Ajmera said so, back when I had first started in 2018, we approved sliding scale healthcare premium benefit. So, if your healthcare insurance cost is above a certain percentage, you'll pay that sliding scale premium.

Ms. Harris said no, ma'am. This does not impact the offerings in the healthcare.

Ms. Ajmera said okay, alright. That's all I have. Thank you.

Motion was made by Councilmember Mayfield, and seconded by Councilmember Driggs to deny review of healthcare benefit costs for police and fire grant options.

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmember Driggs, Graham, Mayfield, Molina, Peacock, and Watlington

NAYS: Councilmember Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Johnson, and Mitchell

Motion was made by Councilmember Brown, and seconded by Councilmember Mayfield to understand the cost to increase minimum wage to \$25 an hour.

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Brown, Mayfield, Mitchell, and Watlington

NAYS: Councilmembers Anderson, Driggs, Graham, Johnson, Molina, and Peacock

Ms. Johnson said can we just clarify something? Mr. Jones, did you say that paying \$25 an hour, the budget would not balance with that?

Mr. Jones said yes.

Ms. Molina said let's clarify that. That's why it's a no for me.

Ms. Johnson said okay, thank you.

Motion was made by Councilmember Brown, and seconded by Councilmember Ajmera, to approve \$300,000 for Helping Hands Foundation.

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Brown, Johnson, Mitchell, and Watlington

NAYS: Councilmembers Driggs, Graham, Mayfield, Molina, and Peacock

Motion was made by Councilmember Mitchell, seconded by Councilmember Brown, and carried unanimously to approve \$200,000 for NAACP Convention funding.

Motion was made by Councilmember Anderson, and seconded by Councilmember Peacock to increase the funding \$159,000 for DreamKey Partners, and \$143,808 for Roof Above.

The vote was taken on the motion and recorded as follows:

YEAS: Councilmembers Brown, Johnson, Peacock, and Watlington

NAYS: Councilmembers Ajmera, Anderson, Driggs, Graham, Mayfield, Mitchell, and Molina

Mayor Lyles said so wait a minute, before we go any further. I mean, we need to take this very seriously, because this is going to be what the staff will be working on and the Manager will be working on to complete this for the budget.

Mr. Jones said and don't hate me everybody. Can we just keep scrolling, because you have more items on here, and I want to make sure that someone doesn't say that we've missed an item. So, the additional items reviewed in the information packet, I just want to make sure, are there any votes, because a lot of it says review, but clearly the first one is funding support of The People's Budget, the review of resources for 911. I just want to make sure we're not missing something.

Mayor Lyles said so, if you are wanting to have something as a part of a discussion, let's go around and make sure.

Ms. Mayfield said mine was that staff was supposed to bring back the conversation regarding the pay grades for our liaison staff, and it still goes back to the conversation, but at the end of the day, we just voted whether or not we're going to give employees a raise, and we said that would blow the budget. I have challenges with that. For clarification, if we were to move with the proposal, two to three percent, that includes our highest paid and our lowest paid, would be in that category.

Mr. Jones said you mean in the proposed budget?

Ms. Mayfield said right.

Mr. Jones said so, for the operating folks, it was four percent and salary is three percent, but that's just what we put into every department's budget, which is an average of three percent.

Ms. Mayfield said up to three percent, of which I asked it at the very beginning, if not now, will you look into it over the next few months to see parity wise what we can do to make sure that our employees don't need to go to HR for assistance?

Mr. Jones said yes, got it.

Mayor Lyles said alright. I don't believe that that requires a motion or any action by the Council.

Councilmember Brown said yes, I was just saying that we've already went through The People's Budget, and I made it clear for the record that I was supporting, but we went through pages three through eight, and we realized that some of the partners that we were supporting did not apply. So, it made it difficult for us to try to push it through, so. I yield back to you, Mayor. Thank you.

Ms. Johnson said I wanted to ask about Councilmember Mayfield's recommendation, the Constituent Services pay grade. Last year, was there a change to the OCS (Office of Community Services) structure in last year's budget? No?

Unknown said we had another person.

Ms. Johnson said we had another person. Did we ever hire that other person?

Mr. Jones said yes.

Ms. Johnson said okay. It was Alexis, was it?

Unknown said yes.

Ms. Johnson said that's who that person was?

Mayor Lyles said yes, she's had a couple assignments.

pti:pk

Ms. Johnson said well, I know Alexis is here, but I thought there was somebody else besides Alexis, or another structure, okay. Then, also, just to clarify, that we did support giving City staff a raise to \$24 an hour, instead of \$25, correct? That's the minimum?

Mr. Jones said yes, absolutely.

Ms. Johnson said okay, so it's not those of us who didn't support the \$25, didn't support a raise. We support a raise. We just didn't support an unbalanced budget. Thank you.

Mr. Jones said absolutely.

Mr. Mitchell said [inaudible].

Ms. Johnson said well, I didn't know if we're going in order, but absolutely, we can talk about 911. We have to do something. We've been talking about this for five years. I can remember being in your office pre-COVID, Mr Jones, and having a video of a 911 call on hold. I just think that that's unacceptable. I know that there's a plan and we're hiring in August 2025, but I think that that's dangerous. Councilmember Mitchell and I talked about it. He was on hold for 17 minutes. So, we have to do something immediately. So, do you have any suggestions or what can we do?

Mr. Jones said so, the plan, Councilmember Johnson, is I think there are like 23 vacancies, there are a couple of tranches of staff that are coming in, and I think by August 2025, Marie help me out, we'll be close to full staff.

Ms. Harris said yes, sir, according to police and their division, they feel like those will be filled by August 2025, and then they'll have some more in the hopper for attrition as well.

Ms. Johnson said but this has been an ongoing problem. So, if we're hiring, is this something we're doing differently this year, or do we always have vacancies, or do we need to look at the hiring practice or the structure or departments or something?

Mr. Jones said I think it's two pieces, Councilmember Johnson. One, when this came to our attention maybe three years ago, we did a lot of different things around compensation. So, not to say that we're perfect with it, but clearly it has helped, because by August 2025, we feel that we will be fully staffed, and I will continue to report back to his body about the progress we're making in terms of filling those positions.

Ms. Johnson said thank you, because the report we got, I think we met the goal 70 percent of the time. I asked for the KPIs (Key Performance Indicator), and it was, I think 70 percent, that we were meeting the goals. I imagine our goal or aspiration is to meet it more than 70 percent?

Ms. Harris said yes, ma'am, it's 90 percent, and we're trending in the right direction, but you're right, we're still in the 70s.

Ms. Johnson said okay. So, yes, if we could get an update monthly. I don't know if we can roll some of those calls to 311. I know 911 operators do have specialized training, and I think when there's an overflow, and if there's more than three minutes hold, then it rolls over 311?

Ms. Harris said no, ma'am. It would roll over to medic or the other.

Ms. Johnson said okay. So, I think three minutes is a long time, so if we could look at a shorter period of time for rollover. I mean, I don't want to get too far in weeds and the operations, but a public safety perspective, I don't think anyone should call 911 and be on hold. Thank you.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson said thank you, Ms. Johnson. I will say that they track that on national metrics as well, so how other metropolitan areas are doing.

Ms. Molina said so what I brought up was, it was with reference to an anonymous email that we received, and I think it was widely distributed with regards to the pay of our salaried employees and making sure that we were competitive with our salaried employees in the same way that we are with our hourly employees. It was really just to review, and this isn't like an ARPA funding request. I don't know if we can make that adjustment in this particular ask, and like Councilmember Johnson, I think I want to be clear in saying, as much as I would love to say we should all have our staff members making at least \$25 an hour. I think we would all say that, but again, there is a raise, there's \$24 an hour, and not say that that's good enough, but I know that \$25 was on the board, and we've definitely got to clarify that that didn't mean that we weren't saying that the \$24 was merited. It's just that the \$25 would mess up the budget, clarify that. Then, also like I said, to make sure that we are being just as competitive with our salaried employees to maintain the pipeline of leadership that we have and the talent that we have. I think that's important to make sure that we're competitive.

Mr. Jones said I know we don't want to drag it out, but I think it's important to look at our employees almost as three different units. One is public safety that never, ever stopped working during COVID. I mean, they had to come to the office every day, same with hourly. Hourly, whether it's Solid Waste Services or water, and then salary had so much more flexibility, hybrid work schedules. So, as an organization, we understood the differences, and there were some tradeoffs. So, while, the three percent is just an average, it's really zero to six. So, there are salaried employees that can make six percent. So, I just want to make sure when we talk about this, if we zeroed in on public safety you're going to have one story. If you zeroed in on hourly, so, but together, we think that we put together a package over the years for the salaried, that that flexibility is what they wanted almost as much as anything else.

Ms. Molina said no, that's really good, Mr. Manager. Thank you for clarifying that, because that wasn't articulated, so that's good to know. That's all I have, thank you.

Mayor Pro Tem Anderson said thank you. So, we've discussed line item 48 with Ms. Brown, 49 with Ms. Johnson, and we discussed 51 with Mayfield, 52 with Molina. Mr. Mitchell, we jumped over yours at 50. Did you want to make comments?

Mr. Mitchell said yes, Mayor Pro Tem, thank you. This coincides with the presentation we received today in Jobs and Economic Development Committee, when we talked about Corridors of Opportunities and focus on our small businesses. So, the Institute just landed a new office here, that Councilmember Mayfield and Mayor Pro Tem and I attended. So, I think this will be a great opportunity to reach out to them to partner and leverage state funding, because we're still hearing in our Corridors, small businesses need capital. So, I'd still like for us to talk about how can we leverage The Institute funding and capital for our small businesses, as well as inexpensive space, when it comes to some of our small businesses in the Corridors, because they are looking for space. So, City Manager, if you can bring something back on those two fronts?

Mr. Jones said I think that's great, Councilman Mitchell, and we can do it one of two ways. It can be a part of the referral with Do Greater, or we could try to bring back some information, but I think the more that we can get some of these asks into committee, so that we can get some guidance, I think we can be faster.

Mr. Mitchell said Mayor, can you refer it to my chair for August 2025? Let me do it the right way.

Mayor Lyles said of course.

Mr. Mitchell said thank you, Mayor. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Ms. Anderson said yes, okay. Thank you, Mr. Mitchell. Okay, so we will now go to line item 53, Ms. Ajmera. Did you have any comments or followups on the review of paid parental leave?

Ms. Ajmera said I did get a formal response. Marie and the team, great job putting together this very detailed package that addresses my question. Thank you.

Ms. Anderson said okay, great. Lastly, we have Ms. Johnson with the review of tourism funds. Did you have any additional comments there?

Ms. Johnson said yes, you all know how I feel, I'm going to consistent, and if I understood, Mr. Jones was willing to send something to be considered for tourism funds, we talked about tonight, what was that? Was it the Museum?

Mr. Jones said it's a different pot. It is the arts pot.

Ms. Johnson said okay, it's a small victory, but okay, thank you.

Motion was made by Councilmember Graham, seconded by Councilmember Mayfield, and carried unanimously to direct the City Manager to prepare the necessary documents and resolutions for the FY 2026 Budget Ordinance.

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ITEM NO. 4: CLOSED SESSION (AS NECESSARY)

No closed session occurred.

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ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Anderson, seconded by Councilmember X, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:16 p.m.



Ariel Smith, Lead Clerk

Length of Meeting: 3 Hours, 14 Minutes
Minutes completed: