

The City Council of the City of Charlotte, North Carolina convened for a Strategy Session on Monday, May 2, 2022, at 5:03 p.m. in Room 267 of the Charlotte Mecklenburg Government Center with Mayor Vi Lyles presiding. Councilmembers present were, Tariq Bokhari, Ed Driggs, Larken Egleston, Julie Eiselt, Malcolm Graham, Renee Johnson, Matt Newton, Gregg Phipps, Victoria Watlington, and Braxton Winston, II.

ABSENT UNTIL NOTED: Councilmember Dimple Ajmera

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Mayor Vi Lyles said welcome everyone after a beautiful weekend, with a little bit of rain yesterday, welcome to the Charlotte City Council's Budget Session. Today, this beautiful day of May the 2nd, this meeting is being held in accordance with all of the rules and regulations that we have for a public meeting and we hope those of you who are watching are watching us on our Government Channel, the City's Facebook Page, or the City's YouTube Page. We're going to begin a very important part of the governmental process today with our budget.

Councilmember Ajmera arrived at 5:06 p.m.

Mayor Lyles said all right, thank you, everyone. This day, I always like to think about it, as the May that begins the process for the city to develop an overall budget. This is an opportunity for the Manager, as well as his existing team, to put together what they believe is necessary for the city to operate efficiently, as well as effectively, given the priorities set by the Charlotte City Council

So, with this day, what we do allow, is the Manager to present the budget to the Council, and then we accept it. After we accept this recommendation, we begin to scrutinize it and look at it to see how it meshes with what we've talked about over the years, and what we're going to do. So, today, the Mmanager presents and then at the end of the session, the Council begins its work. So, it is my pleasure first to say thank you to the budget staff that has worked with us so closely to do this and to thank the many employees that participate in the process. We know it's not done alone. I'd also like to recognize Ed Driggs, who chairs our Budget and Effective Governance Committee, who has worked with you with all of the team continuously, Mr. Driggs.

Councilmember Driggs said thank you, Madam Mayor. We have conducted a number of meetings in the Budget Committee, as well as workshops on the Council to review the various topics and provide input to the Manager from the Council on our priorities. The members of the committee are myself as Chair, Dimple Ajmera as Vice Chair, Mr. Bokhari, Councilmember Eiselt, and Councilmember Phipps. So, we have talked about the Enterprise Funds, about CIP (Capital Investment Plan), about the General Fund, and today we're going to hear from the Manager, his result, his takeaway from those

meetings. Mr. Manager, I look forward to hearing what you have come up with, and with that, Madam Mayor, we're ready to proceed.

Mayor Lyles said all right, thank you very much. Again, I want to say that the Manager will present, and the Council will receive the information, but at the end, I believe the Manager will address how the community can engage and be involved and be a part of what this important decision is for us. So, with that, I'm turning it over to Mr. Jones.

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ITEM NO. 1: CITY MANAGER'S PROPOSED FY 2023 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Marcus Jones, City Manager said thank you Mayor and members of the Council. We have a title of this year's budget presentation and the budget merging stronger together. As I start to think about what we've gone through over the past few years, I would say that the work of our city employees is nothing short of amazing. The guidance that the Council has been able to give to team Charlotte, in terms of what your priorities are, really helped us weather the storm through some very difficult times as a city, as a nation, and throughout the world.

So, with that said, I'll start off with where we are in the budget and it's a \$3.24 billion budget that I am presenting to you tonight. So, I know you've been thinking about a \$2.7 billion budget. So, let's just dive into that big number. For the most part, when we think about the General Fund, the General Fund is only growing by 4.5 percent. We'll talk about that as I go through the presentation. What you will see is General Bonds, growing at \$226 million, if you start to think about it that's your CIP. We then have a bond, and this current fiscal year we'll have one in FY 2023. As well as Enterprise Capital funds another \$146 million in terms of infrastructure projects. So, that is what's really driving, for the first time, the city to have a budget that's more than \$3 billion. So, a \$3.2 billion budget. So, building on this intentional plan, it's interesting as we start to look at the last two budget covers, and the one that we have now. Again, we've been intentional.

We have been trying to get COVID (Coronavirus Disease) behind us so that we can emerge stronger than we went in prior to COVID. The key is that we've never really stopped working. Again, you're going to hear a recurring theme from me tonight, and it's all about our great employees. During the recovery, you heard a lot of concepts about going back to work, we never stopped working. If you start to think about it 75 percent of our employees did not have a hybrid option, or anything option other than going into the office, or into the trucks, or the vehicles every day. So, as we start to think back to January 2020, we had all of these great ideas. I'll never forget as this Council was sworn in December 2019, you talked about not bright shiny objects, but what can we do throughout our entire community. I think we've really been able to strike a balance, even with COVID. Some of the big items that you've discussed, we've made progress on

those. Also, we have been able to engage in this community and do much more than big projects.

On the left side, you'll see operations in general, we never stopped. On the right side. I call this you know, one of those success stories. Back in 2019, we began a career training academy with individuals with barriers to employment. We created our own pipeline in the City of Charlotte, 50 individuals. It took us until 2021 to actually have the graduation ceremony even though they graduated six months into it. Thirty-six of those 50 individuals came in attendance, in this room to that graduation ceremony. They're still energized about being a part of team Charlotte. Now think what has worked for us, it's a mixture, if you will, of patience and urgency, and I'll show you in some instances where the patience has paid off and I'll show you in some instances where the urgency has also paid off.

Everything begins with your priorities, and it really guides us. So, we are very appreciative that these really don't fluctuate from year to year. During the fall strategy meeting, you reaffirmed these priorities. I'll just use one example if you look at the Corridors of Opportunity, they are basically a primary relationship with direct impact all the way across all of the committees and all of the priorities. If you take the intersection between the well-managed government and our core services we take these, the direction from the Council, and we attempt to, and we think we're successful, provide the best municipal services in the country. So, what happened over the course of the last year advancing those priorities through a well-managed government?

Some of the big items that occurred is that you create a pathway for arts and culture. You began the community discussion on HIRE Charlotte, we're going to match our residents with the jobs that are there today as well as the jobs of the future. You deployed Housing Trust Funds. You approved the Charlotte Future 2040 Plan. You began the assessment of the Transformational Mobility Network. You launched the SAFE (Safety and Accountability For Everyone) Charlotte initiatives which cities around the country are looking at what you've done in terms of SAFE Charlotte reimagining policing. Also, in the well-managed government aspect, we did not use any of our operating reserves. There have been no layoffs. We maintain a AAA bond rating through all of this. As I've mentioned earlier, we've continued to deliver exceptional Core Services. This team has also, over the three-year process, identified more than \$13 million of savings, \$5 million in FY 2023 alone. That's important because as we start to talk about how we redeploy funds, one of the things that you've said to me, is initially "Okay, how do you first make sure that you're getting the best outcome for the resources that you have prior to asking for additional resources?" I will tell you that being able to use the one-time federal funds, for one-time purposes has also helped us. We've done it all without a tax increase and spoiler alert, there's no tax increase in this budget. So, putting the federal funds into the community, that sense of urgency. You will recall the CARES funds and how almost 60 percent of those community investments went right out in the community during the pandemic. Also, about 41 percent of those funds have been used for city operations.

We were able to keep our employees safe, we were able to make sure that our buildings were safe so that as we were continuing to work through the pandemic we could do it with employees in mind. This first tranche of ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) funds, which we received last May, 85 percent of those investments have been planned to go out in the community. These are the investments that we have been talking about, for instance, Housing and Homelessness \$17 million, Workforce and Economic Development \$16 million, and Community Vitality \$27 million, and you have approved a good portion of the Community Vitality bucket over the course of the last couple of few months, 15 percent that has been for city operations.

So, what I'm proposing is for us to continue to use Phase II ARPA funds, which we'll get this month to the tune of about \$71 million. Somewhat in those same areas to help us with city operations and city employees. Also, for community investments. I'll go into these in a bit more detail.

What I do want to point out is that as we start to look at cities across the country, for the most part in these ARPA funds, the national average has been about 38 percent for operations. We are only recommending or suggesting 22 percent. So, again, opportunities to get more of these funds out into our community. During that same period of time, I would say we solidified our capital planning process. Remember, as we started this process a year and a half or so ago, we're coming to the end of the 2014 four bond cycles. We wanted to make sure that we had good planning for the next four bond cycles. Each bond cycle before then was accompanied by a tax increase, a property tax increase. So, if you go back to 2007 it tended to be four bond cycles, it used to be three, they were made possible with a 2.67 percent property tax rate increase. Same thing in 2014, they were made possible with a 3.17 percent property tax rate increase. What we're seeing as we move forward for the next four bond cycles, we're doing this without a property tax increase. So, how's this possible?

A lot of the success has been around our Advanced Planning Fund. In other words, being able to get to 30 percent design before we put something in the budget has really helped us. We solved lingering issues like the Cross Charlotte Trail. I'm hoping this is the last budget presentation that I'll mention the Cross Charlotte Trail, but it's important because you have to have a level of trust in the community that your estimates are going to be correct. As you start to ask individuals to vote on certain bond issues. We also established the Steady State Affordability again, this bond package with four bonds is to do this without a property tax increase. Let's talk a little bit about the proposed 2022 Capital Improvement Plan.

When we started this in the budget workshops, as Mr. Driggs mentioned earlier, we basically had \$198 million planned for bonds and \$50 million plan for COPs so these Certificates Of Participation and with COPs for the most part is they have buildings and fleet and things of that nature. We had \$50 million set aside for housing \$29 almost \$30 million set aside for neighborhoods, and \$118 million set aside for transportation. As we have gone through this process and refined our numbers, we believe we have an

additional \$37 million for capacity. I will talk about how I'm proposing that we spread that additional \$37 million for capacity, which would move your steady state up to \$285 million.

Again, if we start to look at these next four bond cycles, we would start off with turning \$85 million in each one of the bond cycles. Tonight, I'm only making recommendations of how to allocate that additional \$37 million in the FY 2023 bond but leave the capacity in the out years. Mainly because I think what's worked well is this last year. Where we've been able to present a bond to you, we've had a chance to talk about it, and then it's the next year where you actually having a vote on whether or not to approve that bond. So, I would just say in terms of the Budget and Governance Committee, there'll be a lot of activity for FY 2025, FY 2027, and FY 2029. Because we're not making recommendations in terms of using any of their capacity.

Affordable housing \$50 million, is what's in the current plan, and I am recommending that we stay at \$50 million. One of the things that's important is that we look at the momentum that has occurred over the last two bond cycles when we jumped up from \$15 million to \$50 million. So, while there's been a lot of discussion about the last 20 years, I think it's important to note that nearly 50 percent of the units created and preserved were funded through the last two bond cycles. So, having said that with a proposed \$50 million bond for 2022, you would have three consecutive bond cycles at \$50 million. I believe that's where we're starting to see some of the success. Affordable housing, there's also, a holistic approach. So, while we have the \$50 million that's in the bond, there's a lot of work that's happening with the Great Neighborhoods Committee, the NEST (Nuisance Enforcement Strategy) Commission, and the Equitable Development Commission. It's important for us, as we move forward, to make sure that we are reevaluating how we use Trust Fund dollars. Also, how we go about addressing issues such as anti-displacement.

So, we've engaged the community and the council, and we have a pilot in three neighborhoods, Hidden Valley, Washington Heights, and Winterfield. That pilot of about \$4.5 million, we're focusing on the tools in that toolbox and refining those. So, what we're doing is exploring new ways with homeownership assistance, comprehensive rehab, acquisition rehab, and resale, and maybe most importantly working with the United Way as we work on resident support services. So, a lot of work for the Great Neighborhoods Committee.

As we prepare for what the council has been discussing, which I'll call the Fall Summit, we start to review what's going on with our Trust Fund policies, as well as many of these commissions and committees. I'm proposing that we take the residual of the \$8.5 million that we had in FY 2021 and FY 2022 for the Corridors Housing Program, the \$17 million that we have in tranche one of ARPA, and I'm proposing that we use 30 million in tranche two of the ARPA allocation for \$55.5 million of support for staying in place and strategic partner initiatives. That's over and above the \$50 million that's in the bond but it's giving us resources because if we're going to have community-wide discussions

about anti-displacement, staying in place, I know we need resources to have those discussions. So, that's part of what's next.

In terms of neighborhoods, we had \$29.8 million in terms of the bonds. I'm proposing that we remain at that level. One of the things that's important is that a big part of that \$29.8 million is an investment in Corridors, about \$10 million of it. If we go back in time in FY 2021, there was about \$24.5 million set aside for our six Corridors, even though we were only in the initial stage of the Beatties Ford Road corridor than West Boulevard. As you move to FY 2022 we jumped into I-85 and Sugar Creek, as well as Central Avenue and Albemarle, with \$14 million. Going into FY 2023 we have just the CIP allocation. So, as you start to think about this, I would think some of the individuals in future corridors are saying, "Well, the funds are drying up, let's make sure that there are opportunities for us too."

I think that's where it's important that we leveraged the public investments with private and philanthropic investments too. In our Corridors for Opportunity, I talked a bit about what's in the CIP, but when we discuss things like SAFE Charlotte grants, and what we're doing in terms of Wi-Fi in some of these communities, you can get north of \$60 million in the public investment. There are so many partners in our community, Wells Fargo, is investing in the Corridors to the tune of \$20 million. Fifth Third Bank, working with LISC (Local Initiatives Support Corporation) is investing in the corridors to the tune of \$20 million. The United Way is investing in our Corridors, and the YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association) of Greater Charlotte is also investing in the corridors, and the big fundraising efforts from the Mayor's Racial equity initiative. When you combine that that's almost \$100 million, that can also, be deployed in our corridors as you're seeing less funds coming from the public sector.

Transportation and infrastructure is where I am recommending that the additional capacity goes. So, not in the housing and not in neighborhoods, but in transportation. So, this is what the council has built up to this point. I think there's a great success in the planned CIP, the bonds, when you start to think about sidewalks, which are planned right now is \$50 million, that's more than three times what was in the 2020 bond \$10 million for congestion mitigation. If you will recall, we've had in previous allocations almost \$15 million for places like Steel Creek and what's happening in South Charlotte, in the University City area. We've doubled the money for Vision Zero, and we've doubled the bike infrastructure money from \$4 million to \$8 million. So, know there's a strong foundation in our transportation system, but there's more that we can do.

There's also, two intersections and four roads planned between now and the 2028 bond, and that's almost unheard of to have that level of intersections and roads in a CIP. So, we're very proud of the work that's been done there, as well as how the advance planning committees allowed us to do it. So, with the additional capacity of that \$37 million, I'm recommending that \$9 million goes to the COPS (Certificates of Participation), and that's going to further our fire station building program, as well as

develop the city's first all-electric fire station. I'll talk a little bit about that more, as well as our first electric fire truck.

We're also going to make more investments in our Strategic Energy Action Plan, and that's just the 9 million of the 37 going into COPS. In terms of bonds, it was very clear to us during the budget workshop that issues like lighting, issues like Vision Zero, and what we could do in terms of traffic incidents were very important. So, my recommendation is, outside of taking \$1.3 million for additional allocation to the Rea Road project, to have \$13.6 million that will be added to the already \$8 million planned for street resurfacing. As you will recall that cut to the Powell Bill, it's so important to get that restored but right now we can't continue to lose ground in street resurfacing.

Then also, another \$13.1 million that would be added to the \$4 million that we already have for Vision Zero, and then another \$4.5 million for Vision Zero but we want to call it out for street lighting. That's something we've heard over and over again, from the space there would be a total of \$17 million for Vision Zero. Some of these investments include pedestrian crossings, as well as having an enhanced focus on safety around our schools.

Another priority coming out of the Annual Strategy Session was jobs. How do we connect job seekers to today's jobs, and the jobs of the future? There's a strategic framework that's been going through the Economic Development Committee and the Council has been getting periodic briefings from that. We think there's a great opportunity for Charlotte to play a large role in the bigger ecosystem. With that said, there's an initial launch. The initial launch will be a portal to connect our residents to the jobs that are available, and the jobs of the future. However, we're also building on our current programs and launching new programs. Some of our successful programs have been AMP UP, which supports small and minority business capacity, and what we call NXT CLT, which is more or less firms that graduate from AMP UP more mid-level minority firms, and other firms.

Also, what's new, and we're very excited about this opportunity is with the Charlotte business inclusion program to set aside the initial \$800,000 to address some of the issues we've heard from minority businesses, and that is access to capital and CBI (Charlotte Business INclusion) bonding programs. We're very excited about being able to get into that space. Which brings me to the next section of the ARPA funding tranche two, I'm recommending \$16 million of that allocation to go towards jobs, workforce development, and MWBEs (Minority, Women, Small Business Enterprise), we think that's the right way to use these funds. The additional priority has been the comprehensive plan.

So, as I mentioned earlier, the comprehensive plan was approved, you recently approved the Policy Map, and we're moving on to the UDO (Unified Development Ordinance), but all of those really are around building a sustainable future. If there's something to really get excited about is the work that's been happening in terms of

sustainability. There's almost \$16 million in SEAP (Strategic Energy Action Plan) investments over the last three years and there's around \$7 million in the FY 2023 proposed budget. I talked about the electric fire station and electric fire truck, but we're also having the first electric pursuit vehicle in police, the first Ford F-150 lighting electric trucks, and we're adding 55 electric vehicles. Those 55 electric vehicles will increase our fleet by 45 percent. So, it's interesting, because three years ago I don't think we would have been discussing things like fire trucks, electric fire trucks, and electric police pursuit vehicles. We've all come along and come to better understand how this has such a positive impact on our community.

In equity, we are adding \$100,000 to the budget for American Sign Language and Spanish translation at Council meetings. Another \$4.25 million for the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) implementation plan. We continue to work with the Environment, Engagement, and Equity Committee because there's so much more work to do in that space. SAFE Charlotte, again, is one of the I think jewels that have come out of these last two budget processes. You've seen a lot of good work and Julia has been able to present that to the Council.

One of the things that we're excited about is we're launching the Civilian Assistance, Respond, Engage, Support or CARES team and it's much like CAHOOTS in Portland, and STAR in Denver. It's low-risk, mental health, substance abuse, and homelessness call for service that we're going to have a different way of addressing those calls. Different uniforms, different brands and so we're very excited about being able to do that. We're very thankful for receiving an additional \$330,000 from the state to do that. We'll continue with our SAFE Charlotte grant program. It has been successful.

We're also adding two new alternatives to violence sites and that's based on a million dollars that we're getting from the federal government. So, again, our city dollars are leveraging other funds and it is very helpful for us to continue to advance the priorities of the Council. So, now setting the stage to emerge a stronger and more resilient organization. I hope you enjoy those smiles on the faces behind me, okay? So, it represents a lot of what we've been going through, but it's also, this joy of working together. So, let's see what we're able to do for our employees.

I mentioned earlier about the budget, and I just want to lock in on the General Fund. It is structurally balanced, and it's a 4.5 percent growth. When we do a budget we don't just structurally balance for the current year. We also, do it for FY 2024 also. We don't add-in, which is a policy decision, anything that deals with compensation. So, I want to make sure that you know that everything that we're doing now is not hurting us in the future.

Also, in terms of supporting our region, it's important to talk about what fee increases we have. So, no property tax increase. In aviation, there's not applicable in terms of fee increases. CATS (Charlotte Area Transit System) there's no rate increase there. I do want to focus on water, stormwater, and solid waste. If you begin to add those three-monthly average charges, it turns out to be about \$3.75 a month, or \$45 a year. So,

again, water 3.5 percent rate increase, stormwater 3.8, and for solid waste it's 92 cents a month. So, it was a structurally balanced budget, with no tax increase and minimum fee increases consistent with previous budgets.

So, now I'd like to spend a time a little bit of time talking about what we're able to do with employees once we have made sure that our financial house is in order. We want to use the second tranche of the ARPA to invest in our employees also. So, I talked about affordable housing at \$30 million, and jobs workforce development in MWSBE at \$16 million. We'd like to carve out \$20.8 million for our employees. More than half of that about \$10.8 million would be associated with a retention bonus, and the other \$10 million would help us in terms of some of the hits that we've taken to the Health Care Fund. As well as continuing to improve our technology for many of our workers that have hybrid schedule opportunities. We worked well with our public safety employees during the past three years, and we have made some significant improvements. We talked with you about this during one of the budget workshops and compared to peer cities we feel that we've made improvements, but we also know there's still work to do. So, as we continue to support our first responders in FY 2023 one of the things that I realized is that in order to continue to recruit and retain, we have to make some changes in terms of salary structure.

So, first, we're boosting the starting pay for officers, police officers, and firefighters, and it's a two-step process. So, I'll just race to January. So, by January of 2023, next January, there'll be a 10.5 percent starting salary increase for both police and fire. We also are going to have a 3 percent market adjustment for police and fire that is split between July and January. Normally, you'd have a market adjustment of 1.5 percent but given where we are, we thought that doubling that would be good. The step increases will continue at between 2.5 percent and 5 percent when the individuals are eligible. Now I talked about using some of those ARPA funds, so I'll start here with this retention bonus. So, what I'm recommending is that we have a 2 percent retention bonus for all of our employees. Both the hourly employees, and the salaried employees, minus deputies and above, and also, for public safety. So, the way this would work is that on your salary you would get 1 percent in July, and you would get another 1 percent in September. So, we believe that would work well in terms of rewarding individuals staying with us, but also, using those one-time funds as a retention.

We're also going to take the next steps with public safety. As I've mentioned earlier while we had a three-year plan, we're not three years and done. We're already talking about concepts of reaching top pay or expanding top pay. I feel comfortable that we have this dialogue that allows us to have some tough discussions, but also, to get to places that can help us in terms of public safety.

Hourly employees, this is the focus that we have, a lot of what we've talked about, and you may recall one of the budget workshops where we saw the turnover in hourly employees being much more than our salaried employees, and even public safety so that's our focus. So, the first thing I want to start off with is to let you know that I'm

recommending that beginning in January that we move to \$20 an hour for all of our employees and that would be all of our 40-hour-a-week full-time employees. We've been on that path for a while. If you start to go back to FY 2018, we've almost increased the starting pay by 50 percent over that period of time. We believe this is the right thing to do for our employees. So, \$20 an hour beginning in January.

I learned a great deal sitting with their employees and understanding how we pay them. I admit, it was quite an odd experience when you start to think about, you know, sometimes you would get a merit adjustment, let's say of 1.5 percent in December, and or an adjustment of 1.5 in December, then maybe even wait all the way until June for the other 1.5 percent. So, we said, "Well, let's see how we can change that." We're changing that in FY 2023, and I believe we can change that going into the future also. So, we're going to provide more than twice the standard pay increase for our hourly employees. So, instead of having a 1.5 percent market increase in December and a 1.5 merit increase during your merit date, it's just going to be a 4 percent increase in July, and then another 4 percent increase in January. Which would equal an 8 percent increase. If you go back and also applied to that what we talked about in terms of the retention bonus from the ARPA funds, then 8 percent that's built into your pay, and then another 2 percent that's a bonus.

I want to add to that, that we're not increasing healthcare premium costs, even though we've had tremendous hits to the fund. So, again, we're not going to put something in one pocket, take a piece of it out of the other pocket. So, this is a 10 percent minimum total compensation for general employees. We continued to talk to employees and realize that that's just not it, you know, what more could we do? So, we realized that there are some things that can help the quality of life for our employees.

The concept of shift differential for second and third shift, and that would be for our general employees, and police of 2.5 percent. We would start that in January, I'd love to start it earlier to be candid with you, just to get the system up and to make sure that we do it the right way. We just need a little bit of time to get that done. It became clear to us that we were training people and we were losing them.

Certain things are so important in this environment, such as having a commercial driver's license, or CDL (Comercial Driver's License). So, what we're doing for those jobs that require a CDL we are going to provide a 2.5 percent increase to those employees that require that and that will happen in July. So, while I won't do the math in front of you. If you start to think about it based on the employee, and based on whether certain shifts they work, or whether they have like a CDL, the compensation is much more than 8 percent or much more than 10 percent. We're going to take this long-term view with our hourly employees. I just want to thank them. We've had a lot of discussions and it's been very helpful to understand what makes for a better experience working for the City of Charlotte. So, we'll continue to work with them to see what we can do also, in FY 2024. We are also going to reward our salaried employees.

Typically, it's a 3 percent merit pool for the general employees. We're going to bump it up to 4 percent and there is no health care premium increase for any of our employees. They will get the 2 percent bonus of both in July and in September with a minimum being \$1,000 and we will continue to have our flexible work schedule. I think that's important. As you may have noticed that the garage isn't always as full as it has been but that also helps us in terms of parking, it helps us in terms of some of the things that happened in the organization.

So, whether it's the hourly workers or the public safety pay plan, folks or even the Queen's Team members, people really wanted not just compensation, but they want career mobility and career growth. That's what we're going to focus on in this FY 2023 budget. There's an opportunity for a free associate degree for our employees that do not have that through CPCC (Central Piedmont Community College). We're going to enhance our connections with CPCC for upskilling and reskilling employees, and maybe most importantly we're going to launch our own internal portal for our employees. So, we can have, let's call it concierge service, where if they want opportunities within this organization we can see what gaps are there and how can reskill them, or upskill them, or grow them to be able to thrive within our organization.

We also heard not only from the Council but from employees that it's difficult to find a place to live in Charlotte. So, we are setting aside \$2 million for our employees, as it relates to downpayment assistance and opportunities to live in Mecklenburg County. This down payment assistance also can include closing costs, interest rate buy downs, as well as home education. So, we are excited about an opportunity to help our employees that way. So, again, it's people, its priorities, and it's our future. I hear this often, and I believe in it, you know, in this community for our employees we want to make sure they have a good paying job, we want to make sure they have a great place to live and a way to get there. That's part of what we believe this budget will help us do.

We still have work to do. There are a lot of things that are happening in our CIP. There's more that we'd like to do. It's great to say that we didn't have a property tax increase, but we know that the needs exceed the resources that we have. So, at some point, the question becomes is there a dedicated revenue source, whatever that may be, for not just transportation and innovation around that, but transit also?

So, I would just say to the Council, I'm very proud to be your manager. This was a big night in Charlotte as we set a world record for an MLS game. As I start to look at this wonderful workforce that we have and the diversity that we have and how we work together, it's moments like that, that make it really feel great to be the City Manager and to be a part of this team. I want to thank everybody who played a role in this. We'll do this again, hopefully, when you adopt the budget, especially the finance team, the budget team, the manager's office, and all the directors who have really worked hard to get us to where we are today.

So, the next step, there's a Budget Public Hearing on Monday. Budget adjustments are on the 11th, straw votes on the 25th, and the budget adoption is on May 31. What's important is that if there are any comments on the proposed budget, there is this link, here's the strategyandbudget@charlottenc.gov is where any questions can come up, or comments. We'd like to make sure we can get those to you during the public hearing, or right before the public hearing on Monday. This is where I get to say to this Mayor and Council, this is no longer our budget, we are turning it over to you. We will provide you with any information or assistance that you need as relates to that but thank you and it's your budget.

Mayor Lyles said thank you, Mr. Jones, and to the entire team from the Council member committee to the budget office, to all of the people that make this possible. This council is very grateful for the level of expertise and the level of commitment to being an efficient government as well as an effective government. So, we appreciate this. It is the first opportunity for people to begin to read and review. The first public hearing, as the manager said is on Monday, May the 9th, so we really do want to have the opportunity for people to read and you can comment on the budget. Actually, it's released now. Is that correct? It's available for your review right now online. If you're in our community, any resident interested, if you'd like to have some participation or presentation around it please contact the strategyandbudget@charlottenc.gov so that we can work with you to understand the recommendations that the Manager has made. I'd also like to comment on budget adjustments for the public. That is the opportunity for the Charlotte City Council individually and collectively to suggest things that they would like to see done differently in the Manager's budget. We keep that list, the staff does the research, and then on May 25, we have straw votes about any change that we would make to the existing recommendation. That leads us to May 31st for the budget adoption. So, with that, we now have a budget, I am assuming that the staff is going to distribute a copy of that, or do we need to go online as well?

Marie Harris, Strategy and Budget said Mayor I'm sorry, right quick before I made a typo. It should be strategyandbudget@charlottenc.gov and we'll change it on the online part.

Mayor Lyles said thank you for doing that, and for reminding us of that. So, media, you got it? So, you know, to put the dot? Thank you very much. You know, there are always some people to correct us and then we rely on them. They sit over here most of the time. So, with that we are ready to get the information, and begin the process, and with this do I have a motion to adjourn?

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ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Councilmember Driggs, seconded by Councilmember Eiselt, and carried unanimously to adjourn the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 p.m.


Billie Tynes, Deputy City Clerk

Length of Meeting: 47 Minutes
Minutes Completed: June 22, 2023