

**MINUTES OF THE CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL
FINANCE COMMITTEE
TUESDAY, MAY 12, 2026**

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Councillor Nolan, Co-Chair
Councillor Al-Zubi, Co-Chair
Vice Mayor Azeem
Councillor Flaherty
Councillor McGovern
Councillor Simmons
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler
Councillor Zusy
Mayor Siddiqui

A public meeting of the Cambridge City Council’s Finance Committee was held on Tuesday, May 12, 2026. The meeting was Called to Order at 9:00 a.m. by the Co-Chair, Councillor Nolan. Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2025 adopted by Massachusetts General Assembly and approved by the Governor, this public meeting was hybrid, allowing participation in person, in the Sullivan Chamber, 2nd Floor, City Hall, 795 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA and by remote participation via Zoom.

At the request of the Co-Chair, Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Vice Mayor Azeem – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Flaherty – Absent*
Councillor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Simmons – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Mayor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 8, Absent – 1. Quorum established.

*Councillor Flaherty was present in the Sullivan Chamber at 9:52a.m.

The Co-Chair, Councillor Nolan offered opening remarks and noted that the call of the meeting was to discuss the City budget covering the fiscal period July 1, 2026 to June 30, 2027. Present at the meeting was City Manager Yi-An Huang, Deputy City Manager, Kathy Watkins, Assistant City Manager for Finance, Claire Spinner, Budget Director, Taha Jennings, and Principal Budget Analyst, Daniel Liss, and Participatory Budget and Engagement Coordinator, Melissa Liu. Also present was City Auditor, Joe McCann.

Co-Chair Nolan provided a brief overview of what was expected of the meeting and noted that there were FY27 Budget Finance Committee meetings that were held in advance of the Budget Hearings. Co-Chair Nolan reviewed the list of Departments that have been pulled by Councillors for questions (**Attachment A**) regarding the budget. The Departments that were pulled were

Cambridge Health Alliance, Capital Building Projects, Historical Commission, Inspectional Services, Public Works, Transportation, Veteran Services, Water, Office of Sustainability, Community Safety, Fire Department, Police Department, Emergency Communications, Community Events and Celebrations, Library, Debt Service, MWRA, Revenue Section, and Public Investment Section.

Co-Chair Nolan opened Public Comment.

Young Kim, 17 Norris Street, Cambridge, MA, offered comments and concerns related to the proposed FY27 Budget.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Mayor Siddiqui who made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 Budgets for the License Commission, Animal Commission, Cherry Street, Reserve, Financial Summaries Section, and Appendices to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons -Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

CAMBRIDGE HEALTH ALLIANCE

Co-Chair Nolan recognized President and CEO of the Cambridge Health Alliance (CHA), Dr. Assaad Sayah, Executive Vice Present and Chief Operating Officer, Renee Kessler, and Interim Chief Public Health Officer, Tracy Rose-Tynes. Dr. Sayah offered opening remarks and provided a handout for the Committee (**Attachment B**). Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy who asked for clarification on the \$12.9 million budget and whether it was for CHA or the Public Health Department. Dr. Sayah explained that the budget is for the Public Health Department, with the City providing most of the funding and CHA contributing the remainder. Dr. Sayah and Tracy Rose-Tynes highlighted the programs that are possible due to the budget, such as, school health nurses, mental health supports, infectious disease surveillance, wastewater surveillance, TB clinic work, home visits, and the Agenda for Children literacy work. Co-Chair Nolan asked about the annual Public Health Needs Assessment, key community health priorities, performance measures, and how budget dollars are tied to outcomes. Tracy Rose-Tynes shared that the Community Health Improvement Plan is being developed and that focus areas will include literacy, mental health, and maternal health. Mayor Siddiqui asked about the reopening of the Birth Center, and Dr. Sayah shared that the Birth Center is expected to reopen in July, with an open house scheduled for June 17th.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Mayor Siddiqui who made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for the Cambridge Health Alliance to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons -Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

CAPITAL BUILDING PROJECTS

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Brendan Roy, Director of Capital Building Projects, Nick Soutt, Director of Design, Monique Oliveira, Director of Construction, Anthony Avola, Director of System Performance and Maintenance, and Aoife Viglianti, Supervising Architect. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy who asked about high project costs compared with neighboring communities, the First Street Garage, and the Lafayette Fire Station. Deputy City Manager Watkins noted that the broader cost discussion would be taken up during the capital investment section. Brendan Roy explained that the project is estimated to be around \$10 million and that the City is in the process of selecting a construction manager. Nick Stout added that the construction work is expected to take about a year and a half and will be done in phases to keep the garage operating. Brendan Roy shared that close to \$18 million has been set aside based on prior firehouse projects and current construction costs. Councillor Al-Zubi asked how projects are prioritized. Brendan Roy explained that the Department considers master plans, urgent building needs, and City Manager priorities. Co-Chair Nolan asked about commissioning and recommissioning city buildings to reduce energy use. Brendan Roy explained that the Department is building a more consistent process for commissioning and recommissioning across the City's building range. Vice Mayor Azeem asked about EV charging infrastructure and Deputy City Manager Watkins explained that public users pay for their own charging, while municipal fleet charging is charged to the City account.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy who made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for Capital Building Projects to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons -Absent Councillor

Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent Councillor

Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

HISTORICAL COMMISSION

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Charles Sullivan, Director, and Samantha Elliott, Assistant Director. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Co-Chair Al-Zubi who asked how the African American Trail marker project would be funded. Director Sullivan explained that the project is fully funded through Community Preservation Act funds. Councillor Flaherty asked if the Commission needs additional resources due to increased landmark petitions and demolition-related work following recent zoning changes. Director Sullivan shared that the Department is currently able to manage its responsibilities, but added that some non-regulatory projects may be delayed. Councillor Zusy thanked the Commission for its work and acknowledged the difficult position it has been in with increased project reviews. Mayor Siddiqui had questions related to Indigenous historical markers and other markers throughout the City. Director Sullivan shared that an Indigenous marker is planned for Windsor Park and that the next phase of the African American Trail will include updates to the original markers and up to 20 new markers. Councillor Simmons asked about the African American Heritage Trail and whether there will be a walking tour guide. Director Sullivan responded and shared that the Commission hopes to create a print publication or guide.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy who made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for the Historical Commission to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons -Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 9, No – 0, Absent – 0. Motion passed.

INSPECTIONAL SERVICES

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Peter McLaughlin, Commissioner, Jacob Lazzara, Assistant Commissioner, and James DeAngelo, Compliance Inspector and thanked them for their work on building safety, environmental health, and quality-of-life concerns such as rodent issues. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Co-Chair Al-Zubi, Councillor Zusy, and Vice Mayor Azeem for comments and questions related to building permit inspections, staffing, neighborhood meetings, and the permitting process. Commissioner McLaughlin explained how inspection work has become more complex, which affects the number of inspections that can be completed. In

response to Councillor Zusy's questions related to staffing, Commissioner McLaughlin responded that Department does have enough staffing to monitor demolition projects, asbestos

concerns, and neighborhood safety issues as they relate to the increase of construction projects. In addition, Commissioner McLaughlin shared that there are ongoing efforts to improve efficiency between Departments and the permitting process. Co-Chair Nolan asked how the budget reflects changes that have been made in local and state codes, such as the Fossil Fuel Free Ordinance, and if staff, contractors, architects, and homeowners are receiving training related to those changes. Co-Chair Nolan also highlighted the importance of permitting efficiency, women in trade positions, and enforcement. Commissioner McLaughlin explained how training to be compliant with local and state codes, as well as communication to residents, is ongoing.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy who made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for the Inspectional Services Department to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons -Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 9, No – 0, Absent – 0. Motion passed.

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS

Co-Chair Nolan recognized John Nardone, Commissioner, Jennifer Mathews, Deputy Commissioner, Jim Wilcox, Assistant Commissioner of Engineering, and Ellen Katz, Director of Fiscal Affairs and Energy Resources. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy, Co-Chair Al-Zubi, and Councillor McGovern for comments and questions related to trees, accessible restrooms, and the River Street construction project. Commissioner Nardone explained that the forestry budget includes both capital and operating costs and noted that planting locations are becoming more limited. Commissioner Nardone shared how DPW continues to work with Green Cambridge and DCR to identify additional planting opportunities. Commissioner Nardone shared information on how DPW tracks information on the number of trees being planted and noted that the City will be updating the Urban Forestry Master Plan, which may shift how to reflect the overall tracking towards tree canopy goals. Jim Wilcox provided an update on having an accessible bathroom at DePasquale Park and shared that the project is close to going out to bid. He noted that the restroom will be located near the park in the parking lot. Commissioner Nardone shared that the River Street project has taken longer than expected due to unforeseen delays, but the Carl Barron Plaza is expected to have a soft opening in the summer, with final paving of the project to be done in the fall. Co-Chair Nolan asked if the no-tow street sweeping policy has freed up staff or resources. Commissioner Nardone explained that it has not created major savings because staff now must do more hand cleanup around parked cars. Co-Chair Nolan also asked about sustainable asphalt options. Commissioner Nardone and Jim Wilcox responded by explaining that the City reviews paving standards and uses different asphalt mixes depending on street conditions and traffic needs.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor McGovern who made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for the Department of Public Works to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Coucillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons - Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Transportation Commissioner, Brooke McKenna, Assistant Commissioner for Street Management, Jeff Parenti, Assistant Commissioner for Transportation, Stephanie Groll, and Assistant Commissioner for Parking Management, Stephanie McAuliffe. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy who thanked the Department for its work and asked about funding for the Grand Junction Path, intersection improvements, traffic calming near Garden Street, the New Street connector, ordinary maintenance, bike lane repainting, the Cambridge Access and Mobility Plan, and flexible parking corridors. Commissioner McKenna shared that the \$10.2 million for the Grand Junction Path comes from transportation mitigation funds and will be used for that project and that the Department is having ongoing discussions with Eversource, the MBTA, MIT, and other partners related to the project. Jeff Parenti provided an overview of the Department's plans to address dangerous intersections as well as traffic calming work near Garden Street. Councillor Flaherty asked for more information related to the Department's revenue. Staff responded by sharing that the Department budgets around \$23.9 million in total revenue and what the revenue supports within the Department. Co-Chair Al-Zubi had clarifying questions related to the organizational change between CDD and Transportation. Commissioner McKenna explained that the budget reflects the transfer of transportation planning staff and not new positions. Co-Chair Nolan asked about SMART goals Harvard Square pedestrianization, and the possibility of a citywide shuttle program. Commissioner McKenna provided an update on the Zero Emission Transportation Plan, Bow Street and Brattle Street planning, and that funding is available to conduct a shuttle study. Vice Mayor Azeem asked for more information related to Blue Bikes. Brooke McKenna emphasized that the City's goal is to have a Blue Bike station within a three-minute walk for community members to use and noted that there is continued expansion which is supported by grants and operating funds.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Mayor Siddiqui who made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for the Department of Transportation to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons - Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 9, No – 0, Absent – 0. Motion passed.

VETERANS SERVICES

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Veterans Services Director, Cynthia Shelton Harris for opening remarks and to respond to comments and questions from Committee members. Councillor Zusy asked for more information related to the Department’s travel and training and ordinary maintenance budgets. Director Harris and Taha Jennings explained that most of the money listed under travel and training is not actually for travel, it is used to give financial help to low-income veterans and their families, adding that the State pays the City back for 75% of those costs. Director Harris explained that the budget for ordinary maintenance is used for projects and events such as Veteran’s Day and Memorial Day. Councillor McGovern thanked Director Harris for her leadership, especially around veteran homelessness and mental health, and suggested that the budget book should explain the veteran’s assistance funding more clearly. Councillor Simmons thanked Director Harris for her service and recognized her role as the first woman to lead the Department. Councillor Simmons asked if the Department has enough funding for training and outreach to women veterans. Director Harris provided information on virtual and state training opportunities and shared that she believes the Department is supported if additional needs come forward throughout the year.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Simmons who made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for Veterans Services to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons - Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

WATER DEPARTMENT

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Mark Gallagher, Managing Director, Administration and Fiscal Operations Manager, Elisabeth Barr, and Interim Director of Administration, Ellen Katz. Mark Gallagher offered opening remarks and shared that the Water Department provides more than 4.5 billion gallons of water to the City each year. Co-Chair Nolan asked for more information related to the 11% budget increase, PFAS costs, and drought conditions. Mark Gallagher shared that the budget increase reflects the \$1.3 million annual replacement of granular activated carbon. Mark Gallagher noted that with the annual carbon replacement, it should allow the City to meet the State and future Federal PFAS standards. He stated that the Water Department is closely monitoring the reservoir levels. Councillor Zusy had questions related to the City's water infrastructure. Mark Gallagher explained that Cambridge has an old water system, including some water mains dating back to the 1800s, but the City has replaced many miles of pipe and uses a priority system to decide which water mains should be replaced first. Councillor Flaherty asked for more information related to the poison ivy at Fresh Pond. Director Gallagher noted that because Fresh Pond is a protected watershed area, the Department cannot use pesticides, herbicides, or livestock, so poison ivy must be removed by hand.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Flaherty who made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for the Water Department to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Absent

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons - Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

OFFICE OF SUSTAINABILITY

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Julie Wormser, Climate Chief, who offered opening remarks and Suzanne Rasmussen, Deputy Climate Chief. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Co-Chair Al-Zubi who asked how the Office is prioritizing new work while keeping the budget the same. Julie Wormser explained that the Office follows plans such as the Net Zero Action Plan, Resilient Cambridge, and the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, and adjust resources as projects are completed. Councillor Zusy asked about the City's virtual power purchase agreement for wind energy in North Dakota. Staff explained that Cambridge does not directly receive that electricity but receives renewable energy credits that help support new clean energy production. Co-Chair Nolan asked about residential electrification, waste reduction, climate communication, and support for low- and

moderate-income residents. Staff shared how the Office supports building decarbonization for residential programs, adding that the City is seeing an increase in participation with energy assessments. Julie Wormser and Susanne Rasmussen provided information on how they partner with DPW on sustainable purchasing and outreach and incentives for low- and middle-income households, as well as small businesses.

Co-Chair Nolan made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for the Office of Sustainability to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Yes

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons - Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 9, No – 0, Absent – 0. Motion passed.

The Finance Committee went into recess at 12:54p.m. and reconvened at 1:41p.m.

At the request of the Co-Chair, Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Vice Mayor Azeem – Absent*

Councillor Flaherty – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Absent*

Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Simmons – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Mayor Siddiqui – Present/In Sullivan Chamber

Present – 6, Absent – 3. Quorum established.

*Vice Mayor Azeem was present and remote at 2:00p.m.

*Councillor McGovern was present in the Sullivan Chamber at 1:47p.m.

COMMUNITY SAFETY

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Marie Mathieu, Community Safety Director, and Rebecca Fuentes, Deputy Chief Operating Officer. Marie Mathieu offered opening remarks and shared that the Department has responded to more than 1,100 crisis calls this fiscal year, along with more than 1,300 follow-up interactions, and that the CARE team will expand from Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. beginning June 1st. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler who asked about staffing, current hours, and the long-term goal of moving toward 24/7 service. Co-Chair Al-Zubi asked if the Department would be able to expand their hours and handle more calls successfully with only a small increase in their budget. Mayor Siddiqui asked for more information related to violence prevention grants and recommendations that came out of a recent report. Councillor McGovern asked for more information related to staffing, training, and staff

wellness. Councillor Zusy asked if more coverage is needed during the evening hours to make sure the Department is being fully used. Marie Mathieu explained that the Department currently has 14 FTEs, including five clinicians and four responders who respond to calls, and that the Department will use call data to plan future staffing requests, and added that the current staffing will be able to support the new Monday through Friday schedule. Marie Mathieu provided a brief update related to the new Assistant Director of Violence Prevention that will begin on June 1st, noting that their role will be to help coordinate prevention work and community partnerships. In response to Councillor McGovern, Marie Mathieu shared that the Department is close to being fully staffed and regular training is provided, as well as staff wellness activities to address the emotional and mental difficulties of the job. Marie Mathieu explained how the Department fully operates, sharing that the team's work is not only about the number of calls, but also about building relationships, doing follow-up, connecting people to treatment and services, and preventing future harm. Co-Chair Nolan asked about measuring the impact of violence prevention work, expanding call codes, joint responses with public safety partners, and grant reporting. Marie Mathieu provided detailed information on how the Department is working in collaboration with the Police Department, Public Health Department, and community partners to better track results and improve services.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor McGovern who made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for the Community Safety Department to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons - Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

FIRE DEPARTMENT

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Deputy Chief John Cotter, Deputy Chief Sean White, and Deputy Chief Scott Volz. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Zusy who asked what the most common causes of fires are and why fire trucks only respond to some medical calls. Deputy Chief White explained that many fires are cooking related and that fire trucks respond to certain medical calls because they carry trained staffed and medical equipment and help meet emergency response staffing needs. Councillor McGovern asked for an update related to the Cadet Program. Deputy Chief Volz shared that the Department is focusing on the local registry hiring policy because it can be faster and more cost-effective to hire Cambridge residents and build a more diverse working environment. Co-Chair Nolan asked for more information related to the new FTE's and training related to electrifications and electric systems. Deputy Chief Cotter provided an overview of the

two new positions, noting they were created to support administrative duties. Staff explained that most electrical incidents are handled by shutting off the power before entering, and that an all-electric house would not usually change the basic emergency response. He noted that battery energy

storage systems are different and can affect how firefighters respond, and staff are receiving training on those types of systems.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor McGovern who made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for the Fire Department to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons - Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Acting Police Commissioner, Pauline Wells, Superintendent Frederick Cabral, Director of Planning, Budget, and Personnel, Angela Alfred, and Director of Clinical Services, Dr. James Barrett. Co-Chair Nolan asked about employee payouts and whether the Community Safety Department's work is expected to reduce the Police Department budget. City staff explained that certain payouts are handled through transfers or other budget processes. Superintendent Cabral noted that the Community Safety Department has not had a major impact on police call volume, since police responded close to 100,000 calls in 2025, adding that the decrease in calls has been about 1% to 2%. Councillor Simmons thanked the Department for its outreach to seniors around scams and safety. Acting Commissioner Wells pointed out that that work could be expanded without budget impact. Councillor Simmons also asked about the Cambridge-Northeastern Police Academy. Acting Commissioner Wells shared that it costs more than using a regular state academy, but it allows the Department to train officers in the "Cambridge way." Co-Chair Al-Zubi asked about alternative hiring pathways, body-worn camera audits, and coordination with the Community Safety Department. Acting Commissioner Wells explained that the alternative pathway currently has about 30 candidates and can help support diversity in hiring. Acting Commissioner Wells noted that body-worn camera audits focus on policy, collective bargaining, and incident-related compliance. Police staff also explained that the Department works closely with the Community Safety Department, especially around seniors, people with mental health needs, unhoused residents, and follow-up services. Mayor Siddiqui asked about the one new FTE and overtime. Superintendent Cabral noted that the new position is a Chief of Staff role and that the Department has started a new overtime review process that is expected to reduce overtime. Councillor Zusy asked about extraordinary expenditures, ordinary maintenance, and bicycle thefts. Police Staff explained that extraordinary expenditures support fleet vehicles and motorcycles, while ordinary maintenance supports Department operations, such as utilities and vehicle maintenance. Acting Commissioner Wells shared that bicycle thefts were down 33% and down 36% compared to the five-year average. Co-Chair Nolan asked for stronger SMART goals in future budgets and encouraged continued coordination with the Community Safety Department. During discussion, Co-Chair Al-Zubi and Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler said they would vote present on

the favorable recommendation, due to concerns about the balance of public safety resources and the co-response model.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Simmons who made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for the Police Department to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Present

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons - Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 1, Present - 2. Motion passed.

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Christina Giacobbe, Director, and Rebecca Fuentes, Deputy Chief Operating Officer, to respond to comments and questions. Co-Chair Nolan recognized Co-Chair Al-Zubi who asked for information related to the lower number of referrals to the 911 Social Worker. Christina Giacobbe explained that the Department lost its former Social Worker and needed time to recover and bring on a new clinician, who started in January 2026. Christina Giacobbe provided a brief overview of the role of the clinician, adding that they work closely with Community Safety, Fire, and Police. Co-Chair Nolan had questions related to technology upgrades, teleserve reports, and the increase in budget. Christina Giacobbe shared that Public Safety IT supports Emergency Communications, Police, Fire, and Community Safety, and that upcoming upgrades will include system upgrades, radio site work, and the move back to Fire Headquarters. Christina Giacobbe explained the purpose of teleserve reports, and that the Department is hoping to expand the amount of teleserve reports for certain non-emergency police reports. Christina Giacobbe provided information related to the budget increase and provided information related to where the Department found savings within the budget.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Councillor Simmons who made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for the Emergency Communications Department to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons - Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 8, No – 0, Absent – 1. Motion passed.

COMMUNITY EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

Co-Chair Nolan recognized City Manager Huang, Deputy City Manager Watkins, Taha Jennings, and Matt Nelson. City staff explained that this is a newer budget section meant to bring together event-related costs that were previously spread across different departments. Co-Chair Nolan asked for more information about the \$850,000 listed under salaries and wages. Staff shared that this amount is for overtime costs, not new staff positions, adding that the overtime costs include support from departments such as public safety, public works, and transportation for events that often take place during the weekends.

Co-Chair Nolan made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for Community Events and Celebrations to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Absent

Councillor Flaherty – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes

Councillor Nolan – Yes

Councillor Simmons - Yes

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent

Councillor Zusy – Yes

Mayor Siddiqui – Yes

Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

LIBRARY

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Library Director, Maria McCauley, Deputy Director, Joy Kim, and Manager of Finance and Operations, Idalia Cuevas. Co-Chair Nolan asked about the budget increase, staffing count, and if the Library participated in the City's budget savings effort. Maria McCauley shared that there are no new positions and that the FTE count includes both full-time and part-time staff. Library staff noted that the budget increase is mostly related to salary and wage costs from contractual requirements, and that savings were found in facilities, consultants, and materials costs. Councillor Zusy celebrated the Library's work and the positive impact they have on the Cambridge community.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Co-Chair Al-Zubi who made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for the Library to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes

Councillor Flaherty – Absent

Councillor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons - Yes
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Yes
Yes – 7, No – 0, Absent – 2. Motion passed.

The Finance Committee went into recess at 3:33p.m. and reconvened at 3:44p.m.

At the request of the Co-Chair, Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Vice Mayor Azeem – Present/Remote
Councillor Flaherty – Absent
Councillor McGovern – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Nolan – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Simmons – Present/Remote
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Councillor Zusy – Present/In Sullivan Chamber
Mayor Siddiqui – Absent*

Present – 7, Absent – 2. Quorum established.

*Mayor Siddiqui was present in the Sullivan Chamber at 3:46p.m.

DEBT SERVICES

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Taha Jennings, Claire Spinner, City Manager Huang, and Deputy City Manager Watkins. Co-Chair Nolan reviewed the City's \$114 million debt service budget, noting that it represents a significant part of the operating budget and reflects major City investments, including school construction and other capital projects. Councillor Zusy asked why the City is using less from the Debt Stabilization Fund while debt costs are increasing. Taha Jennings explained that the fund is used to help manage increases in debt payments, but the City needs to manage the reserve carefully because it is not unlimited. City Manager Huang added that the City is trying to manage long-term debt by keeping debt service at a responsible share of the overall operating budget. Co-Chair Nolan asked about the City's sustainable level of debt and future risks, especially as project costs continue to rise. Deputy City Manager Watkins explained that the City is trying to keep tax-supported debt growth aligned with operating budget growth and below 5% over the long term.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Mayor Siddiqui who made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for Debt Services to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation. Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Flaherty – Absent
Councillor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons - Absent

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Yes
Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

MWRA

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Taha Jennings, Claire Spinner, City Manager Huang, and Deputy City Manager Watkins. Co-Chair Nolan reviewed the \$34.3 million MWRA proposed budget. City staff explained that the City pays MWRA for sewer services, and residents pay for those services through their water and sewer bills rather than paying MWRA directly. Co-Chair Nolan also asked about funding for combined sewer overflow (CSO) cleanup work. Staff noted that the City submitted a draft CSO control plan in April and that the final plan will include a cost-sharing agreement between the City and MWRA. Staff added that the City is already funding CSO-related projects.

Co-Chair Nolan made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for MWRA to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes
Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Flaherty – Absent
Councillor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons - Absent
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Absent
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Absent
Yes – 5, No – 0, Absent – 4. Motion passed.

REVENUE

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Taha Jennings, Claire Spinner, City Manager Huang, and Deputy City Manager Watkins. Co-Chair Nolan reviewed the Revenue section of the budget, which includes City income sources outside of property taxes, such as rental income from City property, interest earnings, parking-related fees, short-term rental community impact fees, cemetery fees, and other smaller revenue sources. Co-Chair Nolan asked about rental income from City properties and how those revenues and related costs are shown in the budget. Deputy City Manager Watkins shared that the City is continuing to review City-owned properties and rental arrangements, including how they are reflected in different budgets, and said more information is expected later in the year. Co-Chair Nolan also asked for more information about interest earnings. Taha Jennings explained that interest earnings can change from year to year and are not always predictable, so the City budgets them carefully.

Co-Chair Nolan made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for Revenue to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Flaherty – Absent
Councillor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons - Absent
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Absent
Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

PUBLIC INVESTMENT

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Taha Jennings, Claire Spinner, City Manager Huang, and Deputy City Manager Watkins. Jim Wilcox, Melissa Peters, Brendan Roy, and Nick Stout were also available to respond to questions and comments from Committee members. Co-Chair Nolan reviewed the Public Investment section of the budget, which includes major capital projects across areas such as buildings, parks, streets, water and sewer, equipment, and public ways. Deputy City Manager Watkins explained that the public investment section is organized differently this year to make the budget easier to understand, with projects grouped by type rather than only by department. Deputy City Manager Watkins added that the City has been closely reviewing the timing and scope of capital projects to better control debt service and overall project costs. Councillor McGovern asked for an update related to the Hoyt Field project. Staff explained that the City is still planning to make improvements to Hoyt Field, but the project is being adjusted to fit with available funding, adding that the City will use CPA funds and begin the design and community input process soon. Councillor Zusy asked about the Central Square project, sewer work, and why the project scope was reduced. Staff explained that the original Central Square project was estimated at more than \$50 million, but the City scaled it back to focus on sidewalks, bus stops, separated bike lanes, and utility work, adding that they also had to coordinate with delayed MBTA elevator work. Co-Chair Al-Zubi asked for more information related to the process for approving public investment projects and whether community engagement is included, especially for parks and recreation projects. Staff explained that bonded projects require separate loan authorization votes, while other capital projects are approved through the Public Investment budget, and that park projects such as Hoyt, Gold Star Mothers, and Danehy include community processes. Co-Chair Nolan asked about Gold Star Mothers Park, capital cost controls, utility coordination, complete streets projects, and the \$28 million Municipal Facilities Improvement Plan. Staff shared that Gold Star Mothers Park includes expensive soil and park reconstruction and that the project costs have been steadier in recent years. Additionally, the City is planning projects around available budgets rather than expanding budgets to match every desired scope item. Staff also explained that major street projects such as River Street, Harvard Square, Central Square, and Mass Ave require utility coordination, engineering, and careful phasing to stay on budget. Staff provided an overview of the Municipal Facilities Improvement Plan, noting it will go towards the Lafayette Square Firehouse and additional funding for smaller building projects.

Co-Chair Nolan made a motion to forward the proposed FY27 budget for Public Investment to the full City Council with a favorable recommendation.

Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Present

Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Flaherty – Absent
Councillor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons - Absent
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Absent

Yes – 5, No – 0, Absent – 3, Present – 1. Motion passed.

Co-Chair Nolan offered closing remarks and thanked the Finance team and Departments for their ongoing work to support the City.

Co-Chair Nolan recognized Co-Chair Al-Zubi who made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Interim City Clerk Crane called the roll.

Councillor Al-Zubi – Yes
Vice Mayor Azeem – Yes
Councillor Flaherty – Absent
Councillor McGovern – Yes
Councillor Nolan – Yes
Councillor Simmons - Absent
Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler – Yes
Councillor Zusy – Yes
Mayor Siddiqui – Absent

In City Council June 1, 2026.
Adopted by Affirmative
Vote of Eight Members:-
Attest:- Paula M. Crane, Interim City Clerk
A true copy;

ATTEST:-



Paula M. Crane
Interim City Clerk

Yes – 6, No – 0, Absent – 3. Motion passed.

The Finance Committee adjourned at approximately 4:55p.m.

Attachment A – Questions from Committee members.

Attachment B – Handout from the Cambridge Health Alliance.

Clerk’s Note: The City of Cambridge/22 City View records every City Council meeting and every City Council Committee meeting. The video for this meeting can be viewed at:

Attachment A

FY27 Budget Questions from City Councillors

May 5, 2026 Questions

Councillor Nolan

Community Development

- Can the use of AI advance the work of the department? It seems it could streamline some of the work and shorten timelines, which would then allow for a different allocation of resources.

Finance Admin

- (shared question for HR/Finance/IT) significant budget allocation over a long time for the new integrated system: how much comparison work has been done to ensure it is the most cost effective system? Understanding our complex city and union environment, it is important to use system that is customizable but not custom, since that causes budgetary constraints.

Assessing

- How has the availability of big data affected the work of the department – is the assessment process mostly automated now?

Auditing

- 1 new FTE (pg. 226) up from 8 FTE to 9 FTE. What is the new position?

Budget

- Community Budget Walkthrough events - smart goals associated with those events or planning for future events?
- City Council recently reduced their footprint at City Hall in order to allow other departments to use space for staff. My understanding is that the capital building team was able to move some staff into that space. How will that move reduce rental payments and improve space utilization?

Information Technology

- (shared question for HR/Finance/IT) significant budget allocation over a long time (is it \$25mill over 5 years)
- Pg. 19 - \$1.15 increase for software and licenses: rationale

Comms and Comm. Engagement

- What is the purpose of the new FTE in the Comms and Community Engagement? Or is this the result of counting part-time employees?
- Glad there is a FY27 Objective related to the overall structure of Boards and Commissions to create consistency within all multi-member advisory bodies. Is there any additional objective to streamlining or combining or phase out multimember bodies with related or outmoded functions? Has there been any reporting on multimember bodies that have struggled to meet quorum or have not posted meeting minutes? As part of this FY27 objective, all multi member bodies with some work relevant to council deliberations should send reports to the Council, on an annual basis. Consider the practice of an annual report so that we can better utilize the expertise and community input that we seek to receive from these bodies – especially the bodies developed by Council ordinance.
- How is the effectiveness of the various communications assessed? What are SMART goal related to mailings and distributed materials, to ensure cost is justified?
- How does this department, which consolidated and coordinated communications across departments, work with other community engagement efforts in other departments?

Election Commission

- What is reason for the significant increase in budget? The amount of increase is 20% for salaries and wages with the same FTEs. and 29% up for other ordinary maintenance.

Executive

- Although stabilizing in recent years, the executive department has grown significantly since FY22. How has the growth of the executive department and especially the strategy team led to stronger organizational capacity and savings across the entire budget?
- We have looked at some departments - police, fire, DPW - budgets compared to other Mass similarly sized cities. Have we done the same with all departments, to

look at staffing for all areas, to ensure best practice and efficient providing of city services?

- For the process of identifying savings: there were departments that could not - why and what is the plan for future savings ? And, were there any departments that identified more than 2.1% in savings within their budgets? Is there an ongoing effort to identify future savings across departments?
- Pg. 19 - The budget includes a \$1mill increased allocation to the executive department for community events support. why?
- Overall the city uses many consultants, which the strategy team should be reviewing.. Is there an internal objective and performance measure to reduce the amount of consultants, to consolidate, and to establish limits - e.g. \$150/hour max for consultants? For example, there should never be a need for consultants to run community engagement efforts, since the city is well resourced with staff.

Human Resources

- (shared question for HR/Finance/IT) significant budget allocation over a long time (is it \$25mill over 5 years)
- HR budget increased from FY26 adopted to FY27 budget by 9.3%, one of the largest increases by any department. What are the measures of success to justify this investment?
- What process did your department undertake to accomplish the Manager-directed savings goal and were you successful in finding department-level savings? What accounts for the large increase in budget request?
- Compensation study did it identify potential savings where out salaries are higher than other comparable public sector positions?

Employee Benefits

- FY27 request up 9.3%. is that all health care or other?
- What is the process and timeline for addressing our high health care costs?
- What is needed to ensure our pension liabilities get fully funded ?

Law

- Law department budget is up 6.3% FY26 adopted to FY27 request, higher than many department level changes. What process did your department undertake to accomplish the Manager-directed savings goal and were you successful in finding department-level savings? What accounts for the large increase in budget request?

- Law department FTE grew from 16 to 18 in FY27. New positions are for new assistant solicitor and a new paralegal. Are there any additional goals or operational capacity that will be filled with these new FTEs? Many law firms are using AI to be more efficient in operations and reducing the need for staff, what is the legal department doing related to cost effectiveness?
- Staff time allocations for law department vs. outside council for ongoing lawsuits – what has been the cost-saving strategy and will that change going forward as we find ourselves engaging in more and more federal lawsuits?

Equity and Inclusion

- The department budget was changed this year to reflect a new structure. There are no SMART goals for any of the divisions. Are those in place, and if not how is the work assessed?
- The allocation of funding for outside research for the Freedmen’s Commission is quite large – \$294K. The research could be done engaging members of our community - why not use the incredible resources of the city – the Historic Commission, Commission members, our university partners intellectual resources, nationally known experts who have already done this work – instead of expensive outside consultants?

Councillor Zusy

Arts Council

- What are the major findings from the 3-yr regional study: Making Space for Art?

Community Development

- Overall the budget is up \$6m from FY26. Why?
- Why are fewer businesses receiving grants? In FY25, 62; in FY26, 34; in FY27, 28. □

Housing

- What is the funding for the HIP program?
- What is the average cost of units for the Homebridge Program?
- What is the average cost of repairs between owners of Homebridge Program units?
- How can we better mentor and incentivize Homebridge homeowners about the need to maintain properties and incentivize them to do this?
- Other Ordinary Maintenance: \$31m: for what?
- We are creating 3 new positions, including a Resident Engagement Services Manager and Housing Development Planner. What will they do?

Human Services

- How many students participate in the Green Jobs Initiative and are they getting jobs?
- What did DHSP Dept. of Workforce Development fund with \$5m? How many residents are engaged in Workforce programs? And what sort of work are they training for? Are they getting jobs? Are we tracking that?
- Eager to hear more about CRLS's Youth Employment Center.
- Shouldn't the benchmarking and analysis of toddler care have preceded the roll out of UPK?
- Eager to hear more about the Digital Navigator Coalition. (I thought the Library was leading with this.)
- Other Ordinary Maintenance: \$2m: for what?
- How many students are engaged in the College Success Program? Stats on its providing better outcomes? (Sounds like a great program. Eager to hear more.)
- \$111,000 budgeted to provide funding for expanded inclusion services: can this fall under the \$7.5 million we are already spending?

Finance Admin

- How is the Health Claims Trust Fund funded? (FY27: \$18.25m)
- Is the assumption that health insurance costs will increase annually by 10% from FY28-31, or overall? And that dental insurance will increase annually by 2.5% during this period, or over the whole period?
- Salary and wages are projected to continue to grow annually through FY31. Is that prudent if we'll have less income?
- Other Ordinary Maintenance=\$1.97m. For what?

Info Tech (IT)

- Other Ordinary Maintenance=\$6.7m. For what?

Cable TV

- Is the new combined playback system part of the 22 City View Budget?
- Staff of 5 with \$1m+ Other ordinary maintenance. What does this include?

Comms & Comm Engagement

- Eager to hear more about the Civic Engagement Compass and Civic Outreach Squad. How is the City using City View to get out video stories?
- Eager to hear about the City's unified branding work. What changes were made?
- \$1m for ordinary maintenance—for what?

Election Commission

- Eager to hear more about the Commission’s “pre-registering to vote” initiative for 16 and 17 year olds.
- How much are Election Commissioners paid?

Executive

- What is the Service Level Agreement timeframe for SeeClick Fix?
- Which boards receive stipends and why?
- How many full time staff did past City Managers engage? Will the Manager always need a staff of 24?

Human Resources

- What % of City staff are union and non union?
- \$1.8m for ordinary maintenance—for what?

Law

- 2,255 public record requests: why so many and how can we make info more readily available so that residents don’t have to file PRRs to access info? What sort of info is regularly requested?

Equity & Inclusion

- Where are we in hiring a American Freedman Comm. Director?
- What are the stipends for committee members and have we started paying them?
- How will the \$425,321 budgeted for this initiative be spent?
- Ordinary maintenance: \$239.2k. For what?

Mayor Siddiqui

General/Budget/Finance Admin

- Budget book states \$7.4M in departmental savings. What is the breakdown between citywide savings and department savings? Did elimination of out-of-state travel count towards the 2.1% goal? Where were there department-based revenue increases?

Community Development

- Planned consultant work for FY27?

Housing

- What work is being done to make sure constituents looking for housing support are informed about the restructuring?

Human Services

- Are there any goals around OST aside from the planned initiative about the registered apprenticeship program? How are last year's OST expansion study recommendations being implemented?
- Afterschool scholarships that were previously funded by ARPA?

Budget

- What were the key takeaways from the Community Budget Walkthroughs? Will this be an annual process? Any changes for next year?

Information and Technology

- Can you speak to the increase for software and licenses?

Comms and Comm. Engagement

- How is capacity being shifted within the department with the boards and commissions management moving over?
- Civic Outreach Squad—when and how do they get deployed?

Human Resources

- What accounts for the increase and what measures were taken to find department-level savings?

Employee Benefits

- During Feb 3 finance meeting, staff outlined potential citywide and department-based savings including health benefits savings. Is this reflected in total savings and/or this section?

Law

- What capacity will be filled with the two new positions?

Equity and Inclusions

- Last December there was talk of a strategic plan. When will we see it?
- CIRC—Are there any additional resources being invested into legal aid capacity?
- AFC—What is the timeline for hiring the ED?

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler

Executive

- Ask Executive team what their determinations are for hiring staff vs. consultants and what can we do to decrease our need for consultants
- Employee Benefits/School District/Executive: ask about state advocacy for using Chapter 70 funds to address high health insurance costs

Employee Benefits

- Employee Benefits/School District/Executive: ask about state advocacy for using Chapter 70 funds to address high health insurance costs

May 12, 2026 Questions

Councillor Zusy

Cambridge Health Alliance/Public Health (Little info re this department is listed.)

- How many staff? What do they do?
- Budget: \$12.9m!

Capital Building Projects

- 17 staff: 11 general fund and 6 capital staff (for specific projects?) Why do we pay so much more than neighboring communities for projects and what can we do to reduce project costs?
- When will the city repair the 1st St. Garage: cost said to be about \$10m. Noted that you're replacing the parking access and revenue control system.
- What are the plans for the Lafayette Fire Station and why will it consume most of the \$28.5m capital budget?

Dept. of Public Works

- Urban Forestry: budget \$4.6 vs FY26 \$4.8m + \$1.45m annually through FY31 for trees?
- Aren't we running out of places to put them? How many more will we plant each year?
- How much of this budget is financed by cutting down trees/tree mitigation funds?
- How are you envisioning updating the Tree Protection Ordinance?

Transportation

- \$10.2 for the Grand Junction path. Does that mean that we got the green light from Eversource and the MBTA to build it?
- Cost of the shuttle study and timeline, please.
- \$22m in parking revenues? (\$6.2m at the end of FY27).
- Other ordinary maintenance \$6m? For what?
- When will the New St. connector be built? Will the whole thing, to the new Fitchburg Line bike/pedestrian bridge cost \$9.5m?
- What will the Cambridge Access & Mobility Plan include, will it be done in-house & what is its timeline?

- How many of the top 10 dangerous intersections will be improved in FY27 and shouldn't this be a priority? (It isn't listed as one.) Is updating the signals what is necessary?
- Or will is the line item for \$500k to make Vision Zero Safety Improvements accomplish this?
- When will DOT implement traffic calming in the abutting Garden St. neighborhoods?
- Another priority: Creating the parking neighbors were promised with the flexible parking corridors to alleviate parking scarcity.
- 46.9% of Cambridge's workforce drive alone and have for some time. How many of these are City workers and where do they park? How can we better accommodate City workers, but not with street parking in our neighborhoods?
- EV chargers: \$1,100 is the annual? operating cost of the chargers?
- With street parking becoming more scarce, where will you put new ones?

Veterans Services

- Ordinary maintenance for small dept. with 5 staff: \$122.3k? \$462.8 for travel & training?! What for?

Water

- So many water leaks & repairs. How old is our water distribution infrastructure, what is the state of it and how can we stay ahead on this?
- What is CARE: Construction Administration & Resident Engineering Service? \$250k annually at Fresh Pond.
- The water-granulated activated carbon filter has increased in costs to \$1.3m? (\$1.1m budget in FY26)

Office of Sustainability

- Other Ordinary Maintenance: \$1.3m: for what?
- From FY20 to FY312, we'll invest \$3.7m in the City's Virtual Power Purchase Agreement (VPPA) at Bowman Wind in N. Dakota. This will give us renewable energy certificates but no energy, right?

Community Safety

- How do you define "extensive response program"?
- Will the Violence Prevention Program build on Niko Emack's study?
- When are you busiest? Will you be moving some staff to late night hours, at least during the warmer months?
- Concerned with only 727 crisis calls for 15 staff. Does this include 120 referrals by police?
- In spare time, could CARE team do wellness calls to seniors or checks?

Fire Department

- What is the cause of most fires? So many!
- Why do EMT calls include a fire truck? Seems like you could use a smaller vehicle, if needed, to supplement the ambulance.

Police Department

- Proposal to do hiring from the Local Register. What is that?
- Ordinary maintenance: \$3.7m. For what?
- How can we better protect Cambridge bikes? 427 thefts in FY26.

Debt Service

- Quote: “The City Debt Stabilization Fund will provide \$16 million to cover debt service costs, which is a slight decrease from the \$17 million used in FY26, in order to address increased debt costs.” (pg 9)
 - Does that make sense? The city is putting less towards debt service costs because of increased debt costs?

MWRA

- Does the City pay out \$34.3m or do the ratepayers?
- How do Cambridge ratepayers’ fees compare with those of neighboring towns who don’t have their own water supply? How does our having our own water system impact the cost?

Public Investment Section

- Parks & Rec: FY29 \$19m budgeted: for what?
- Central Square: \$10k for paving, bike lanes, bus boarding islands, trees, and outdoor dining + sewers redone, too—from FY21 \$27.5m sewer bonds?

Councillor Sobrinho-Wheeler

Police Department

- For CPD, it might be good to say something about how many of the recent expenses (settlement with Ahern, new guns) come from free cash instead of their budget. This impacts funding for other things citywide. Why does the city as a whole have to suffer?
- Can bring up civil service again and our need to do away with it to make sure we're getting the best. On page 35, they note the "Local Register" as an alternative hiring pathway. The Cambridge Police Department is implementing an Alternative Hiring Pathway through the establishment of a Local Register. This initiative modernizes

hiring by supplementing the traditional civil service process with a more flexible, merit-based approach. Under this model, up to 50% of new hires may be selected from the Local Register, with the remaining positions filled through the traditional civil service list. This balanced approach preserves the integrity of civil service while providing the Department with the flexibility to identify and recruit qualified candidates, including entry-level applicants and POST-certified lateral officers. The Local Register will enable the Department to efficiently recruit and evaluate candidates while maintaining transparency and accountability. It is designed to attract individuals who reflect the values and diversity of the Cambridge community and who demonstrate strong judgement, professionalism, and commitment to community engagement. Once implemented, the Local Register is expected to reduce hiring timelines, address vacancies effectively, and strengthen the Department's ability to meet evolving public safety needs. The initiative reinforces the Department's commitment to building a professional, diverse, and community - focused police workforce.

Councillor Nolan Cambridge

Health Alliance

- The funding from the city is for the public health department - other than school nurses, how does the use of resources - staff - focus on services to Cambridge residents?
- The contract requires an annual assessment of public health needs in Cambridge - was that done and how is the budget organized around that assessment?

Capital Building Projects

- What has been the budget impact of commissioning of the city buildings that are done - the new standards should mean energy costs are not higher, but there has been some concern about higher costs - can you confirm the extent of commissioning and resulting impact on future energy costs?
- FTE from 10 to 11, but per page 80, no new positions - what accounts for the extra position in the budget line?

Inspectional Services

- How has the budget allocation been revised to account for the various changes in local and state codes, ordinances and requirements? Especially, does the budget include training and communication to not only staff but contractors, architects, homeowners and all involved in projects requiring permits?

- The FY27 objectives include more efficiency of the department - does that require investment in new IT or is the current system sufficient and no new IT investment is needed to fulfill the goal?

Public Works

- great SMART goals and excellent services provided - With the changes in some city policies - like no towing for street cleaning which changed the amount of time for routes, have department resources been able to be deployed to other services?

Transportation

- Good Smart goals for tickets, permits. What about SMART goals from the work done on mode shift: the percent of trips not in cars, and the # of cars registered in Cambridge, public transit use - are those goals still in place and DOT resources deployed to achieve them?
- Is there a budget for the planning for the pedestrianization of Harvard Square or is that inhouse or with community pro bono services?
- What is the budget for the work on understanding citywide shuttle possibility in conjunction with other partners?

Water

- Budget is up 11% - please explain
- \$1.3mill increase for granular activated carbon (GAC) filter media. Is there a medium or long term budget projection for the continued investment in GAC replacements or a projected timeline for functionality of the media? Smoothing out those large allocations over time will be important.

Office of Sustainability

- FY27 marks the first full year of achieving 100% renewable electricity supply for municipal operations
- Budget request decreased by 0.3%

Community Safety

- The department should be able to provide services as needed - Is the budget sufficient for more deployment of staff for more times - during hours when most needed?
- Has the number of call codes and possible joint response as needed been included in the budget planning?

Fire Department

- 2 new FTEs associated with this budget (pg. 80). What are the new positions?

Police Department

- Employee payouts from free cash vs. internal budget. Need to better track payouts to CPD versus other departmental averages. If CPD payouts are higher than typical department disputes, then that should be reflected in an annual budget request.
- Would like an accounting of recent expenses come from free cash instead of CPD budget. Free cash allocations are not tracked as clearly as department budgets and may provide a skewed picture of department costs over time.
- With the Community Safety Department now staffed and able to respond to calls which the police would have had to respond to, what is the expected impact on the budget?

Emergency Communications

- Lots of variance in the performance measure for social worker referrals. How have you worked to plan for that goal and why the high variability from FY25,26,27?
- Large number of systems upgrades (obj. 8) - is there a cost associated with those upgrades within the budget?

Community Events & Celebrations

- \$1mill special events support. \$850k for salaries and wages. Are there any FTEs associated with this allocation or is this due to the new community events cost-sharing initiative we discussed a few weeks ago?

Library

- The library FTE count obviously includes a number of part time positions, but it is difficult to account for the FY26 to FY27 comparison with the transition to an FTE framework. Are there new positions in the FY27 budget?

Debt Service

- What is the sustainable and fiscally responsible level and what are the risks in future spending for debt service?

MWRA

- \$1.2mill increased MWRA costs - any thing to highlight about this?
- What would it take for the city to provide funding for clean up of the CSO as has been proposed to ensure better and fewer CSOs?

Revenue Section

- Rent of City property (pg. 108) - thanks for including this item.
- Pg. 129 miscellaneous revenue -
 - Debt stabilization transfer down \$2mill. What is the function of this?
 - Interest earnings down from \$17mill in FY25 to \$5mill in FY27. What is the decrease due to? Does this decrease scale with decrease in Free Cash from \$18mill to \$13mill?

Councillor Al-Zubi

Capital Building Projects

- Can you help me understand how the department is prioritizing the sequencing of these projects especially considering capacity?
- There is a larger increase in salaries and wages from FY25 to FY27 even though FTE moved from 9 to 11. What is driving this increase? Does the staffing plan include the six capital fund positions or just the 11 general fund positions? Where are the positions accounted for if only 11 general fund here?

Historical Commission

- The FY27 has a planned initiative to implement replacement and expansion of the African American Trail, but the Other Ordinary Maintenance is increasing by about 9000. Can you help me understand how the department is funding the installation of these markers? If from CPA funds, do we know if the allocation is confirmed?

Inspectional Services

- The department added a Director of Construction Quality Assurance, we're seeing an increase to 33.13 FTE, but the building permit compliance inspection target drops from 9000 to 8500 for FY27. Given there's increased staffing, are you able to help me understand why the inspection target is being set lower than higher? I know the change of accounting for FTE might be a part of this!

Public Works

- Can you help me understand why we don't have a performance measure for tree planting?
- How will the five-year sidewalk and street reconstruction plan affect near term capital planning, if anything at all?

Transportation

- Can you help me understand the larger jump in budgeted positions? I recognize part of this may be the transfer of the Transportation Department from CDD, but it's only happening in FY27. What's the number of new hires vs. transfers? Is there double-counting here?
- Are the municipal garage upgrades being done through the operating budget or through the capital budget? Has there been appropriation through capital if that's the case? What's the estimated cost here?

Office of Sustainability

- The budget is staying relatively the same even though there are new workstreams like a new heat emergency protocol and extreme precipitation initiative. Is there a prioritization framework here?

Community Safety

- Community Safety is seeing around a 2% increase. They're planning to have a significantly larger response to crisis calls while expanding the current window of hours. How does the department plan to staff these expanded hours and absorb call volume growth without additional positions?

Fire Department

- There is a large budget vs. actual gap that exists here. What percentage of this change is from the employee benefits accounting change vs. departmental spending?
- The FY27 Planned Initiatives section seems thin for a department of this size. Why is this the case? Are there any operational changes here?

Police Department

- There is a large budget vs. actual gap that exists here. Same as fire, what drove that large difference? Is this also mainly employee benefits accounting change? How much was overtime? How much was private detail reimbursements?
- The alternative hiring pathway initiative is described as being final implementation in FY27, but not seeing a performance measure tied to it. How many officers do we anticipate here?

Emergency Communications

- The FY26 projection for referrals to the 911 Social Worker was only 30 which is significantly lower than FY25 of 198. What caused the drop here? Is FY27 realistic given no structural explanation here?
- What is the total cost of the AI-enhanced non-emergency call processing initiative?

Attachment B



Cambridge
Public Health
Department

Cambridge Public Health Department
Preliminary Account of FY26 Activities

May 12, 2026

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- **Massachusetts Gaming Commission Community Mitigation Grant** – In partnership with **Cambridge Arts**, the department was awarded this grant to address addiction and harm reduction through a dual-pronged approach: the production of educational videos designed to mitigate stigma and improve service awareness, alongside artist-led community workshops focused on storytelling and creative expression.
 - Videos - CPHD will produce four person-centered video stories and four 30-sec social media clips (e.g., 1 therapist and 3 community members from the racial and ethnic groups highlighted in the research, such as Black, Latinx, and Asian populations). **Videos are in production.**
 - Workshops - Cambridge Arts will organize artist-led workshops that provide a supportive environment for storytelling, story-sharing, and creative expression. **3 workshops completed.**

Agenda for Children Literacy Initiative

- Number of Staff: 4 full-time, 6 per diem
 - AFCLI Manager
 - Early Literacy Program Supervisor
 - Pathways to Family Success Coordinator
 - Cambridge Dads Coordinator
 - Literacy Ambassadors (6)

The Agenda for Children Literacy Initiative (AFC) is an early literacy program initiative supporting parents and caregivers of young children, birth to 8 years. AFC carries out its work through three programs: Let's Talk!, Cambridge Dads, and Pathways to Family Success.

Let's Talk! works with moms, dads and caregivers to support the development of young children's language and literacy skills through a broad range of activities including home visits, parent workshops, family events, and book distribution. Cambridge Dads strives to ensure dads are engaged, informed, and feel supported in their role as parents. Pathways to Family Success is a two-year program designed to build community, support school access, and provide resources for low-income Cambridge families with children in Pre-K through 2nd grade. Many of our services are provided by Literacy Ambassadors – multilingual, multicultural, trained parents who serve as links between the programs and families in the community. Many of our activities are done in partnership with other community agencies.

FY26 activities include:

- Thousands of books distributed to families
- Born to Read packets sent to newborns in Cambridge
- Events held for families in Pathways to Family Success program including parent workshops, field trips, and parent-child activities
- Pathways to Family Success families each received \$500 for enrichment activities for their children from the Curiosity Fund
- Cambridge Dad Events for dads and kids such as Fatherhood Buzz, Dads and Kids in Gym series, and Dads and Kids BBQ

- Worked closely with the Cambridge Public Schools District (CPSD) in a number of roles:
 - **Analyzed school menu** recipes for carbohydrate quantities to ensure safe consumption for students with blood sugar concerns such as Type 1 Diabetes;
 - Collaborated with the School Nurses to **assess student allergens** and create safe eating environments;
 - Facilitated the **CPSD Wellness Policy Council** addressing topics pertaining to student wellness, including nutrition, physical activity, mental health, and substance use.
- Collaborated with the City Office of Sustainability on a social media video to discuss the benefits of plant-forward food choices.
- Facilitated the **Cambridge Tap Water Taskforce** and worked with community partners to create a public service campaign promoting the benefits of drinking Cambridge tap water, including a partnership with the Office of Sustainability and the City GIS team to create an interactive story map of water bottle fillers in Cambridge
- Completion of the **Cambridge Physical Activity Assessment** to inform city infrastructure and programming that improves equitable access to physical activity for all Cambridge residents, including a large-scale performing arts event at the MLK School to disseminate findings prior to publishing

Mental Health and Behavioral Health

- Number of Staff: 2 full-time
 - Manager
 - Prevention and Recovery Specialist

The MBHP Unit works to improve the health of everyone in Cambridge by increasing awareness of mental and behavioral health needs and services. Much of the work of the MBHP Unit focuses on substance use among the adult population of Cambridge, particularly tracking opioid overdose data and promoting harm reduction resources.

Accomplishments to date in FY26 include:

- **21 Overdose Prevention Trainings** for 180 attendees
- **7 Narcan Distribution Events**
- 2,242 doses of narcan distributed
- **2 Medication TakeBack Events** - 106 pounds collected at April event
- With support from a Municipal Matching grant from Mosaic Opioid Recovery Partnership, CPHD piloted a **syringe redemption** program. Between August and April, 98 unique participants have successfully removed 18,833 syringes from the Alewife area.
- Utilizing opioid abatement funds, placed **2 Peer Recovery Coaches** in 2 community programs - Healthcare for the Homeless and the Community Safety Department. Between November and April, the coaches have had 397 encounters with people (new and duplicate), 2 referrals to clinical stabilization, 23 referrals to detox, 1 IOP, 3 residential and 2 referrals to sober living.
- Projects to promote **Community Mental Health and Harm Reduction Resources** included:

- Began focus groups with youth 13+ **to learn how they want to be engaged in city decision-making and how Cambridge can better support them.** We have spoken with **35 youth so far**, with more focus groups to come.
- Developed 3 **Mental Health PSAs** with the Community Engagement Team to help people better understand mental health through relatable everyday scenarios, reduce stigma, recognize when support may be needed, and encourage seeking help for themselves or others.
 - These PSAS are currently being translated into Amharic, Arabic, Bangla, Haitian Creole, and Spanish.
- **5 Mini Grants**, each \$2k, will be distributed to local organizations to fund sustainable and innovative community projects to improve youth wellness in the city.
- Implemented the **MassCALL3 grant** from MA DPH.

Environmental Health Division

- Number of Staff: 3 full-time
 - Sr. Director, Environmental Health
 - Manager
 - Public Health Compliance Specialist

The Division of Environmental Health oversees key permit programs, investigates environmental hazards, and supports Inspectional Services and Public Works in addressing other health concerns related to the built environment. In FY26 the Division undertook a wide range of projects.

- **Indoor Air Quality (IAQ) investigations & community air quality investigations.** Initiated shared tracking (with ISD Housing inspectors) of each IAQ case under co-enforcement. An assessment of chronic moisture, mold, particulates, typical indoor gas pollutants and other concerns is followed with a report that includes data and descriptions of primary causes; this report is shared with the resident, the owner or mgmt company, and Inspectional Services. In FY26 through April 30 there were **53 IAQ cases investigated** with a report generated.
- **Added 4 additional medical sharps kiosks:** Alewife, Rindge Ave, Danehy Park & Harvard Sq
- **Public Requests** - Responded to 200+ requests for assistance related to permits, exposure hazards, housing, community nuisances, tobacco complaints and other topics.
- **Public Health Excellence (PHE) grant** - Co-lead Cambridge participation (with ISD) Statewide initiative to raise performance standards for all local Boards of Health and Inspectional Services departments. Focused on improvement in inspectional documentation and proper equipment and protocols for housing inspections.
- **Rodent control activities:**
 - Hosted monthly Rodent Control Task Force that includes partners and municipal staff from Cambridge, Boston, Brookline and Somerville.

- **Body Work Therapy regulation repealed.** After long consideration after MDPH takeover of most massage practices, staff completed required public notification and received approval from Public Health Commissioner Sayah. The vestigial regulation covering in a few low-risk body work therapy modalities
- **Major update of Body Art/Tattoo regulation** is scheduled to be promulgated in May. This extensively amended regulation is based on the National Environmental Health Association national Model Code. Staff initiates a 3-city review of these changes to bring tattoo oversight into alignment in Boston and Chelsea. We anticipate working with Somerville when they are ready to amend their body art code. This collaboration included the 3 metro Boston communities with the largest number of parlors and licensed artists.
- **Tobacco sales enforcement** is currently undergoing a division of authority with the agreement of the City Council. This allows CPHD to take over the Youth Access and Sales portion of the Tobacco Control ordinance. The City Council will rescind that section, retaining authority over smoking in public places, restaurants and work places. This realignment of authority will enable Cambridge to adopt major provisions of the MDPH Model Tobacco Code.

Permits for FY26 YTD

- Laboratory Biosafety permits issued: 130
- Tanning: 2
- Tattoo and Body art establishments: 11
- Tattoo and Body art practitioners: 69
- Beekeeping; 7 Permits
- Henkeeping: 5 Permits

(Permits submitted but not approved during the fiscal year were not included in these counts.)

Commissioner of Laboratory Animals

- Number of Staff: 1 part-time
 - Commissioner of Laboratory Animals

The Commissioner of Laboratory Animals is a licensed veterinarian who reviews the care and use of laboratory animals in academic and industry research labs in Cambridge. This program is unique to Cambridge (with Lexington recently having passed a similar regulation); local standards exceed federal mandates for the oversight of the treatment of laboratory animals.

The Commissioner also serves as CPHD's expert on zoonotic diseases and co-chairs the department's Ethics Committee.

In FY26, the Commissioner:

- Reviewed the care and use of lab animals in 25 currently registered labs;
- Evaluated applications for permitting and registration;

- Planning for a Training with the FBI to educate Cambridge public health and public safety coalition members (CPD, CFD, Pro, MIT EM, Harvard EM, ECC, MAH, CHA) regarding what is available/provided by FBI after an incident (this will be in tandem with the AS/AI workshop)

Social Capital/ Resilience:

- Block Party Collaboration with CPHD, CDD, and Arts Council:
- Artist in Government: Inaugural Artist in Government will be hosted by CPHD, in partnership with CDD and the Arts Council. Artist Heather (Hey There) Kapplow was selected after an extensive application process.

Climate resilience:

- Extreme Weather: Extreme Heat Communication Protocol
- Newly launched Extreme Heat Task Force with Community Development Department (CDD) and Office of Sustainability (OoS)
- NeighborHubs: a program with OoS and CDD that launched summer of 2025 and will continue into this upcoming summer with the hope of recruiting 3 more neighborhood/ community centers to become a NeighborHub
- Heat and Health Trainings for Community Partners who serve the public (e.g., The Foundry) - an additional training has been scheduled for June 3 at the Foundry as a refresh for the summer as part of the NeighborHub Program
- Participation in the Green Communities workgroup hosted by OoS as we work to purchase and dispose of items at CPHD in a responsible and sustainable fashion.
- Advisory Committee on Resilient Cambridge Plan (Section 1: Closer Neighborhoods)

Disability Access and Inclusion

- Sustained the Inclusive Health Coalition (IHC) composed of residents with lived experiences with disability and access was developed and continues
- IHC identified 2 priorities for the work: Anti-Stigma Campaign & Access to Recreational Activities
- 2 full Coalition Meetings with full translation and disability access
- Applied for a 5-year grant to continue to grow the disability access and inclusion initiative (if received would begin July 1, 2026)
- Hosted the inaugural Celebrating Disability Day of Pride in October 2025 in partnership with CHA DEI office, the IHC and City Departments.
 - >400 attendees with a silent disco, photo booth and other inclusive and accessible activities
 - Planning for the 2nd event on October 3, 2026

Cambridge Community Corps: (all activities ceased November 2025 due to ARPA funding ending)

CPHD's ambassadors to the community

- Employ between 7-20 corps members (numbers fluctuate with the seasons)

lifestyles. The health department provides medical backup to several Cambridge child care centers and advises them on best practices and disease prevention

The Public Health Nursing unit's ongoing coordination with local universities (Harvard, MIT, Lesley, Hult and Longy), public, private, and charter schools, and the City's Inspectional Services Division is also vital to communicable disease monitoring and prevention in Cambridge.

Vaccinations

Over the past season, CPHD held 5 large public vaccine clinics and several targeted clinics at senior building, shelters and meals sites.

- CPHD nurses and firefighter colleagues delivered **2,501 vaccinations**
 - 1182 COVID-19, 1,319 Flu
- **1,543 individuals were served**

Tuberculosis

The department's public health nurses staff the TB clinic at CHA Cambridge Hospital and provide home visits for Directly Observed Therapy (DOT), patient care, and case management support. Patient volume has been increasing steadily in recent years.

- 1,772 Visits. Total **visits to the TB clinic increased 62%** (For FY25, 1,010 public health nurses appointments, 762 MD appointments)
- 41 active cases (patients) of TB case management

Miscellaneous

Given their roles, the nursing team also fields inquiries about a wide range of health concerns from residents. Individuals often call the health department when they are not sure where else to call for guidance. Over the past fiscal year, these calls have been for included such topics as:

- Concerns about exposure to rabies from dogs/bats
- Guidance for an employee who may have been exposed to a communicable illness
- Questions about access to vaccines for homebound residents
- How to access primary care
- Guidance on recommended travel immunizations/medications
- Inquiring about locations for low cost vaccines and lab tests

School Health

- Total number of staff: 27 (14 full-time, 10 part-time, 3 per diem)
 - 16 Registered Nurses
 - 1 Nurse Manager
 - 4 Health Aids
 - 1 Nurse Case Manager
 - 1 Hearing & Vision Specialist Nurse
 - 3 per diem nurses
 - 1 Medical Director (BMC Pediatrician, part-time at CPHD)

- Oral Health Screenings in the Cambridge Public Schools:
 - 1136 students screened
 - Healthy; no obvious issues - **748 students**
 - Triage I: dental cleaning or sealants recommended -**145 students**
 - Triage II(D0) ; dental exam recommended for possible tooth decay and orthodontic evaluation -**16 students**
 - Triage II(D): dental exam recommended for possible tooth decay - **91 students**
 - Triage II(O): dental exam recommended for an orthodontic evaluation - **98 students**
 - Triage III; urgent care referral due to a large area(s) of possible decay, pain, swelling, or infection - **38 students**

- Offered annual **School Nurse CEU Certificate Course** - School Health Nurses Role in Awareness of the State of Early Childhood Caries
- Provided **Oral Health Supplies** for school nurses at all CPS schools
- Provided **Oral Health Support** visits and outreach for school nurses of children with dental needs and referrals.
- Provided Sixth Edition of **School Nurse Oral Health Resource Guide** School Year 2025-2026
- **Mouth Guard Cases** with Care Cards to youth for distribution(300)
- Provided **CRLS Senior Graduation Transition Supplies** - 600 Toothbrush Kits with Dental Access Resource Sheet given out with cap and gown bag.
- CHA Cambridge **Teen Center Oral Health Screenings**
 - Collaboration with CHA and CHA Windsor Street Dental Clinic to serve students in need of dental care. Provided dental screenings, education and resources.

Oral Health in the Community

- Cambridge Healthy Smiles Community Program
 - **Community Outreach (350+ Toothbrush kit supplies)**
 - **Seniors (65+) Program**
 - Cambridge Senior Center site visits (3) Oral Health Presentations, Education and Resources. Toothbrush kits.
 - Cambridge Police Senior Secret Santa donation of toothbrush kits (100)
 - Senior Events with HEAL providing oral health connection to Oral Health and BP readings.
 - The Harvard Square Churches Meal Program-Christ Church Oral Health BP and Oral Health Resource Visits Biweekly thru Fall.
 - CHA apartment site visits (5)- Oral Health Presentations, Education and Resources. Toothbrush kits.

- **Special Needs Program** (physical, developmental, and behavioral/emotional)
 - Russel Youth and Community Center - 60 Adult TB bags & Oral Health Adult Presentation
 - MA Special Olympics connection on Oral Health adaptive needs. Distribution resources- reusable toothbrush caps, toothbrush adapted handle, mouthguards. Resource pamphlet and infographic.

- Feedback from clinic participants collected to evaluate/improve operations
 - Participants rated their experience at the clinics highly. When asked about a number of aspects related to the clinic experience, over 75% of respondents rated them 4 or higher (scale of 1-5, 5 being most positive).

COVID+ Outreach Team

- Ongoing PCP sign ups (beginning November 2024) :
 - Trained with CHA to have EPIC access and direct scheduling ability
 - Shared Intake form with school and public health nurses in all four cities/towns
 - Available for all CPHD program staff to refer people for PCPs
 - Helped people navigate insurance questions, provide directions, etc
- Inbound Phone Line resource navigation

Communicable Disease New Reports

- Internal Dashboard (accessible through staffnet)
- 2025 Communicable Disease report

Teen Health Survey

- 2026 Survey administered in all upper schools and at CRLS
- Epi function: lead the biannual review of survey tool, liais with contractor, and produce adhoc data analysis
- Redevelopment of THS & MGHS Infographic for dissemination at schools and youth programs
- Datawalks to increase engagement among youth and community partners

Oral Health

- Oral Health Data Dashboard - internal facing
- Oral Health Poster presented at CHA
- Data management for annual school screenings
- Creation of new scheduling tool for teen health center screenings

HEAL

- Mini grants evaluation: evaluating the effectiveness of the program to support and sustain community organization work
- Physical activity assessment

Mental and Behavioral Health

- Opioid overdose training evaluation: information about the knowledge and awareness of overdoses and response in program participants
- Weekly opioids overdose report data analysis support
- Addition of the opioids data to the City Open Data Portal

Internal Unit Admin

- Journal Club

- Co-led development of the Cambridge Public Health Department's Community Advisory Group to deepen health equity initiatives
- Led community outreach initiatives such as the Black Maternal Health Community Conversation to deepen efforts within communities identified as vulnerable
- Identified upstream approaches to mitigating disparities in Cambridge and initiated advocacy efforts around policy concerning maternal health disparities

Communications and Marketing Division

- Number of Staff: 2 full-time
 - Sr. Director, Communications
 - Health Promotion and Marketing Specialist

CPHD's Communications and Marketing team collaborates with CPHD staff and city partners to develop timely messages and materials that keep the public up-to-date on our work and the issues impacting the public health of the city. Activities this year have included:

- Served as CPHD's public information office, managing inquiries from the media and the public
- Initiated a bi-weekly dedicated Public Health Updates section in the city's daily email
- Participated in weekly meetings with communications staff from the City Manager's Office and other city departments to ensure consistency of messaging
- Provided public health warnings, alerts, and education to the the public about health risks:
 - communicable disease (e.g., COVID-19, Influenza) and issued reminders about taking precautions during respiratory season;
 - Tick-borne illnesses
 - cases of EEE/West Nile virus in Massachusetts and issued mosquito bite prevention tips;
 - Issued Public Health Warnings due to Combined Sewer Overflows
 - local food recalls;
 - Issued weather warnings and emergency preparedness posts
- Maintained CPHD's social media accounts (Instagram, Facebook, Bluesky, Youtube)
- Maintained CPHD's website, including frequent events posting and updates to division/unit content
- Publicized events CPHD events as well as City events: vaccine clinics, mental health events, Hoops 'N' Health, medication takeback days, monthly narcan trainings, blood pressure screenings and Immigration Rights events
- Provided education on a range of health topics and resources including hypertension, mental health, substance use recovery, heat safety, swim safety, tick bite and mosquito bite prevention, food safety, pet safety, etc.
- Develop and assist in creating CPHD reports.

Accreditation

- Submitted the first Public Health Accreditation Board (PHAB) annual report for the current cycle
- Completed a comprehensive readiness audit for all PHAB Standards in preparation for the next submission

Strategic Planning

- Instituted an enhanced monthly progress reporting process with the leadership team to better monitor the success of the FY24–FY26 Strategic Plan
- Launched the FY27 Strategic Plan development process. Activities to date include convening a cross-cutting development workgroup, completing a postmortem on the FY24–FY26 process, and creating a prioritized data inventory. Work for the remainder of the fiscal year will include the development of a SWOT or comparable analysis, the selection of priority areas, and planning for FY27 implementation
- Co-led the Foundational Documentation project in collaboration with the Division of Epidemiology & Data Services and the Health Equity Unit, establishing department-wide standards, protocols, and templates for team scoping, program development, program evaluation, and health equity review. Full adoption expected in FY27

Quality/Process Improvement

- Led a QI project with TB Clinic Nurses to strengthen staff knowledge and confidence in serving hard-of-hearing patients; 100% of post-intervention survey respondents reported confidence in preparing a room for these visits
- Completed a year-long time study with the Public Health Nursing team, quantifying average weekly time per nursing activity to inform scheduling, identify standardization opportunities, and set staff benchmarks
- Supporting the School Health Nursing team on a performance improvement project to accelerate care referrals following positive postural, hearing, and vision screenings, with the aim of reducing medical absenteeism
- Conducted a run-chart analysis of the TB Clinic's Did-Not-Keep appointment rate, distinguishing controlled from uncontrolled variation in their process and giving the team a better understanding of their workflow
- Built and maintained budget infrastructure for CPHD by developing new tracking tools to standardize grant budget management and grant application processes, and provided ongoing support for departmental budget trackers to give managers visibility into spending
- Developed internal QI training modules for CPHD staff that will be added to the annual training curriculum to strengthen understanding of QI concepts and increase staff involvement in QI projects
- Conducting a department-wide assessment of CPHD's continuous quality improvement culture to produce an actionable plan for closing identified gaps

Cambridge Public Health Department staffing

Total staff: 53 full-time, 16 part-time, 12 per diem

(Note: per diem numbers fluctuate according to need)

Department Management

Chief Public Health Officer

Population Health Initiatives

- Number of Staff (Division-level): 1 full-time
 - Director of Community Engagement

Agenda for Children Literacy Initiative

- Number of Staff: 4 full-time, 6 per diem
 - Manager, Agenda for Children Literacy Initiative
 - Early Literacy Program Supervisor
 - Pathways to Family Success Coordinator
 - Cambridge Dads Coordinator
 - Literacy Ambassadors (6)

Healthy Eating Active Living

- Number of Staff: 3 full-time
 - Manager, Public Health Nutrition Services
 - Program Specialist
 - Public Health Nutritionist

Mental Health and Behavioral Health

- Number of Staff: 2 full-time
 - Manager, Mental and Behavioral Health
 - Prevention and Recovery Specialist

Youth Engagement

- Number of Staff: 1 full-time, 1 part-time
 - Youth Engagement Manager
 - Youth Wellness Coordinator

Environmental Health

- Number of Staff: 3 full-time
 - Sr. Director, Environmental Health
 - Manager
 - Public Health Compliance Specialist

Commissioner of Laboratory Animals

- Number of Staff: 1 part-time
 - Commissioner of Laboratory Animals

- Number of Staff: 2 full-time
 - Sr. Director, Communications
 - Health Promotion and Marketing Specialist

Administrative & Finance Operations

- Number of staff: 4 full-time
 - Manager, Finance & Grant Management
 - Manager of Planning and Operations
 - Administration Coordinator II
 - Administrative Operations Specialist

Quality & Strategic Development

- Number of staff: 2 full-time
 - Director, Quality & Strategic Development
 - Performance Management & Quality Improvement Specialist