



February 10, 2025 Finance Committee Agenda

City Hall, Council Chambers, 2nd Floor – 1221 SW Fourth Avenue, Portland, OR 97204

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Monday, February 10, 2025 12:00 pm

Session Status: Adjourned

Committee in Attendance:

Councilor Candace Avalos

Councilor Steve Novick

Councilor Mitch Green

Council President Elana Pirtle-Guiney, Vice Chair

Councilor Eric Zimmerman, Chair

Councilor Zimmerman presided.

Officers in attendance: Rebecca Dobert, Acting Council Clerk

Committee adjourned at 1:26 p.m.

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[Proposed City budget hearings and adoption schedule \(Presentation\)](#)

Document number: 2025-023

Introduced by: Councilor Eric Zimmerman

Time requested: 1 hour

Council action: Placed on File

Portland City Council, Finance Committee
February 10, 2025 - 12:00 p.m.
Speaker List

Name	Title	Document Number
Eric Zimmerman	Councilor, Committee Chair	2025-023
Rebecca Dobert	Acting Council Clerk	2025-023
Christopher Herr	Council Policy Analyst	2025-023
Candace Avalos	Councilor	2025-023
Elana Pirtle-Guiney	Council President, Vice Committee Chair	2025-023
Steve Novick	Councilor	2025-023
Mitch Green	Councilor	2025-023
Jonas Biery	Deputy City Administrator, Budget and Finance	2025-023
Ruth Levine	Interim Director, City Budget Office	2025-023
Robert Cheney	Senior Analyst, City Budget Office	2025-023

Portland City Council Committee Meeting Closed Caption File

February 10, 2025 – 12:00 p.m.

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Speaker: Hey. Good afternoon. It is February 10th, 2025. This is the first meeting of the Portland City Council's finance committee. If I could. Clerk, could you read the roll? I'll note we have commissioner councilor novick online. Avalos.

Speaker: Present.

Speaker: Pirtle-guiney here.

Speaker: Novick here.

Speaker: Green here.

Speaker: Zimmerman here. Thank you. You know, as we begin our work, it's important to just kind of note committee procedures are still being worked out. I think my colleagues know that we're going to go ahead and lean on the council and committee procedures as outlined for our larger council. I don't think that's a surprise to anybody. As we go through this, and, chris, if you could, could you read the statement of conduct for the audience, please?

Speaker: Welcome to the meeting of the finance committee to testify before this committee in person or virtually. You must sign up in advance on the committee agenda at. [Portland.gov/council agenda slash finance dash committee](https://portland.gov/council/agenda/slash/finance/dash/committee) or by calling 311. Information on engaging with the committee can be found at this link. Registration for virtual testimony closes one hour prior to the meeting. In person. Testifiers must sign up before the agenda item is heard. If public testimony will be

taken on an item. Individuals may testify for three minutes unless the chair states otherwise. Your microphone will be muted when your time is over, your chair preserves order. Disruptive conduct such as shouting, refusing to conclude your testimony when your time is up, or interrupting others testimony or committee deliberations will not be allowed. If you cause a disruption, a warning will be given. Further disruption will result in ejection from the meeting. Anyone who fails to leave once ejected is subject to arrest for trespass. Additionally, the committee may take a short recess and reconvene virtually. Your testimony should address the matter being considered when testifying one. State your name for the record. Your address is not necessary. If you are a lobbyist, identify the organization you represent. Virtual testifiers should unmute themselves when the clerk calls your name. Thank you.

Speaker: Well, that's a lot for a small little committee where we're spread across but sometimes necessary. So thank you for putting that in the record. Today we're going to have presentations from our cfo and our budget office. Jonas beery with proposed city budget hearings and adoption schedule. And then colleagues will have a chance for questions and any discussions. The intent from that item will be that based on the information we hear today, my office will put together on behalf of this committee a recommended proposal to our whole council for adoption of a budget schedule. And with that clerk, do we need to have you read the item in?

Speaker: We do.

Speaker: Okay.

Speaker: Thank you. Item one proposed city budget hearings and adoption schedule.

Speaker: All right. Jonas and ruth, if you could introduce yourselves and i'll let you take it away.

Speaker: Great. Thank you, chair and committee members. For the record, I'm Jonas Beery, the city's deputy city administrator of budget and finance and chief financial officer. And with me here is city budget office director Ruth Levine. First, thank you for the invitation to be here. I am very excited that maybe for the first time ever that I'm aware of, there's five elected officials at this city who are committed to put in the time and effort.

Speaker: To.

Speaker: Have a finance discussion. So we are feeling much loved on the finance side and appreciate appreciate working with you. One of my priorities that I've communicated when I started at the city this last summer is to promote transparency and good governance. Having a finance committee such as yourselves is a key component of that, and so I very much look forward to working collaboratively to elevate and illuminate those those city financial conversations. We have just a very brief presentation that Ruth is going to pull up, I think just ten minutes or so to kind of tee up big picture where we are and, and highlight the schedule. At least that's been communicated earlier in this cycle. Next slide Ruth. Yeah. So we'll just quickly talk about the budget process. And then Ruth will highlight the budget calendar details including some dates that are more firm and some dates that are more flexible. And then we'll kind of close with just previewing some upcoming community engagement opportunities. Yeah. Next slide. So the broader city transition presents a huge opportunity to realign the future path of budget development to increase public education. About the budget process, to be transparent about the city's financial situation and to meaningfully enhance community engagement and participation. I will also flag, maybe before I dig in, that there are lots of resources available and would certainly encourage you, if you haven't already, to take a look at those. The budget office is also available to

support, but the information on the budget office website, historical documents and other kind of one on one materials, obviously, state statute, state budget law, which we can help facilitate for you. The state budget manual, which is published online. Importantly, the body called the Multnomah County tax supervisory and conservation commission. And so there's a step in the process that will require their input. We've talked with the director of the tcc, and she's indicated a willingness to come before you as well to provide an introduction to the work they do. And then, of course, city budget office. And we have a number of staff in the room here as well, are a great resource. So what I just wanted to tee up is and some of you I know have seen this before, but really this transition moment is a huge opportunity to evolve the budget process in the ways I described. In the old process, we had 26 bureaus who very vertically submitted their requested budgets in February through that bureau director and through a commissioner in charge. And then we kind of smashed them all together in February and put a document out that really was 26 separate budget requests. That was a necessity of the old process. And we no longer have that necessity under the new budget process that we've envisioned, of which this moment is kind of the first the first step in in evolving that those the work to develop that kind of pre develop the budget concepts is pulled much earlier in the year. So pulled into kind of the early fall and even late summer within the bureaus and service areas to do some collaboration across those service areas and then float those up to the executive leadership team, city administrator, deputy city administrators to do a first level of kind of enterprise review of those budget concepts. Frankly, a step that has never happened as far as I know, in the history of the city. And so that's a really important improvement. And then what that results in is a body of information that is more interactive discussion between council, the mayor, city leadership, and then all of it

framed in community input throughout the process. I will flag it's kind of a multiyear, multiyear effort. We're taking this as far as we can within the current fiscal year budget development. It is admittedly been quite awkward. We started this kind of midstream in kind of a limited timeline to implement, particularly around the community input side through the fall, which we anticipate will improve next year. And recognizing we started this process under one mayor and one form of city government and City Council, and are now finishing the second important half under new mayor and new city leadership. So it's been a little, little awkward. And we expect that to improve in in the future. Next slide please ruth. So very generally this is kind of the old budget development timeline. The new timeline is somewhat similar, but we'll identify a couple of nuance differences. Obviously the city's fiscal year begins July 1st. So really that under the old pre charter change, those bureaus prepared their budgets in in their own kind of vertical. In October through December, the requested budget is lobbed over the fence in February. And then there's kind of historically been a kind of intense moment of conversation in March and April to get to the mayor's balanced budget in may, as required by state statute, and then ultimately approval and adoption by council in June. Next slide, ruth, in the new process, the timeline is mostly the same. Again, there's some of that additional pre work that's happening kind of earlier during budget preparation at the enterprise level, leading to draft budget recommendations, which will be put forth by the city administrator by the end of February. So we're actively working on gathering that right now. And then for this year, 2526, looking to have community engagement on those draft recommendations in March and April, and conversations with council, as we'll discuss here in the in the schedule to inform the mayor's proposed budget in may. There's not a slide here, but the future state that community engagement bar would really go all the way across the full timeline with

the idea that there'd be community engagement early in the process. There'll be community engagement prior to development of the draft recommendations in February. There'll be community engagement after publication of that. Certainly community engagement during the proposed and approval timeframes. And then we'd come back and say, how did we do? And look at that and continue that conversation in the summer. So we're kind of in a little, little gap here, a little in between years as we as we navigate towards that future state. But wanted to flag that. That's just kind of a super high level summary. And I think, ruth, the next slide is the detailed calendar. So this is the calendar that was prepared in the fall in anticipation of the key timelines. And so ruth, i'll hand to you to talk about that.

Speaker: Sure. Yeah. So this is from a memo that I put out in December.

Historically, council has adopted a budget calendar resolution in the fall, obviously, that with the transition, that wasn't a realistic path this year. So I put out a memo kind of outlining what a tentative budget calendar could look like, recognizing that it would change once you all are here. So that's what we're here to do today. So I'm just going to kind of walk through it and pause in the places where there's like discussion I think, to be had today. So obviously the service area has submitted their requested budgets at the end of January, and we're working on releasing the city administrator's draft budget recommendations, which will be out at the end of this month. So then after that, that is kind of the most flexibility, I would say in the schedule is kind of in March and April, we have the city has historically done both well, not district, but listening sessions in in March and April, as well as City Council work sessions previously. The I believe the work sessions were done first and then the listening sessions, and they were the sort of standard two minutes of person listening sessions pre-pandemic. They were held, you know, out in in community spaces as well as downtown. And then the last few years they've been more virtual.

So that's kind of where the most play is in this calendar. Once we get into the end of April, a couple of notable things on here. So by charter, the mayor's proposed budget has to be released by may 5th. The tentative plan as of right now is that around may 1st would be sort of the press release and the like, and then the full document would be available on may 5th, which is a Monday this year. After that point, there are a number of steps that are required. So the mayor has to deliver to the to the full council his budget message, which is a formal hearing. And historically that has also been paired with a work session. They did not used to be on the same day, but they can be on the same day. And that's the work session was to kind of explain what was in the mayor's proposed budget. The message is you're probably familiar with is pretty high level and sort of values and priorities, type communication. And then the proposed budget gives more of the technical detail. After that point, there is I'm going to come back to the utility rate piece in a second. After that point, they you go into a very short window of time before hearing the approved budget. And the approved budget is a report that comes to council with all of the technical details, all the fun level breakouts, like the full kind of budget, filing documents, and it is the sort of best opportunity to make major amendments to the budget, because once you hear the approved budget, you're constrained in terms of how much gets changed between approved and adopted. There's sort of a 10% rule, and we can talk more about what that means. But so that fairly short window of time in may between the mayor's budget message and the approved budget, is the time that you all will be actively trading amendments, discussing doing all of that. And, you know, obviously, this committee can discuss what you want your role to be in that as well. But that wasn't a part of it in the past. Obviously, after the approved budget is heard on may 21st this year, there's not that much wiggle room on that date because we have to cbo files a report with the

tax, tcc and we only have a certain number of days before there's a required number of days for them to kind of review that information before we have the tcc hearing. And we have tentatively scheduled the tcc hearing for June 11th. We can still change that, but we need to know pretty soon if we're going to change it. And then. The first sorry, June 10th, what it says on the slide, not what I just said. June 10th is the tcc hearing. June 11th would be the first reading of the budget, which then would kick the second reading a week out to the 18th. We need cbo needs at least sort of ten days to get the budget uploaded into sap. There's a fair amount of work on the back end, so that on July 1st, we are up and running and ready to go and pay the things we need to pay. So you can kind of see that once we get into may, the dates get pretty constrained. Happy to talk more about any of those dates. But we are also we have talked to the clerk and our need to continue working with them, because not all of the dates on here are council days. So that's going to there may be some. Yeah, sort of additional meetings that we need to schedule just to meet the legal requirements. The last thing i'll talk about is the utility rate hearing and prosper's budget. So the utility rate hearing. We have done in a different way. So basically it's not actually a budget ordinance. It is just the ordinance in which council sets the rates for that. The utilities are allowed to charge. But it has a clear nexus, an important nexus with their budgets. Obviously, they have to budget the amount of revenue they expect to receive based on the rates they're planning to charge. And so they have requested we've done it a couple of ways. It used to be basically aligned with the approved budget. And then one year there was a change at the last minute that made it hard for them to actually submit their balanced budgets. And so they have requested to move it slightly earlier. So I think they would like the first reading sometime in April. I think that exact date can be flexible, but that was their desire to have enough time to actually reflect the rates in their

budget on time. Prosper is typically aligned exactly with the approved budget, but like last year, they literally gaveled out as the budget committee and gaveled in as council to approve prosper's budget. So it's just because it's not a city bureau. It has a slightly different, yeah, process to it, but it should be aligned with the overall approved budget.

Speaker: And can I just make one one more quick comment on the on the calendar here. Ruth mentioned the kind of more flexible dates in March and April. It's not reflected here in detail, but just for your awareness. What's kind of currently been envisioned subject to change is that there would be district based, one in each district kind of community listening, listening sessions. I forget the exact dates, but kind of March 10th to 20th kind of time frame. Don't quote me on those exact dates, with the idea being that that gives a couple of weeks for the document to be published for members of the public to be able to read it, but also aligns those work sessions with kind of as early as possible to try to get that feedback out and available to all of you, to City Council, to the city budget office and to bureaus. And recognizing that Portland public schools spring break kind of falls in there. So trying to work between those those bookends, it may not be perfectly possible, but the vision would be to have it have those work sessions within that kind of general time frame, be able to assemble that information for a council work session at your pleasure and discretion, and then potentially have time for a second council work session prior to that April kind of need to prepare. The mayor's proposed in April. So it's not reflected in detail here, but that's kind of the current vision. But but again, subject to change. And the last thing I'd say about that is we do need to get clarity about the intent for the community session so we can get them scheduled kind of asap. So I think that's really important to have that discussion here today.

Speaker: Great. I'm going to have you guys do your last slide, because this is the area we've gotten most questions to come up, which is exactly where we wanted them. But why don't you take care of the last slide and then we'll move into discussion and questions.

Speaker: Great. So I just wanted to highlight for all of you and for any community members watching right now for this year. These are the community engagement opportunities kind of writ large. We just completed a couple of weeks ago, some community sessions related to introductory to the introductions to the budget. Many of you were able to attend. And thank you for that. The March and April engagement is what we were just discussing in response to that draft budget recommendation document. There is the third kind of box on the top there. There is a link in the on the cbo website, which I think will show on the screen here quickly that year round. We can collect comments and feedback on the budget. So I want to highlight that certainly anticipate opportunities for public testimony during the council hearings in may and June. And then I'm going to skip the insight survey, ruth, i'll let you talk about that. But I also wanted to acknowledge that the budget advisory committee process this year is a little bit out of whack, maybe a lot out of whack, and not not what we would envision in the future. So what we envision in the future, beginning for next year's budget cycle, is that there will be a reformed budget advisory committees at the service area level, and that those budget advisory committees will be a touch point throughout the calendar year, not just at the moment of budget in the spring. And, ruth, I think we have some updated news on the insight survey that i'll let you talk about.

Speaker: Yeah, sure. So the Portland insight survey, just for everyone's awareness, is a citywide representative survey that our office conducts in partnership with psu each year. And sorry, what we run the survey every other year on even years. And

then we have focus groups in the odd years. So the 2024 survey has been completed and we have preliminary results. And we anticipate having being able to share some of those results in March, sort of, if ideally, it would be aligned with the community listening sessions, and the full report would probably come out from psu later in March or the beginning of April. So that's exciting.

Speaker: And then the last slide, I think just for the public watching, has just some links to some of that key information that we've talked about.

Speaker: Thank you.

Speaker: Great. Thank you. That was nice and quick. And with that I want to go to councilor novick for the first set of questions.

Speaker: Please. You hear me?

Speaker: Yes we can.

Speaker: Okay. Let's see one question. Darn. What the hell? There was something you just said. I was going to ask something about. It's blown out of my mind in terms of the work sessions between the release of the draft, the February 28th and the mayor's, the mayor's proposed. Are there limitations? I have this vague understanding that we can't discuss a balanced budget until something happens. Are there limitations on the discussions we can have in those work sessions? Because of this limitation on when we can discuss a balanced budget?

Speaker: Yeah, so the city administrator's budget recommendations will not be balanced, in part because of that requirement. So, I mean, I think the, the, the state budget law that governs this is intended to ensure that the sort of budget process is followed, meaning that the mayor releases their proposed budget and delivers the budget message. Before you're discussing actual budget amendments. And so I think I think the basic answer is there's not a lot of limitations on what happens in

those work sessions, because we don't have a balanced budget that's been released at this point. I it's yeah, I think that's the basic answer.

Speaker: Yeah. I would I would add councilor. I mean, it's a great question and it's been a little bit of a challenge in navigating, you know, this is new for the city. The city structure is a little bit unique. And so we've been working with particularly with tcc to help get a little bit of guidance and clarity around what those boundaries are and how to set these up, how to set these steps in the process up in a way that facilitates that conversation, but also still complies with with budget law.

Speaker: So but.

Speaker: Councilor novick is it fair to is it fair to clarify your question is at those listening sessions that we truly be in listening mode versus proposal or amendment mode until we hear the mayor's budget? Because I agree, I've had that concern out there in other budgets where we can start talking about amendments and start talking about priorities, and when does that start? And what I think you said, ruth, is after the mayor's proposed, is that getting to the heart of your question? Councilor novick.

Speaker: Actually, my understanding, given that after the listening sessions, it says we can have council work sessions on draft budget recommendations? I was envisioning that in March and April, that's where we'd have discussions of, okay, here's something that's totally unacceptable to a majority of the council. Here's some, here's some other cuts, here's the cuts that are here's things that that a majority of the council as we as we determined through these work sessions, think has to be added back in that before well before the mayor proposes his budget, he would have some understanding of what changes the council is likely to insist on before approving the budget, and we'd have a fairly detailed discussion in those work sessions.

Speaker: Yeah. And I think that's I mean, we'll confirm with the tcc, but that's I think that's appropriate. And as long as I think it's you're not getting necessarily to the level of what would an amendment look like because you don't yet know what the proposed budget look looks like. But if there are cuts that are put on the table or adds that aren't included or whatever that you would like to see reflected, I think it's fine and appropriate and legal for you to kind of make that preference known, because it's not really a true amendment that you're discussing of like, okay, well, if you don't fund this, you know, take it from here. It's, you know, clear. It's, you know, preferences around, I don't support this or I do support that.

Speaker: And we can only have those discussions in council work sessions because because of the public meetings law, we can't have conversations where we start talk. We start talking about what's acceptable to whom. And the information winds up getting to seven people in a non public manner. So it pretty much has to all play out in public. And those work sessions.

Speaker: Yeah, that's correct. Councilor and I think a couple thoughts is one, I mentioned the tax. They've made an offer to come meet with either council or with this committee. And I would just suggest that might be a really great opportunity to get their sort of specific feedback before those work sessions. I think generally, you know, you're not you're not voting, you're not counting votes. You know, you're not making specific amendment suggestions at those work sessions or sort of the things that start to cross into maybe cross that line. But talking about priorities, giving feedback, asking questions for more information. I mean, those are absolutely the value of having those work sessions. And I think particularly having those with the benefit of some community input to help frame the conversation around things that we're hearing, both through the listening sessions and other things that you all are hearing directly.

Speaker: Thanks, councilor pirtle-guiney.

Speaker: So I just want to clarify, kind of final drop dead date. It looks like we have to have the approved budget ready to go to task by mid-May. So that means that as we think about the work of council, we need to have a budget that we are all prepared to vote on that has the amendments in place? Not actually by mid-June, but by mid-May. Is that correct?

Speaker: You are able to make amendments in the adopted phase. You're just not able to make giant amendments.

Speaker: Can we make amendments even after we've had the hearing with tcc or.

Speaker: Yes, it's just that you're held to that 10% threshold of any fund. So if there were a large change or, you know, a totally different, you know, structure, that would be problematic after the approved budget. If you're just doing things on the margin, it's fine.

Speaker: And when you say of any fund, is that a line item in the budget, is that a bureau? Is that a bucket of money that says general fund? How detailed does that work?

Speaker: Yeah, it should be just any fund. But I'm looking behind me. There are some. So basically the appropriations schedule is set in certain buckets as dictated by state budget law. And I can give you the current appropriation schedule. But the sort of caveat. So it's basically at the fund level, the caveats to that are it's broken up into what's called bureau operating expenses and contingency. So if you're changing contingency, that can be a problem. And then I don't know, Robert, you want to introduce yourself and add any more color to that.

Speaker: Sure. Yeah. Hello. Robert Chaney, deputy director of the budget office. Yeah. The funds, if you conceptualize them as manila envelopes and every bureau has like for fund for the general fund, it's one 100 and every bureau shares those.

So it's a line item in the sense that it's like a separate variable with which budget lives. The best way to map it would probably be to look at the annual comprehensive financial report. We have operating funds. We have like enterprise funds, things like that. So every bureau can participate in budgeting within a fund. And we have a chart of accounts that has sub fund structure to that. But, you know, it is the case. Like for example, the golf fund is an enterprise fund managed completely by the parks and rec. But for the general fund, we have a lot of bureaus participating in it. So it's kind of highly variable in that way.

Speaker: Thank you.

Speaker: And I'm curious if I wonder if it'd be helpful subsequent maybe to the next committee meeting to have to provide a just a brief kind of one pager that shows that fund level summary, if that's helpful.

Speaker: Yeah. In fact, one of our closing, I think, tasks I was going to ask you for is a little bit more around this approved, adopted and how funds are affected by those words, not just to share with this committee, but actually to share with our entire council. I found that this area of municipal budgeting is one of those wrapped around the axle moments that is worth diving into, so that clarity around words like approved and adopted and fund don't cause you a half a day loss at a council meeting. Yeah, more to come on that. Yeah. If you could also clarify when we talk about 10% changes in funds, if that means changes to things that are already in that fund, meaning moving, let's say 15% around within it or changing the size of that fund, those types of things are going to be helpful for us as we move forward.

Speaker: That last piece you asked was my follow up question. Thank you.

Speaker: Councilor avalos.

Speaker: Hello. Thanks for being here. So you mentioned that on the city budget website, there is a link for year round comments. I just took a glance at the website and not seeing it. So that's my first question. Just what's the accessibility of that and the follow up to that being? Is there a way that you all plan to give us that information, like how are we going to receive that feedback that you're collecting?

Speaker: Great question. So and i'll have somebody double check the website. The link should be up there. So apologies if it's not. We actually just relaunched the comment form because we moved it from it's a longer story than you need to have. We moved it and we relaunched it and it's better and more accessible than it used to be. And but your question about how we're going to share that information out is a great one. And I think it's a question for you all. Historically, we sort of would pull the full data dump of all of the comments on a regular basis during the budget season. So sort of we would I mean, if you look on, if you when you look at the old comments, like the vast majority would come in may and so we would pull them like on a weekly basis, I think during that period and maybe starting in March, the so we can continue to do that. Another sort of option would be and we haven't done this before, so I'm offering it with the caveat that we need to figure out how to make it work, but would be for staff to kind of try to code comments, both in the listening sessions and then from the online testimony form, just to say like they, you know, increase funding to x, decrease funding from x, like those that just so that you could see data like aggregated data on what people are saying because we found, you know, you often come away from those budget listening sessions with a sense of like, wow, tons of people showed up on psr. But then, you know, unless you go and do the analysis, you kind of forget that, like, oh, there were also ten comments about this other thing and that might get lost. So that's that's an offer. Obviously there's also kind of a selection issue there. Like very often people are

activated around a particular topic and tons of people show up. But I think nonetheless it could be helpful to see kind of the trends in what's been brought up. So those are the happy to, you know, share with you all the data dump. We may even be able to share a live link where you could check it at any time. I have to check with our new our new comment form and then do that coded data as well.

Speaker: Okay. And then a follow up on just data in general. I mean, I'm hearing there are a couple of things that chair zimmerman's already asking, right. Like some of that coding and understanding all that language. I'll take it a step further to say I would love to receive a folder of homework. I have been looking on the website and kind of just going through what's publicly available, but I would like you all to provide us, and I could talk offline with the chair about what I'm looking for or what kind of info I'm looking for. Maybe there is already a place where that thing exists, or maybe it's something we need to create, but I'd like some level of like, you know, okay, here's the here's last year's budget process. And, you know, I know that's on the website somewhere, but I'd like you all to just provide us a full folder of that so that I can just spend some time digging in, agree that there's got to be some kind of key to every document, like a code, like, what are these budget codes or what are what is this specific budget language mean. So we can start, you know, learning that as we're navigating. So yeah, I just want to put that as an ask and we can follow up. And then my last question I was trying to follow the discussion around why we aren't getting a balanced budget. I don't know that I really captured the answer. So can you explain more about why, or at least what I heard was that the city administrator does not need to give us a balanced budget. Why is that?

Speaker: Yeah, so. So by charter, the mayor's it. It's sort of the mayor's duty to produce the balanced budget. In addition, in talking with the scc.

Speaker: Can you before we do that, can you please bring up the whomever is bringing up the timeline? Yes, because this timeline supports the answer you're going to give if we talk about the dates there.

Speaker: Yeah, sure. So the mayor's it's the mayor's responsibility. Responsibility to produce a balanced budget by may 5th. And the city administrator. So this draft city administrator document is really completely optional. And the idea behind it is to provide, you know, there's no requirement to produce requested budgets at all. The idea behind it is to provide more transparency and something to react to in the public and among council, and to inform the mayor's proposed budget so that that's not built in a vacuum. And it's kind of we're trying to so on the legal side of it, the idea is that, you know, it's the mayor's responsibility and the as a result, the council is not you're not allowed to discuss sort of amendments until the mayor delivers that budget message. That is the like point at which it sort of transfers from the mayor to council to work on. And up until that point, the guidance was having a balanced budget would kind of shortcut the mayor's budget process. And so the guidance we were given was we should not be preparing a balanced budget before the mayor's budget message is released, which, like legally, is required by may 5th. So that's the piece. That's the kind of justification for it. I mean, i, I yeah. And I think it's more it's a, it's a state budget law question. So I think the staff from the ssc could probably get into more depth than we did. Talk to our attorneys as well about it. So happy to provide more on that. But it's.

Speaker: At the end of the day, the mayor's budget will be a balanced budget that they give us, but the city administrators is not right. That's.

Speaker: Yeah. And I mean, thank you, councilor, for both both these kind of categories of questions because these both highlight how, you know, we're in this odd moment of trying to figure out how do we, you know, balance both state

budget law, figuring out how the new process works under the new under this new alignment, figuring out how do we elevate the opportunity for transparency and community input. So that's both on sort of the timeline piece. And I think on I'm thinking about how do we gather this information? We have to, you know, we have a very limited window to figure out how do we get through this next five months to get to the to the balanced budget requirement? But it's an opportunity. I think this is where I get maybe more excited is it's an opportunity to kind of think about how do we do this optimally. And so I would just also encourage us to say, let's live in both worlds a little bit. How do we get through the next few months to get a budget that's that's balanced and compliant with state law? And how do we really build the optimal process for the long term?

Speaker: Thank you, I appreciate that. Lastly, i'll end with just a general comment. I well, I'm excited to hear that you're excited about this new process, because I agree that it's an opportunity to really transform the way that we do the budget process. Looking at this calendar, I mean, I understand the flow and the need for these different steps. What I'm not seeing a lot of is where more community engagement is being sprinkled in along the way. So i'll just keep flagging that for us. And that'll I told chair zimmerman, I'm not a budget guru, but I can be the community engagement angel for us and find ways that we can continue to enhance that, including visuals that the public can clearly understand and just how also just prepping us to communicate with the public about, you know, how to understand the budget and kind of where we're setting our priorities. So i'll just continue to bring that up and we'll be bringing ideas forward. But just wanted to note that I'm not seeing a lot of that in the calendar, and that is my intention to change.

Speaker: Great. Thank you I love that. And we should also note we're working and we talk about community engagement. We're also working in alignment with with

civic life to help us navigate those those issues as well, but absolutely appreciate any kind of angelic assistance that we can get. Thank you.

Speaker: Councilor green.

Speaker: Thank you, chair, and thank you for participating in this. I think it's super important here. I've got a number of questions. So cut me off, chair. If I'm cutting into it. I think we've got time though. So just kind of looking at this calendar and seeing how crunched it's going to get, I think once we get to past February 28th and then we've got to have our listening sessions, and then we want to develop some sort of preparedness to go into the formal processes. Is there any way that this this let me just put it this way. I'm sort of I guess I'm asking on behalf of this committee, can we get some excel files or something that sort of translates the pdf versions of the adopted budgets into something workable? So we can do this work where we say, all right, let's put this into visual form. Let's look at the historical trending of these categories.

Speaker: Yeah, definitely I would I would love to. And I've already had staff who are sitting here starting to work on something that could be helpful for you, but wanted to kind of hear from you all first about what you want. I will just say, I think there's a lot of as a career budget professional in public, in in government. There's a lot in there that's unintuitive. And I think it would just be helpful to actually walk you through, whether it's in this committee or separately in, you know, whatever groupings you'd like, walk you through some kind of basic things to look for in the data so that you can kind of understand what you're seeing a little bit better. I'm, you know, have full faith in all of you that you can figure it out. I just without any kind of tutorial, I think it would be really challenging. And there are also always weird quirks in the data that look like something. And they may not be something because something moved from here to there. And if you, you know, unless you

can triangulate it just it's very complicated and but very happy to do that we you know, so as I said, we've been putting together some data to kind of start so that it's not just a total data dump. And, and happy to kind of go through that and kind of show you and have, you know, if there are other specific questions that you'd like to see more on, we can do that as well. So yeah, happy to talk more about that.

Speaker: I really appreciate that. And I think, you know, being someone who's worked on the other side of this, the education piece will be really important if we're creating our own sort of categories by looking at past budgets. It could be a lot of spinning of wheels. And, you know, we want to be aligned. We want to have a common operating assumption with you guys. I think that'd be super helpful for us. So I look forward to that. My second question is, is there any way we can get sort of a copy of the recent bond rating agency comments? Yeah, I think that'd be pretty helpful. It may not be as urgent in this time frame right now, but definitely when we get sort of post budget, that's going to be some work I'm going to be looking into as we get a little more kind of off season time.

Speaker: Yeah, we can get those to you. No. No problem.

Speaker: Thanks. And the reason why I want to see those is I also want to kind of explore maybe updating or taking a good look at our debt management policy to see if there's opportunities there. You know, obviously you don't mess around with your debt management policy before you look at the bond rating agency comments. So I get that. But there's one part of that policy. Fin 2.12, section eight, which talks about long term debt, allowable uses. And, you know, our policy is that we issue debt, long term debt only for capital projects and those that are defined by allowable cip. I think plan expenses. But I want to know is that is that an internal policy constraint or is that sort of a state law thing or, you know, can you speak to that predominantly?

Speaker: That's an internal policy related to best practices. So, you know, as you I'm sure know, the city's triple A rated. A big part of that is having stable and secure policies that follow best practices. So for example, we don't want to be I don't know if I want to name names, but folks that may be in the midwest who have had some major financial issues because they borrowed for operational purposes, that is not a best practice. So that's why that that exists. Just another thought to put on your radar is we have somebody at the city who specifically is the debt manager, whose job is to manage our credit rating, to manage all of our centrally managed, all of our debt issuance. Et cetera. And so would be happy to have him. His name is matt. Would be happy to have matt come and either present to this committee or have individual briefings, if that's helpful as well.

Speaker: It is. And I and I raise it because, you know, presentation this morning in the transportation infrastructure committee talked about our significant backlog of maintenance. And when you I think the word, the phrase was the cost of inaction is failure. And that's a deferred maintenance depreciation problem. And, you know, as we get to the boundary condition where infrastructure really starts to run away and crumble away, that's the same in my view, of avoided new capital investment because, you know, if I'm a debt, if I'm a sort of bond rating agent, a bond rater analyst, and I'm looking at the city's infrastructure and asset base, and if we have an opportunity to make investments in it, that might be characterized as operational costs, but they're really just sort of capital preservation uses. I would probably give that a positive rating, but that's just me. So just a little flavor of what I'm thinking about here. And so the next question here would be, I did notice that we have an interest rate swap policy. Do we do those.

Speaker: We never have.

Speaker: I don't think so. It's one of those things where you have it on the shelf, and you better have a policy if you're going to do it right.

Speaker: That's that's that's correct. Yeah. There was a time a couple of decades ago when those were starting to be in vogue, and so we created a policy just to have it, but have never used it. And as far as I'm aware, no intent to. If we get into a volatile rate environment, we might want to dust that off. And then if I'm interested in looking at sort of budget versus actual trending data, what's the best report to look for that.

Speaker: Sorry, budget versus actual data. We have reports that we can pull from our budget system, but most of it sort of publicly is included either in the acfr or in the budget documents themselves. But if there are specific questions, we're happy to pull additional data and show you. We can also include some years of budget and actuals in the sort of data that we send over to you.

Speaker: That'd be really great. And acfr is annual comprehensive financial report okay?

Speaker: Yep. Correct. So sometimes just simply financial audit, right. Yeah. And just one other resource that can be helpful. It's another, you know, deep dive. But on the city's on the debt management portion of the city's website or investor relations, I think we call it now all of the city's bond disclosure documents, including the sso, which is the documents that are presented to investors when we do a bond issue, and the annual reporting that's required to be done in association with that are all posted on the website. And so that's just another resource to have slices of information that are maybe a little bit more digestible. It's still very dense and thick, but but it does have some kind of summary tables that might be useful in getting that that lens.

Speaker: Thank you very much. I'll yield.

Speaker: Thanks, councilor. Let's go back to councilor. Novick, please.

Speaker: Yeah, I remember the question I forgot to ask earlier, which is the survey that is out at which I confess, I forget the name of it and I forget when we get it back. But does it ask people questions about choices like if we have to cut police, fire, parks or housing, which would we cut first?

Speaker: Good question. So it's the Portland insight survey, and I do not believe we have a question like that at this point. We've sort of talked about having right now it's more of a high level sort of community priorities survey. You know, most communities have like a basic satisfaction survey, and ours is a little bit more in depth than the sort of average community satisfaction survey, but we have not used it thus far to ask specific budget scenario type questions like the one that you just mentioned, but has been a point of question. I mean, I think there's also options. We do have the focus group. So that could be a place where we could use an exercise like that. And we've talked about creating those types of exercise for community engagement events in the future. I will say, I think for it to be meaningful, we'd probably want to spend some time developing it and thinking, being thoughtful about kind of what the question states. But but definitely something that that we can look at. I mean, there's also kind of packaged software that you can buy that some cities use to do this sort of thing just online. But there's pros and cons to that too. So I think it's a point of ongoing conversation. But a good question.

Speaker: I mean, I would feel I mean focus groups are, you know, obviously not a statistically representative sample. I would like us to have, one way or another, a actual scientific poll asking those questions. And I don't know where the money for that would come from. I mean, I can imagine maybe using some of my office budget for it, if it comes down to that, because I just think that, I mean, as you

know, generally at listening sessions, people come and say, I don't want you to cut x. And it's hard to get people to say, you know, I think you should cut y instead. And even if they did, it's a small sample. So I do think that it would be useful or at least interesting to have an actual poll asking the questions, which we're going to have to answer.

Speaker: Councilor pirtle-guiney.

Speaker: I've shared this with the chair, and I think, jonas, I've shared this with you as well, but I just want to say here for other folks listening, that I absolutely agree with councilor novick that we need to have that conversation about what Portlanders would do when faced with hard decisions. With the level of budget cut we are facing, to only ask people what they care about feels irresponsible. We need to ask people what hard decisions they would make if forced to as well, so that we can have a real conversation with people about what the priorities are for our city, not just the rosy picture of what folks want to add.

Speaker: Thanks, everybody for those questions and some of the feedback. I think a couple of things that I wanted to highlight, and for the second part of this conversation is where I hope we can have some discussion on the timeline, as you see. So one of the areas that that I've insisted on and I've heard from others is and the budget team mentioned it is getting back to our community based listening sessions. And when I say that word, what I'm talking about is the old model of like a school gymnasium. As ruth described, a couple of minutes packed folks from different parts of the community who are sharing the things that they care a lot about. It's something that I'm looking forward to having take place in all four of our districts, which has never happened before. There is a note, though, that I'm curious for conversation purposes, what others think when it comes to when to have those not the specific dates, but what has already been released. So as you

see on the timeline currently, we would be having those sometime after the city administrator's draft budget recommendations were publicly released. A different option is to have. And so before I say a different option, part of that might be to help inform this council, but also to inform the mayor in terms of things that the community is valuing, that they hear from these budget work sessions, excuse me, listening sessions, so that the mayor's proposed budget is able to encompass that feedback. The other side and our colleagues across the river do do it this way, which is once because they don't have a city administrator draft budget come out. They just have the chair's budget come out, which for us would be the mayor's budget. They have those community listening sessions after the executive balanced budget comes out, which is truly where you see, i'll say, the real balancing or the real cuts that exist. I my initial reaction to this was maybe this was mis ordered, but actually in a week or so of kind of marinating on this, on this calendar. I seem to like this calendar now. But I'm curious from colleagues, if you think we should have those listening sessions prior to the mayor's released budget or after the mayor's released budget, and if you have opinions, I hope you'll share them for this conversation. Should we have our district based community listening sessions prior to the mayor's released budget? Meaning after the city administrators? Or should we wait until the mayor releases their executive budget and have them then?

Speaker: Can I comment on that? Or how do you want to go?

Speaker: Why don't we do it? We'll do. We'll just go right on down the way, if that. If that works for you. Councilor avalos.

Speaker: Okay. Well, I guess for me it would also kind of depend on what we feel is our strategy versus the mayor's strategy. I'm not really clear on like, like is because the mayor has to provide a first budget. Right. And I don't know what his intentions are as far as like community engagement or whatever. And then there's kind of it

comes to our desk and then we go from there. I'm just curious if we see that as two different processes, if we see that as the mayor has, you know, some level of programming that he wants to do ahead of his budget, getting released. And then after that we do another layer of programming. So I guess that's what that would be. My what I would need to know to better answer that question, because I could see us justifying both, but I don't know where the mayor sees himself in this process and how he plans to engage the community in his process. Does that make sense?

Speaker: Yeah it does. Thanks.

Speaker: A couple of thoughts, but I'll start with just the practical, which I think at the end of the day overrides any other thoughts I have, which is that between when the mayor's proposed budget comes out and when we have to have an approved budget, which, though we can make changes after, is somewhat limiting, we have one month, and I think soliciting feedback from the public, processing that feedback and coming up with our amendments in one month is a very tall order. And I think practically we just need to move that to before the mayor's budget. For that reason, I hope that if we have those listening sessions before the mayor's proposed budget, we can have a conversation about coordination with the administrative side and the executive branch on those listening sessions. I think we may hear different things than the mayor hears. We may take what we hear and do different things with it. We certainly should leave ourselves the space to make different amendments based on what we hear. But if we can partner on that and help streamline that for Portlanders so that frankly, we're not asking them to go through the same process twice, that may be better for Portlanders ability to engage. And it certainly gives us a little more flexibility in that very short time period we have, after the mayor's budget to make amendments.

Speaker: Thank you. It's helpful. Councilor green.

Speaker: Thank you. I appreciate the question. I'm going to echo what council president just said. I think the practical consideration really does suggest that we should have those listening sessions before the mayor's proposed budget is noticed. I also think that the city administrators public release is going to provide a pretty strong signal of where the mayor's budget is going to be. You can kind of back into what those cuts and ads would look like based upon that. And so that gives us two months basically to get feedback from the community and for us to kind of prepare how we want to respond immediately from the mayor's budget.

Speaker: Councilor novick do you have anything to add?

Speaker: No, I mean, I agree with both those points. I guess I would only add that another factor is that I think if we wait until the mayor's proposed budget, the only people we hear from are people who are mad about cuts in the mayor's proposed budget. Whereas before the mayor's proposed budget come out, even though there will be a recommended budget, we can make it clear to people that everything is on the table. So if you like something or are willing to have something cut, bring it up now and we'll get more comprehensive answers than we will in the responses to the mayor's budget.

Speaker: Thanks for that.

Speaker: Councilor. If I may please. I also just wanted to add, I appreciate all that feedback. And you know, I would just say from speaking from my seat and I'd say from the sort of the executive side, I mean, community engagement early and often in this process is what we would prioritize. I also wanted to kind of step back a little bit to the conversation about kind of the city administrator versus the mayor's budget versus the City Council's budget. It is the city's budget. And so those that terminology reflects the person that's putting it forward. But ideally, this should be a collaborative process where the information that the service areas and bureaus

are utilizing in the fall to develop the concepts is in alignment with the City Council's priorities and the city of Portland's priorities. And then that's reflected in the city administrator's release in February and enhanced. That's the first body of information to reflect those priorities, facilitate that discussion, then enhanced in the mayor's proposed so that in the future state, that is a very limited adjustment that's made. So I just want to be clear that from the chief financial officers perspective and from the executive side of this government, that is the goal is to have that all be in alignment throughout the entire process.

Speaker: Great. Councilor avalos.

Speaker: Yeah, I appreciate that reframing, and I don't want to have my questions be interpreted as feeling like there's two different processes, but I think what I'm getting at is more so I want to understand what are we trying to receive from the public and how do we plan to use it? Because if the mayor has a certain methodology for drafting that first budget and wants to receive feedback in a certain way to use in a certain way, I could see that being a different community engagement process than post that point. And once we kind of like take it on from there. So yeah, I don't want to I just want to be clear. I'm not suggesting that, you know, that the mayor kind of has their own process, but I more so am asking about like, what are we trying to get out of this? I think ultimately, again, when it comes to community engagement, if we don't have a plan for what we're trying to receive and how we plan to use it, then I don't think we have a plan. So that's kind of what I'm getting at and seeing along, as I mentioned, because I believe there needs to be more built into the calendar seeing, okay, what are the things, how are we communicating with or how are we engaging the public prior to the first draft versus once we're in amendment phase versus once we're in? Like there's not really

anything else big that we can change, but maybe there's some small tweaks and we can have another kind of process. So that's what I'd like to develop with your help.

Speaker: And if I do, you mind if I respond to that or do you want to go to it.

Speaker: Let me set a frame quick and then respond. So I think those are great points and questions. And so what what I'm hoping to do based on this conversation with within the finance committee is here's some of this feedback. Take this timeline that the budget office has given us and make some slight adjustments based on this conversation, so that the next time that this body comes together, we'll have a resolution to recommend to our full council for adoption of a calendar. And within that, I think when it comes to how to engage community, one of the questions I've got down today is about when I talk about a district listening session. In my mind, that means the majority, the council being there, not just the three from that district, that what that doesn't mean is that the three from that district, or even on an individual basis, that folks are not out there engaging in, in a in a smaller audience way or in a unique way to their needs of their office. But the sanctioned, fully vested city administration going out to the public takes place in this calendar, which is when we have, let's say, a meeting at mcdaniel high school that all 12 of us and perhaps the mayor are also there hearing that feedback on either side of that. Throughout the whole process, I can imagine that certain groups of three or even individuals will probably have similar types of listening sessions, but those are operations of your office rather than being operations of the budget team, the city administration and the overall council. I hope that makes sense. And now if I could now, ruth, if you have more to add.

Speaker: Sure. And so I just had two kind of quick notes of clarification. So I think with the city administrator's budget recommendations, what we're trying to do. And again, this is the first time we've done it. So asking for a little grace as we're actively

working on it, but is kind of thread the needle to have kind of what councilor novick said of like, everything's on the table. There's this full menu of options, there's a whole list of all the decision packages that have already been developed, and a discussion of things that haven't yet been developed, with some recommendations within there to say, you know, these are painful, but we think they make sense. These were not so sure about have more discussion on them to kind of tee that up so that you all can have a sense and the mayor can have a sense of, you know, what's a total nonstarter for the public and what is kind of, you know, not not being as mentioned as clearly, you know, with the caveat that none of it is going to be representative. So that's the hope is to kind of thread that needle and be able to have both you and the mayor hear that same feedback on the things that are on the table at that point. The other just really quick clarification that I didn't that I think I didn't make clear earlier, historically, the mayor's message has been also a public hearing where you can hear like a council meeting where you can hear testimony from the public. So there is also that opportunity immediately when the mayor releases the proposed budget. So I just want to clarify that as well. There will be there can be public testimony there as well.

Speaker: So I want to make sure I understand. So I've not been a part of one where a proposed budget happens without the message at the same time. Can you is this a normal practice to have a few weeks between.

Speaker: Sorry, it is at the same time.

Speaker: Is it so?

Speaker: So that one that says mayor's message and hearing on the city budget. That's normally the mayor delivers the message at the beginning and then they open it up for the sort of standard two minute testimony.

Speaker: I guess what I meant is that the mayor's proposed budget will be released on 421, and we won't hear his message until five six.

Speaker: Sorry, that's just the noticing. That's a little misleading. Apologies. The actual document would be the actual proposed budget. We're we're planning to release on the first. Sorry, we I would almost strike that noticing line. That's that's more just so that we notice it appropriately.

Speaker: Okay. So with that it kind of goes actually into my next question. You have on here a number of things that are asterisks. And those that say that they are budget committee under state law. That's correct. Can you describe a little bit because I've I'm approaching this and I've worked in other budgets where basically from the time the mayor's proposed budget comes out until the day we adopt the sucker, we are basically in budget hearings in some form or fashion, meaning that out of the 12, if somebody has a proposed amendment, they could drop those anytime. Throughout those conversations, I have not had a municipal calendar dictate which ones are considered a as a budget committee like this. Can you tell me what the thought is behind that so we can understand that better?

Speaker: Yeah, that's kind of a technical note. So in state budget law in Oregon, there's a weird thing. Again, the sec can probably summarize this for you better than I can right now. But in communities of I think it's 200,000 or more, the full committee is designated. The full legislative body is designated as the budget committee. So it's basically Multnomah County, which is why we have the Multnomah County and Portland and. And the state budget law just dictates that the budget committee in that capacity is hearing the approved budget and hearing the mayor's budget message. So you're kind of receiving the mayor's budget message as the budget committee, and then you're turning around and hearing the approved budget on may 21st or thereabouts. So it's sort of it's a legal distinction,

but it just means that I think you are correct that at any time after the mayor's proposed budget message, you can be discussing budget amendments. They won't be reflected until the approved budget or the adopted budget, like those are the two mechanisms, the two points at which we would actually file a thing that reflects the amendments. But you can discuss them at any time once the message has been received.

Speaker: Clear as mud.

Speaker: That's great.

Speaker: So I think I am trying to reflect that out of a council of 12. We have about 4 or 5 who've spent a significant amount of time in some form of municipal budgeting. A couple have spent some time at state and a few who have not done either, and that we've got a variety of experience levels. And when you haven't done one in the city or city, and you fall back on what you've done at other places. So some of that and a couple of my colleagues were probably doing that a little bit and trying to make sense of a new city, a city system that is new to us. So a practice that I'm used to, and I'd like to understand if that's the norm for this city, is a practice I'm used to is listening to councilors throughout the budget season when we're in budget hearings after they've had a released budget. So the balanced one make amendments any old day that they're in that budget committee, you can make an amendment. And it's I amend to fully fund xyz program. And we basically captured those for consideration. But we're not voting on them at the moment in which they come up. We're just adding them to the chalkboard, so to speak. And throughout the season that you've laid out here in the calendar time, some folks are going to go through their considerations about that, and many will survive until the end when we take a vote on them, and many will actually be withdrawn by their by the authoring councilor. And then toward the end of it, when it's getting close to

adopting and balancing the budget, individual amendments or perhaps a package of amendments would be voted on for inclusion in what will become the adopted budget. Is that the practice in the city thus far, or how have we dealt with amendments in previous years?

Speaker: Yeah, i'll take a stab and then turn it over to you. So i, I do think the county does this a little bit differently than we do. So I do want to flag that, although I'm not super familiar with their process. So we historically have collected all the amendments. We, being the city budget office, has historically collected all of the amendments in advance of the approved budget hearing and then reflected them in the so that you can hear them during that hearing, and then you vote on them. And we update the, you know, approved budget based on the amendments that pass in that hearing. So you do the sort of individual voting on them. What we don't do is like vote on individual decision packages. We kind of take all of the decision packages, put them into the approved that we file, and then there's the amendments that say, okay, here's the approved as filed. All of these things are in it based on what was in the mayor's proposed and any other changes. And then one by one you say, okay, I want to take, you know, \$100,000 from here and move it to here. I'm going to take it from the approved as filed and file an amendment that says, reduce this by 100,000 and increase this by 100,000 or whatever. And then you each you put those forward and we kind of group them. Does that make sense.

Speaker: What I'm hearing you describe is that there's at least a culture that the person councilor making an amendment about a program is also offering up the offset. If it's a positive amendment, show us where you're taking from. Right. I just want to clarify that that is a culture and is not a legal basis. Right. In terms of you can propose any amendment. Nothing says it has to be balanced. The only thing has to be balanced is the approved budget. As we once we finally close out and I

and this will become important as we figure out for the very first time how to get 12 people to agree across what I anticipate will be a host of amendments. I think this is worth us putting on our our work schedule so that we can make some recommendations both as a finance office but as a finance committee to our to our council about how we might engage in this. So I think this probably is worth some extra conversation about the season coming up. I know you came up to, if you have something to add, I can pause.

Speaker: No, I was just going to ask if you were referring to the like, the staff amendment that the council at Multnomah County does.

Speaker: So the county has used a staff package. I'm not a big fan of it, but it was a tactic that has been used at different times by different chairs. And that is also just cultural, not anything based in ordinance or resolution. It's just how they've that's how they've negotiated through budget amendments in the past. I'll just leave it at that. Yeah.

Speaker: The only thing I would add is you're absolutely right. Our amendments historically have been a lot more decomposed and balanced. But I would say to your point about the someone introducing an unbalanced amendment, that would mean that the budget would then become unbalanced and the council can vote on an unbalanced budget. It would be a violation of state budget law. So yeah.

Speaker: I think we'll make that part abundantly clear.

Speaker: Yeah.

Speaker: Yeah, good for pirtle-guiney.

Speaker: Actually, I have a question related to that because I do have some concerns with every individual amendment having to be balanced. I don't think that gives us the opportunity to have a holistic conversation about balancing the budget across all programs and across all ads and takeaways, as we are voting on a budget,

I believe that we are allowed to have amended forms of that budget before we vote on the final budget out of balance. I just want to confirm that based on the comment you made.

Speaker: That's right. Yeah, that an individual amendment can put the budget out of balance, but you can't adopt the approved budget as a whole without balancing it.

Speaker: We have the ability with amendments coming to have a strategic conversation about here are five ads. We don't have to have five small takeaways attached to that. We could have one larger takeaway that covered all of them.

Speaker: Yeah. That's right. I mean, I've been the only other data point I have is from the city and county of san francisco, where it's a very different structure. But to this point, they kind of identify the cuts they want to make at the front end, and then they figure out what ads they want to make with the money they generated from those cuts, essentially. So that's a different approach.

Speaker: What a responsible order to take it in.

Speaker: So this has been great right. So I think this is highlighting some cultural and some learning that I think that this smaller committee has a real sense of, or a real duty to make some sense for our larger council and how we're going to engage in this budget process. And I think it sometimes can be lost on members of the public, on our own bureaus, that when we first move into a budget work session, we are almost in essence, in this continual long meeting that goes on until we hit that approved gavel. And so the imbalance that will happen from one day to the next is unimportant as long as the ending approved budget. Excuse me, adopted budget is balanced. And so that can be a different mindset because very few things that we do at the city will be strung out over this many weeks. But this is a long process. And this is where I think from a staff perspective, from a committee

perspective, we can spend a little bit of time in this month to set up somewhat of a guiding light, if you will, for how each of the 12 engage and also how the mayor engages. I think there are going to be times, and this is the only government, I think, in the state where the mayor won't have a vote on the budget. And I think engagement with that executive budget, we're going to be hearing back and forth. So this has been helpful. Hopefully you got a lot of notes as well. Jonas. Colleagues, I'm going to I'm going to make sure I've hit a few things to make sure that we've got the right stuff for the next meeting, but if there's anything else other colleagues want to ask or bring up, I think we are kind of getting to the point of culmination here. So this would be your chance to let yourself known. Councilor green, thanks.

Speaker: Just a clarifying question. So when we gavel in as the budget committee, when does that happen?

Speaker: First, when you hear the mayor's proposed budget message and then when you approve the budget.

Speaker: Okay. So that is a pretty long period. Okay. Thanks.

Speaker: Staff. Anything else to mention before we go to wrap.

Speaker: Up, I just have two things to follow up on. One is with regard to the schedule and the sort of less flexible dates that ruth mentioned. I know some of those dates are outside the regular cadence, so just wanted to flag and maybe request council president will work with with you and the clerk to make sure we get those scheduled. I know there's already some conversation in motion, but but hearing at least general agreement that that we'll go ahead and get those on the calendar. So great. And then second question is, I heard I think that that the path of having the community listening sessions kind of up front is the preferred path we will need to start getting those scheduled to work with the district coalition offices to identify locations and to start advertising that to the community. So I know there

was maybe some schedule hiccups, but we'll start working on that and maybe chair and council president with your offices to start at least getting those meetings on the calendar. I just wanted to confirm your your that you agree with that path.

Speaker: Yeah, I've got a few comments about that. And before we do that i'll go to councilor avalos. You had some comments.

Speaker: Yeah. Sorry if I missed it earlier, but did you state what your expectations are of each counselor in or of the district specific counselors in those events, and the planning and the programing?

Speaker: Yeah.

Speaker: It's I mean, it's a great question. It's an open question. I think we're flexible to do whatever. I mean, the model we've been maybe operating from, at least for this year, is similar to what the model has been in the past, where it's really just an open forum with more of a listening perspective and just kind of inventorying those questions, maybe less of an interactive opportunity. Certainly having the presence of the district counselors there is valuable for you to hear that, but really defer to, you know, your preferences. And again, we're kind of making this up a little bit as we go.

Speaker: Yeah. Just one quick note on, you know, having done these in the past, they can go quite long. And I assume we're going to want to do them in the evening for accessibility reasons. So I do think it's valuable to have some introductory material, especially because we will have if we're doing these in March, we will have just released the city of the draft budget recommendations. So having some material I think can be valuable and we can, you know, put out links ahead of time for people to reference. But ideally keeping the intro fairly short, especially if all 12 of you are are there. It could get quite lengthy if each, and the mayor if each person delivers like a two minute thing. And I just want to, you know, we would like last

year I think we did two hours of testimony from the public. So that's about 60 people at two minutes apiece. So I just yeah, just think being mindful. And we did like last year we cut off registration at some point before not long before. But so just being mindful of that time element.

Speaker: To follow up comments one. Partly why I'm asking. I wasn't able to make my first meeting, but what I had heard from other councilors at their district meetings was that people in the audience turned it into a q and a and started, you know, expressing, you know, requests for things to cut. And from what I understood, we weren't really given any feedback or any heads up on what was the expectation of our presence there. And our role, you know, was originally like, oh, it's just listening and we're just going to be there. And then I wasn't at mine, but I heard from other councilors that that was the case. And so I'm just flagging that we can't do that again. We need to have a clear expectation of what our role is going to be because, you know, as councilors, people are going to want to ask us questions. So if we're going to create space for that, it needs to be an intentional space that we can prepare for. And lastly, on the comment, partially what you're saying, chair Zimmerman around wanting the 12 of us, right, in that how does that affect public meeting law? Or do we have to notice that as like a council meeting officially, or is that how you intend it to show up, like it's an official council meeting, just on budget in the district?

Speaker: Yes.

Speaker: Okay. That's it. Thanks.

Speaker: Yeah. And councilor, just apologies for those community sessions. That interactivity was not our intent when those were set up and not our expectation when we walked in the room either. So just wanted to acknowledge that.

Speaker: Thanks. Yeah. You know what those are. Those are working out the kinks, aren't they. But I think we all got a little surprised. So sorry, councilor green. Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you. It occurs to me I might offer a suggestion for the listening sessions. That could be, you know, expand our capacity because, you know, if you hear two minutes from every person in a large town hall, it's it can take a long time. And some of those concepts might be redundant. So I wonder if, have you guys thought about using, like, a survey tool that you kind of, you know, if you've got a smartphone and you're in the audience, you know, what are your top five priorities? Put them in now and then. We could sort of have that be a bit of an interactive session where we're using some statistics on the fly, be like everyone in the audience thought, you know, public safety was the issue or infrastructure that could potentially narrow in our focus and have a really productive conversation. Thanks.

Speaker: I know you're not the only member of this committee who's voiced some thoughts around that. I've heard that privately from a couple of you. So thank you. So one of the reasons I really want to make sure that we send something to the rest of our council gets back to the dates. Right? I think getting the dates on and in that next resolution will be important so that the clerk's office can lock it in. And balancing 12 schedules is impossible a year out, and it's very impossible with this quick of a fuze. So. I'll if for councilors if you have any concerns or if you have any hard and fast problems on this date, I hope that between now and the next meeting, you'll let the staff know about those or myself as we draft what will approve next time, or i'll ask you to approve next time. We'll work a little bit on. What constitutes a budget or a budget committee meeting, or when appropriate, to drop amendments is and what that process might look like. I'd ask also if you could

get clarification for us around who the budget officer is in this new form of government and how that will play, I will assume that the chair of the budget committee is also the council president. But there's a saying about assumptions. So I'm going to I'm going to hold that until we get good clarification there. And then my request to my colleagues is, you know, we have a member of each district here, and I am hoping that you can take this back to your districts and, and get a sense for a place that you'd like in your district to have a listening session held, because I think that's probably going to be the best recommendation. Get a sense or or at least give everybody some familiarization around the idea that all 12 of us will probably come to a district to hear this listening session, so there are no surprises there. And then I actually think that if groups of three or others are going to do other stuff, that's great, but maybe letting us know kind of some of the other stuff that's going on. But I'm looking at those four being the bulk of the staff slash city administration sanctioned is the wrong word. But like organized paid for. Et cetera. Et cetera. Listening sessions for the budget, knowing full well that there'll be other smaller versions in the community. And I think that's all I've got. Okay. Any last thoughts? Comments? Okay, staff, anything else ready to get off the hot seat? Okay. I'm sure there's a script here that I'm supposed to read about a next meeting, but the next meeting will just say will be two weeks from today, same time, same channel. And we are out.