

GROUND RULES:

- Listen to each other – it's as important as talking.
- Talk to each other not the moderator. The moderator will lead your deliberations, yet remain impartial.
- Everyone is encouraged to participate.
- Everyone understands the talk is deliberative weighing choices, rather than argumentative.
- Ask clarifying questions.
- Explore disagreement. Search for common ground.
- Examine trade-offs across choices.
- Everyone works toward making a decision about what's best for Philadelphia, not just one's own neighborhood.

PROJECT TEAM:

Harris Sokoloff, Chris Satullo, Linda Breitstein, Holly Kirksey,
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THE CITY BUDGET: TIGHT TIMES, TOUGH CHOICES

TAXPAYER FORUMS FEBRUARY 12, 18, 19 AND 23

SCHEDULE

7:00 PM	WELCOME: Harris Sokoloff, <i>Penn Project for Civic Engagement</i>
7:10 PM	PANEL DISCUSSION ON THE CITY BUDGET CONTEXT
7:10 PM	PANEL OF ARTS AND CULTURE LEADERS
	MODERATOR: Chris Satullo, <i>Executive Director, News and Civic Dialogue, WHYY (February 12 and 23)</i> Or Tom Ferrick, <i>former Inquirer Columnist (February 18 and 19)</i>
	PANELISTS: Dr. Camille Barnett, <i>Managing Director</i> Mr. Stephen J. Agostini, <i>Director, City Budget Office</i> Mr. Rob Dubow, <i>Director of Finance</i> Mr. Clarence D. Armbrister, <i>Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office</i> Mr. James Eisenhower, <i>Esquire, Chairperson, PICA</i> or Mr. Uri Monson, <i>Executive Director, PICA</i>
7:45 PM	SMALL GROUP WORK SESSIONS
9:15 PM	CONCLUDING REMARKS How your input will be used
9:30 PM	ADJOURN
6:30-9:30 PM	VIDEOTAPING OF INDIVIDUAL TESTIMONY AND "WAILING "WALL"

WWW.GSE.UPENN.EDU/PPCE ■ CIVIC-ENGAGEMENT@GSE.UPENN.EDU





THANK YOU FOR TAKING PART TONIGHT. WE SALUTE YOUR CITIZENSHIP AND CONCERN FOR OUR CITY.

Tonight, you will work with other citizens to assess the difficult budget choices facing our city government. The results of your discussions will be sent to the Nutter administration. The mayor has agreed to use your work tonight as important input into his proposed 2009-10 budget. We have asked his administration to report back to you on how they factored your input into their budget decisions.

Tonight is an unprecedented experiment in gathering citizen input BEFORE budget decisions get made. Please help it go well, first by giving it a chance, second by being civil and respectful of others.

The accompanying grid offers a sampling of possible budget steps being actively considered by the city. Some steps would cut costs, and services. Others would raise revenues, through increased taxes or fees, thus preserving some services.

This list is a representative sample of the many, many steps being considered to close a \$200 million budget gap, but it is far from complete. A full list would fill many pages. It would be impossible to absorb and discuss in one evening. The full list will be available within a week at www.gse.upenn.edu/ppce.

Each of these possible steps would be painful to someone. It would be great to avoid every one. But that's unfortunately not the world we're living in right now. State law forces the city to balance its budget, requiring the kind of belt-tightening you're probably making in your own home, or experiencing at your workplace.

What will happen tonight? First, you'll hear a panel of top city officials answer journalists' questions as to how the city got into this fix, and how the budget choices you'll review tonight got developed.

Then you'll have three different chances for input;

- 1) You'll be assigned to a breakout group of 20-30 citizens to talk through the budget worksheets, working with trained moderators. Your group will make joint judgments on what input to give city officials, for example: *Sure, cut this. OK, raise this fee. Do this only as a last resort. No way, no how should you cut this.*

Your group will come up with a joint set of recommendations, which will be relayed to City Hall. If you wish, you can also submit a personal version of the worksheet.

- 2) You can also give individual input or testimony at one of three videotaping stations set up in this building. Please observe a two-minute limit per person. All videos will be made available to the city.
- 3) We've also set up a "wailing wall," where you can post any idea, comment, protest or suggestion you might have. The city will get a copy of your note.

The grid/worksheet that you'll receive tonight presents several dozen steps the city of Philadelphia could take to balance its 2009-10 budget. The city is looking at a shortfall of more than \$200 million in its \$3.9 billion spending plan.

Each step has a point value assigned to it. That value represents how much the step would do to close the budget gap, either by saving spending or raising revenue. To make this workshop as simple as possible, we've assigned you the goal of approving steps worth 100 points. So, a step worth 5 points would get you 5 percent of the way to closing the budget gap.

The grid has five columns:

- 1) The service area affected by the step, for example: fire safety, police, street cleaning, administration.
- 2) A description of the step, for example: *Eliminate all travel to conventions.*
A few of the possible actions offer multiple levels of cuts, from less to more severe.
A few actions offer options. *For example: Option A: Cut in half frequency of trash pickup. Option B: Maintain service, levy "pay as you throw" fees.*
- 3) A description of the likely impact of the step. For example: Average household would pay \$40 in new trash fees.
- 4) The point value for this step.
- 5) Your group's decision on this step. If you write a zero in this column, that means you reject the step. If you accept the step, put down the point value shown in Column 4.

Again, your group's goal is to approve a combination of steps—either cutting costs, or raising taxes and fees—equal to 100 points. As your group works, the moderators will ask questions to get at the "whys" of your decisions: *Why keep this? Why cut this? Why are you willing to pay more for this, but not for that?* This input is also vital to city officials.

If your group gets to 100 points, you'll get a small reward for that hard work. You'll review a set of long-term steps that could save big money; these steps would let you to "buy back" a couple of the most painful cuts you had to make. These steps might save a lot of money, but would require changes in law or contracts that the city assume will happen. City officials would like to hear whether you'd support such major steps.

Your moderators will keep tabs on the choices you make together, and will submit to the city ONE sheet representing your collective judgment. If you really, really don't agree with the choices your group made, you can submit an individual worksheet. If you want to do so, ask your moderator for an additional worksheet at the end of the evening, and submit it at the registration desk on your way out tonight.