

City of Detroit

CITY COUNCIL

DENZEL ANTON MCCAMPBELL
COUNCIL MEMBER, DISTRICT 7

MEMORANDUM

TO: Conrad Mallet, Corporation Counsel
Detroit Law Department

THRU: Council President James Tate

FROM: Council Member Denzel Anton McCampbell *D.A. McCampbell*

DATE: March 26, 2026

RE: FY27 Budget Hearing Follow Up – Detroit Law Department

Thank you again for your time and for the presentation during the recent hearing. We appreciate the Department's willingness to walk through current operations and respond to council questions. As a follow-up, I have a few additional questions so I can better understand some of the issues discussed on the record and areas that may come up in future policy discussions.

- 1) Strategic Goal #10 is to 'capture billable time.' How is billable time currently tracked? What percentage of attorney hours are being captured, and what is being done with that data (for example, is it used to bill other departments or to justify staffing levels)?
- 2) Within the General Fund, proposed FTEs drop from 119 in FY26 to 113 in FY27, a reduction of 6 positions. What is the rationale for this reduction given that the overall budget expenditure is actually increasing? Is the department stretching fewer people over more work?
 - a. Two Senior Clerk and two Executive Administrative Assistant 2 positions are being dropped with no replacement.
- 3) Total GF expenditures for the Law Department are proposed at \$21,893,170 in FY27, up from \$21,883,977 adopted in FY26 — an increase of approximately \$9,193 or less than 0.05%. Given inflation, rising salary costs, and the complexity of the department's workload, how is the department able to hold spending essentially flat?
- 4) Employee Benefits are actually decreasing from \$4,076,925 in FY26 to \$4,060,535 in FY27. How is the benefits budget decreasing when we have cost-of-living and healthcare premium trends typically going in the opposite direction?
- 5) The \$500,000 Eviction Prevention and Diversion program is again listed as 'one-time' funding for the second consecutive year. Why is the city's commitment to keeping Detroiters housed being treated as a temporary expense rather than a permanent budget line? What would it cost to make this a recurring appropriation, and what is the administration's plan to do so?

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- 6) Last week was Sunshine Week and Michigan law requires government agencies to respond to FOIA requests within five business days. [Outlier Media recently documented multiple outstanding requests](#) to city agencies ranging from 31 days to 364 days without a response or denial. Can you explain what is happening in these cases, and does the Law Department's FOIA Division track response time compliance across all city departments? One outstanding request is related to Detroit police and Border Patrol and has been pending for 364 days. Another outstanding request is for a home repair loan program consulting contract that has been outstanding for 31 days. Another one related to a solar farm project settlement has been pending for 105 days.
- How many FOIA staff, including attorneys and support staff, are dedicated to the FOIA Division? Is the FOIA Division sufficiently resourced relative to the volume of requests it handles, or is understaffing a root cause of delays?
 - Is there a centralized tracking system for FOIA requests across all city departments?
 - What are the most common categories of FOIA denials or delays? Does the department track denial reasons and publish that data?
 - Are FOIA fees a barrier to access for residents? What was the total amount collected in fees in FY25 and FY26 YTD, and is there a fee waiver process available for low-income requestors or members of the press?
 - What percentage of FOIA requests come in languages other than English, and does the department have capacity to respond in those languages? Is there a formal language access plan for the FOIA process, and if not, will the department commit to developing one?
 - Beyond FOIA compliance, does the department have any policy on proactive disclosure (voluntarily publishing contracts, settlement agreements, legal opinions, and other public interest documents without waiting for a formal request)? Many cities have adopted proactive disclosure policies as a best practice. Has Detroit considered doing so, and is there any funding in this budget to support it?
- 7) Given the current federal immigration enforcement environment, has the Law Department issued formal legal guidance to all city departments, not just DPD, on their obligations and rights when interacting with federal immigration authorities? Is that guidance publicly available, and has it been communicated to immigrant-serving community organizations in Detroit?
- 8) The Criminal Enforcement division handles cases in Sobriety Court, Mental Health Treatment Court, Veterans Court, and Community Court. What training do Law Department attorneys receive on trauma-informed approaches, implicit bias, and restorative justice practices? Has the department evaluated whether its prosecution practices in specialty courts are achieving rehabilitation outcomes and is that evaluation data available to Council?
- 9) What portion of blight litigation defendants are individual Detroit homeowners versus corporate or absentee landlords? Is the department tracking whether blight enforcement is falling disproportionately on long-term residents with limited resources, versus

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speculative investors who should face more aggressive enforcement? Can the department provide a breakdown of defendants by owner type?

- 10) Please provide an update on Municipal Civil Infractions.
- 11) Please provide an update on 19327 W. Chicago.

Commented [DM1]: Please add this to BSEED as well.

Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you have any questions. Thank you.

Cc: Honorable Detroit City Council
Louise Jones, City Clerk's Office
Malik Washington, Director of City Government Affairs