

March 19, 2018

MOBILE COUNTY COMMISSION

The Mobile County Commission met in regular session in the Government Plaza Multi-Purpose Room, in the City of Mobile, Alabama, on Monday, March 19, 2018, at 2:15 P. M. The following members of the Commission were present: Connie Hudson, President, Jerry L. Carl, and Merceria Ludgood, Members. President Hudson chaired the meeting.

AGENDA #1

APPROVE CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS/
PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR AND COUNTY
ENGINEER POSITIONS

The interviews were conducted: Bryan Kegley, applying for County Engineer and Ricky Mitchell, applying for Public Works Director. Court Reporter's Transcript (Freedom Court Reporting) attached.

AGENDA #2

COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS
AND/OR COMMENTS

There were no announcements and/or comments.

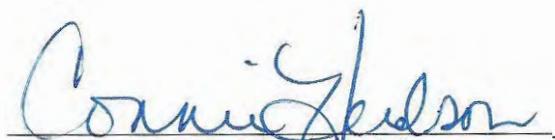
March 19, 2018

AGENDA #3

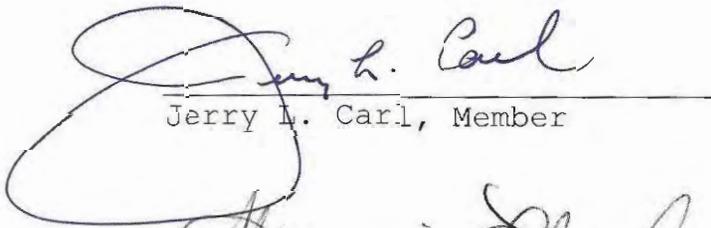
ADJOURN

Commissioner Carl moved, seconded by Commissioner Ludgood, that the Board approve a request for motion to adjourn until March 20, 2018.

Motion carried unanimously.



Connie Hudson, President

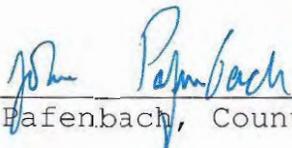


Jerry L. Carl, Member



Merceria Ludgood, Member

ATTEST:



John Pafenbach, County Administrator

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INTERVIEW
of
BRIAN KEGLEY
for
COUNTY ENGINEER

BEFORE THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF MOBILE COUNTY, ALABAMA

CONNIE HUDSON
MERCERIA LUDGOOD
JERRY CARL

DATE: MARCH 19, 2018
TIME: 2:30 P.M.
COURT REPORTER: JENNIFER SAGE, CCR
LOCATION: 205 GOVERNMENT STREET
MOBILE, AL 36602

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PROCEEDINGS

COMMISSIONER HUDSON: We can go ahead and get started. Our first applicant -- candidate for the county -- position of county engineer is, of course, Brian Kegley.

And so we will -- Brian, if you want to start by just giving us a brief introduction --

MR. KEGLEY: Okay.

COMMISSIONER HUDSON: -- and tell us about yourself.

COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Do we need to call him Willis Brian Kegley II?

COMMISSIONER HUDSON: I think we might. We'll call -- we'll start calling him Willis.

MR. KEGLEY: I don't get offended easily, Commissioner, so that's fine.

COMMISSIONER CARL: You know, it took a lot of reading that, about three times, before I finally figured it out.

MR. KEGLEY: Did it? Really?

1 COMMISSIONER CARL: Yeah.

2 MR. KEGLEY: Well, they put the II
3 on the end there because they did not want
4 anyone calling me junior.

5 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Oh.

6 MR. KEGLEY: So that gives you an
7 idea of the thought process of my parents
8 there.

9 Well, I -- I have been employed with
10 the Mobile County Commission since December
11 31, 1994. And my first day of work was New
12 Year's Day, which was a holiday.

13 Wasn't that nice?

14 I have enjoyed my time working with
15 the County Commission. Some of them have
16 been some challenging years. Working
17 underneath Mr. Ruffer and John Murphy for a
18 lot of years afforded me the opportunity to
19 learn an awful lot. That was two fine
20 gentlemen right there that really knew their
21 business. I was able to learn a lot.

22 There were a few stressful years
23 there whenever we were doing the Garvey

1 program. There were some time constraints
2 on spending the money that things got kind
3 of tough in the engineering department, but
4 we struggled our way through it and we did
5 quite well.

6 I think we spent more money than any
7 other county in the state of Alabama. That
8 was a feather in Mr. Ruffer's hat, quite
9 frankly.

10 I have progressed from coming in as
11 a design engineer doing the review of
12 pay-as-you-go plans and commercial
13 subdivisions and site plans to being
14 promoted to the design engineering manager
15 in 2000.

16 And I was able to gradually learn
17 that process and learn how to develop the
18 leadership skills that are necessary to
19 supervise employees. And I've had quite
20 good success with that.

21 I find it enjoyable whenever you
22 have good employees. Being a supervisor in
23 that situation is quite enjoyable. And I've

1 considered myself very fortunate. I've had
2 good people working underneath me.

3 In the unfortunate situation where
4 you have one that doesn't fit in, there are
5 ways of removing them from the process. And
6 we have unfortunately had to do that a time
7 or two.

8 I worked as design engineer manager
9 for about 10 years, and then my supervisor,
10 Mr. Murphy, retired in May of 2011. And Mr.
11 Ruffer pretty much took a lot those
12 responsibilities that Mr. Murphy was
13 shouldering and placed them on me in the
14 spring of 2011 before Mr. Murphy even
15 retired.

16 And fortunately he was there for
17 several months to try to help me shoulder
18 those additional responsibilities moving
19 forward. And I -- I thoroughly enjoyed
20 working underneath his tutelage. And
21 there's not a finer man that I can think of,
22 quite frankly.

23 And whenever he retired, I was asked

1 to step up as the assistant county engineer.
2 And that was an interesting transition,
3 quite frankly, for me working directly for
4 Mr. Ruffer. That was a learning process
5 also.

6 As you can imagine, learning
7 leadership -- additional leadership
8 responsibilities, learning how to handle
9 people, tough situations.

10 The pay-as-you-go program was put
11 squarely on my shoulders. And working
12 underneath Mr. Ruffer's guidance, I think
13 the pay-as-you-go program continued quite
14 well. And it continues today to be doing
15 quite well. I thoroughly enjoyed working
16 with that program, a wonderful program.

17 The capital improvement program is
18 something just here recently in the last
19 five years or so. I enjoyed working with
20 that, kind of helping establish potential
21 projects. Establishing budgets associated
22 with each project is an interesting process.

23 So in 2016 Mr. Ruffer retired and

1 the Commission appointed me the interim
2 county engineer position, which involves
3 additional responsibilities, as y'all know.
4 I'm glad to that for the Commission. I'm
5 always happy to help. And that brings us up
6 to where I am now.

7 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay.

8 MR. KEGLEY: I -- I really struggled
9 with the additional responsibilities for
10 about the first six months or so after you
11 assigned me that -- those responsibilities.

12 But I wouldn't call myself a real
13 quick learner. But after about six months
14 or so, I -- I got a real good feel for what
15 is involved with that.

16 And the last eight, 10 months, I
17 have really enjoyed my position that you
18 guys have asked me to step up and do, so.

19 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay. Thank
20 you, Brian. I think we'll move on to the
21 questions.

22 Did you get the first group?

23 COMMISSIONER CARL: I got the first

1 group.

2 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay. You
3 want to -- we'll start this way, then.

4 COMMISSIONER CARL: All right.

5 Brian, how would you describe your
6 leadership style and give us some examples.

7 MR. KEGLEY: Okay. Well, it -- it's
8 pretty simple, quite frankly. I lead by
9 example. You will catch me coming in early,
10 staying late when necessary. I sit my
11 people down and I tell them, look, you do
12 the very best you can do every day you come
13 to work.

14 You do that and I've got your back.
15 You mess up deliberately, you do something
16 that's illegal or something that you know is
17 not right, and I'm going to be the first one
18 in line to prosecute you, if necessary.

19 My people know what I expect of
20 them. They know they are to be straight-up,
21 forthright, honest and completely legal. If
22 we make an honest mistake somewhere, we'll
23 correct it and move on. That's kind of my

1 leadership style.

2 COMMISSIONER CARL: Okay.

3 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay. I tell
4 you what, what we -- why don't we -- we'll
5 just go ahead and take turns and we'll --

6 COMMISSIONER CARL: All right.

7 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: -- so we don't
8 have to go back around.

9 COMMISSIONER CARL: Sure, yeah.

10 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: How does that
11 sound?

12 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Okay.

13 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Because
14 they're all -- you know, they're not -- the
15 subject matter is not so different on all of
16 them.

17 So I think you had the second group,
18 didn't you, Commissioner Ludgood?

19 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Uh-huh.

20 (Indicates affirmatively.)

21 In your current role, what
22 strategies do you use to build morale among
23 those you supervise?

1 MR. KEGLEY: To build morale. Well,
2 I have found that just going around to
3 people who are under my supervision -- just
4 go around and sit down and talk with them,
5 take 10 minutes.

6 Just plop yourself down in front of
7 them while they're working and ask them to
8 just take a break for a minute and sit down
9 and talk and ask them about their children,
10 things of that nature.

11 I think that helps build the morale.
12 It helps build the camaraderie amongst the
13 people in the engineering department. It
14 helps them feel like we're a family.

15 If something happens to them, to
16 their family members, we're there. As an
17 engineering department, we're going to
18 support them. We'll be there with food, if
19 necessary, whatever they need at home.

20 If they get sick, our people donate
21 sick time, vacation leave, things of that
22 nature, to make sure that they do not go
23 without a paycheck.

1 That's kind of the way that we
2 operate here in the engineering department.
3 We've been doing that for several years. I
4 think that helps the morale of the
5 employees.

6 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Okay.

7 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: How do you
8 establish rapport with others who do not
9 report to you but whom you must obtain input
10 and support to help you achieve your goals?

11 MR. KEGLEY: Sort of the same thing,
12 Commissioner. I make it a point -- I go up
13 there and knock on their door. And if
14 they've got a few minutes, you may see me in
15 there with -- sitting in front of them with
16 my legs crossed and we're just having a
17 casual conversation. I like to do that and
18 maintain a relationship with them. I have
19 found that seems to work fairly well.

20 There's some people that are a
21 little easier to get to know and you may
22 enjoy their conversations a little bit more
23 than some others, but it's important to go

1 and sit down in their office and talk with
2 them periodically. That's kind of my
3 favorite way to -- to do that.

4 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay.

5 COMMISSIONER CARL: What -- Brian,
6 what do you believe are the most critical
7 steps to take when managing any changes and
8 what are some of the pitfalls that you're --
9 you're trying to avoid?

10 MR. KEGLEY: Oh, boy. You're
11 talking to an individual that does not like
12 changes. But I have found that whenever
13 changes are necessary, you need to squarely
14 face them.

15 You determine what your department
16 needs to do to implement the changes,
17 discuss it with everybody. You define the
18 roles that each individual is going to need
19 to play to implement those changes. What
20 software do you need, how long is it going
21 to take to implement that, do we need new
22 computers.

23 You've got to define the scope of

1 the change and how it's going to affect your
2 department and then you attack it head-on.
3 You define the responsibilities that's going
4 to be necessary for each individual in your
5 department. And it may involve individuals
6 outside your department.

7 What we have experienced here lately
8 has been a lot of coordination with the
9 administration department. And we've got
10 some good folks up there on the eighth floor
11 that we have enjoyed coordinating with. And
12 it seems to be ironing some of the wrinkles
13 out, head -- headed in the right direction.

14 COMMISSIONER CARL: Thank you.

15 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Can you give
16 us an example of where you had to deal with
17 conflict on your team and how did you manage
18 it, and -- and, you know, looking in a
19 rearview mirror, is there anything that you
20 would do differently in hindsight?

21 MR. KEGLEY: Well, fortunately
22 Commissioner, we've not had a lot of
23 conflict in -- in our department, thank

1 goodness.

2 All right. I can digress back many
3 years ago when GIS was underneath our
4 department still before it was transitioned
5 up to the administrator's department.

6 And we had a GIS technician that was
7 kind of over the GIS at that time. And we
8 had different ideas of what was his
9 responsibilities and what was not.

10 And dealing with him and enforcing
11 our thoughts of what we thought his
12 responsibilities were became a little bit
13 contentious, but we held firm and we sat
14 down and said, look, we'll provide you
15 whatever equipment you need, whatever time
16 you need to learn this.

17 And it eventually worked itself out,
18 but it was a pretty contentious time there
19 for a little while, but we ironed that out
20 too.

21 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Anything you'd
22 do differently next time?

23 MR. KEGLEY: Well, now that I'm in a

1 position that holds a little bit more
2 authority, I may approach it a little bit
3 differently than where I was as a design
4 manager.

5 I don't know that I would approach
6 it a whole lot differently. I might be a
7 little bit more forceful now that I am in
8 the position that I am now.

9 I don't think I was quite forceful
10 enough with that particular individual at
11 that time. You learn from your mistakes.
12 Now I just go in there and just confront it
13 head-on and say, hey, this is what's
14 expected of you, what can I do to help you
15 accomplish that. I think that's the way I
16 would kind of adopt it now instead of what I
17 did then.

18 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay. And you
19 -- and I guess you've alluded to some of
20 this, but can you tell us about what traits
21 and qualities that you think you possess
22 that make you feel that you're a good
23 consensus builder? What about you is -- are

1 you able to resolve these kind of conflicts?

2 MR. KEGLEY: I think you're talking
3 about one of my strongest points,
4 Commissioner. There are a lot of
5 individuals that I competed with in college.
6 There's a lot of individuals that I have
7 competed against in -- in practice, private
8 practice, prior to coming to the County
9 Commission that are a lot smarter than me.

10 But if you give me an opportunity,
11 I'll build that team. And if you're not
12 careful, we're going to beat your britches
13 off, you know, because we just -- we work
14 hard and consistently.

15 And we're not -- I don't have people
16 on my team that are egotistical, just
17 hardworking, clean-living folks. And just
18 sitting down and talking with people -- one
19 of my favorite things to do is sit down and
20 talk with folks and -- and build a team, you
21 know.

22 If this person and this person are
23 having a hard time, you'll probably find me

1 sitting in there in both of their offices.
2 And I'm going to see if I can bridge that
3 for them or help them bridge that.
4 Sometimes you can, sometimes you can't.

5 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Well, what
6 skills do you use to try to bridge that?
7 That's what we're trying to --

8 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Yeah.

9 MR. KEGLEY: Sitting there and
10 looking them eye-to-eye, going and sitting
11 down and talking with them and finding out
12 what their grief -- what their beef is and
13 seeing if there's anything that I can do to
14 try to help that situation and vice versa
15 with the other individual.

16 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: So that's your
17 approach, what is the problem and what can I
18 do to help you resolve it?

19 MR. KEGLEY: You know, find out what
20 the problem is and identify it. And then
21 let's go conquer it. You know, this --
22 let's go handle it. Don't let it fester. I
23 think it is -- is probably the best way.

1 But just going to sit down and
2 talking with people I find is -- is a good
3 way to build consensus among people.
4 Sometimes you're -- can do it and sometimes
5 it doesn't work. Yeah.

6 COMMISSIONER CARL: These question
7 are not set up. They were given to us.

8 MR. KEGLEY: I understand.

9 COMMISSIONER CARL: If it sounds
10 like I'm trying to get to a particular
11 point, I'm not here.

12 Have you ever been in situations
13 where you were less successful as a leader
14 than you would have wanted to be? What did
15 you learn from that experience?

16 MR. KEGLEY: As a leader, less
17 successful. Nothing pops out in my head,
18 Commissioner. I might just generalize.

19 I have one manager that is currently
20 working for me that I have been trying to
21 set a good example by coming in early and
22 leaving late and things of that nature. And
23 this particular manager has not picked up on

1 that. I'm -- I'm going to have to address
2 it just point blank.

3 And I think I'm getting very close
4 to -- to doing that. I like to kind of pick
5 my times. There's a right time and there's
6 a wrong time.

7 And whenever this particular
8 individual gets to a point where I think it
9 will be conducive to making that change,
10 I'll -- I'll have to confront that, but I --
11 I pick my times.

12 COMMISSIONER CARL: I wish I could
13 learn a little bit of that.

14 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Let's see --

15 MR. KEGLEY: You know, the older you
16 get, Commissioner, the easier it is -- it is
17 to just kind of bite your tongue and wait
18 for the time, I have found. I used to be a
19 little more hot-headed.

20 And whenever an issue arose, I'd
21 just address it just point blank
22 immediately. And sometimes that's the worst
23 time you can do it because both individuals

1 are still frustrated and angry over that
2 situation.

3 And I'd go and try to attack it
4 right then, but I have found sometimes it's
5 best to let them cool off and give it a day
6 or two, and then go in there and sit down
7 and talk to them calmly.

8 That's just come with a little bit
9 of seasoning. I've got enough gray hair
10 right now I can say that comfortably.

11 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: So how do you
12 ensure that costs are controlled in your
13 current role in your budget?

14 MR. KEGLEY: By maintaining our
15 budgets.

16 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Uh-huh.
17 (Indicates affirmatively.)

18 MR. KEGLEY: I have an individual in
19 my office, Commissioner, that used to be
20 heavily involved in budgets. That
21 particular individual has been removed from
22 that responsibility, but he still has that
23 capability.

1 Whenever I receive reports down from
2 the administrator's office, I hand those to
3 this particular individual and he plots that
4 for me. I can keep up with our 112 labor
5 budgets. I can keep up with my 116
6 infrastructure, the 128s, severance tax
7 fund. I just -- we just keep a running
8 chart to ensure that we stay within budget.

9 Now, my 116 fund we had been
10 running -- we've been burning through that
11 pretty -- pretty rapidly, but these are
12 projects that the Commission has asked us to
13 pursue the TAP grants and, you know, things
14 of that nature.

15 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Uh-huh.
16 (Indicates affirmatively.)

17 MR. KEGLEY: Which are good
18 projects, but that money comes out of my 116
19 fund.

20 And we are pursuing a lot of other
21 drainage projects, things of that nature,
22 and I've -- I've kind of run into a
23 situation where I -- I needed a little bit

1 of an infusion. And I think our finance
2 director has been gracious enough to -- to
3 do that.

4 And I think that's the type of
5 relationship that we're developing with
6 finance. They know what we're trying to do,
7 trying to accomplish. And I think we're --
8 they're working hand-in-hand with us to get
9 that accomplished for the Commission.

10 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: So you
11 basically closely monitor your budget
12 expenditures?

13 MR. KEGLEY: Whatever budgets that
14 I'm responsible for, I have this particular
15 individual creating graphs for me where I
16 can show the budget and then where I am
17 incrementally month by month.

18 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay.

19 MR. KEGLEY: So whether -- if I need
20 to cool my jets on a particular budget or
21 transfer something out of this budget into
22 that one, or whatever we need to do.

23 Otherwise, you're running blind. If

1 you don't do that, you're running blind.

2 And y'all expect more than that from us.

3 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Thank you.

4 What would you intend to accomplish
5 in -- in your first year if you're named as
6 county engineer permanently?

7 MR. KEGLEY: You know what I would
8 really like to do. I thought you guys would
9 ask me a question, what would you like the
10 county engineering department -- what
11 changes in the next five years.

12 And I've thought about that a little
13 bit. In the next year, I would really like
14 to implement two things, and it's going to
15 involve coordination with the administration
16 department.

17 One, I would like to go to
18 electronic agendas. We've discussed this
19 before, last year. I would also like to go
20 to an electronic bidding process. All of
21 our projects are being bidding -- bid
22 electronically.

23 We've discussed it with the road

1 builders and briefly discussed with Mr.
2 Pafenbach. There's going to have to be some
3 coordination between our departments, but I
4 would like to pursue both of those items
5 within the next year.

6 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: As far as how
7 any of the personnel issues, you think that
8 those are --

9 MR. KEGLEY: Yeah. We're pretty
10 stable in --

11 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: It's pretty
12 stable?

13 MR. KEGLEY: -- the engineering
14 department right now, Commissioner. We --
15 I've got about 24 people.

16 We're running pretty tight right
17 now. I've got a situation where I have one
18 manager and one engineer -- three, a
19 professional engineer, that have kind of put
20 me on notice that I've got probably two
21 years or less before they retire or are not
22 with us anymore.

23 So I'm going to have to try to get

1 somebody in probably within the six months,
2 if possible, at least within the next year
3 to get them in to study underneath these two
4 individuals so that I don't lose all that
5 knowledge whenever it walks out the door.

6 So I'm either going to bring in a
7 young engineer right out of college if I can
8 find somebody that's got a suitable --
9 suitable temperament to handle that, or I'm
10 going to need to bring in a professional
11 engineer to kind of pick up those
12 responsibilities and learn those two
13 topics before those people walk out the
14 door.

15 COMMISSIONER CARL: You ever see, in
16 the foreseeable future, downsizing?

17 MR. KEGLEY: Oh, I -- I don't know
18 how we could do that, Commissioner. There
19 would have to be some changes in our job
20 responsibilities, because right now all my
21 engineers that I have on staff are pretty,
22 pretty busy.

23 COMMISSIONER CARL: How many

1 engineers do you have on staff?

2 MR. KEGLEY: Let's see, I've got
3 three directly underneath me. And I think
4 Ricky has two, I think, underneath him,
5 professional engineers.

6 COMMISSIONER CARL: All right.

7 MR. KEGLEY: I just -- I just don't
8 see us downsizing much at all, Commissioner.
9 The responsibilities that we're charged with
10 continue on.

11 COMMISSIONER CARL: If I ever get
12 rid of all these dirt roads, you won't --
13 won't have that problem.

14 MR. KEGLEY: Oh, yeah. Well --

15 COMMISSIONER CARL: That's my goal
16 anyway.

17 MR. KEGLEY: -- we're a long way
18 away from that.

19 COMMISSIONER CARL: Job security.

20 What -- what do you think the
21 employees are looking for from work life
22 today? It doesn't sound right, but that's
23 the way it reads. And how do you get the

1 best out of your employees?

2 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: I think they
3 are talking about work/life balance.

4 COMMISSIONER CARL: Okay. All
5 right. Work/life.

6 I thought life was work.

7 MR. KEGLEY: Well, you know, my --
8 my boss, John Murphy, would walk around the
9 corner whenever he was getting ready to
10 leave and say "don't stay too late. You got
11 a wife and kids at home. Don't stay too
12 late. You've got a wife and kids at home."

13 And whenever my children were small
14 I had that natural tendency to want to stay
15 real late, but I would just force myself to
16 just leave because I needed to be home for
17 dinner for my kids.

18 Of course, they are all grown now,
19 so I don't have that pull back to the house,
20 so making it easier for me to stay late.
21 But I -- I try to tell my folks "don't stay
22 too late, don't stay too late."

23 I'll walk by there and it's 5:30 and

1 they're still hard at it, I'll stick my head
2 in the door and say "don't stay too late,
3 you've got a wife and kids at home, go
4 home."

5 And if I walk by again and it's 6
6 o'clock, I'm a little bit more forceful.
7 I'll stick my head in the door and say "go
8 home." I think that's pretty important.

9 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: You want to
10 go into your -- because I have one that's
11 not on the list that I want to ask, but I
12 want to make sure we've got this covered.

13 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER CARL: That's no fair.

15 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Well, you
16 asked about downsizing.

17 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: I think we've
18 -- we've got plenty of time. You go ahead.

19 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Okay.

20 Well, it's kind of in your -- are
21 you going to ask about performance measures?

22 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Yeah.

23 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Well, that's

1 what I wanted to know about.

2 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay. As far
3 as performance measures, because I know you
4 have to -- not only do you monitor the --
5 the role of the employees who report to you
6 but you basically have to monitor yourself
7 as well.

8 So what -- what type of key
9 performance measures do you use to not only
10 measure your employees but yourself? I
11 mean, what -- what expectations --

12 MR. KEGLEY: Well, I --

13 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Can -- can I
14 add a little bit on top of that?

15 And one of the things that we're
16 looking toward is performance measures for
17 our departments, how are we going to measure
18 the work that we do. That's one of the
19 things that came out of our study and just
20 whether you had given any thought to how you
21 would approach that.

22 MR. KEGLEY: Well, we could set up
23 measurements such as how many reviews have

1 you done, how many permits have you issued,
2 things of that nature. There's ways of
3 establishing those type performance
4 measures.

5 But even more importantly than that
6 is what -- what kind of a leader are you,
7 what kind of example are you setting for
8 your employees that are working for you.

9 I think that's probably as
10 important. If -- if you set a good example
11 for your employees and you know that they
12 know what you expect of them and you set
13 that example as a -- as a leader of your
14 department, I think you'll end up with good
15 production.

16 And if you're not -- I mean, if we
17 establish performance measures and we see
18 that something's falling off in a certain
19 area, then we'll have to address that, of
20 course.

21 And there may be circumstances for
22 it. It may be something that's occurring
23 outside of the department that's causing

1 that, but we --we'll determine that at that
2 time, I would think.

3 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: But they
4 clearly understand what expectations and --
5 so there's no -- no confusion, no doubts.
6 They know what the expectation is.

7 MR. KEGLEY: They know --

8 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: And then you
9 monitor to make sure --

10 MR. KEGLEY: They know what is
11 expected of them.

12 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: -- they are
13 living up to those expectations.

14 MR. KEGLEY: Absolutely. And -- and
15 we go in and we sit down as managers and we
16 sit and talk with them and say, hey, how's
17 -- how's it going, you know, are things
18 okay, how is this side of the building
19 doing.

20 I like to do that because Ricky has
21 got that side and I've got this side. And a
22 lot of times I'll just plop down and say
23 how's things going on this side of the

1 building to see if there's anything I can do
2 to try to help that situation.

3 And -- and not only just him, but
4 there are other managers that may not even
5 work for me. And I'll go sit down in their
6 office and say, hey, how is it going, how
7 you doing, and just to see if there's
8 anything on their mind that may be giving
9 them grief. Maybe I can help them out a
10 little bit.

11 I think that's pretty important.
12 I've -- I intentionally do that, try to
13 establish rapport with those folks,
14 consensus building.

15 But performance measures, we haven't
16 really implemented a lot of that,
17 Commissioner. Mr. Ruffer and Mr. Murphy
18 would always just expect you to come in and
19 just -- you hit it hard whenever you walk
20 through the door.

21 And you will have a pile of stuff
22 that needed to be done in the morning. And
23 at the end of the day, that pile of stuff

1 was over here. It was done. And by the
2 next morning --

3 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: So it's in
4 work output is what you're saying?

5 MR. KEGLEY: It's just piling it up.
6 The next morning you'd have another stack to
7 attack. And I've -- I've been here 23 years
8 and I've never had a slack day. I've never
9 had a day that I wasn't busy. I like that.
10 It makes the day go by fast.

11 But my responsibilities now are much
12 different than they were 10 years ago. And,
13 quite frankly, I'm getting to where I really
14 enjoy what I'm doing here with the
15 additional responsibilities. It's -- it's a
16 learning process, but it's a good learning
17 process.

18 COMMISSIONER CARL: I think more
19 important the question was going, in my
20 head, was -- I don't understand how to gauge
21 what people should be doing. You say
22 they're doing a great job because they're
23 handling a lot of volume.

1 MR. KEGLEY: Uh-huh. (Indicates
2 affirmatively.)

3 COMMISSIONER CARL: The first thing
4 I taught was don't confuse volume with
5 profit because you can stay real busy and
6 still lose money. So you've got to learn to
7 work smarter and less, if you possibly can.
8 I'm a salesman by nature so that makes me
9 lazy.

10 But we have no way of measuring a
11 dump truck driver -- how many loads a day is
12 he supposed to deliver. An engineer -- if
13 you are an attorney, they -- they've got
14 trackable hours.

15 But -- but, you know, there's --
16 there's -- there's -- there's something
17 there that you can -- you know, if you owned
18 -- owned a big law firm or an engineering
19 firm, you know, each engineer should turn
20 out X amount of hours per million in
21 construction. That's the way I'm told it's
22 handled.

23 But in -- in government, it's not

1 that way. It's just did you do a good job
2 or not do a good job. And -- and the answer
3 to fix everything is hire another person.
4 You know, that's -- that's kind of the
5 feeling I get. And I'm just speaking for
6 myself here.

7 So I guess where I was trying to go
8 with this, do you think there's a method
9 that we can put in place to start tracking
10 these hours and what people are actually
11 achieving?

12 Because to motivate people, it's
13 great to be able to go to them and say,
14 look, you did this much more than you did
15 last month and look how much more we've got
16 done. You know, it -- it can also be used
17 as a motivational tool. It's not just to --

18 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: You know, as
19 I was thinking about these questions, every
20 question that came to my mind, I realize
21 that it was probably a public works
22 question.

23 COMMISSIONER CARL: Yeah.

1 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: And that's --
2 that lends itself more to that kind of
3 measurement than like the peer engineering
4 side. That's what I was thinking.

5 COMMISSIONER CARL: Even an
6 engineer, how many hours are they, on
7 average, spending on a set of plans?

8 MR. KEGLEY: It depends on the size
9 of the plans and whether -- if it's a 30,
10 60, 90 or 100 percent submittal.

11 COMMISSIONER CARL: Okay.

12 MR. KEGLEY: How good of a job did
13 the engineer that's submitting it to you do.
14 Sometimes you'll roll out something and --
15 and you'll start diving into it and you
16 realize, oh, my goodness, this is going to
17 take a lot because he missed this, this,
18 this and this.

19 And then you'll roll out your next
20 set of plans and, wow, that's a good job.
21 That guy really thought this through. And
22 you just have a few review comments. It's
23 really kind of difficult, Commissioner

1 because --

2 COMMISSIONER CARL: But you have an
3 average.

4 MR. KEGLEY: -- as an engineering
5 department, we're -- we're more driven
6 towards -- not necessarily production, but
7 it is doing things in a timely manner so
8 that we can give it back to the consulting
9 engineers or doing things in a timely manner
10 to ensure that we're meeting your needs.

11 That's more of where we come from as
12 an engineering department, the -- what
13 you're talking about as far as keeping track
14 of things. That's more of -- I agree with
15 the Commissioner -- more of a public-works-
16 related type issue.

17 I can pretty much tell -- and I
18 think my managers can tell whenever the
19 engineer is working for them or are doing
20 their job or not, doing it in a timely
21 manner.

22 Fortunately I -- I think I've got
23 some really good engineers working for me.

1 I don't even have to worry about it. Our
2 managers don't even have to worry about it.

3 They are in, they are working, they
4 are doing a good job. I get good feedback
5 from the consulting engineers that are
6 receiving the comments from -- from my
7 engineers. They're -- they're flowing
8 really well right now.

9 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Okay.

10 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay. Have we
11 asked --

12 COMMISSIONER CARL: I got my four.

13 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: We've got a
14 little more time.

15 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: We can see
16 what questions he may have.

17 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Yeah. We
18 will.

19 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Okay.

20 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: But do y'all
21 have any more questions that you can think
22 of that are follow-up that you want to ask
23 him?

1 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: The -- you
2 know, one of the things that a lot of -- we
3 have a very active county -- State County
4 Engineers Association, National County
5 Engineers Association, and it looks like
6 they have -- what has been your involvement
7 with them? How do you -- do you think
8 that's important in what they -- in what
9 they can bring to us in terms of doing
10 things better?

11 MR. KEGLEY: Well, I think as an
12 association it's important that we have a
13 strong association to try to get things
14 challenged in Montgomery whenever law --
15 prospective laws, bills are brought up into
16 the House of Representatives and the Senate
17 that could affect the counties. I think we
18 have strong associations right now.

19 I, as the assistant county engineer,
20 have not been afforded an opportunity at
21 this point in time to really get involved
22 with that.

23 I would foresee myself becoming a

1 little bit more involved with ASCE if -- if
2 I'm appointed as the county engineer. I
3 think the county engineer of a county as
4 large as Mobile needs to be involved in
5 ASCE.

6 ACCA, not necessarily as much, but I
7 know Mr. Ruffer was involved with Sonny
8 Brasfield with ACCA. If I'm appointed
9 county engineer, I -- I would foresee myself
10 approaching Sonny and seeing if there's
11 something that maybe the county engineer
12 from Mobile County could help him with,
13 pursuant, of course, with y'all's approval
14 because it takes time out of your county
15 engineer's time to -- to do that. So with
16 y'all's approval, I would foresee myself
17 doing that.

18 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Richie Beyer,
19 I think, who's Elmore County.

20 MR. KEGLEY: Elmore County.

21 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: He represents
22 engineers nationwide on the NACo board.

23 MR. KEGLEY: Absolutely.

1 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: He is their
2 representative.

3 MR. KEGLEY: Yeah. We were there
4 for his inauguration.

5 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Okay.

6 MR. KEGLEY: Yeah, a very good
7 engineer.

8 COMMISSIONER CARL: Is there
9 anything in the engineering department you
10 feel like you want to change?

11 MR. KEGLEY: There is one thing.
12 The manager that I have over the traffic
13 engineering department is not a professional
14 engineer. He is a technician that was hired
15 many years ago and has been with us over 35
16 years and has just learned it coming up
17 through the ranks. He's got a world of
18 knowledge.

19 I -- He's one of the two individuals
20 that I noted earlier that I think will be
21 leaving me probably in the next couple of
22 years, and I don't want all that knowledge
23 walking out the door.

1 I think if -- if you've got an
2 engineer that is marking up plans of another
3 professional engineer, that individual needs
4 to be a professional engineer.

5 And, James, bless his heart, he's
6 doing a really good job. He's not a
7 professional engineer. So far we've been
8 very lucky that -- that we haven't had any
9 of our consulting engineers complain about
10 their work being reviewed by a non-PE, but
11 that's only because he's that good. I mean,
12 he's really good.

13 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: I'm sure he is
14 well respected by everybody.

15 MR. KEGLEY: He is well respected,
16 absolutely.

17 COMMISSIONER CARL: He's won several
18 awards.

19 MR. KEGLEY: Yes, he has. I mean,
20 he knows his stuff.

21 And whenever he has been out
22 recently it's put a little bit of additional
23 pressure on some of the others of us in the

1 office to try to cover it.

2 And, quite frankly, there's several
3 things that I have just allowed to migrate
4 into the future until I could get him back
5 to start addressing some of those. And I
6 think we're back addressing those.

7 But whenever he walks out the door,
8 that's a whole -- that's just a ton of
9 experience that I'm going to lose in our
10 department.

11 And I think I would like to have a
12 professional engineer handle that end of it.
13 So that's the one thing I think I would
14 change.

15 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Do you -- do
16 you have engineers on staff who are not
17 professional engineers? And, if so, what,
18 if anything, does the department do to help
19 them achieve their PE?

20 MR. KEGLEY: Well, I do not have any
21 Engineer Is or IIs right now. I have not
22 had a need to hire a young engineer. And
23 what happens is you hire them right out of

1 school as an Engineer I and four years later
2 they take their PE exam and they become an
3 engineer, a professional engineer. So I do
4 not have any young engineers right now.

5 I -- I met with Fanice last week and
6 I've put in a request for a young Engineer I
7 so I can get something -- somebody on staff
8 to start learning.

9 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Okay.

10 MR. KEGLEY: Yeah.

11 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay. Well,
12 Brian, do you have any questions of us?

13 MR. KEGLEY: Well, you know, I
14 thought about this over the weekend. And I
15 thought, you know, I'm going -- I'm going to
16 walk in there and I'm going to say, hello,
17 Commissioners, what would you like to ask me
18 that you don't already know.

19 I think the County Commission is a
20 strong commission. Everybody knows that.
21 You're well respected. It's been a pleasure
22 working for you, all three of you.

23 I think over the last 18 months I've

1 had an opportunity to establish a good
2 rapport with all three of you. And with the
3 additional responsibilities that y'all have
4 placed on my shoulders, it has given me a
5 little bit of additional authority with some
6 of the other department heads like with
7 MAWSS and ALDOT and -- because they are
8 looking at me as the county engineer instead
9 of the county engineer's assistant.

10 Even though my title is still
11 assistant, I've been functioning in -- in
12 that capacity. So it's been a good learning
13 experience.

14 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Good.

15 MR. KEGLEY: It really has.

16 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: We appreciate
17 the job you've been doing too.

18 MR. KEGLEY: Well, I'm -- thank you.
19 I appreciate that because --

20 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Do you have
21 any questions you want to ask us?

22 MR. KEGLEY: Well, I'm just -- I've
23 had other people ask me what kind of time

1 frame do y'all think you will make your
2 decision? Next week or two?

3 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Well, I know
4 it's been a long, drawn-out process. I
5 think our intention now is to get through
6 these interviews. We've got them -- we've
7 got -- within -- within this week we're
8 going to have all the interviews completed.
9 So I would think that a decision should be
10 forthcoming soon, very soon.

11 MR. KEGLEY: Okay. Very good. I do
12 not have any additional questions.

13 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay.
14 We appreciate your time today.

15 MR. KEGLEY: Thank you.

16 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Thank you.

17

18 (Whereupon, the interview of Brian
19 Kegley was concluded at 3:25 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

STATE OF ALABAMA)
MOBILE COUNTY)

I hereby certify that the above and foregoing interview was taken down by me in stenotype, and the questions and answers thereto were transcribed by means of computer-aided transcription, and that the foregoing represents a true and correct transcript of said interview.

I further certify that I am neither of counsel nor of kin to the parties to the action, nor am I in anywise interested in the result of said cause.

JENNIFER L. SAGE, CCR
COURT REPORTER, NOTARY PUBLIC
STATE OF ALABAMA AT LARGE
ACCR# 292, EXPIRES 9/30/18

<u>WORD INDEX</u>		
<1>	22:7 23:4	approach 15:2, 5
10 5:9 7:16 10:5	accomplished 22:9	17:17 29:21
33:12	ACCR 47:21	approaching 40:10
100 36:10	achieve 11:10	approval 40:13, 16
112 21:4	43:19	area 30:19
116 21:5, 9, 18	achieving 35:11	arose 19:20
128s 21:6	action 47:15	ASCE 40:1, 5
18 44:23 47:21	active 39:3	asked 5:23 7:18
19 1:18	add 29:14	21:12 28:16 38:11
1994 3:11	additional 5:18	assigned 7:11
	6:7 7:3, 9 33:15	assistant 6:1 39:19
	42:22 45:3, 5	45:9, 11
	46:12	associated 6:21
<2>	address 19:1, 21	Association 39:4, 5,
2:30 1:19	30:19	12, 13
2000 4:15	addressing 43:5, 6	associations 39:18
2011 5:10, 14	administration	attack 13:2 20:3
2016 6:23	13:9 23:15	33:7
2018 1:18	administrator's	attorney 34:13
205 1:21	14:5 21:2	authority 15:2
23 33:7	adopt 15:16	45:5
24 24:15	affect 13:1 39:17	average 36:7 37:3
292 47:21	affirmatively 9:20	avoid 12:9
	20:17 21:16 34:2	awards 42:18
<3>	afforded 3:18	awful 3:19
3:25 46:19	39:20	
30 36:9 47:21	agendas 23:18	
31 3:11	ago 14:3 33:12	back 8:14 9:8
35 41:15	41:15	14:2 27:19 37:8
36602 1:22	agree 37:14	43:4, 6
	ahead 2:4 9:5	balance 27:3
<5>	28:18	basically 22:11
5:30 27:23	AL 1:22	29:6
	ALABAMA 1:10	beat 16:12
<6>	4:7 47:3, 21	becoming 39:23
6 28:5	ALDOT 45:7	beef 17:12
60 36:10	allowed 43:3	believe 12:6
<9>	alluded 15:19	best 8:12 17:23
9 47:21	amount 34:20	20:5 27:1
90 36:10	angry 20:1	better 39:10
	answer 35:2	Beyer 40:18
<A>	answers 47:8	bid 23:21
able 3:21 4:16	anymore 24:22	bidding 23:20, 21
16:1 35:13	anyway 26:16	big 34:18
Absolutely 31:14	anywise 47:15	bills 39:15
40:23 42:16	applicant 2:4	bit 11:22 14:12
ACCA 40:6, 8	appointed 7:1	15:1, 2, 7 19:13
accomplish 15:15	40:2, 8	20:8 21:23 23:13
	appreciate 45:16,	28:6 29:14 32:10
	19 46:14	
		40:1 42:22 45:5
		bite 19:17
		blank 19:2, 21
		bless 42:5
		blind 22:23 23:1
		board 40:22
		boss 27:8
		boy 12:10
		Brasfield 40:8
		break 10:8
		BRIAN 1:3 2:6, 7,
		14 7:20 8:5 12:5
		44:12 46:18
		bridge 17:2, 3, 6
		brief 2:8
		briefly 24:1
		bring 25:6, 10 39:9
		brings 7:5
		britches 16:12
		brought 39:15
		budget 20:13 21:8
		22:11, 16, 20, 21
		budgets 6:21
		20:15, 20 21:5
		22:13
		build 9:22 10:1,
		11, 12 16:11, 20
		18:3
		builder 15:23
		builders 24:1
		building 31:18
		32:1, 14
		burning 21:10
		business 3:21
		busy 25:22 33:9
		34:5
		<C>
		call 2:14, 16 7:12
		calling 2:16 3:4
		calmly 20:7
		camaraderie 10:12
		candidate 2:5
		capability 20:23
		capacity 45:12
		capital 6:17
		careful 16:12
		CARL 1:13 2:20
		3:1 7:23 8:4 9:2,
		6, 9 12:5 13:14

<p>18:6, 9 19:12 25:15, 23 26:6, 11, 15, 19 27:4 28:14 33:18 34:3 35:23 36:5, 11 37:2 38:12 41:8 42:17 casual 11:17 catch 8:9 cause 47:16 causing 30:23 CCR 1:20 47:20 certain 30:18 CERTIFICATE 47:1 certify 47:6, 13 challenged 39:14 challenging 3:16 change 13:1 19:9 41:10 43:14 changes 12:7, 12, 13, 16, 19 23:11 25:19 charged 26:9 chart 21:8 children 10:9 27:13 circumstances 30:21 clean-living 16:17 clearly 31:4 close 19:3 closely 22:11 college 16:5 25:7 come 8:12 20:8 32:18 37:11 comes 21:18 comfortably 20:10 coming 4:10 8:9 16:8 18:21 41:16 comments 36:22 38:6 commercial 4:12 Commission 3:10, 15 7:1, 4 16:9 21:12 22:9 44:19, 20 COMMISSIONER 2:3, 11, 13, 15, 19, 20 3:1, 5 7:7, 19, 23 8:2, 4 9:2, 3, 6,</p>	<p>7, 9, 10, 12, 13, 18, 19 11:6, 7, 12 12:4, 5 13:14, 15, 22 14:21 15:18 16:4 17:5, 8, 16 18:6, 9, 18 19:12, 14, 16 20:11, 16, 19 21:15 22:10, 18 23:3 24:6, 11, 14 25:15, 18, 23 26:6, 8, 11, 15, 19 27:2, 4 28:9, 13, 14, 15, 17, 19, 22, 23 29:2, 13 31:3, 8, 12 32:17 33:3, 18 34:3 35:18, 23 36:1, 5, 11, 23 37:2, 15 38:9, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17, 19, 20 39:1 40:18, 21 41:1, 5, 8 42:13, 17 43:15 44:9, 11 45:14, 16, 20 46:3, 13, 16 COMMISSIONERS 1:9 44:17 competed 16:5, 7 complain 42:9 completed 46:8 completely 8:21 computer-aided 47:10 computers 12:22 concluded 46:19 conductive 19:9 conflict 13:17, 23 conflicts 16:1 confront 15:12 19:10 confuse 34:4 confusion 31:5 CONNIE 1:11 conquer 17:21 consensus 15:23 18:3 32:14 considered 5:1 consistently 16:14 constraints 4:1 construction 34:21 consulting 37:8 38:5 42:9</p>	<p>contentious 14:13, 18 continue 26:10 continued 6:13 continues 6:14 controlled 20:12 conversation 11:17 conversations 11:22 cool 20:5 22:20 coordinating 13:11 coordination 13:8 23:15 24:3 corner 27:9 correct 8:23 47:11 costs 20:12 counsel 47:14 counties 39:17 COUNTY 1:5, 9, 10 2:5, 6 3:10, 15 4:7 6:1 7:2 16:8 23:6, 10 39:3, 3, 4, 19 40:2, 3, 3, 9, 11, 12, 14, 19, 20 44:19 45:8, 9 47:4 couple 41:21 course 2:6 27:18 30:20 40:13 COURT 1:20 47:20 cover 43:1 covered 28:12 creating 22:15 critical 12:6 crossed 11:16 current 9:21 20:13 currently 18:19 <D> DATE 1:18 day 3:11, 12 8:12 20:5 32:23 33:8, 9, 10 34:11 deal 13:16 dealing 14:10 December 3:10 decision 46:2, 9 define 12:17, 23 13:3 deliberately 8:15 deliver 34:12</p>	<p>department 4:3 10:13, 17 11:2 12:15 13:2, 5, 6, 9, 23 14:4, 5 23:10, 16 24:14 30:14, 23 37:5, 12 41:9, 13 43:10, 18 45:6 departments 24:3 29:17 depends 36:8 describe 8:5 design 4:11, 14 5:8 15:3 determine 12:15 31:1 develop 4:17 developing 22:5 different 9:15 14:8 33:12 differently 13:20 14:22 15:3, 6 difficult 36:23 digress 14:2 dinner 27:17 direction 13:13 directly 6:3 26:3 director 22:2 dirt 26:12 discuss 12:17 discussed 23:18, 23 24:1 diving 36:15 doing 3:23 4:11 6:14 11:3 19:4 31:19 32:7 33:14, 21, 22 37:7, 9, 19, 20 38:4 39:9 40:17 42:6 45:17 donate 10:20 door 11:13 25:5, 14 28:2, 7 32:20 41:23 43:7 doubts 31:5 downsizing 25:16 26:8 28:16 drainage 21:21 drawn-out 46:4 driven 37:5 driver 34:11</p>
--	--	---	---

<p>dump 34:11</p> <p>< E ></p> <p>earlier 41:20</p> <p>early 8:9 18:21</p> <p>easier 11:21 19:16 27:20</p> <p>easily 2:19</p> <p>egotistical 16:16</p> <p>eight 7:16</p> <p>eighth 13:10</p> <p>either 25:6</p> <p>electronic 23:18, 20</p> <p>electronically 23:22</p> <p>Elmore 40:19, 20</p> <p>employed 3:9</p> <p>employees 4:19, 22 11:5 26:21 27:1 29:5, 10 30:8, 11</p> <p>enforcing 14:10</p> <p>ENGINEER 1:5 2:6 4:11 5:8 6:1 7:2 23:6 24:18, 19 25:7, 11 34:12, 19 36:6, 13 37:19 39:19 40:2, 3, 9, 11 41:7, 14 42:2, 3, 4, 7 43:12, 21, 22 44:1, 3, 3, 6 45:8</p> <p>engineering 4:3, 14 10:13, 17 11:2 23:10 24:13 34:18 36:3 37:4, 12 41:9, 13</p> <p>engineers 25:21 26:1, 5 37:9, 23 38:5, 7 39:4, 5 40:22 42:9 43:16, 17 44:4</p> <p>engineer's 40:15 45:9</p> <p>enjoy 11:22 33:14</p> <p>enjoyable 4:21, 23</p> <p>enjoyed 3:14 5:19 6:15, 19 7:17 13:11</p> <p>ensure 20:12 21:8 37:10</p> <p>equipment 14:15</p>	<p>establish 6:20 11:8 30:17 32:13 45:1</p> <p>Establishing 6:21 30:3</p> <p>eventually 14:17</p> <p>everybody 12:17 42:14 44:20</p> <p>exam 44:2</p> <p>example 8:9 13:16 18:21 30:7, 10, 13</p> <p>examples 8:6</p> <p>expect 8:19 23:2 30:12 32:18</p> <p>expectation 31:6</p> <p>expectations 29:11 31:4, 13</p> <p>expected 15:14 31:11</p> <p>expenditures 22:12</p> <p>experience 18:15 43:9 45:13</p> <p>experienced 13:7</p> <p>EXPIRES 47:21</p> <p>eye-to-eye 17:10</p> <p>< F ></p> <p>face 12:14</p> <p>fair 28:14</p> <p>fairly 11:19</p> <p>falling 30:18</p> <p>family 10:14, 16</p> <p>Fanice 44:5</p> <p>far 24:6 29:2 37:13 42:7</p> <p>fast 33:10</p> <p>favorite 12:3 16:19</p> <p>feather 4:8</p> <p>feedback 38:4</p> <p>feel 7:14 10:14 15:22 41:10</p> <p>feeling 35:5</p> <p>fester 17:22</p> <p>figured 2:22</p> <p>finally 2:22</p> <p>finance 22:1, 6</p> <p>find 4:21 16:23 17:19 18:2 25:8</p> <p>finding 17:11</p>	<p>fine 2:19 3:19</p> <p>finer 5:21</p> <p>firm 14:13 34:18, 19</p> <p>first 2:4 3:11 7:10, 22, 23 8:17 23:5 34:3</p> <p>fit 5:4</p> <p>five 6:19 23:11</p> <p>fix 35:3</p> <p>floor 13:10</p> <p>flowing 38:7</p> <p>folks 13:10 16:17, 20 27:21 32:13</p> <p>follow-up 38:22</p> <p>food 10:18</p> <p>force 27:15</p> <p>forceful 15:7, 9 28:6</p> <p>foregoing 47:7, 11</p> <p>foresee 39:23 40:9, 16</p> <p>foreseeable 25:16</p> <p>forthcoming 46:10</p> <p>forthright 8:21</p> <p>fortunate 5:1</p> <p>fortunately 5:16 13:21 37:22</p> <p>forward 5:19</p> <p>found 10:2 11:19 12:12 19:18 20:4</p> <p>four 38:12 44:1</p> <p>frame 46:1</p> <p>frankly 4:9 5:22 6:3 8:8 33:13 43:2</p> <p>front 10:6 11:15</p> <p>frustrated 20:1</p> <p>functioning 45:11</p> <p>fund 21:7, 9, 19</p> <p>further 47:13</p> <p>future 25:16 43:4</p> <p>< G ></p> <p>Garvey 3:23</p> <p>gauge 33:20</p> <p>generalize 18:18</p> <p>gentlemen 3:20</p> <p>getting 19:3 27:9</p>	<p>33:13</p> <p>GIS 14:3, 6, 7</p> <p>give 8:6 13:15 16:10 20:5 37:8</p> <p>given 18:7 29:20 45:4</p> <p>gives 3:6</p> <p>giving 2:8 32:8</p> <p>glad 7:4</p> <p>go 2:3 9:5, 8 10:4, 22 11:12, 23 15:12 17:21, 22 20:3, 6 23:17, 19 28:3, 7, 10, 18 31:15 32:5 33:10 35:7, 13</p> <p>goal 26:15</p> <p>goals 11:10</p> <p>going 8:17 10:2, 17 12:18, 20 13:1, 3 16:12 17:2, 10 18:1 19:1 23:14 24:2, 23 25:6, 10 28:21 29:17 31:17, 23 32:6 33:19 36:16 43:9 44:15, 15, 16 46:8</p> <p>good 4:20, 22 5:2 7:14 13:10 15:22 18:2, 21 21:17 30:10, 14 33:16 35:1, 2 36:12, 20 37:23 38:4, 4 41:6 42:6, 11, 12 45:1, 12, 14 46:11</p> <p>goodness 14:1 36:16</p> <p>GOVERNMENT 1:21 34:23</p> <p>gracious 22:2</p> <p>gradually 4:16</p> <p>grants 21:13</p> <p>graphs 22:15</p> <p>gray 20:9</p> <p>great 33:22 35:13</p> <p>grief 17:12 32:9</p> <p>group 7:22 8:1 9:17</p> <p>grown 27:18</p> <p>guess 15:19 35:7</p>
---	---	--	---

<p>guidance 6:12 guy 36:21 guys 7:18 23:8</p> <p><H> hair 20:9 hand 21:2 hand-in-hand 22:8 handle 6:8 17:22 25:9 43:12 handled 34:22 handling 33:23 happens 10:15 43:23 happy 7:5 hard 16:14, 23 28:1 32:19 hardworking 16:17 hat 4:8 head 13:13 18:17 28:1, 7 33:20 headed 13:13 head-on 13:2 15:13 heads 45:6 heart 42:5 heavily 20:20 held 14:13 hello 44:16 help 5:17 7:5 11:10 15:14 17:3, 14, 18 32:2, 9 40:12 43:18 helping 6:20 helps 10:11, 12, 14 11:4 hey 15:13 31:16 32:6 hindsight 13:20 hire 35:3 43:22, 23 hired 41:14 hit 32:19 holds 15:1 holiday 3:12 home 10:19 27:11, 12, 16 28:3, 4, 8 honest 8:21, 22 hot-headed 19:19 hours 34:14, 20</p>	<p>35:10 36:6 house 27:19 39:16 how's 31:16, 17, 23 HUDSON 1:11 2:3, 11, 15 7:7, 19 8:2 9:3, 7, 10, 13 11:7 12:4 14:21 15:18 17:8, 16 22:10, 18 23:3 24:6, 11 28:13, 17, 22 29:2 31:3, 8, 12 33:3 36:1 38:10, 13, 17, 20 42:13 44:11 45:14, 16 46:3, 13</p> <p><I> idea 3:7 ideas 14:8 identify 17:20 II 2:14 3:2 IIs 43:21 illegal 8:16 imagine 6:6 immediately 19:22 implement 12:16, 19, 21 23:14 implemented 32:16 important 11:23 28:8 30:10 32:11 33:19 39:8, 12 importantly 30:5 improvement 6:17 inauguration 41:4 incrementally 22:17 Indicates 9:20 20:17 21:16 34:1 individual 12:11, 18 13:4 15:10 17:15 19:8 20:18, 21 21:3 22:15 42:3 individuals 13:5 16:5, 6 19:23 25:4 41:19 infrastructure 21:6 infusion 22:1 input 11:9 intend 23:4</p>	<p>intention 46:5 intentionally 32:12 interested 47:15 interesting 6:2, 22 interim 7:1 INTERVIEW 1:1 46:18 47:7, 12 interviews 46:6, 8 introduction 2:9 involve 13:5 23:15 involved 7:15 20:20 39:21 40:1, 4, 7 involvement 39:6 involves 7:2 ironed 14:19 ironing 13:12 issue 19:20 37:16 issued 30:1 issues 24:7 items 24:4</p> <p><J> James 42:5 JENNIFER 1:20 47:20 JERRY 1:13 jets 22:20 job 25:19 26:19 33:22 35:1, 2 36:12, 20 37:20 38:4 42:6 45:17 John 3:17 27:8 junior 3:4</p> <p><K> keep 21:4, 5, 7 keeping 37:13 KEGLEY 1:3 2:6, 10, 14, 18, 23 3:2, 6 7:8 8:7 10:1 11:11 12:10 13:21 14:23 16:2 17:9, 19 18:8, 16 19:15 20:14, 18 21:17 22:13, 19 23:7 24:9, 13 25:17 26:2, 7, 14, 17 27:7 29:12, 22 31:7, 10, 14 33:5 34:1 36:8,</p>	<p>12 37:4 39:11 40:20, 23 41:3, 6, 11 42:15, 19 43:20 44:10, 13 45:15, 18, 22 46:11, 15, 19 key 29:8 kids 27:11, 12, 17 28:3 kin 47:14 kind 4:2 6:20 8:23 11:1 12:2 14:7 15:16 16:1 19:4, 17 21:22 24:19 25:11 28:20 30:6, 7 35:4 36:2, 23 45:23 knew 3:20 knock 11:13 know 2:20 7:3 8:16, 19, 20 9:14 11:21 13:18 15:5 16:13, 21 17:19, 21 19:15 21:13 22:6 23:7 25:17 27:7 29:1, 3 30:11, 12 31:6, 7, 10, 17 34:15, 17, 19 35:4, 16, 18 39:2 40:7 44:13, 15, 18 46:3 knowledge 25:5 41:18, 22 knows 42:20 44:20</p> <p><L> labor 21:4 large 40:4 47:21 late 8:10 18:22 27:10, 12, 15, 20, 22, 22 28:2 lately 13:7 law 34:18 39:14 laws 39:15 lazy 34:9 lead 8:8 leader 18:13, 16 30:6, 13 leadership 4:18 6:7, 7 8:6 9:1 learn 3:19, 21 4:16, 17 14:16</p>
--	--	--	---

<p>15:11 18:15 19:13 25:12 34:6 learned 41:16 learner 7:13 learning 6:4, 6, 8 33:16, 16 44:8 45:12 leave 10:21 27:10, 16 leaving 18:22 41:21 legal 8:21 legs 11:16 lends 36:2 life 26:21 27:3, 5, 6 line 8:18 list 28:11 little 11:21, 22 14:12, 19 15:1, 2, 7 19:13, 19 20:8 21:23 23:12 28:6 29:14 32:10 38:14 40:1 42:22 45:5 living 31:13 loads 34:11 LOCATION 1:21 long 12:20 26:17 46:4 look 8:11 14:14 35:14, 15 looking 13:18 17:10 26:21 29:16 45:8 looks 39:5 lose 25:4 34:6 43:9 lot 2:21 3:18, 19, 21 5:11 13:8, 22 15:6 16:4, 6, 9 21:20 31:22 32:16 33:23 36:17 39:2 lucky 42:8 LUDGOOD 1:12 2:13 3:5 9:12, 18, 19 11:6 13:15 17:5 19:14 20:11, 16 21:15 27:2 28:9, 15, 19, 23 29:13 35:18 38:9, 15, 19 39:1 40:18,</p>	<p>21 41:1, 5 43:15 44:9 45:20 46:16 < M > maintain 11:18 maintaining 20:14 making 19:9 27:20 man 5:21 manage 13:17 manager 4:14 5:8 15:4 18:19, 23 24:18 41:12 managers 31:15 32:4 37:18 38:2 managing 12:7 manner 37:7, 9, 21 MARCH 1:18 marking 42:2 matter 9:15 MAWSS 45:7 mean 29:11 30:16 42:11, 19 means 47:9 measure 29:10, 17 measurement 36:3 measurements 29:23 measures 28:21 29:3, 9, 16 30:4, 17 32:15 measuring 34:10 meeting 37:10 members 10:16 MERCERIA 1:12 mess 8:15 met 44:5 method 35:8 migrate 43:3 million 34:20 mind 32:8 35:20 minute 10:8 minutes 10:5 11:14 mirror 13:19 missed 36:17 mistake 8:22 mistakes 15:11 MOBILE 1:10, 22 3:10 40:4, 12 47:4 money 4:2, 6 21:18 34:6</p>	<p>monitor 22:11 29:4, 6 31:9 Montgomery 39:14 month 22:17, 17 35:15 months 5:17 7:10, 13, 16 25:1 44:23 morale 9:22 10:1, 11 11:4 morning 32:22 33:2, 6 motivate 35:12 motivational 35:17 move 7:20 8:23 moving 5:18 Murphy 3:17 5:10, 12, 14 27:8 32:17 < N > NACo 40:22 named 23:5 National 39:4 nationwide 40:22 natural 27:14 nature 10:10, 22 18:22 21:14, 21 30:2 34:8 necessarily 37:6 40:6 necessary 4:18 8:10, 18 10:19 12:13 13:4 need 2:13 10:19 12:13, 18, 20, 21 14:15, 16 22:19, 22 25:10 43:22 needed 21:23 27:16 32:22 needs 12:16 37:10 40:4 42:3 neither 47:13 never 33:8, 8 New 3:11 12:21 nice 3:13 non-PE 42:10 NOTARY 47:20 noted 41:20 notice 24:20</p>	<p>< O > obtain 11:9 occurring 30:22 o'clock 28:6 offended 2:18 office 12:1 20:19 21:2 32:6 43:1 offices 17:1 Oh 3:5 12:10 25:17 26:14 36:16 Okay 2:10 7:7, 19 8:2, 7 9:2, 3, 12 11:6 12:4 15:18 22:18 27:4 28:13, 19 29:2 31:18 36:11 38:9, 10, 19 41:5 44:9, 11 46:11, 13 older 19:15 operate 11:2 opportunity 3:18 16:10 39:20 45:1 outpnt 33:4 outside 13:6 30:23 owned 34:17, 18 < P > P.M 1:19 46:19 Pafenbach 24:2 parents 3:7 particular 15:10 18:10, 23 19:7 20:21 21:3 22:14, 20 parties 47:14 pay-as-you-go 4:12 6:10, 13 paycheck 10:23 PE 43:19 44:2 peer 36:3 people 5:2 6:9 8:11, 19 10:3, 13, 20 11:20 16:15, 18 18:2, 3 24:15 25:13 33:21 35:10, 12 45:23 percent 36:10 performance 28:21 29:3, 9, 16 30:3, 17</p>
--	--	--	---

<p>32:15 periodically 12:2 permanently 23:6 permits 30:1 person 16:22, 22 35:3 personnel 24:7 pick 19:4, 11 25:11 picked 18:23 pile 32:21, 23 piling 33:5 pitfalls 12:8 place 35:9 placed 5:13 45:4 plans 4:12, 13 36:7, 9, 20 42:2 play 12:19 pleasure 44:21 plenty 28:18 plop 10:6 31:22 plots 21:3 point 11:12 18:11 19:2, 8, 21 39:21 points 16:3 pops 18:17 position 2:5 7:2, 17 15:1, 8 possess 15:21 possible 25:2 possibly 34:7 potential 6:20 practice 16:7, 8 pressure 42:23 pretty 5:11 8:8 14:18 21:11, 11 24:9, 11, 16 25:21, 22 28:8 32:11 37:17 prior 16:8 private 16:7 probably 16:23 17:23 24:20 25:1 30:9 35:21 41:21 problem 17:17, 20 26:13 PROCEEDINGS 2:1 process 3:7 4:17 5:5 6:4, 22 23:20 33:16, 17 46:4</p>	<p>production 30:15 37:6 professional 24:19 25:10 26:5 41:13 42:3, 4, 7 43:12, 17 44:3 profit 34:5 program 4:1 6:10, 13, 16, 16, 17 progressed 4:10 project 6:22 projects 6:21 21:12, 18, 21 23:21 promoted 4:14 prosecute 8:18 prospective 39:15 provide 14:14 public 35:21 47:20 public-works 37:15 pull 27:19 pursuant 40:13 pursue 21:13 24:4 pursuing 21:20 put 3:2 6:10 24:19 35:9 42:22 44:6 < Q > qualities 15:21 question 18:6 23:9 33:19 35:20, 22 questions 7:21 35:19 38:16, 21 44:12 45:21 46:12 47:8 quick 7:13 quite 4:5, 8, 19, 23 5:22 6:3, 13, 15 8:8 15:9 33:13 43:2 < R > ranks 41:17 rapidly 21:11 rapport 11:8 32:13 45:2 reading 2:21 reads 26:23 ready 27:9</p>	<p>real 7:12, 14 27:15 34:5 realize 35:20 36:16 Really 2:23 3:20 7:8, 17 23:8, 13 32:16 33:13 36:21, 23 37:23 38:8 39:21 42:6, 12 45:15 rearview 13:19 receive 21:1 receiving 38:6 related 37:16 relationship 11:18 22:5 removed 20:21 removing 5:5 report 11:9 29:5 REPORTER 1:20 47:20 reports 21:1 representative 41:2 Representatives 39:16 represents 40:21 47:11 request 44:6 resolve 16:1 17:18 respected 42:14, 15 44:21 responsibilities 5:12, 18 6:8 7:3, 9, 11 13:3 14:9, 12 25:12, 20 26:9 33:11, 15 45:3 responsibility 20:22 responsible 22:14 result 47:16 retire 24:21 retired 5:10, 15, 23 6:23 review 4:11 36:22 reviewed 42:10 reviews 29:23 Richie 40:18 Ricky 26:4 31:20 rid 26:12 right 3:20 8:4, 17 9:6 13:13 14:2 19:5 20:4, 10</p>	<p>24:14, 16 25:7, 20 26:6, 22 27:5 38:8 39:18 43:21, 23 44:4 road 23:23 roads 26:12 role 9:21 20:13 29:5 roles 12:18 roll 36:14, 19 Ruffer 3:17 5:11 6:4, 23 32:17 40:7 Ruffer's 4:8 6:12 run 21:22 running 21:7, 10 22:23 23:1 24:16 < S > SAGE 1:20 47:20 salesman 34:8 sat 14:13 saying 33:4 school 44:1 scope 12:23 seasoning 20:9 second 9:17 security 26:19 see 11:14 17:2 19:14 25:15 26:2, 8 30:17 32:1, 7 38:15 seeing 17:13 40:10 Senate 39:16 set 18:7, 21 29:22 30:10, 12 36:7, 20 setting 30:7 severance 21:6 shoulder 5:17 shouldering 5:13 shoulders 6:11 45:4 show 22:16 sick 10:20, 21 side 31:18, 21, 21, 23 36:4 simple 8:8 sit 8:10 10:4, 8 12:1 16:19 18:1 20:6 31:15, 16</p>
---	--	--	--

<p>32:5 site 4:13 sitting 11:15 16:18 17:1, 9, 10 situation 4:23 5:3 17:14 20:2 21:23 24:17 32:2 situations 6:9 18:12 six 7:10, 13 25:1 size 36:8 skills 4:18 17:6 slack 33:8 small 27:13 smarter 16:9 34:7 software 12:20 somebody 25:1, 8 44:7 something's 30:18 Sonny 40:7, 10 soon 46:10, 10 Sort 11:11 sound 9:11 26:22 sounds 18:9 speaking 35:5 spending 4:2 36:7 spent 4:6 spring 5:14 squarely 6:11 12:13 stable 24:10, 12 stack 33:6 staff 25:21 26:1 43:16 44:7 start 2:8, 16 8:3 35:9 36:15 43:5 44:8 started 2:4 state 4:7 39:3 47:3, 21 stay 21:8 27:10, 11, 14, 20, 21, 22 28:2 34:5 staying 8:10 stenotype 47:8 step 6:1 7:18 steps 12:7 stick 28:1, 7 straight-up 8:20</p>	<p>strategies 9:22 STREET 1:21 stressful 3:22 strong 39:13, 18 44:20 strongest 16:3 struggled 4:4 7:8 study 25:3 29:19 stuff 32:21, 23 42:20 style 8:6 9:1 subdivisions 4:13 subject 9:15 submittal 36:10 submitting 36:13 success 4:20 successful 18:13, 17 suitable 25:8, 9 supervise 4:19 9:23 supervision 10:3 supervisor 4:22 5:9 support 10:18 11:10 supposed 34:12 Sure 9:9 10:22 28:12 31:9 42:13</p> <p>< T > take 9:5 10:5, 8 12:7, 21 36:17 44:2 taken 47:7 takes 40:14 talk 10:4, 9 12:1 16:20 20:7 31:16 talking 12:11 16:2, 18 17:11 18:2 27:3 37:13 TAP 21:13 taught 34:4 tax 21:6 team 13:17 16:11, 16, 20 technician 14:6 41:14 tell 2:11 8:11 9:3 15:20 27:21 37:17,</p>	<p>18 temperament 25:9 tendency 27:14 terms 39:9 Thank 7:19 13:14, 23 23:3 45:18 46:15, 16 thereto 47:9 thing 11:11 34:3 41:11 43:13 things 4:2 10:10, 21 16:19 18:22 21:13, 21 23:14 29:15, 19 30:2 31:17, 23 37:7, 9, 14 39:2, 10, 13 43:3 think 2:15 4:6 5:21 6:12 7:20 9:17 10:11 11:4 15:9, 15, 21 16:2 17:23 19:3, 8 22:1, 4, 7 24:7 26:3, 4, 20 27:2 28:8, 17 30:9, 14 31:2 32:11 33:18 35:8 37:18, 22 38:21 39:7, 11, 17 40:3, 19 41:20 42:1 43:6, 11, 13 44:19, 23 46:1, 5, 9 thinking 35:19 36:4 thoroughly 5:19 6:15 thought 3:7 14:11 23:8, 12 27:6 29:20 36:21 44:14, 15 thoughts 14:11 three 2:21 24:18 26:3 44:22 45:2 tight 24:16 TIME 1:19 3:14 4:1 5:6 10:21 14:7, 15, 18, 22 15:11 16:23 19:5, 6, 18, 23 28:18 31:2 38:14 39:21</p>	<p>40:14, 15 45:23 46:14 timely 37:7, 9, 20 times 2:22 19:5, 11 31:22 title 45:10 today 6:14 26:22 46:14 told 34:21 ton 43:8 tongue 19:17 tool 35:17 top 29:14 topics 25:13 tough 4:3 6:9 track 37:13 trackable 34:14 tracking 35:9 traffic 41:12 traits 15:20 transcribed 47:9 transcript 47:12 transcription 47:10 transfer 22:21 transition 6:2 transitioned 14:4 truck 34:11 true 47:11 try 5:17 17:6, 14 20:3 24:23 27:21 32:2, 12 39:13 43:1 trying 12:9 17:7 18:10, 20 22:6, 7 35:7 turn 34:19 turns 9:5 tutelage 5:20 two 3:19 5:7 20:6 23:14 24:20 25:3, 12 26:4 41:19 46:2 type 22:4 29:8 30:3 37:16</p> <p>< U > Uh-huh 9:19 20:16 21:15 34:1</p>
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<p>underneath 3:17 5:2, 20 6:12 14:3 25:3 26:3, 4 understand 18:8 31:4 33:20 unfortunate 5:3 unfortunately 5:6 use 9:22 17:6 29:9</p> <p>< V > vacation 10:21 versa 17:14 vice 17:14 volume 33:23 34:4</p> <p>< W > wait 19:17 walk 25:13 27:8, 23 28:5 32:19 44:16 walking 41:23 walks 25:5 43:7 want 2:7 3:3 8:3 27:14 28:9, 11, 12 38:22 41:10, 22 45:21 wanted 18:14 29:1 way 4:4 8:3 11:1 12:3 15:15 17:23 18:3 26:17, 23 34:10, 21 35:1 ways 5:5 30:2 week 44:5 46:2, 7 weekend 44:14 Well 3:2, 9 4:5 6:14, 15 8:7 10:1 11:19 13:21 14:23 17:5 26:14 27:7 28:15, 20, 23 29:7, 12, 22 38:8 39:11 42:14, 15 43:20 44:11, 13, 21 45:18, 22 46:3 we're 10:14, 16, 17 11:16 16:12, 15 17:7 22:5, 6, 7 24:9, 16 26:9, 17 29:15 37:5, 5, 10 43:6 46:7</p>	<p>We've 11:3 13:9, 22 21:10 23:18, 23 28:12, 17, 18 35:15 38:13 42:7 46:6, 6 wife 27:11, 12 28:3 Willis 2:14, 17 wish 19:12 won 42:17 wonderful 6:16 work 3:11 8:13 11:19 16:13 18:5 26:21 27:3, 5, 6 29:18 32:5 33:4 34:7 42:10 worked 5:8 14:17 working 3:14, 16 5:2, 20 6:3, 11, 15, 19 10:7 18:20 22:8 30:8 37:19, 23 38:3 44:22 works 35:21 world 41:17 worry 38:1, 2 worst 19:22 wow 36:20 wrinkles 13:12 wrong 19:6</p> <p>< Y > y'all 7:3 23:2 38:20 45:3 46:1 y'all's 40:13, 16 Yeah 3:1 9:9 17:8 18:5 24:9 26:14 28:22 35:23 38:17 41:3, 6 44:10 year 23:5, 13, 19 24:5 25:2 years 3:16, 18, 22 5:9 6:19 11:3 14:3 23:11 24:21 33:7, 12 41:15, 16, 22 44:1 Year's 3:12 young 25:7 43:22 44:4, 6</p>		
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INTERVIEW
of
RICKY MITCHELL
for
PUBLIC WORKS DIRECTOR/CHIEF ENGINEER,
DIVISION of PUBLIC ROADS

BEFORE THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF MOBILE COUNTY, ALABAMA

CONNIE HUDSON
MERCERIA LUDGOOD
JERRY CARL

DATE: MARCH 19, 2018
TIME: 3:30 P.M.
COURT REPORTER: JENNIFER SAGE
LOCATION: 205 GOVERNMENT STREET
MOBILE, AL 36602

1 PROCEEDINGS

2

3 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Up next is
4 Ricky Mitchell who is applicant for the
5 Public Works Director/Chief Engineer, the
6 Division of Public Roads.

7 It is a mouthful.

8 We've -- we are -- we've divided up
9 questions, Ricky.

10 MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: First of all,
12 what we'd like for you to do is just give --
13 just give you an opportunity -- you know,
14 just tell us about yourself and --

15 MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: -- introduce
17 yourself.

18 MR. MITCHELL: Okay. All right.
19 Well, I am married and I have two kids.
20 They are -- my oldest son is graduating in
21 May and getting married in May. And he's
22 graduating from Mississippi State in
23 computer and electrical engineering.

1 And, yeah, I looked at the
2 transcript and he's had two Bs.

3 COMMISSIONER CARL: His mama must be
4 smart.

5 MR. MITCHELL: His mama is very
6 smart.

7 And so then I have a daughter and
8 she is a sophomore at Southern Miss. And
9 she's going in for -- I mean, library
10 science and English. Kind of a double major
11 there.

12 And I've been working in the
13 retirement system for right over 25 years.
14 I've had seven years with the DOT up in
15 Birmingham area working on Quarter X
16 (phonetic) and some areas like that,
17 projects like that.

18 Then also I was the assistant county
19 engineer in Blount County for five years,
20 and I've been here at Mobile for 13 years.
21 And I can honestly say that this last year
22 and a half has been quite enjoyable being
23 able to work as one team with all

1 departments. That's been an enjoyable thing
2 that may not have happened in the past as
3 well as it should have, but that's been very
4 nice.

5 But I graduated college, UAB, in
6 1992 with a civil engineering degree, and I
7 have used that a little bit. But mostly,
8 you know, when you get up into this area
9 you're more managing than you are doing
10 civil engineering. You're -- you're kind of
11 doing some management of people and things
12 like that. So, but that's really all about
13 me.

14 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay. All
15 right.

16 Well, Commissioner Carl, do you
17 want to begin --

18 COMMISSIONER CARL: Yeah.

19 Leroy, can you hear him fine?

20 Okay, good, all right.

21 We had problems with Brian. He --
22 he said he can hear you fine.

23 MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

1 COMMISSIONER CARL: Okay. We've --
2 we've got these stock questions.

3 MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

4 COMMISSIONER CARL: And -- and --
5 and according to your answer, we may fall
6 off of them a little bit, but we're -- we're
7 kind of -- everyone is going to get the same
8 questions, all the candidates, to give you
9 some idea. But we can't ask some of the
10 candidates the same questions we're going to
11 ask you because they're not employed here.

12 MR. MITCHELL: Right.

13 COMMISSIONER CARL: Does that make
14 sense?

15 MR. MITCHELL: Sure.

16 COMMISSIONER CARL: Okay. All
17 right. How would you describe your
18 leadership style? And, if you would, give
19 us some examples.

20 MR. MITCHELL: I -- I'm more of a --
21 in -- in the office area, I'm more of a show
22 and do and then work with them to continue
23 on. I'm not real big on just saying go do

1 this. I'm not going to ask somebody to do
2 something I don't do.

3 And -- and in the field it's -- it's
4 the same way. You'll see me in the ditch
5 when I go out there. You'll see me
6 shoveling asphalt. You'll see me with a
7 sledgehammer or a shovel because I want them
8 to know that I'm going to do the same thing
9 that I'm asking them to do.

10 So I -- I like to show by -- lead by
11 example and do it and show them that I can
12 do it. And I -- you know, we do know how to
13 do things and what's going on, not that we
14 can't get a better way from them.

15 They -- they do it every day, so I
16 learn when I go out as well from them of --
17 you know, there's, oh, you know, I never
18 thought to do it that way.

19 So, and -- and, for an example, like
20 on the -- two -- two examples. I'll do an
21 office example and a field example.

22 So we were -- in the field we were
23 working on a drainage issue on Dawes --

1 Dawes Road, and we had a box out there that
2 was kind of reducing the water flow that
3 could go into the water -- I mean, under the
4 road.

5 The road had a bigger pipe than what
6 the inlets were allowing it to get into and
7 it was kind of causing it to back up and
8 ultimately was coming over Dawes Road.

9 So we -- I go out there with them
10 knowing that they are going to do this job
11 that day. And I'm -- I'm with them. I'm
12 slinging the sledgehammer busting down the
13 walls with them. I'm shoveling with them.

14 And because -- you know, you can't
15 do that for long. Trust me. At least I
16 can't do that for long, okay? Maybe they
17 can do it longer than I can, but -- but you
18 got to take breaks.

19 And so we -- we take turns and --
20 and so they -- and I've been told by the
21 supervisors they enjoy that when I come out
22 and help them. They see me work and that --
23 that -- that really lifts them up. It makes

1 them feel good that I'm willing to do that.

2 In the office we've just now
3 installed a -- back in October, we started a
4 new -- not document management -- work order
5 system to keep up with the costs and -- and
6 the quantities and all of that.

7 And I'm still going out -- you know,
8 probably once a week I'm going out to the
9 different camps and -- not each camp each
10 week, but I will take time -- turns and go
11 out and sit with them and say, okay, what
12 are we -- what are we still having problems
13 with.

14 Show me something that you -- you
15 know, you can't get into the system or it's
16 not working. And so I'll sit there and
17 figure out if it's something that they don't
18 have the privilege to do that I can -- might
19 can fix that, or is it something the program
20 is not doing. And we have to call and get
21 that.

22 So I like to get out and do as much
23 as -- sit behind the desk, that's -- that's

1 not me. I'm -- I don't enjoy the sitting
2 behind the desk near as much as getting out
3 and doing.

4 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Oh, it's my
5 turn?

6 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Yeah.

7 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: So how do you
8 -- you kind of answered that.

9 How do you currently develop your
10 key employees? So I guess I'm asking if
11 someone comes in and you see -- either they
12 come to you and say, you know, I really want
13 an opportunity to move up or develop or you
14 recognize it in them and just -- how -- how
15 do you take that employee and then -- and
16 develop them?

17 MR. MITCHELL: Okay. So one of my
18 beliefs is we're going to train you to do
19 what you need to do. We've got to give them
20 the tools and the training in order to get
21 the job done. If they have the tools and
22 they still don't know how to do that, that
23 doesn't help.

1 So when we see individuals that are
2 willing, we start that process of going out
3 and talking to them and seeing if -- if they
4 can get to, like, some training and would
5 gather great information from that training.
6 We've sent -- we do a lot of training in the
7 public works department.

8 So if they -- if they have the tools
9 but they don't really know how to use them,
10 they don't know how to use that computer,
11 they don't know how to do things without the
12 training, without us going out forward and
13 giving them that training, then it's just a
14 computer sitting on a desk and it really
15 doesn't do the County any good.

16 So if -- it -- it -- and it does
17 depend on the level. If it's more of a
18 laborer, we will send them to the flagging
19 schools and get them trained in -- in the
20 areas that we know that they're going to be
21 utilized immediately.

22 And then as -- as we see progress in
23 them -- some employees don't ever progress.

1 I mean, some don't want to go any further.
2 If you ask them, "I don't want -- this is
3 what I want to do."

4 But we do give them that opportunity
5 to go train. We're sending some of our
6 paving operators now to -- up to Illinois, I
7 think. We're going -- I know it's a
8 training class for the paver. I can't
9 remember exactly which state it's in, but
10 we're training them on the paver along with
11 a -- we're sending an operator and we're
12 sending a mechanic so they can learn about
13 the different things that they don't get to
14 see every day.

15 And so that's -- that's helping them
16 in order to progress up that promotional
17 chain because they're going to have that
18 knowledge. We do try to keep that inside
19 what the promotional chain would be.

20 We don't train an office assistant
21 to go out and do -- you know, train them on
22 paving. I mean, that -- that's not --
23 that's not a line -- a normal line of

1 progression. We try to keep it within that
2 normal line of progression. And we just
3 step them up as we can and train them for
4 that next position if they are willing and
5 want to.

6 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Do you think
7 those opportunities are adequate, plentiful
8 enough for training?

9 MR. MITCHELL: There could easily be
10 more. There could easily be more, but there
11 is -- there is some financial cost to a lot
12 of that training. So we -- we do have to
13 look at -- we can't send everybody.

14 And, of course, if we did, then the
15 work wouldn't be getting done. We'd be
16 training, but we do send as many as we can
17 within the budget and within those time
18 constraints.

19 With us -- me being able to go out
20 and help teach some of them, we don't have
21 to send some of them off to training if I
22 can sit down with them and help train. And
23 if I can train the supervisors, then they

1 can train their -- their employees too on
2 certain techniques.

3 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Do we have
4 enough -- I know sometimes if you have
5 enough people certain entities will come in
6 and -- you know, they'll come in and they'll
7 do your training in-house.

8 Do we do any of that?

9 MR. MITCHELL: We have. We -- we
10 did that in building inspections. We -- for
11 the stormwater -- for those new stormwater
12 MS4s that we're -- we're doing, we actually
13 paid a company to come in and train us here.

14 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Okay.

15 MR. MITCHELL: We've actually paid a
16 consultant to come in, a teaching
17 consultant. He -- he sat down with our
18 motor grader operators and supervisors.

19 It was almost a week that he went
20 out with them and got on -- got on the
21 graders, let them -- and then watched how
22 they operated and said, okay, now, you could
23 do this and it -- to crown the road better

1 to get the road off -- or the water off the
2 road and showed them techniques. We've done
3 that, actually brought people in for those
4 reasons.

5 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Okay.

6 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Ricky, talk a
7 little bit, if you would, about how you --
8 your management style, how do you establish
9 rapport with others, those who do not report
10 to you and don't require -- but -- but whom
11 you must obtain input or support to help you
12 achieve your goals.

13 Talk a little bit about building
14 rapport with -- with those commissioners or
15 whomever, you know, that you work with.

16 MR. MITCHELL: Right.

17 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Engineering
18 manager or director.

19 MR. MITCHELL: Other -- other
20 department heads --

21 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Other
22 department heads.

23 MR. MITCHELL: -- and things like

1 that.

2 So like I said at the beginning, the
3 -- the dynamic has, in my opinion, changed
4 to where it is more open and we are
5 definitely communicating more between the
6 administration and the engineering and
7 public works.

8 The -- the communication between me
9 and Brian has -- I mean, that's kind of a
10 necessity. I mean, for us to function we --
11 we communicate daily if we're -- if we're
12 here.

13 You know, we're -- we're usually in
14 our -- in each other's office 30 minutes a
15 day, or something like that, talking about
16 what's going on. Okay, well, how is that
17 going to affect me and how is that -- how is
18 what -- how is what I'm doing going to
19 affect you.

20 And then with John and Glen, we've
21 had definite -- a better rapport. And we --
22 we are now going to start talking with --
23 going to a manager's type meeting -- a

1 director's meeting with them as well.

2 They've asked us to step in and --
3 and go to a director's meeting -- their
4 normal director's meeting so we can all see
5 how that -- what we do affects each other
6 and maybe how we can help each other.

7 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: And you
8 haven't been involved in that in the past?

9 THE WITNESS: We have not been
10 involved in that ever. So we had had
11 discussions probably a few months ago with
12 John and Glen.

13 And then when we had a meeting with
14 Glen -- I think it was -- I'm sorry -- John
15 last week, he -- he said would y'all mind
16 coming. I was like, no, we'll be glad to
17 come. So I think that's going to help.

18 And in regards to one issue that
19 came up was the trash pickup. So picking up
20 the trash on the side of the road and the
21 right-of-way before we cut.

22 We're giving -- now we're giving
23 Doug a week's notice before we go out on the

1 road and -- and cut. I don't -- I don't
2 know that he can pick -- that the crew can
3 pick up everything in a week, but if we go
4 -- if they go about two weeks, they're still
5 going to have trash back on the road, you
6 know, on the side of the road.

7 So, I mean, there's got to be some
8 happy medium so we have been letting him
9 know a week ahead before we -- we get out
10 there. And that started this year.

11 And that came because they said
12 we -- you know, we would like to have that.
13 Let's -- yeah, that makes sense. And but
14 not talking, you know, not having that
15 interaction on a normal basis, you just
16 don't know that.

17 So that -- not that we don't -- I
18 mean, we talk in here when we see them in a
19 meeting, but just knowing what his
20 tribulations -- what his trials are and how
21 -- the difficulties he has getting his job
22 done, could we do something that might make
23 that easier.

1 You know, running over the trash and
2 him picking up little pieces is a lot more
3 time consuming than him coming out ahead of
4 time and picking it up before we run over
5 it. So things like that definitely have
6 communication.

7 With the -- you know, we have
8 communications with the sheriff when -- when
9 they're -- when they need something, they'll
10 call us and say, hey, can you do that.

11 So, I mean, we have a good rapport
12 with Chief Burrows at -- at the sheriff's
13 office. And that's -- that's who I deal
14 with. I don't deal with the sheriff
15 necessarily, but I deal with Chief Burrows.

16 And so those are the department
17 heads that we deal with on -- on a regular
18 basis. I talk to Bill and Eddie at times
19 when -- when we need something.

20 And -- and when they need something
21 like for the MS4, they'll call us and say,
22 hey, can you -- can you get us this
23 information. And we provide that for their

1 MS4 report, which helps the County, in
2 general.

3 And, you know, if the -- I mean, I
4 -- I'll just let y'all know when we're going
5 to go out and do work. I think -- I know
6 that in the past putting everything on the
7 agenda was not the -- the correct answer.

8 So, you know, I hope that putting
9 these things in an e-mail to you when --
10 when we need an approval is better where we
11 can just let you know we're going to do the
12 work unless we hear different. And that way
13 it's not waiting two weeks to get something
14 done.

15 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay. Ricky,
16 thank you.

17 Go ahead, Commissioner.

18 COMMISSIONER CARL: Yeah.

19 Have you ever been in a situation
20 where you were less successful as a leader
21 than you wanted to be and what did you learn
22 from that experience?

23 MR. MITCHELL: Well, there's always

1 times that you wished you could do better.

2 I mean, nobody is perfect. So as far as an
3 example --

4 COMMISSIONER CARL: I've got one for
5 you.

6 MR. MITCHELL: Okay. Throw it out.

7 COMMISSIONER CARL: You've got a
8 group of guys working icy roads and we
9 don't plan meals for them.

10 MR. MITCHELL: Oh, good -- good --
11 dead on the nose, yes.

12 Yeah, we've had this conversation
13 several times. We have ordered food and we
14 have ordered beds.

15 COMMISSIONER CARL: Well, we learned
16 from it --

17 MR. MITCHELL: So we're good now.
18 But, yeah, that -- that was a bad incident.
19 You know, we had people unfortunately
20 sleeping on the floor with no -- we didn't
21 have food prepared. We didn't have anything
22 for them.

23 So, I mean, we did go out -- luckily

1 there's -- Waffle House is always open, so
2 we were able to get Waffle House and get it
3 to them in the morning.

4 But in the -- at night we -- luckily
5 there was a pizza place that a bunch of
6 people had ordered pizza, but they didn't
7 come pick it up because it was too icy.

8 So we were able to grab -- snatch
9 that up and get it to them, but it wasn't a
10 planned thing. And that -- you -- you're
11 right, that's exactly one -- a good example.

12 And to be honest with you, I was
13 extremely embarrassed that that's what had
14 to -- what happened. It didn't have to
15 happen, but that's what happened.

16 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: So how did
17 you deal with the men once you -- the -- the
18 workers? Once you realized that that was
19 the case, how did you kind of communicate
20 how you were feeling about that? I mean,
21 were you upfront just like you just said?
22 Did you just say, you know, I'm sorry, I
23 should have, could have done, wish I --

1 MR. MITCHELL: I did not get them
2 all together and say that. No, ma'am, I did
3 not. You know, there were -- there were
4 people that -- that we did talk to, but that
5 was not an open -- no, we didn't just go out
6 and say, guys, get everybody together and
7 say we should have done this better, we'll
8 do better. We -- we didn't -- I didn't.
9 Not we. I didn't.

10 MS. LUDGOOD: Okay.

11 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: But in -- in
12 the meantime, nobody went hungry, right?
13 You had to scramble for food, but you got
14 it.

15 MR. MITCHELL: I ate -- I ate what
16 -- what they ate, and I wasn't hungry, but I
17 -- I'm sure that -- there was pizza left
18 over. There was sandwiches and things left
19 over, but it was kind of last minute and we
20 just didn't think -- I didn't think through
21 that like I should have.

22 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: But we're
23 prepared for the future?

16 won't need them, but there's always next
17 time, right?

1 MR. MITCHELL: We have meals ready
2 to eat now. They are on order -- they are
3 on backorder because all the hurricanes and
4 all those storms, they kind of locked down a
5 lot of the places.

6 COMMISSIONER CARL: MREs?

7 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah, those MREs.

8 But we have got the -- the beds on
9 order, air mattress. So we can store those
10 pretty easy. And -- and they got the
11 automatic blowup and release and everything,
12 so they're nice. They're nice. They won't
13 have to worry about sleeping on a concrete
14 floor anymore.

15 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Hopefully they
16 won't need them, but there's always next
17 time, right?

18 MR. MITCHELL: I hope we never use
19 them. Yes, ma'am. I hope we never use
20 them.

21 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay.

22 Commissioner?

23 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: You know, one

1 of the things that -- over the last 12, 16
2 months, 18 -- I can't keep up. We've had at
3 varied points some morale issues. And I
4 would just like you to talk a little bit
5 about what strategies you use or have used
6 to try to -- try to build morale.

7 I've been paying attention, so I
8 know you've -- you've been deliberate about
9 that. But could you talk a little bit about
10 it?

11 MR. MITCHELL: Sure, sure. And, in
12 particular, we've started a -- an
13 employee-of-the-month award. And the
14 departments that have to park way out -- one
15 of -- one of the benefits of getting
16 employee of the month is the departments
17 that have to park a ways away from the
18 building, we have set aside -- we will set
19 aside one place for the employee of the
20 month where they can just pull right up to
21 the building. They really like that, by the
22 way. And -- and they just like being
23 recognized. And so we've -- we've started

1 that.

2 And then at the end of the year we
3 will pick from those an employee of the year
4 and ask y'all to give a resolution. And
5 we'll bring it -- bring them down to the
6 commission meeting and let them be
7 recognized in a public meeting like that.

8 But just to see their face when they
9 get it, it -- it's pretty neat when they get
10 the employee-of-the-month award. It means a
11 lot to them.

12 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Well, good.

13 MR. MITCHELL: And so we started
14 that. And the supervisors -- to be honest,
15 the supervisors have picked up on that and
16 they've run with it.

17 They are now coming out of their
18 pocket to give a cash award to the employee
19 of the month. That's just out of the
20 supervisors' pocket.

21 They will get together and they'll
22 give them a little -- a little extra. So, I
23 mean, the supervisors took this and ran and

1 love it and -- as well. It's not just the
2 employees, but the supervisors have actually
3 taken up and done that.

4 So that even went better than I --
5 we thought it would. That's a good thing.
6 We also -- of course, you know, we had the
7 chili cook-off.

8 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Was that the
9 first time?

10 MR. MITCHELL: That was the first
11 annual chili cook-off. And -- and everybody
12 seemed to like that, so we're -- we'll have
13 another one of those.

14 And it'll be on a holiday week. I
15 don't know if it will be the same week as
16 Mardi Gras but -- because that one was
17 getting a little warm. So maybe we'll want
18 to have it a little bit cooler.

19 And then we're looking at in the
20 summertime, somewhere in the June/July area
21 to have breakfast catered in for the
22 employees in public works.

23 And -- and go out under the John

1 Archer Arena, pack it down, make a, you
2 know, nice, hard floor out of it, put tables
3 up, and have everybody come in. And kind of
4 -- kind of the same thing. Just get
5 everybody together.

6 And we got a lot of comments from
7 people who had been transferred or promoted,
8 moved out of one department and they got to
9 see people from the other department.

10 They said that was really neat to be
11 able to go back and see them because they
12 just don't -- you know, the employees within
13 the departments really don't communicate
14 that much with an employee of another
15 department.

16 The supervisors kind of do, because
17 we have more meetings where they can get
18 together, but the employees really don't.
19 So they -- they really like being able to
20 get back and talk to other employees from --
21 that they used to work with a long time ago.

22 So those are the kind of -- some of
23 the things that we've looked at. We

1 actually had some ideas. They want to do
2 maybe a barbecue. So we've got to find some
3 -- probably sometime in the fall, and maybe
4 we can do a little barbecue cook-off
5 contest. So that's -- they really enjoy
6 that and it really is -- it's a --

7 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Builds --
8 builds camaraderie.

9 MR. MITCHELL: -- it's a small
10 couple of hours, you know, for us.

11 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Yeah.

12 MR. MITCHELL: But it -- it -- I
13 think it goes a long way with the employees.
14 And that's -- and we are trying to build
15 that morale.

16 It -- we -- it is -- it has been low
17 and it's -- it's tough to do what they do.
18 I mean, they're out there every day and --
19 in it. And so it's -- it's tough for them
20 and we want to show them that we do
21 appreciate it.

22 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay. Very
23 good.

1 Okay. Ricky, what particular traits
2 or qualities do you think that you have that
3 make you a good manager and consensus
4 builder? What sets you apart?

5 MR. MITCHELL: Well, I think -- I do
6 listen to them. There's -- there's times
7 you can't do what they want. I mean, it is.
8 I do -- I do listen to them when they come
9 in. I -- I let them know that I hear them.

10 Again, sometimes you can't always
11 solve their problem, but -- so I think just
12 the -- my openness to that. I have several
13 employees, not just mine, but others, that
14 may come in and sit down and say can I talk
15 to you for a few minutes.

16 Sure.

17 You know, that's -- the only time my
18 door is closed -- I mean, that's kind of a
19 cliché. But the only time it's closed is if
20 I'm in a -- in a meeting, in a conference
21 and something. I mean, I don't mind anytime
22 when somebody calls, and I think they see
23 that. And another is that I'm willing to

1 get out there and do what I'm asking them to
2 do.

3 And they see that and so they'll
4 talk to me when I'm out there. Hey, you
5 know, what about so-and-so. So it -- it
6 helps build that rapport with employees when
7 they -- when they don't just see me standing
8 up on -- on the edge and say, hey, y'all get
9 that.

10 You know, I don't ask them that.
11 I'll jump in the hole and get it myself.
12 And then they see that. And it's -- it --
13 it does build that morale a little bit and
14 that rapport with the -- with the employees.

15 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: As far as
16 consensus, working with others that --

17 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: That may not
18 agree.

19 MR. MITCHELL: But may not agree.

20 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: -- may not
21 agree.

22 MR. MITCHELL: That's -- that's
23 true. They -- some --

1 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: How do you --
2 how do you deal with those conflict
3 situations where people don't agree to build
4 consensus? That might be a better way to
5 put it.

6 MR. MITCHELL: So, goodness, I mean,
7 I -- my -- you wanted to know the traits for
8 that. I mean, like I say, I'm open and I'm
9 honest with them.

10 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay.

11 MR. MITCHELL: And so with that,
12 they -- I mean, when I -- if we tell them I
13 can do this, but I can't do this, I mean,
14 they may not agree and they may not like it,
15 but they do -- at -- by the time they're
16 leaving, they're like, okay, I at least
17 understand why you're -- why it is the way
18 it is.

19 I don't think we've had anybody --
20 well, if they did leave that disagreeing to
21 the point where they said you could have
22 done more, they didn't come back to us.
23 They may have come to y'all. I'm not sure.

1 But that's -- I -- I mean, with
2 being honest with them, to tell them, you
3 know, one, I can't do this or I'm -- I'm
4 willing to do this, but I'm not willing to
5 do this and for this reason. They -- at
6 least they know that I'm -- I'm open telling
7 them the truth.

8 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay. All
9 right.

10 COMMISSIONER CARL: What -- what do
11 you believe are the most critical steps to
12 take when managing any changes and what are
13 some of the pitfalls to avoid?

14 MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

15 COMMISSIONER CARL: The keyword
16 there, I think, is changes.

17 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. And -- and --
18 and we've gone through many. So -- okay,
19 so, one is our work order management system.

20 That's a huge change that we now --
21 okay, let me tell you what we did before.
22 Before, we had the -- the OAs in the office
23 typing in all this information into our

1 database system.

2 Well, when we went to the new system
3 the change went to the supervisors entering
4 this information because now they've got a
5 tablet that they can do it in the field.

6 Well, that was a big change for them
7 because now they're -- instead of just kind
8 of chicken-scratching something and throwing
9 it off to the side and -- and the ladies in
10 the office trying to figure out what they
11 put, they are having to get it in the
12 computer and go forward with it from there
13 and make sure that the information is right.

14 And then the ladies, what we did on
15 the change for that is we now -- in the work
16 -- I mean, in the document management system
17 they are now scanning the paperwork instead
18 of it just getting stuck in a file.

19 We're actually getting it into the
20 computer where it can be recalled even from
21 down here if need be. So, of course, the
22 pitfall is I didn't used to have to do that.
23 We didn't do that before. You know, that's

1 just -- that's a lot of work. We didn't do
2 that before.

3 Well, I mean, when you -- you do a
4 few and you walk through it with them and
5 then you show them how you can recall this
6 information -- because, before, they didn't
7 have it at their hands. They didn't have it
8 at their fingertips.

9 They'd have to go back to the ladies
10 and say can you pull up this and run me a
11 report. And we would do so, but it would
12 take them -- you know, they couldn't just
13 get it right then. They'd have to come back
14 to the office.

15 So when they see the benefit that
16 comes from these changes, that starts that
17 ball rolling. But the pitfall is, of
18 course, I can't just say you're going to do
19 it and I don't care if you like it or not.

20 I mean, it's -- you've got to show
21 them the benefit for the extra effort that
22 they're putting in. And it -- it's coming
23 around. It -- it's a slow process because

1 they're not used to this.

2 So it's -- we're still working our
3 way through some of that, I mean, as far as
4 the -- the change for the document
5 management scanning just -- we just put that
6 in two weeks ago.

7 So our ladies are just now getting
8 into that, scanning and trying to figure
9 that out. So that's -- I'm going around and
10 seeing what the problems are there as well,
11 so.

12 COMMISSIONER CARL: Okay. Thank
13 you.

14 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: I've got a
15 follow-up question to that.

16 MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

17 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: But this is
18 not my question.

19 MR. MITCHELL: Wait a minute, wait a
20 minute.

21 COMMISSIONER CARL: I want my time
22 back. I want my time back.

23 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: In that

1 system, is -- does it have a tickler where
2 you can follow what's happening? So, for
3 example, they -- can they go back to that 30
4 days from now to check to see -- you know
5 how I send you all those e-mails -- all
6 those e-mails?

7 So will the system say, okay, 30
8 days have passed and then go and see whether
9 it's done or completed, still pending? Will
10 your system --

11 MR. MITCHELL: The work order
12 system?

13 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Uh-huh.
14 (Indicates affirmatively.)

15 MR. MITCHELL: Yes, ma'am. It has a
16 pending -- and -- and we're working through,
17 like I say, some of the changes. So the
18 supervisor has to remember to close out that
19 work order once the work is done. If they
20 don't hit the close button, then it's still
21 pending.

22 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Okay.

23 MR. MITCHELL: The work could have

1 been done and finished and it's sitting off
2 and nobody is working on it anymore, it's
3 completed, but the close button hadn't been
4 checked.

5 So we're finding some of that, so
6 we're working through some of those issues.

7 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: So --

8 MR. MITCHELL: But, yes, we -- we
9 can tell when a service request -- we call
10 them service requests now.

11 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Uh-huh.

12 (Indicates affirmatively.)

13 MR. MITCHELL: So when a service
14 request comes in, we know -- we take who --
15 who logged it, I mean, who -- who called it
16 in. So we know where it came from and we --
17 it goes in as a -- like you say, a pending.

18 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Uh-huh.

19 (Indicates affirmatively.)

20 MR. MITCHELL: And -- and it'll go
21 -- it'll stay there. We can tell who it was
22 issued to. You know, so if it goes to a
23 certain supervisor and they do a little bit

1 to it and say, okay, I can't do any more on
2 it. I'm sending it to this supervisor.

3 When they assign it over, it follows
4 that as well, but it won't close out until
5 they actually hit the close button. So
6 that's how we're finding some of these, is,
7 man, these -- some of these have been open
8 for a long time. And you go look at it,
9 they've been through. They just didn't hit
10 the close button, so.

11 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Well, that's
12 what I -- will it kick up and say I'm
13 pending, I'm pending, pay attention to me?

14 MR. MITCHELL: It don't just up --
15 jump out and send you something.

16 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Okay.

17 MR. MITCHELL: But there is a screen
18 that if they go -- when they log in they can
19 go to a service request status screen and
20 have their name -- if it's been assigned to
21 them, it'll show all of them that are open
22 and pending. And it tells how long they've
23 been opened and stuff like that.

1 COMMISSIONER CARL: So the managers
2 aren't going through that pending list, say,
3 once a month? In my business, we have a
4 pending list and there's just simply
5 deliveries. And if the delivery person
6 doesn't qualify that it's been delivered, it
7 stays open. And then we're, once a month,
8 going where's the paperwork.

9 THE WITNESS: Yeah. Again, those
10 are some of the things we're -- we're trying
11 to get them into the habit. They'll do it
12 one month. And then we'll look down two
13 months later it's -- you've got two months'
14 worth of stuff pending.

15 So I'm -- you know, we're working
16 through those issues. We're trying to be a
17 little more lenient, to begin with. I mean,
18 again, it's change. They're not used to it
19 yet.

20 So it went in October 1. We started
21 logging information into the system in
22 October 1, and the supervisors had not
23 logged information until that time.

1 So we are working through those
2 issues, but, yes, it will -- in a way, it
3 has a tickler because you can have that
4 screen to where it comes up and just check
5 that screen. So that way it would be
6 screaming at you because it turns red after
7 so many days.

8 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: It does?

9 MR. MITCHELL: Yes.

10 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Oh, okay,
11 that's a good thing.

12 MR. MITCHELL: It's green when we
13 first get it -- it starts out green, then it
14 turns yellow and red. And -- and we've got
15 to look at how long that needs to be before
16 it turns red.

17 If it -- some of them, the settings
18 might need to be, you know, tinkered with
19 just a little bit to let it get -- let it --
20 give them a little longer chance to get
21 something done, because I think it turns red
22 in like three or four days. Sometimes you
23 can't get the job done in four days.

1 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Well, I had
2 been looking for a system that would tell us
3 what was out there. So it sounds like you
4 got the -- that -- that may already be in
5 place with a little tinkering.

6 MR. MITCHELL: It -- it is. It is.
7 It's in place. It's just we -- we can --
8 when the program is working correctly, we
9 can actually have that turned on on the
10 supervisors when they log in to the
11 computer.

12 Unfortunately right now that little
13 -- when you check that box, it -- it
14 crashes. So they can go turn it on, but
15 they just can't have it turn on when they
16 log in. And we've just got to get them
17 to -- to do that. They're working on these.
18 We're finding all the bugs and -- and
19 letting them know, so.

20 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Do you -- you
21 have a question? That was a follow-up.

22 COMMISSIONER CARL: Go ahead.

23 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: You can go

1 ahead.

2 COMMISSIONER CARL: She done burned
3 her time up.

4 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Okay.

5 Dealing with conflict within your
6 team, now, one of the -- well, you probably
7 know this. The people consider you the
8 closest thing to Joe Ruffer in terms of
9 personality and all of that that we can get.
10 The -- the house is divided on whether or
11 not that's a good thing.

12 MR. MITCHELL: I understand.

13 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: So what --
14 the question I'd like to ask you just in
15 terms of your openness to dealing with
16 conflict and a -- a style that's not
17 necessarily top down -- and you -- you've
18 talked some about -- I just want to give you
19 one more opportunity.

20 As opposed to some bottom up, as
21 opposed to I said it. Like my mama used to
22 do, because I said so. But kind of managing
23 a little differently because I think that's

1 -- that's kind of what I -- what I'm hoping.

2 MR. MITCHELL: Sure. Well, I guess,
3 let me kind of say something here.

4 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: And you know
5 I love Joe.

6 MR. MITCHELL: Yes. And this in no
7 way a negative to him.

8 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Uh-huh.
9 (Indicates affirmatively.)

10 MR. MITCHELL: When a supervisor
11 that you report to asks you to do something
12 or go tells you to do something and it's a
13 legal thing to do, it can be done, then you
14 do that.

15 For me, I was put in an -- and, to
16 me, I was kind of put in a bad light because
17 a lot of what I was asked to do was the bad
18 stuff. Tell people, no, I'm sorry, you
19 can't do that. No, you know.

20 Unfortunately, that was kind of the position
21 -- the role that I had at times.

22 I've not -- in my opinion, I don't
23 have a problem with conflict. When somebody

1 comes up and says I don't agree with you,
2 okay, well, let's talk it out.

3 I -- I may leave the conversation at
4 the end still thinking I'm right and
5 somebody has got to -- you know, it's --
6 it's got to fall down to -- somebody's got
7 to take the -- the blame.

8 And if it's going to be blame if it
9 goes wrong, I would rather it be me, not one
10 of my employees. So, if that comes down, I
11 don't want to say, okay, you do it your way.
12 But when it goes bad, I tried to tell you.
13 I'm not going to do that.

14 So I would rather, at that point, it
15 be me. So I don't -- I don't want y'all to
16 have the impression that maybe the opinion
17 of everybody while he was here is me. I --
18 I don't know that it is.

19 And I hope that over this last 18
20 months y'all have seen that it's different
21 than it was when he was here. If you
22 haven't, then I apologize, and -- but I
23 would hope that you have seen that, that I'm

1 more open and willing to work with people
2 and -- and things like that.

3 So, but your question was how do I
4 deal with conflict. We've had several
5 meetings in our -- with our supervisors, our
6 -- our camp supervisors lately that we're
7 looking -- we're going to -- we want to try
8 something.

9 Well, you know, me and Neal have
10 been sitting there talking about this and
11 vetting a lot of these issues out for a
12 while, looking at how we might want to do
13 this.

14 We brought them in to say, okay,
15 now, what have we missed, let's -- let's
16 talk about all of this. And they wasn't
17 happy about it at all, didn't like it at
18 all.

19 And so we -- okay, so let's talk
20 through this. Why -- what are we missing
21 and why -- why do you -- why are you so
22 adamant against this change.

23 And as we sat there and talked about

1 it and the longer -- -- you know, we sat
2 there for probably close to a half day and
3 vetting all these things out.

4 And when they left it was, we see
5 you've thought through everything, we just
6 didn't know you had thought through as much
7 as -- you know, you just came to me -- y'all
8 just came to us and we thought this was just
9 a done deal. I said, no, we never said it
10 was a done deal, we wanted your opinions,
11 and that's why we're having this meeting.

12 So from that meeting we changed --
13 also changed some of the things that we're
14 looking at of -- of how we're going to --
15 and I'll -- I'll tell you.

16 It's a -- we are looking at trying
17 to go maybe more task-based instead of
18 area-based necessarily in some instances.

19 Like our pothole patching, in
20 particular, we have three trucks. One --
21 one camp runs the truck maybe an average of
22 one day a week. One camp runs it an average
23 of two days a week, and one camp runs it

1 every day.

2 So our thought was can we -- and
3 they all start out at the same place. They
4 all have to go to the plant to get asphalt
5 at the very beginning of the day.

6 So it doesn't matter where they
7 start from. They all got to go to the plant
8 to get asphalt to start their day.

9 So we're thinking, okay, if we get
10 one supervisor that's over all the potholes,
11 then we can have the trucks go where they
12 need because camp one, Andy's camp, the --
13 the main middle -- middle area, they use it
14 every day that they can that the weather
15 allows. And they still have a hard time
16 keeping up.

17 Whereas, camp 3, which is your area
18 mainly --

19 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Uh-huh.

20 (Indicates affirmatively.)

21 MR. MITCHELL: -- they may use it
22 one day a week. So maybe we can take those
23 vehicles or that vehicle, move it down and

1 help -- help out camp one. It's not really
2 helping camp -- it's helping the pothole
3 patching task. And do that.

4 And then when camp 3 needs it, send
5 both of them up there and get them done real
6 quick and bring it back down and continue
7 on.

8 As long as one person is over it
9 all, they know what needs to be done and
10 where that labor and equipment needs to be.
11 That may be better than, well, I've got my
12 truck up here and I'll use it when I -- when
13 I need it, but I don't need it but one day a
14 week, but let's not -- let's not get rid of
15 it.

16 So that was kind of a -- it's new to
17 them. They are used to the -- I'm in camp
18 3, I'm in camp 2, I'm in camp 1. And so
19 we're looking at task-based systems. And --
20 and -- and we're going to start with pothole
21 patching and see how that runs.

22 The next thing may be grass cutting.
23 And I want to be able to do that so we can

1 more efficiently use the equipment that we
2 have and maybe keep it running as opposed to
3 -- again, one day a week you've got a piece
4 of equipment sitting up there that maybe we
5 didn't have to have. Maybe we could have
6 used two pieces of equipment and then still
7 get everything done we're doing with the 3.

8 So we're working through things like
9 that. It's -- it's kind of run more -- in
10 the past, it has run more of area-based and
11 you have duplication that maybe we can
12 reduce that duplication and help our
13 deficiencies.

14 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Okay.

15 MR. MITCHELL: And so that's where
16 they were -- they were just saying, wait a
17 minute, you're taking work away from me,
18 you're taking my truck away, what -- what --
19 what are you -- you know, so they didn't get
20 that.

21 But as we started talking through
22 it, they -- and we talked through different
23 tasks as well, grass cutting. We talked

1 through other things as well.

2 Because those are -- if this works,
3 then we're going to move it to another one.
4 And we would like to move it to another
5 task. And maybe -- maybe we are all
6 tasked-based by the end of time. I don't
7 know. Some things may not work as good
8 task-based, but that's what we're -- that's
9 what we're working through right now.

10 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay. That
11 kind of leads to the next question. And, I
12 guess, really this may be our last round. I
13 mean -- on performance measures --

14 MR. MITCHELL: Uh-huh. (Indicates
15 affirmatively.)

16 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: And I guess
17 some of what you've said kind of leads into
18 that.

19 MR. MITCHELL: Sure.

20 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: How -- how do
21 you see your role in monitoring performance,
22 should you be promoted to this position? Do
23 you see anything changing as far as trying

1 to measure performance?

2 MR. MITCHELL: Yes, ma'am. That was
3 one reason we looked into this program as
4 well that we --

5 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Yeah.

6 MR. MITCHELL: -- this new work
7 order system. It -- it actually has a --
8 and by performance, there's two -- two
9 things that you can mean. I want to get X
10 number of miles done in a day or X number of
11 feet done in a day.

12 And -- and that would be great -- if
13 we're fully staffed, you might could answer
14 those questions. If you're not fully
15 staffed -- which we're not. We just don't
16 have the capability to hire those people.

17 They don't -- they don't want to
18 come work for us at this point in time. I
19 -- we're having a hard time hiring and
20 keeping.

21 But, so the supervisor can say,
22 okay, I can get this much done, because they
23 know with four trucks and a Gradall they can

1 get so much ditching done in a day. They
2 know that.

3 But maybe we can't give them four
4 trucks. We can only give them two. The
5 drivers didn't show up for the other two
6 trucks. Or we can only give -- we can give
7 them one truck. Well, how far can you get
8 then.

9 Well, that's -- that's where the --
10 performance, to me -- where the performance
11 measure is just saying how much can you get
12 done in a day, that's based on how much
13 equipment -- man- -- manpower and equipment
14 you have thrown at that task and trying to
15 spread out the work on what needs to be done
16 all over.

17 Sometimes we can't give that task,
18 all the equipment and manpower that it needs
19 to get that three miles that day.

20 So if -- what I'm thinking we can do
21 is run a performance measure based on are we
22 getting it done in the amount of time the
23 supervisor with the equipment that they --

1 and the manpower they have think that they
2 can get it done.

3 And we can -- this program will do
4 that. It will give them a chance to put in
5 an estimated time frame. And then we'll go
6 in and do -- do it. It'll say you said you
7 could do it in three -- this project in
8 three days. It took you six. So we can say
9 what happened. Or it took you four. You
10 look and say, oh, well, the truck broke
11 down.

12 It -- it -- so there's -- there's
13 things like that that we can meas- -- have
14 the performance measures but not just
15 straight out --

16 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Right.

17 MR. MITCHELL: -- okay, you can do X
18 number of feet in a day. If you don't have
19 all the employees or the equipment there,
20 you can't do X number of feet in a day.

21 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Makes sense.

22 MR. MITCHELL: So I would like to
23 run that based on what they have available

1 to them and -- and that -- this program will
2 allow that. Again, we've got to learn how
3 to use that program, but it -- it does have
4 that capability.

5 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Very good.

6 Well, Commissioners, is there
7 anything else that you feel that we need to
8 ask at this time other --

9 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: I'm good.

10 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: I was going to
11 give Ricky a chance to ask us any
12 questions --

13 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Okay.

14 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: If -- if
15 you're okay.

16 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: I'm good.

17 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Are you okay?

18 MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

19 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Anything for
20 us?

21 MR. MITCHELL: Sure.

22 So we've been -- I have been doing
23 this job as the deputy for about 18 months

1 without a -- a previous boss here.

2 So if I was to -- even if I don't
3 get the job, what would you like to see
4 different out of me? I mean, what would --
5 how -- what change do you want to see from
6 me and my department, whether I get the job
7 or not?

8 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: You know --
9 you want to --

10 COMMISSIONER CARL: No, go ahead.
11 Go ahead.

12 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: The -- I'll
13 tell you what I would -- I know that there
14 is a lot of work going on out there. What
15 -- what I would like to see, even if it's
16 just like maybe on an annual basis, like you
17 project, okay, these are -- in fiscal 2018,
18 these are the five things I'd like to see us
19 try to do.

20 Just things that you see that you
21 think need to be done where you just say to
22 us these are -- I think right now these are
23 the four or five or two or three most

1 critical things that we need to work on.

2 And I'm going to start deploying our
3 resources toward that, because we don't know
4 that, Ricky. We respond to the complaints
5 that we get from -- from people calling us.

6 But I can't cast a public works
7 vision for District 1. I just don't know
8 enough to do that. So if you could
9 articulate for us -- and then sometimes
10 things will come in and I can say to people,
11 well, I know that on the drawing board is A,
12 B, C. And that at some point this is -- you
13 know, this is being worked on.

14 MR. MITCHELL: Right.

15 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Something
16 like that. Nothing to -- you know, for you
17 -- to trip you up with, but just so that
18 we'll have kind of an idea about the big
19 picture.

20 MR. MITCHELL: Sure.

21 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: I'd like to
22 have that.

23 MR. MITCHELL: Sure. Okay.

1 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: And as far as
2 I'm concerned, I think that you are really
3 making steps towards addressing some of the
4 concerns as far as morale.

5 I think the Patrick and Berra
6 (phonetic) Study really pointed out some
7 issues.

8 MR. MITCHELL: Absolutely.

9 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: And I think
10 some of the steps you're taking, even if
11 it's just having a chili cook-off or
12 something to build camaraderie and morale, I
13 think -- I -- I commend those steps.

14 I'm glad to see that happening. And
15 I think the more that you can get out and
16 have those one -- one-on-one -- you know, if
17 you're -- if you're out meeting a crew
18 somewhere and you jump in the ditch, as you
19 say, or whatever --

20 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: I want to see
21 that.

22 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Yeah.

23 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: I want to see

1 you get out of the ditch.

2 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. Getting in is
3 a lot easier than getting out, I can tell
4 you.

5 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: But -- but I
6 think, in a -- in a -- in the position as
7 public works director, that that's
8 important.

9 And as you say, it's not always easy
10 to -- to get qualified people to -- and to
11 retain them on these -- on the job.

12 So I think that it has to be an
13 atmosphere that they will find that they
14 feel like they're appreciated and needed and
15 -- and wanted.

16 And -- and it goes beyond the
17 monetary. I mean, that's a big part of it,
18 no doubt.

19 MR. MITCHELL: Sure.

20 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: But it has to
21 be a good atmosphere, and I think that's
22 important.

23 MR. MITCHELL: I think that as we do

1 more of this that maybe the word of mouth
2 gets out and that may change the -- the
3 willingness of people to come to work as
4 well. So that might -- it might in
5 itself help itself improve.

6 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Yeah. Okay.
7 All right. Well, I think -- do you -- any
8 more, any --

9 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah, I'd just like
10 to know, you know, what y'all wanted to see
11 from me. So how can I -- how can I improve
12 what I do to help y'all because that's what
13 I'm here for. I'm -- I'm here, of course,
14 to do roads but that's because that's what
15 y'all do.

16 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Well, I think
17 that just keeping the lines of communication
18 open, communicating with us, as Commissioner
19 Ludgood says about what the -- you know,
20 you're the eyes -- your department is the
21 eyes out in our district to tell us, you
22 know, what those -- those key projects may
23 be that need to be on that -- on the list

1 that we need to pay attention to as well.

2 MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

3 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: So I think the
4 communication is important.

5 MR. MITCHELL: It is definitely a
6 public-facing department.

7 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Yeah.

8 MR. MITCHELL: Everything we do
9 affects the public every day.

10 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: And on -- on
11 that communication piece, if you're talking
12 to us and you're getting mixed signals,
13 bring it to us in a meeting. Let us duke it
14 out. You don't try to duke it out for us.

15 MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Just let us
17 duke it out ourselves so that we can give
18 you -- so then we know that we aren't being
19 clear. We aren't speaking with one voice as
20 a commission.

21 MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

22 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: And you need
23 to know what that is. And the only way to

1 get it from us is in a -- in a meeting. And
2 all of us, you know --

3 We like duking it out, don't we?

4 COMMISSIONER CARL: I -- I think
5 your statement about being the no man
6 applies very well. I think you were kind of
7 preaching at me.

8 MR. MITCHELL: No, I -- No, no, no.

9 COMMISSIONER CARL: No, that's all
10 right. My pastor does it every Sunday. But
11 the last 18 months I've seen some dramatic
12 changes, and I appreciate it.

13 MR. MITCHELL: Thank you.

14 COMMISSIONER CARL: I do appreciate
15 it.

16 MR. MITCHELL: And I appreciate
17 that. I appreciate that. Because that's --
18 that's what I'm trying to do.

19 COMMISSIONER CARL: Yeah.

20 MR. MITCHELL: I'm trying to develop
21 a workplace that I would want to work in. I
22 mean, does that make sense?

23 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Makes lots of

1 sense.

2 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Yeah, makes
3 perfect sense.

4 MR. MITCHELL: If I wasn't where I
5 am, I would like to develop a workplace, if
6 I was somewhere else, that I would want to
7 work there.

8 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Right, right.
9 That's a good attitude.

10 MR. MITCHELL: And I hope that
11 that's what I'm doing. And -- and Brian as
12 well. I think he is -- Like I say, we work
13 hand-in-hand.

14 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Yeah, you've
15 got a great rapport.

16 MR. MITCHELL: I think we've done
17 very -- we've worked very well together over
18 the last 18 months, I think.

19 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay. That's
20 it.

21 COMMISSIONER CARL: I'm good.

22 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Thank you very
23 much.

1 MR. MITCHELL: That's it?

2 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: We appreciate
3 your time.

4 MR. MITCHELL: Absolutely.

5 I didn't tell -- I didn't tell y'all
6 we're looking at possibly doing an incentive
7 plan too for the employees. I didn't even
8 think about that.

9 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: No, you
10 didn't.

11 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. So another
12 idea we've -- we're looking at is an
13 incentive plan. I know the City has one.

14 And so we grabbed that and we've
15 been looking at it and we're vetting through
16 what we would want to incentivize like
17 different tasks if they -- you know, the way
18 the City runs theirs is if they get -- I
19 think it's 100 points.

20 Everything is on a point-based
21 system. If they get 100 points, they get a
22 five percent raise. Now, they've -- it --
23 it takes a while to get that 100 points, but

1 they have limited it to a maximum of three
2 over their career.

3 I don't know that we want to limit
4 it to the maximum. But if you make it
5 difficult enough that maybe you get three or
6 four over your career if you're doing all of
7 that, then that would be -- you know, you're
8 not limiting it because then once they hit
9 that third one, they say, oh, I'm done.

10 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Yeah.

11 MR. MITCHELL: But if you can help
12 the employee better themselves, it's not doing
13 anything but helping the County.

14 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Strive on
15 their own, too.

16 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: Yeah.

17 MR. MITCHELL: So, you know,
18 volunteer opportunities like the Touch a
19 Truck that we did, those employees, you
20 know, get X number of points.

21 You know, they're -- and if they
22 do outside volunteer, and we, you know, just
23 get documentation from that volunteer group

1 that they were doing this, then they can get
2 X number of points.

3 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: I think that's
4 a great idea.

5 MR. MITCHELL: You know, health
6 particip- -- health fair participation,
7 those are -- we don't -- everybody don't
8 participate.

9 But the ones that do, you know, it
10 will be nice to know that, you know, they're
11 not just going in there to help the County
12 out. They are on there to help themself,
13 but it will help -- this will help them in
14 two ways.

15 It'll give them notice of maybe you
16 need to go do something, but it will also do
17 -- it'll give them an incentive to -- a pay
18 incentive, in a way.

19 Certifications, degrees, those
20 things like that. So if -- if our mechanics
21 -- right now there are some of them that are
22 ASE certified, but it cost them their own
23 money to do that.

1 And there's no benefit for -- as far
2 as the County goes or for them -- to them,
3 there's no benefit. But if they are ASE
4 certified, then it'll benefit the County
5 because they have more knowledge now. So
6 then we, you know, help them help the County
7 basically. It all --

8 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: And then they
9 can't leave us. Because once they get the
10 certification, it's easier for them to jump.

11 MR. MITCHELL: Well, it is, but if
12 they see that we're willing to --

13 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: No. I'm glad
14 they -- whatever it takes to keep them --

15 MR. MITCHELL: Oh, yeah.

16 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: -- where they
17 don't feel like they want to go to
18 McConnell.

19 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah. But if they
20 get their ASE certification and all that,
21 yeah, people are going to be looking for
22 them.

23 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Well, keep us

1 posted.

2 MR. MITCHELL: I will.

3 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: And let us
4 know when you have a proposal. Okay?

5 MR. MITCHELL: Sure. And this don't
6 have to be county-wide, so we won't have to
7 -- you know, John -- I've already talked to
8 John about this, and he likes the idea.
9 We're getting it started.

10 And what it would take here -- a lot
11 of what we do will be able to be carried
12 over to the administration side as well.
13 But they may have extra certifications or
14 other things that they would want to add to
15 the list.

16 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: See, this is
17 what I mean by communication. Come and talk
18 to us about these things, even if there's
19 things on the drawing board or things you're
20 thinking about. You know, it -- it's nice
21 to know --

22 MR. MITCHELL: Okay.

23 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: -- kind of

1 what the thought process is.

2 MR. MITCHELL: So that's -- that's
3 what we're doing. And -- and I was riding
4 with Commissioner Carl. This is just -- we
5 hadn't vetted everything out, but one thing
6 we are looking at is a -- maybe a potential
7 four-day week.

8 That would be another incentive to
9 the employees. We may have to split the
10 shift so some people work Monday through
11 Thursday, some people work Tuesday through
12 Friday. It does kind of cut down on meeting
13 days.

14 COMMISSIONER CARL: You're talking
15 about the staff here in-house?

16 MR. MITCHELL: Yeah, staff here.
17 Now, out there it's just Monday through --
18 Monday through Thursday. But who wouldn't
19 want a three-day weekend? I mean, so that's
20 an inc- -- you wouldn't -- you wouldn't want
21 a three-day --

22 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: That's more
23 time for me to have to clean up and do the

1 yard and wash and iron.

2 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: As long as it
3 doesn't affect productivity.

4 MR. MITCHELL: Well, you know, it --
5 it will --

6 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Sometimes
7 those last two hours are hard to work.

8 MR. MITCHELL: It -- it may be.
9 But, you know, it does opened up our office
10 to the public more. Now you're open to the
11 public for 10 hours a day as opposed to
12 eight hours a day. So that's a -- it is a
13 positive to the -- to the public as well.

14 We're -- we're vetting those kind of
15 things out as well. And we don't have
16 everything vetted out so we haven't brought
17 it forward, but --

18 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay.

19 MR. MITCHELL: -- just so you know
20 what's going on.

21 We were riding and looking at a
22 project and I hit him up. I just told him
23 to be expecting something in the future.

1 So --

2 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay.

3 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: All right.

4 MR. MITCHELL: Anything else?

5 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Thank you,

6 Ricky. No, we're good.

7 MR. MITCHELL: That's it?

8 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: We're good.

9 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: We appreciate
10 you.

11 MR. MITCHELL: Well, thanks for
12 meeting with me and giving me the
13 opportunity.

14 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Absolutely.

15

16 (Whereupon, the interview of Ricky
17 Mitchell was concluded at 4:30 p.m.)

18

19 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: You need a
20 motion to adjourn?

21 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: We need the
22 motion to adjourn.

23 COMMISSIONER LUDGOOD: So moved.

1 COMMISSIONER CARL: Second.

2 COMMISSIONER HUDSON: Okay. We
3 stand adjourned.

4

5 (Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned
6 until March 23, 2018.)

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1 CERTIFICATE
2
3 STATE OF ALABAMA)
4 MOBILE COUNTY)
5
6 I hereby certify that the above and
7 foregoing interview was taken down by me in
8 stenotype, and the questions and answers
9 thereto were transcribed by means of
10 computer-aided transcription, and that the
11 foregoing represents a true and correct
12 transcript of said interview.
13 I further certify that I am neither
14 of counsel nor of kin to the parties to the
15 action, nor am I in anywise interested in
16 the result of said cause.
17
18
19
20 _____
21 JENNIFER L. SAGE, CCR
22 COURT REPORTER, NOTARY PUBLIC
23 STATE OF ALABAMA AT LARGE
ACCR# 292, EXPIRES 9/30/18

<u>WORD INDEX</u>		
< 1 >	add 67:14	area 3:15 4:8
1 39:20, 22 48:18	addressing 57:3	5:21 26:20 47:13,
56:7	adequate 12:7	17
10 69:11	adjourn 70:20, 22	area-based 46:18
100 63:19, 21, 23	adjourned 71:3, 5	49:10
12 24:1	administration	areas 3:16 10:20
13 3:20	15:6 67:12	Arena 27:1
16 24:1	affect 15:17, 19	articulate 56:9
18 24:2 44:19	69:3	ASE 65:22 66:3,
54:23 61:11 62:18	affirmatively 36:14	20
72:21	37:12, 19 43:9	aside 24:18, 19
19 1:17	47:20 50:15	asked 16:2 43:17
1992 4:6	agenda 19:7	asking 6:9 9:10
	ago 16:11 27:21	30:1
	35:6	asks 43:11
	agree 30:18, 19, 21	asphalt 6:6 47:4, 8
	31:3, 14 44:1	assign 38:3
< 2 >	ahead 17:9 18:3	assigned 38:20
2 48:18	19:17 41:22 42:1	assistant 3:18
2018 1:17 55:17	55:10, 11	11:20
71:6	air 23:9	ate 22:15, 15, 16
205 1:20	AL 1:21	atmosphere 58:13,
23 71:6	ALABAMA 1:10	21
25 3:13	72:3, 21	attention 24:7
292 72:21	allow 54:2	38:13 60:1
	allowing 7:6	attitude 62:9
< 3 >	allows 47:15	automatic 23:11
3 47:17 48:4, 18	amount 52:22	available 53:23
49:7	Andy's 47:12	average 46:21, 22
3:30 1:18	annual 26:11	avoid 32:13
30 15:14 36:3, 7	55:16	award 24:13
72:21	answer 5:5 19:7	25:10, 18
36602 1:21	51:13	
	answered 9:8	< B >
< 4 >	answers 72:8	back 7:7 8:3 17:5
4:30 70:17	anybody 31:19	27:11, 20 31:22
	anymore 23:14	34:9, 13 35:22, 22
< 9 >	37:2	36:3 48:6
9 72:21	anytime 29:21	backorder 23:3
	anywise 72:15	bad 20:18 43:16,
< A >	apart 29:4	17 44:12
able 3:23 12:19	apologize 44:22	ball 34:17
21:2, 8 27:11, 19	applicant 2:4	barbecue 28:2, 4
48:23 67:11	applies 61:6	based 52:12, 21
Absolutely 57:8	appreciate 28:21	53:23
63:4 70:14	61:12, 14, 16, 17	basically 66:7
ACCR 72:21	63:2 70:9	basis 17:15 18:18
achieve 14:12	appreciated 58:14	55:16
action 72:15	approval 19:10	beds 20:14 23:8
adamant 45:22	Archer 27:1	
		beginning 15:2
		47:5
		beliefs 9:18
		believe 32:11
		benefit 34:15, 21
		66:1, 3, 4
		benefits 24:15
		Berra 57:5
		better 6:14 13:23
		15:21 19:10 20:1
		22:7, 8 26:4 31:4
		48:11 64:12
		beyond 58:16
		big 5:23 33:6
		56:18 58:17
		bigger 7:5
		Bill 18:18
		Birmingham 3:15
		bit 4:7 5:6 14:7,
		13 24:4, 9 26:18
		30:13 37:23 40:19
		blame 44:7, 8
		Blount 3:19
		blowup 23:11
		board 56:11 67:19
		boss 55:1
		bottom 42:20
		box 7:1 41:13
		breakfast 26:21
		breaks 7:18
		Brian 4:21 15:9
		62:11
		bring 25:5, 5 48:6
		60:13
		broke 53:10
		brought 14:3
		45:14 69:16
		Bs 3:2
		budget 12:17
		bugs 41:18
		build 24:6 28:14
		30:6, 13 31:3
		57:12
		builder 29:4
		building 13:10
		14:13 24:18, 21
		Builds 28:7, 8
		bunch 21:5
		burned 42:2

Burrows 18:12, 15	certified 65:22 66:4	COMMISSIONER 2:3, 11, 16 3:3 4:14, 16, 18 5:1, 4, 13, 16 9:4, 6, 7 12:6 13:3, 14 14:5, 6, 17, 21 16:7 19:15, 17, 18 20:4, 7, 15 21:16 22:11, 22 23:6, 15, 21, 22, 23 25:12 26:8 28:7, 11, 22 30:15, 17, 20 31:1, 10 32:8, 10, 15 35:12, 14, 17, 21, 23 36:13, 22 37:7, 11, 18 38:11, 16 39:1 40:8, 10 41:1, 20, 22, 23 42:2, 4, 13 43:4, 8 47:19 49:14 50:10, 16, 20 51:5 53:16, 21 54:5, 9, 10, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19 55:8, 10, 12 56:15, 21 57:1, 9, 20, 22, 23 58:5, 20 59:6, 16, 18 60:3, 7, 10, 16, 22 61:4, 9, 14, 19, 23 62:2, 8, 14, 19, 21, 22 63:2, 9 64:10, 14, 16 65:3 66:8, 13, 16, 23 67:3, 16, 23 68:4, 14, 22 69:2, 6, 18 70:2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 14, 19, 21, 23 71:1, 2	completed 36:9 37:3
business 39:3	certify 72:6, 13	computer 2:23 10:10, 14 33:12, 20 41:11	
busting 7:12	chain 11:17, 19	computer-aided 72:10	
button 36:20 37:3 38:5, 10	chance 40:20 53:4 54:11	concerned 57:2	
<C>	change 32:20 33:3, 6, 15 35:4 39:18 45:22 55:5 59:2	concerns 57:4	
call 8:20 18:10, 21 37:9	changed 15:3 46:12, 13	concluded 70:17	
called 37:15	changes 32:12, 16 34:16 36:17 61:12	concrete 23:13	
calling 56:5	changing 50:23	conference 29:20	
calls 29:22	check 36:4 40:4 41:13	conflict 31:2 42:5, 16 43:23 45:4	
camaraderie 28:8 57:12	checked 37:4	CONNIE 1:11	
camp 8:9 45:6 46:21, 22, 23 47:12, 12, 17 48:1, 2, 4, 17, 18, 18	chicken-scratching 33:8	consensus 29:3 30:16 31:4	
camps 8:9	CHIEF 1:5 2:5 18:12, 15	consider 42:7	
candidates 5:8, 10	chili 26:7, 11 57:11	constraints 12:18	
capability 51:16 54:4	City 63:13, 18	consultant 13:16, 17	
care 34:19	civil 4:6, 10	consuming 18:3	
career 64:2, 6	class 11:8	contest 28:5	
CARL 1:13 3:3 4:16, 18 5:1, 4, 13, 16 19:18 20:4, 7, 15 23:6 32:10, 15 35:12, 21 39:1 41:22 42:2 55:10 61:4, 9, 14, 19 62:21 68:4, 14 71:1	clean 68:23	continue 5:22 48:6	
case 21:19	clear 60:19	conversation 20:12 44:3	
cash 25:18	cliche 29:19	cook-off 26:7, 11 28:4 57:11	
cast 56:6	close 36:18, 20 37:3 38:4, 5, 10 46:2	cooler 26:18	
catered 26:21	closed 29:18, 19	correct 19:7 72:11	
cause 72:16	closest 42:8	correctly 41:8	
causing 7:7	college 4:5	cost 12:11 65:22	
CCR 72:20	come 7:21 9:12 13:5, 6, 13, 16 16:17 21:7 27:3 29:8, 14 31:22, 23 34:13 51:18 56:10 59:3 67:17	costs 8:5	
certain 13:2, 5 37:23	comes 9:11 34:16 37:14 40:4 44:1, 10	counsel 72:14	
CERTIFICATE 72:1	coming 7:8 16:16 18:3 25:17 34:22	COUNTY 1:9, 10 3:18, 19 10:15 19:1 64:13 65:11 66:2, 4, 6 72:4	
certification 66:10, 20	commend 57:13	county-wide 67:6	
Certifications 65:19 67:13	comments 27:6	couple 28:10	
	commission 25:6 60:20	course 12:14 26:6 33:21 34:18 59:13	
		COURT 1:19 72:20	
		crashes 41:14	
		crew 17:2 57:17	
		critical 32:11 56:1	
		crown 13:23	
		currently 9:9	
		cut 16:21 17:1 68:12	

cutting 48:22 49:23	different 8:9 11:13 19:12 44:20 49:22 55:4 63:17	edge 30:8	extremely 21:13
< D >	differently 42:23	efficiently 49:1	eyes 59:20, 21
daily 15:11	difficult 64:5	effort 34:21	< F >
database 33:1	difficulties 17:21	eight 69:12	face 25:8
DATE 1:17	DIRECTOR 1:5	either 9:11	fair 65:6
daughter 3:7	2:5 14:18 58:7	electrical 2:23	fall 5:5 28:3 44:6
Dawes 6:23 7:1, 8	director's 16:1, 3, 4	e-mail 19:9	far 20:2 30:15
day 6:15 7:11	disagreeing 31:20	e-mails 36:5, 6	35:3 50:23 52:7
11:14 15:15 28:18	discussions 16:11	embarrassed 21:13	57:1, 4 66:1
46:2, 22 47:1, 5, 8,	District 56:7 59:21	employed 5:11	feel 8:1 54:7
14, 22 48:13 49:3	ditch 6:4 57:18	employee 9:15	58:14 66:17
51:10, 11 52:1, 12,	58:1	24:16, 19 25:3, 18	feeling 21:20
19 53:18, 20 60:9	ditching 52:1	27:14 64:12	feet 51:11 53:18,
69:11, 12	divided 2:8 42:10	employee-of-the-mo- nth 24:13 25:10	20
days 36:4, 8 40:7,	DIVISION 1:6 2:6	employees 9:10	field 6:3, 21, 22
22, 23 46:23 53:8	document 8:4	10:23 13:1 26:2,	33:5
68:13	33:16 35:4	22 27:12, 18, 20	figure 8:17 33:10
dead 20:11	documentation	28:13 29:13 30:6,	35:8
deal 18:13, 14, 15,	64:23	14 44:10 53:19	file 33:18
17 21:17 31:2	doing 4:9, 11 8:20	63:7 64:19 68:9	financial 12:11
45:4 46:9, 10	9:3 13:12 15:18	ENGINEER 1:5	find 28:2 58:13
Dealing 42:5, 15	49:7 54:22 62:11	2:5 3:19	finding 37:5 38:6
deficiencies 49:13	63:6 64:6, 12 65:1	engineering 2:23	41:18
definite 15:21	68:3	4:6, 10 14:17 15:6	fine 4:19, 22
definitely 15:5	door 29:18	English 3:10	fingertips 34:8
18:5 60:5	DOT 3:14	enjoy 7:21 9:1	finished 37:1
degree 4:6	double 3:10	28:5	First 2:11 26:9, 10
degrees 65:19	doubt 58:18	enjoyable 3:22 4:1	40:13
deliberate 24:8	Doug 16:23	entering 33:3	fiscal 55:17
delivered 39:6	drainage 6:23	entities 13:5	five 3:19 55:18, 23
deliveries 39:5	dramatic 61:11	equipment 48:10	63:22
delivery 39:5	drawing 56:11	49:1, 4, 6 52:13, 13,	fix 8:19
department 10:7	67:19	18, 23 53:19	flagging 10:18
14:20, 22 18:16	drivers 52:5	establish 14:8	floor 20:20 23:14
27:8, 9, 15 55:6	duke 60:13, 14, 17	estimated 53:5	27:2
59:20 60:6	duking 61:3	everybody 12:13	flow 7:2
departments 4:1	duplication 49:11,	22:6 26:11 27:3, 5	follow 36:2
24:14, 16 27:13	12	44:17 65:7	follows 38:3
depend 10:17	dynamic 15:3	exactly 11:9 21:11	follow-up 35:15
deploying 56:2	< E >	example 6:11, 19,	41:21
deputy 54:23	easier 17:23 58:3	21, 21 20:3 21:11	food 20:13, 21
describe 5:17	66:10	36:3	22:13
desk 8:23 9:2	easily 12:9, 10	examples 5:19 6:20	foregoing 72:7, 11
10:14	easy 23:10 58:9	expecting 69:23	forward 10:12
develop 9:9, 13, 16	eat 23:2	experience 19:22	33:12 69:17
61:20 62:5	Eddie 18:18	EXPIRES 72:21	four 40:22, 23
		extra 25:22 34:21	51:23 52:3 53:9
		67:13	55:23 64:6

four-day 68:7	44:8, 13 45:7	help 7:22 9:23	hurricanes 23:3
frame 53:5	46:14 48:20 50:3	12:20, 22 14:11	< I >
Friday 68:12	54:10 55:14 56:2	16:6, 17 48:1, 1	icy 20:8 21:7
fully 51:13, 14	65:11 66:21 69:20	49:12 59:5, 12	idea 5:9 56:18
function 15:10	good 4:20 8:1	64:11 65:11, 12, 13,	63:12 65:4 67:8
further 11:1 72:13	10:15 18:11 20:10,	13 66:6, 6	ideas 28:1
future 22:23 69:23	10, 17 21:11 25:12	helping 11:15 48:2,	Illinois 11:6
< G >	26:5 28:23 29:3	2 64:13	immediately 10:21
gather 10:5	40:11 42:11 50:7	helps 19:1 30:6	important 58:8, 22
general 19:2	54:5, 9, 16 58:21	hey 18:10, 22 30:4,	60:4
getting 2:21 9:2	62:9, 21 70:6, 8	8	impression 44:16
12:15 17:21 24:15	goodness 31:6	hire 51:16	improve 59:5, 11
26:17 33:18, 19	GOVERNMENT	hiring 51:19	incentive 63:6, 13
35:7 52:22 58:2, 3	1:20	hit 36:20 38:5, 9	65:17, 18 68:8
60:12 67:9	grab 21:8	64:8 69:22	incentivize 63:16
give 2:12, 13 5:8,	grabbed 63:14	hole 30:11	incident 20:18
18 9:19 11:4 25:4,	Gradall 51:23	holiday 26:14	Indicates 36:14
18, 22 40:20 42:18	grader 13:18	honest 21:12	37:12, 19 43:9
52:3, 4, 6, 6, 17	graders 13:21	25:14 31:9 32:2	47:20 50:14
53:4 54:11 60:17	graduated 4:5	honestly 3:21	individuals 10:1
65:15, 17	graduating 2:20, 22	hope 19:8 23:18,	information 10:5
giving 10:13 16:22,	Gras 26:16	19 44:19, 23 62:10	18:23 32:23 33:4,
22 70:12	grass 48:22 49:23	Hopefully 23:15	13 34:6 39:21, 23
glad 16:16 57:14	great 10:5 51:12	hoping 43:1	in-house 13:7
66:13	62:15 65:4	hours 28:10 69:7,	68:15
Glen 15:20 16:12,	green 40:12, 13	11, 12	inlets 7:6
14	group 20:8 64:23	House 21:1, 2	input 14:11
go 5:23 6:5, 16	guess 9:10 43:2	42:10	inside 11:18
7:3, 9 8:10 11:1, 5,	50:12, 16	HUDSON 1:11	inspections 13:10
21 12:19 16:3, 23	guys 20:8 22:6	2:3, 11, 16 4:14	installed 8:3
17:3, 4 19:5, 17	< H >	9:6 12:6 14:6, 17,	instances 46:18
20:23 22:5 26:23	habit 39:11	21 16:7 19:15	interaction 17:15
27:11 33:12 34:9	half 3:22 46:2	22:11, 22 23:15, 21	interested 72:15
36:3, 8 37:20 38:8,	hand-in-hand 62:13	25:12 26:8 28:7,	INTERVIEW 1:1
18, 19 41:14, 22, 23	hands 34:7	11, 22 30:15, 20	70:16 72:7, 12
43:12 46:17 47:4,	happen 21:15	31:1, 10 32:8	introduce 2:16
7, 11 53:5 55:10,	happened 4:2	41:20, 23 50:10, 16,	involved 16:8, 10
11 65:16 66:17	21:14, 15 53:9	20 51:5 53:16, 21	iron 69:1
goals 14:12	happening 36:2	54:5, 10, 14, 17, 19	issue 6:23 16:18
goes 28:13 37:17,	57:14	57:1, 9, 22 58:5, 20	issued 37:22
22 44:9, 12 58:16	happy 17:8 45:17	59:6, 16 60:3, 7	issues 24:3 37:6
66:2	hard 27:2 47:15	61:23 62:8, 14, 19,	39:16 40:2 45:11
going 3:9 5:7, 10	51:19 69:7	22 63:2, 9 64:10,	57:7
6:1, 8, 13 7:10 8:7,	heads 14:20, 22	14 65:3 66:23	it'll 26:14 37:20,
8 9:18 10:2, 12, 20	18:17	67:3, 16, 23 69:2, 6,	21 38:21 53:6
11:7, 17 15:16, 17,	health 65:5, 6	18 70:2, 5, 9, 14, 21	65:15, 17 66:4
18, 22, 23 16:17	hear 4:19, 22	71:2	< J >
17:5 19:4, 11	19:12 29:9	huge 32:20	
34:18 35:9 39:2, 8		hungry 22:12, 16	

JENNIFER 1:19 72:20	19 44:5, 18 45:9 46:1, 6, 7 48:9 49:19 50:7 51:23 52:2 55:8, 13 56:3, 7, 11, 13, 16 57:16 59:10, 10, 19, 22 60:18, 23 61:2 63:13, 17 64:3, 7, 17, 20, 21, 22 65:5, 9, 10, 10 66:6 67:4, 7, 20, 21 69:4, 9, 19	67:15 listen 29:6, 8 little 4:7 5:6 14:7, 13 18:2 24:4, 9 25:22, 22 26:17, 18 28:4 30:13 37:23 39:17 40:19, 20 41:5, 12 42:23	13, 16 68:22 70:3, 8, 19, 23	
JERRY 1:13		LOCATION 1:20	<M>	
job 7:10 9:21 17:21 40:23 54:23 55:3, 6 58:11	knowing 7:10 17:19	locked 23:4 log 38:18 41:10, 16 logged 37:15 39:23 logging 39:21 long 7:15, 16 27:21 28:13 38:8, 22 40:15 48:8 69:2	ma'am 22:2 23:19 36:15 51:2 main 47:13 major 3:10 making 57:3 mama 3:3, 5 42:21 man 38:7 52:13 61:5	
Joe 42:8 43:5	knowledge 11:18 66:5	longer 7:17 40:20 46:1 look 12:13 38:8 39:12 40:15 53:10 looked 3:1 27:23 51:3 looking 26:19 41:2 45:7, 12 46:14, 16 48:19 63:6, 12, 15 66:21 68:6 69:21 lot 10:6 12:11 18:2 23:5 25:11 27:6 34:1 43:17 45:11 55:14 58:3 67:10 lots 61:23 love 26:1 43:5 low 28:16 luckily 20:23 21:4	management 4:11 8:4 14:8 32:19 33:16 35:5 manager 14:18 29:3 managers 39:1 manager's 15:23 managing 4:9 32:12 42:22 manpower 52:13, 18 53:1	
John 15:20 16:12, 14 26:23 67:7, 8	<L>	LUDGOOD 1:12 9:4, 7 13:3, 14 14:5 21:16 22:10 23:23 30:17 35:14, 17, 23 36:13, 22 37:7, 11, 18 38:11, 16 40:8, 10 41:1 42:4, 13 43:4, 8 47:19 49:14 54:9, 13, 16 55:8, 12 56:15, 21 57:20, 23 59:19 60:10, 16, 22 62:2 64:16 66:8,	MANCH 1:17 71:6 Mardi 26:16 married 2:19, 21 matter 47:6 mattress 23:9 maximum 64:1, 4 McConnell 66:18 meals 20:9 23:1 mean 3:9 7:3 11:1, 22 15:9, 10 17:7, 18 18:11 19:3 20:2, 23 21:20 25:23 28:18 29:7, 18, 21 31:6, 8, 12, 13 32:1 33:16 34:3, 20 35:3 37:15 39:17 50:13 51:9 55:4 58:17 61:22 67:17 68:19 means 25:10 72:9 meas 53:13 measure 51:1 52:11, 21 measures 50:13 53:14 mechanic 11:12	
July 26:20	labor 48:10 laborer 10:18 ladies 33:9, 14 34:9 35:7	LARGE 72:21 lately 45:6 lead 6:10 leader 19:20 leadership 5:18 leads 50:11, 17 learn 6:16 11:12 19:21 54:2 learned 20:15 leave 31:20 44:3 66:9 leaving 31:16 left 22:17, 18 46:4 legal 43:13 lenient 39:17 Leroy 4:19 letting 17:8 41:19 level 10:17 library 3:9 lifts 7:23 light 43:16 likes 67:8 limit 64:3 limited 64:1 limiting 64:8 line 11:23, 23 12:2 lines 59:17 list 39:2, 4 59:23		
jump 30:11 38:15 57:18 66:10				
June 26:20				
<K>				
keep 8:5 11:18 12:1 24:2 49:2 66:14, 23 keeping 47:16 51:20 59:17 key 9:10 59:22 keyword 32:15 kick 38:12 kids 2:19 kin 72:14 Kind 3:10 4:10 5:7 7:2, 7 9:8 15:9 21:19 22:19 23:4 27:3, 4, 16, 22 29:18 33:7 42:22 43:1, 3, 16, 20 48:16 49:9 50:11, 17 56:18 61:6 67:23 68:12 69:14 know 2:13 4:8 6:8, 12, 12, 17, 17 7:14 8:7, 15 9:12, 22 10:9, 10, 11, 20 11:7, 21 13:4, 6 14:15 15:13 17:2, 6, 9, 12, 14, 16 18:1, 7 19:3, 4, 5, 8, 11 20:19 21:22 22:3 23:23 24:8 26:6, 15 27:2, 12 28:10 29:9, 17 30:5, 10 31:7 32:3, 6 33:23 34:12 36:4 37:14, 16, 22 39:15 40:18 41:19 42:7 43:4,				

<p> mechanics 65:20 medium 17:8 meeting 15:23 16:1, 3, 4, 13 17:19 25:6, 7 29:20 46:11, 12 57:17 60:13 61:1 68:12 70:12 71:5 meetings 27:17 45:5 men 21:17 MERCERIA 1:12 middle 47:13, 13 miles 51:10 52:19 mind 16:15 29:21 mine 29:13 minute 22:19 35:19, 20 49:17 minutes 15:14 29:15 missed 45:15 missing 45:20 Mississippi 2:22 MITCHELL 1:3 2:4, 10, 15, 18 3:5 4:23 5:3, 12, 15, 20 9:17 12:9 13:9, 15 14:16, 19, 23 19:23 20:6, 10, 17 22:1, 15 23:1, 7, 18 24:11 25:13 26:10 28:9, 12 29:5 30:19, 22 31:6, 11 32:14, 17 35:16, 19 36:11, 15, 23 37:8, 13, 20 38:14, 17 40:9, 12 41:6 42:12 43:2, 6, 10 47:21 49:15 50:14, 19 51:2, 6 53:17, 22 54:18, 21 56:14, 20, 23 57:8 58:2, 19, 23 59:9 60:2, 5, 8, 15, 21 61:8, 13, 16, 20 62:4, 10, 16 63:1, 4, 11 64:11, 17 65:5 66:11, 15, 19 67:2, 5, 22 68:2, 16 69:4, 8, 19 70:4, </p>	<p> 7, 11, 17 mixed 60:12 MOBILE 1:10, 21 3:20 72:4 Monday 68:10, 17, 18 monetary 58:17 money 65:23 monitoring 50:21 month 24:16, 20 25:19 39:3, 7, 12 months 16:11 24:2 39:13, 13 44:20 54:23 61:11 62:18 morale 24:3, 6 28:15 30:13 57:4, 12 morning 21:3 motion 70:20, 22 motor 13:18 mouth 59:1 mouthful 2:7 move 9:13 47:23 50:3, 4 moved 27:8 70:23 MREs 23:6, 7 MS4 18:21 19:1 MS4s 13:12 < N > name 38:20 Neal 45:9 near 9:2 neat 25:9 27:10 necessarily 18:15 42:17 46:18 necessity 15:10 need 9:19 18:9, 19, 20 19:10 23:16 33:21 40:18 47:12 48:13, 13 54:7 55:21 56:1 59:23 60:1, 22 65:16 70:19, 21 needed 58:14 needs 40:15 48:4, 9, 10 52:15, 18 negative 43:7 neither 72:13 </p>	<p> never 6:17 23:18, 19 46:9 new 8:4 13:11 33:2 48:16 51:6 nice 4:4 23:12, 12 27:2 65:10 67:20 night 21:4 normal 11:23 12:2 16:4 17:15 nose 20:11 NOTARY 72:20 notice 16:23 65:15 number 51:10, 10 53:18, 20 64:20 65:2 < O > OAs 32:22 obtain 14:11 October 8:3 39:20, 22 office 5:21 6:21 8:2 11:20 15:14 18:13 32:22 33:10 34:14 69:9 oh 6:17 9:4 20:10 40:10 53:10 64:9 66:15 Okay 2:10, 15, 18 4:14, 20, 23 5:1, 3, 16 7:16 8:11 9:17 13:14, 22 14:5 15:16 19:15 20:6 22:10 23:21 28:22 29:1 31:10, 16 32:8, 14, 18, 21 35:12, 16 36:7, 22 38:1, 16 40:10 42:4 44:2, 11 45:14, 19 47:9 49:14 50:10 51:22 53:17 54:13, 15, 17, 18 55:17 56:23 59:6 60:2, 15, 21 62:19 67:4, 22 69:18 70:2 71:2 oldest 2:20 once 8:8 21:17, 18 36:19 39:3, 7 64:8 </p>	<p> 66:9 one-on-one 57:16 ones 65:9 open 15:4 21:1 22:5 31:8 32:6 38:7, 21 39:7 45:1 59:18 69:10 opened 38:23 69:9 openness 29:12 42:15 operated 13:22 operator 11:11 operators 11:6 13:18 opinion 15:3 43:22 44:16 opinions 46:10 opportunities 12:7 64:18 opportunity 2:13 9:13 11:4 42:19 70:13 opposed 42:20, 21 49:2 69:11 order 8:4 9:20 11:16 23:2, 9 32:19 36:11, 19 51:7 ordered 20:13, 14 21:6 other's 15:14 outside 64:22 < P > P.M 1:18 70:17 pack 27:1 paid 13:13, 15 paperwork 33:17 39:8 park 24:14, 17 part 58:17 particip 65:6 participate 65:8 participation 65:6 particular 24:12 29:1 46:20 parties 72:14 passed 36:8 pastor 61:10 </p>
--	--	---	---

<p> patching 46:19 48:3, 21 Patrick 57:5 paver 11:8, 10 paving 11:6, 22 pay 38:13 60:1 65:17 paying 24:7 pending 36:9, 16, 21 37:17 38:13, 13, 22 39:2, 4, 14 people 4:11 13:5 14:3 20:19 21:6 22:4 27:7, 9 31:3 42:7 43:18 45:1 51:16 56:5, 10 58:10 59:3 66:21 68:10, 11 percent 63:22 perfect 20:2 62:3 performance 50:13, 21 51:1, 8 52:10, 10, 21 53:14 person 39:5 48:8 personality 42:9 phonetic 3:16 57:6 pick 17:2, 3 21:7 25:3 picked 25:15 picking 16:19 18:2, 4 pickup 16:19 picture 56:19 piece 49:3 60:11 pieces 18:2 49:6 pipe 7:5 pitfall 33:22 34:17 pitfalls 32:13 pizza 21:5, 6 22:17 place 21:5 24:19 41:5, 7 47:3 places 23:5 plan 20:9 63:7, 13 planned 21:10 plant 47:4, 7 plentiful 12:7 pocket 25:18, 20 point 31:21 44:14 51:18 56:12 </p>	<p> point-based 63:20 pointed 57:6 points 24:3 63:19, 21, 23 64:20 65:2 position 12:4 43:20 50:22 58:6 positive 69:13 possibly 63:6 posted 67:1 potential 68:6 pothole 46:19 48:2, 20 potholes 47:10 preaching 61:7 prepared 20:21 22:23 pretty 23:10 25:9 previous 55:1 privilege 8:18 probably 8:8 16:11 28:3 42:6 46:2 problem 29:11 43:23 problems 4:21 8:12 35:10 PROCEEDINGS 2:1 process 10:2 34:23 68:1 productivity 69:3 program 8:19 41:8 51:3 53:3 54:1, 3 progress 10:22, 23 11:16 progression 12:1, 2 project 53:7 55:17 69:22 projects 3:17 59:22 promoted 27:7 50:22 promotional 11:16, 19 proposal 67:4 provide 18:23 PUBLIC 1:5, 6 2:5, 6 10:7 15:7 25:7 26:22 56:6 </p>	<p> 58:7 60:9 69:10, 11, 13 72:20 public-facing 60:6 pull 24:20 34:10 put 27:2 31:5 33:11 35:5 43:15, 16 53:4 putting 19:6, 8 34:22 < Q > qualified 58:10 qualify 39:6 qualities 29:2 quantities 8:6 Quarter 3:15 question 35:15, 18 41:21 42:14 45:3 50:11 questions 2:9 5:2, 8, 10 51:14 54:12 72:8 quick 48:6 quite 3:22 < R > raise 63:22 ran 25:23 rapport 14:9, 14 15:21 18:11 30:6, 14 62:15 ready 23:1 real 5:23 48:5 realized 21:18 really 4:12 7:23 9:12 10:9, 14 24:21 27:10, 13, 18, 19 28:5, 6 48:1 50:12 57:2, 6 reason 32:5 51:3 reasons 14:4 recall 34:5 recalled 33:20 recognize 9:14 recognized 24:23 25:7 red 40:6, 14, 16, 21 reduce 49:12 reducing 7:2 </p>	<p> regards 16:18 regular 18:17 release 23:11 remember 11:9 36:18 report 14:9 19:1 34:11 43:11 REPORTER 1:19 72:20 represents 72:11 request 37:9, 14 38:19 requests 37:10 require 14:10 resolution 25:4 resources 56:3 respond 56:4 result 72:16 retain 58:11 retirement 3:13 RICKY 1:3 2:4, 9 14:6 19:15 29:1 54:11 56:4 70:6, 16 rid 48:14 riding 68:3 69:21 right 2:18 3:13 4:15, 20 5:12, 17 14:16 21:11 22:12 23:17 24:20 32:9 33:13 34:13 41:12 44:4 50:9 53:16 55:22 56:14 59:7 61:10 62:8, 8 65:21 70:3 right-of-way 16:21 Road 7:1, 4, 5, 8 13:23 14:1, 2 16:20 17:1, 5, 6 ROADS 1:6 2:6 20:8 59:14 role 43:21 50:21 rolling 34:17 round 50:12 Ruffer 42:8 run 18:4 25:16 34:10 49:9, 10 52:21 53:23 running 18:1 49:2 </p>
---	---	---	---

<p>runs 46:21, 22, 23 48:21 63:18</p> <p>< S ></p> <p>SAGE 1:19 72:20</p> <p>sandwiches 22:18</p> <p>sat 13:17 45:23 46:1</p> <p>saying 5:23 49:16 52:11</p> <p>says 44:1 59:19</p> <p>scanning 33:17 35:5, 8</p> <p>schools 10:19</p> <p>science 3:10</p> <p>scramble 22:13</p> <p>screaming 40:6</p> <p>screen 38:17, 19 40:4, 5</p> <p>Second 71:1</p> <p>see 6:4, 5, 6 7:22 9:11 10:1, 22 11:14 16:4 17:18 25:8 27:9, 11 29:22 30:3, 7, 12 34:15 36:4, 8 46:4 48:21 50:21, 23 55:3, 5, 15, 18, 20 57:14, 20, 23 59:10 66:12 67:16</p> <p>seeing 10:3 35:10</p> <p>seen 44:20, 23 61:11</p> <p>send 10:18 12:13, 16, 21 36:5 38:15 48:4</p> <p>sending 11:5, 11, 12 38:2</p> <p>sense 5:14 17:13 53:21 61:22 62:1, 3</p> <p>sent 10:6</p> <p>service 37:9, 10, 13 38:19</p> <p>set 24:18, 18</p> <p>sets 29:4</p> <p>settings 40:17</p> <p>seven 3:14</p> <p>sheriff 18:8, 14</p>	<p>sheriff's 18:12</p> <p>shift 68:10</p> <p>shovel 6:7</p> <p>shoveling 6:6 7:13</p> <p>show 5:21 6:10, 11 8:14 28:20 34:5, 20 38:21 52:5</p> <p>showed 14:2</p> <p>side 16:20 17:6 33:9 67:12</p> <p>signals 60:12</p> <p>simply 39:4</p> <p>sit 8:11, 16, 23 12:22 29:14</p> <p>sitting 9:1 10:14 37:1 45:10 49:4</p> <p>situation 19:19</p> <p>situations 31:3</p> <p>six 53:8</p> <p>sledgehammer 6:7 7:12</p> <p>sleeping 20:20 23:13</p> <p>slinging 7:12</p> <p>slow 34:23</p> <p>small 28:9</p> <p>smart 3:4, 6</p> <p>snatch 21:8</p> <p>so-and-so 30:5</p> <p>solve 29:11</p> <p>somebody 6:1 29:22 43:23 44:5</p> <p>somebody's 44:6</p> <p>son 2:20</p> <p>sophomore 3:8</p> <p>sorry 16:14 21:22 43:18</p> <p>sounds 41:3</p> <p>Southern 3:8</p> <p>speaking 60:19</p> <p>split 68:9</p> <p>spread 52:15</p> <p>staff 68:15, 16</p> <p>staffed 51:13, 15</p> <p>stand 71:3</p> <p>standing 30:7</p> <p>start 10:2 15:22 47:3, 7, 8 48:20 56:2</p>	<p>started 8:3 17:10 24:12, 23 25:13 39:20 49:21 67:9</p> <p>starts 34:16 40:13</p> <p>State 2:22 11:9 72:3, 21</p> <p>statement 61:5</p> <p>status 38:19</p> <p>stay 37:21</p> <p>stays 39:7</p> <p>stereotype 72:8</p> <p>step 12:3 16:2</p> <p>steps 32:11 57:3, 10, 13</p> <p>stock 5:2</p> <p>store 23:9</p> <p>storms 23:4</p> <p>stormwater 13:11, 11</p> <p>straight 53:15</p> <p>strategies 24:5</p> <p>STREET 1:20</p> <p>Strive 64:14</p> <p>stuck 33:18</p> <p>Study 57:6</p> <p>stuff 38:23 39:14 43:18</p> <p>style 5:18 14:8 42:16</p> <p>successful 19:20</p> <p>summertime 26:20</p> <p>Sunday 61:10</p> <p>supervisor 36:18 37:23 38:2 43:10 47:10 51:21 52:23</p> <p>supervisors 7:21 12:23 13:18 25:14, 15, 20, 23 26:2 27:16 33:3 39:22 41:10 45:5, 6</p> <p>support 14:11</p> <p>Sure 5:15 22:17 24:11, 11 29:16 31:23 33:13 43:2 50:19 54:21 56:20, 23 58:19 67:5</p> <p>system 3:13 8:5, 15 32:19 33:1, 2, 16 36:1, 7, 10, 12</p>	<p>39:21 41:2 51:7 63:21</p> <p>systems 48:19</p> <p>< T ></p> <p>tables 27:2</p> <p>tablet 33:5</p> <p>take 7:18, 19 8:10 9:15 32:12 34:12 37:14 44:7 47:22 67:10</p> <p>taken 26:3 72:7</p> <p>takes 63:23 66:14</p> <p>talk 14:6, 13 17:18 18:18 22:4 24:4, 9 27:20 29:14 30:4 44:2 45:16, 19 67:17</p> <p>talked 42:18 45:23 49:22, 23 67:7</p> <p>talking 10:3 15:15, 22 17:14 45:10 49:21 60:11 68:14</p> <p>task 48:3 50:5 52:14, 17</p> <p>task-based 46:17 48:19 50:8</p> <p>tasked-based 50:6</p> <p>tasks 49:23 63:17</p> <p>teach 12:20</p> <p>teaching 13:16</p> <p>team 3:23 42:6</p> <p>techniques 13:2 14:2</p> <p>tell 2:14 31:12 32:2, 21 37:9, 21 41:2 43:18 44:12 46:15 55:13 58:3 59:21 63:5, 5</p> <p>telling 32:6</p> <p>tells 38:22 43:12</p> <p>terms 42:8, 15</p> <p>thank 19:16 35:12 61:13 62:22 70:5</p> <p>thanks 70:11</p> <p>theirs 63:18</p> <p>themselves 64:12 65:12</p> <p>thereto 72:9</p>
--	--	---	---

thing 4:1 6:8 21:10 26:5 27:4 40:11 42:8, 11 43:13 48:22 68:5	13 29:6 43:21 tinkered 40:18 tinkering 41:5 told 7:20 69:22 tools 9:20, 21 10:8 top 42:17 Touch 64:18 tough 28:17, 19 train 9:18 11:5, 20, 21 12:3, 22, 23 13:1, 13 trained 10:19 training 9:20 10:4, 5, 6, 12, 13 11:8, 10 12:8, 12, 16, 21 13:7 traits 29:1 31:7 transcribed 72:9 transcript 3:2 72:12 transcription 72:10 transferred 27:7 trash 16:19, 20 17:5 18:1 trials 17:20 tribulations 17:20 tried 44:12 trip 56:17 truck 46:21 48:12 49:18 52:7 53:10 64:19 trucks 46:20 47:11 51:23 52:4, 6 true 30:23 72:11 Trust 7:15 truth 32:7 try 11:18 12:1 24:6, 6 45:7 55:19 60:14 trying 28:14 33:10 35:8 39:10, 16 46:16 50:23 52:14 61:18, 20 Tuesday 68:11 turn 9:5 41:14, 15 turned 41:9 turns 7:19 8:10 40:6, 14, 16, 21	two 2:19 3:2 6:20, 20 17:4 19:13 35:6 39:12, 13 46:23 49:6 51:8, 8 52:4, 5 55:23 65:14 69:7 type 15:23 typing 32:23 < U > UAB 4:5 Uh-huh 36:13 37:11, 18 43:8 47:19 50:14 ultimately 7:8 understand 31:17 42:12 unfortunately 20:19 41:12 43:20 upfront 21:21 use 10:9, 10 23:18, 19 24:5 47:13, 21 48:12 49:1 54:3 usually 15:13 utilized 10:21 < V > varied 24:3 vehicle 47:23 vehicles 47:23 vetted 68:5 69:16 vetting 45:11 46:3 63:15 69:14 vision 56:7 voice 60:19 volunteer 64:18, 22, 23 < W > Waffle 21:1, 2 Wait 35:19, 19 49:16 waiting 19:13 walk 34:4 walls 7:13 want 4:17 6:7 9:12 11:1, 2, 3 12:5 26:17 28:1, 20 29:7 35:21, 22 42:18 44:11, 15	45:7, 12 48:23 51:9, 17 55:5, 9 57:20, 23 61:21 62:6 63:16 64:3 66:17 67:14 68:19, 20 wanted 19:21 31:7 46:10 58:15 59:10 warm 26:17 wash 69:1 watched 13:21 water 7:2, 3 14:1 way 6:4, 14, 18 19:12 24:14, 22 28:13 31:4, 17 35:3 40:2, 5 43:7 44:11 60:23 63:17 65:18 ways 24:17 65:14 weather 47:14 week 8:8, 10 13:19 16:15 17:3, 9 26:14, 15 46:22, 23 47:22 48:14 49:3 68:7 weekend 68:19 weeks 17:4 19:13 35:6 week's 16:23 Well 2:19 4:3, 16 6:16 15:16 16:1 19:23 20:15 25:12 26:1 29:5 31:20 33:2, 6 34:3 35:10 38:4, 11 41:1 42:6 43:2 44:2 45:9 48:11 49:23 50:1 51:4 52:7, 9 53:10 54:6 56:11 59:4, 7, 16 60:1 61:6 62:12, 17 66:11, 23 67:12 69:4, 13, 15 70:11 went 13:19 22:12 26:4 33:2, 3 39:20 we're 5:6, 6, 10 9:18 11:5, 7, 10, 11, 11 13:12, 12 15:11, 11, 13, 13 16:22, 22 19:4, 11 20:17
---	---	--	--

22:22 26:12, 19
 33:19 35:2 36:16
 37:5, 6 38:6 39:7,
 10, 10, 15, 16 41:18
 45:6, 7 46:11, 13,
 14 47:9 48:19, 20
 49:7, 8 50:3, 8, 9
 51:13, 15, 19 63:6,
 12, 15 66:12 67:9
 68:3 69:14, 14
 70:6, 8
We've 2:8, 8 5:1, 2
 8:2 9:19 10:6
 13:15 14:2 15:20
 20:12 24:2, 12, 23,
 23 27:23 28:2
 31:19 32:18 40:14
 41:16 45:4 54:2,
 22 62:16, 17 63:12,
 14
willing 8:1 10:2
 12:4 29:23 32:4, 4
 45:1 66:12
willingness 59:3
wish 21:23
wished 20:1
WITNESS 16:9
 39:9
word 59:1
work 3:23 5:22
 7:22 8:4 12:15
 14:15 19:5, 12
 27:21 32:19 33:15
 34:1 36:11, 19, 19,
 23 45:1 49:17
 50:7 51:6, 18
 52:15 55:14 56:1
 59:3 61:21 62:7,
 12 68:10, 11 69:7
worked 56:13
 62:17
workers 21:18
working 3:12, 15
 6:23 8:16 20:8
 30:16 35:2 36:16
 37:2, 6 39:15 40:1
 41:8, 17 49:8 50:9
workplace 61:21
 62:5

WORKS 1:5 2:5
 10:7 15:7 26:22
 50:2 56:6 58:7
worry 23:13
worth 39:14
wrong 44:9

 < Y >
y'all 16:15 19:4
 25:4 30:8 31:23
 44:15, 20 46:7
 59:10, 12, 15 63:5
yard 69:1
yeah 3:1 4:18 9:6
 17:13 19:18 20:12,
 18 23:7 28:11
 32:17 39:9 51:5
 57:22 58:2 59:6, 9
 60:7 61:19 62:2,
 14 63:11 64:10, 16
 66:15, 19, 21 68:16
year 3:21 17:10
 25:2, 3
years 3:13, 14, 19,
 20
yellow 40:14