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Toronto budget shortfall, hiring freeze, essential workers, property taxes, municipal land transfer tax, climate change, flooding, print issue, elections, Blue Jays loss, Day of the Dead, Prince Harry, Justin Baldoni lawsuit, Sean Combs sentence.

SPEAKERS

Emma Amodio, Praise Ditep, Ria Sidhu, Janna Abbas, Speaker 2, Speaker 3, Sidra Al Jammal, Speaker 4, Gabi Grande, Olivia Zhong

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Sidra Al Jammal 00:16

Good morning. Thanks for joining us today. I'm Sidra al Jammal

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Gabi Grande 00:19

and I'm Gabi Grande. Here are some of the stories we're following this morning from the on the record newsroom. It's budget time of year for the City of Toronto. Mayor Olivia Chow is faced with what to do about a serious shortfall in the 2026 budget plan, one measure is already in effect, a hiring freeze on what the city calls non essential workers.

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Sidra Al Jammal 00:41

We're joined by our city hall reporter Olivia Zhong to bring us more on the story. Hi Olivia, thanks for coming in. So what can you tell us about this?

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Olivia Zhong 00:49

Thanks, Sidra. Well, as Gabi said, it's a time of restraint in setting next year's budget. We haven't heard it being called an austerity budget, exactly, but the city budget chief Shelley Carroll has used the term Lean to describe what's coming next.

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Sidra Al Jammal 01:06

So what's the problem? Why the shortfall?

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Olivia Zhong 01:08

Well pretty much every year, the city faces a built in budget shortfall. The shortfall for 2026 is project projected to be over \$1 billion that's the money the city needs to find in order to keep its services running at the same levels as now in 2025 compare that amount of budget shortfall to what it was averaged before the pandemic, 500 to \$700 million now if the city tried to make up that shortfall through property taxes alone, those taxes would have to jump up by about 22% and that's not going to happen. Also, as we know, the condo market has slowed down. Some call it a collapse, and while that is up for debate, it means fewer property sales, so less revenue generated by the municipal land transfer tax, something the city has counted on in the past.

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Sidra Al Jammal 02:02

So I think you and I were talking in the newsroom earlier about a hiring freeze. What can you tell us about that it applies to what the city calls non essential workers? So who is that exactly?

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Olivia Zhong 02:14

That's a great question, and it's not entirely clear. A memo obtained by the Toronto Star says the freeze won't apply to roles essential for public safety, maintaining core services or meeting legal obligations. CUPE clarified with us that the city considers any legislated roles to be essential. So we're talking nurses, paramedics, firefighters, transit workers, and in the case of nurses, their numbers by law are not permitted to fall below a certain ratio to the number of patients in the province. But what about by law, officers, people in it, policy analysts. They're not really essential workers, but they are essential to the daily operations in the city. So for city employees, that may mean taking on more work with fewer staff, that leads to what, again, economists call reduced capacity. And as capacity shrinks, it becomes ever more challenging to deliver services at the same level as before, and that shrunken capacity to deliver services is something residents will most certainly notice. I've got more on the story. It's up on our website now.

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Sidra Al Jammal 03:27

Thanks, Olivia, thanks. And the federal budget is coming down later today, Finance Minister Francois Philippe champagne will unveil the budget in the House of Commons at 4pm parts of the budget are expected to be directed towards defense spending, home building and temporary ei measures to combat uncertainty over tariffs. It's the first budget of the minority Liberal government of Prime Minister Mark Carney, who is of course, a former central banker both here in Canada and the UK.

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Gabi Grande 04:00

In local news, a Toronto woman sobbed in Court yesterday during her sentencing hearing after her dog bit a nine year old boy last March. It happened when Patricia syrek took her dog to a park in Toronto's East End. It's a playground that prohibits dogs. The dog was not wearing a muzzle, even though he had a history of biting, and on that day, last March, he broke away from his owner and bit the boy as he played with his father. The dog has since been euthanized. The sentence will be delivered next month. Now let's have a look at other stories we're working on today and this week in our on the record newsroom, standing by live in the newsroom is Janna Abbas, Janna, what have you got for us?

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Janna Abbas 04:38

Thanks Gabi, the semester may be coming to an end, but it doesn't mean work is slowing down. Here in the OTR newsroom, our reporters are gearing up for the print issue of on the record news, the theme of which is climate change and its effects on local communities in the GTA. Reporters, Mariela Toroba Hennigan. And Aia Jaber are working on a story for the print issue about flooding in Toronto and how it has disproportionate impacts on low income residents. They'll be speaking to experts and people whose homes have been flooded, speaking of flooding. Reporters Amulyaa Dwivedi and Survi Sahni are looking into what the city of Vaughan is learning about the benefits of planting trees, lots of trees when it comes to managing climate change issues such as flooding, their story will also be featured in the print issue, which will be out at the end of the month. But if you don't want to wait for the print issue to get your daily dose of OTR news, Fear not. Our reporter, Emma Amodio, is covering the tmsu nomination period, which opened yesterday for a story that will be up on our website later this week. That's all from me, from right here in the OTR newsroom. Back to you in the studio, Gabbi and Sidra.

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Sidra Al Jammal 05:59

Thanks, Jenna, across the US today, elections that many say will provide a snapshot of where the country is, its vision of itself in the era of Donald Trump. The elections take place largely in democratic areas, and the outcomes are expected to guide the party as it seeks to rebuild its brand, its appeal for voters. Watch for results in Governor races in states such as New Jersey and Virginia, and without a doubt, the most watched election is the one for the mayor of New York City, Zohran Mamdani was pretty much unknown even a few months ago now, as the candidate representing the party democratic socialists of America, poll suggests that he has a huge lead over his competition, former New York Governor Andrew Cuomo and the law and order candidate Curtis Lewa,

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Gabi Grande 06:50

Former US Vice President Dick Cheney has died. Cheney was the architect of the US invasion of Iraq that happened in 2003 under President George W Bush. Cheney is regarded as one of the most powerful political figures in US history. He died from complications of pneumonia and cardiac and vascular disease. He was 84

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Sidra Al Jammal 07:12

and now to sports. You know that in this upcoming segment from our reporter Ria Sidhu that you're going to have to relive the pain of the Blue Jays loss in the World Series to the LA Dodgers. But for what it's worth, game seven last Saturday was the largest international broadcast in the history of Major League Baseball. More than 36 million viewers across the world, nearly 11 million of them here in Canada. Now here's Ria.

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Ria Sidhu 07:41

Thanks! The city went from hope to heartbreak this week after the Toronto Blue Jays lost the World Series, the Jays fell in game seven to the LA Dodgers, after a hard fought series, despite a strong start in winning most of the game, the game went to the ninth inning, tied at four. Four Dodgers, catcher Will Smith, eventually hit a home run in the 11th inning, giving the team back to back titles an international lose a historic moment for women's cricket and a massive step forward for the sport in India as Team India claimed the title after a stunning victory over Australia. The teams played on Sunday in the International Cricket Council Women's World Championship final, India chased a tough total with just two balls to spare and a clutch boundary from jamima Rodriguez, the win marks India's first ever women's world title, a moment fans across the country have been waiting for and on the local side, the Tmu bold, basketball, volleyball and hockey teams are all set to play this week, playing off their six game winning streak. The women's basketball team is set to tip off Wednesday night at 6pm at the matami Athletic Center and trying to continue their strong start to their season after four wins and one loss, the women's volleyball team is set to play in Windsor this Friday at 6pm that's all for sports. Now back to the desk.

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Gabi Grande 08:52

Thanks Ria, and now for entertainment, it's looking like a lot of trial news for us this week. Here's reporter Praise Ditep with more.

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Praise Ditep 09:02

Gabi, thanks. We've got a lineup of juicy stories for you. Here's what's causing a buzz in entertainment this week, the Duke of Sussex, Prince Harry, is coming to Toronto starting tomorrow. In fact, he will attend various events ahead of Remembrance Day, that's a week from today, the prince is admired for his commitment to military veterans while here in town, he will show his support for members of the Canadian Armed Forces and discuss some of the issues facing veterans in this country and internationally, Harry will visit the Veteran Center at Sunnybrook Hospital and will attend an event called the true patriot love national tribute and to keep alive the legacy of his late mother, Diana, Princess of Wales. Harry. Will also attend a private fundraiser hosted by the halo trust, an organization that Princess Diana supported in her lifetime. The trust has worked for decades to reduce the estimated 110 million unexploded land mines still in the ground, nearly set in nearly 70 countries. A judge has dismissed Justin Baldoni's \$400 million lawsuit against his one time co star Blake Lively. It was nearly a year ago, December 2024 that is all kicked off, starting with lively accusing Baldoni of sexual harassment on a film set, Baldoni was having none of it. He flew into defense mode, filing a counter lawsuit for libel against lively and her husband Ryan Reynolds also the New York Times after it published a report that seemed to support lively side of events, we'll all be hearing about this mess again next year when Lively's original lawsuit against Baldoni is expected to go ahead. That's in March. Speaking of trials and lawsuits, you will recall that a month ago, Sean Combs, the rapper formerly known as Puff Daddy, also Diddy, was sentenced in a Manhattan courtroom to more than four years in prison for offenses relating to prostitution, but the judge also recommended that combs be considered for a substance abuse program while he is behind bars, his participation could see his sentence being reduced by up to a year. Combs has been in jail in Brooklyn for the past 14 months since the time of his indictment. That time served also counts towards his sentence, but industry observers suggest that even a reduction in the sentence is not going to bring redemption to combs in terms of his high past profile a story in The New York Times reported that many inside the industry are, quote, deeply skeptical that combs can ever regain anything like the status he enjoyed when he wielded a Midas touch in music, fashion and media. The report notes that there was a time when combs earned hundreds of millions of dollars pitching various consumer brands. That's all the latest entertainment stories back to you in the studio.

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Sidra Al Jammal 12:55

If Halloween wasn't enough on Friday, the Day of the Dead was on Saturday. And for more on that. Here's Emma Amodio with the story.

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Emma Amodio 13:08

These are the sights and sounds of Toronto's Day of the Dead festival. The celebration drew crowds eager to experience Mexican and Latino culture on the west end of the city. Day of the Dead, or Día de los Muertos is a Latino cultural celebration where loved ones are believed to emerge from the dead to visit their families on Earth. The festival hadn't been held since 2022 but this year, it made its return to Toronto. Sam melkick, the festival organizer, didn't want to go on camera, but says the festival fell on the perfect

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Speaker 3 13:41

day, I think because it actually falls on a Saturday this year, it makes sense to do it as a big festival. So the fact that it was falling on a weekend just made it allowed us to kind of create a whole big thing, bring in a huge wrestling ring and make a day out of it.

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Speaker 2 13:55

Melkic says the festival is especially meaningful in a multicultural city like Toronto, for newcomer helenus ladoya, it's a chance to experience and connect with cultures beyond her own we

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Speaker 4 14:06

are not really familiar with, like Latino culture, let's say so. If this is a part, if this is like an important day to celebrate, yeah, we should. We want to learn about these things experience, like, what's going on

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Speaker 2 14:20

with Halloween just a day before, festival organizers were able to bring this festival to life with traditional face painting, a wrestling show and food vendors for on the record news. I'm Emma amodio,

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Gabi Grande 14:34

and that's all for On The Record this November 4, 2025 I'm Gabi Grande

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Sidra Al Jammal 14:38

and I'm Sidra al Jamal, join us for On The Record next week, as we round out the latest stories from the OTR newsroom.

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Gabi Grande 14:45

And for the latest 24/7 visit our website, on the record news.ca Have a great day.