

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS, LIBRARIES, AND INTERNATIONAL INTERGROUP RELATIONS  
JOINTLY WITH: COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES

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February 05, 2014  
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HELD AT: 250 Broadway - Committee Rm,  
14th Fl.

B E F O R E:  
JULISSA FERRERAS  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

COSTA G. CONSTANTINIDES  
ELIZABETH S. CROWLEY  
LAURIE A. CUMBO  
JULISSA FERRERAS  
ANDY L. KING  
PETER A. KOO  
STEPHEN T. LEVIN  
HELEN K. ROSENTHAL  
JAMES G. VAN BRAMER

## A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

2 [gavel]

3 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Good morning.

4 Welcome to today's Finance Committee hearing. My  
5 name is Julissa Ferreras and I chair the Committee  
6 on Finance. Today the Finance Committee is joined  
7 by the Committee on Cultural Affairs and  
8 International Intergroup Relations chaired by  
9 Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer. And we are also  
10 joined by the Subcommittee on Libraries chaired by  
11 Council Member Costa Constantinides. Together we  
12 will examine the capital spending practices of the  
13 Queens Borough Public Library. I'd like to  
14 introduce Council Member Laurie Cumbo, Council  
15 Member Peter, Peter Koo, Public Advocate Tish  
16 James, Council Member Liz Crowley, Council Member  
17 Mark Weprin, and I think we have other colleagues  
18 that are going to be joining us shortly. By way of  
19 background the Queens Borough Public Library is an  
20 independent not-for-profit organization that serves  
21 a population of 2.3 million each year. It is guided  
22 by a board of trustees and receives the majority of  
23 its funding from, for operations and capital  
24 improvements from the city. Capital funding enabled  
25 libraries to make facility improvements and solve

2 infrastructure needs that can be critical to the  
3 future of libraries. The capital needs of the  
4 Queens Library system totaled more than 292 million  
5 dollars. Their most crucial need is funding for  
6 infrastructure which includes roofs, heating, and  
7 air conditioning, masonry, and doors and windows.  
8 Today's hearing will assess whether the spending  
9 practices for capital improvements at the Queens  
10 Borough Public Library adhere to the prudent  
11 business practices, practices with a particular  
12 focus on their necessities and their internal  
13 approval process. Before I talk about the details  
14 of this hearing I wasn't to thank the staff for  
15 working on this issue and putting this hearing  
16 together in a very short period of time. I want to  
17 thank my finance counsel Tanisha Edwards, and the  
18 Cultural's Finance Analyst Nora Yahya. This hearing  
19 is prompted by recent news accounts highlighting  
20 the capital spending of the Queens Borough Public  
21 Library including 140 thousand dollars used to  
22 renovate the offices of the Queens Library  
23 President, Mr. Tom Galante which included an  
24 adjoining 27 thousand dollar teak tile deck. While  
25 we understand that the capital improvements are

2 necessary for any organization to keep its  
3 operations running smoothly without incident many  
4 have questioned whether the spending on these  
5 capital improvements were prudent particularly in  
6 the light of the 255 employees that have been lost  
7 due to layoff and attrition since 2008. These  
8 layoffs occurred while elaborate renovations were  
9 occurring and were committed to occur. Another  
10 concern relates to janitorial services in the  
11 Queens Library system. Previously Mr. Galante hired  
12 union workers at the rate of 35 dollars per hour  
13 however, according to recent news, news reports the  
14 president now outsources such services to  
15 subcontracts at a rate of 15 dollars per hour. Our  
16 questions is how are the savings realized from the  
17 outsourcing being used and whether outsourcing  
18 these services are the most productive way to  
19 secure cost savings. In light of these developments  
20 this hearing will examine the capital spending  
21 practice of the Queens Borough Library. The level  
22 of oversight exercised by the Board of Trustees. To  
23 ensure prudent spending, the precedent of the  
24 Queens Borough Library has been invited to testify  
25 and he is here today. And we also will hear from

2 other members of the public who wishes to testify.  
3 Before I turn my, to my co-chairs Council Member  
4 Van Bramer and Council Member Constantinides for  
5 statements I want to remind my that the scope of  
6 this hearing is very narrow and is in direct  
7 response to recent news accounts about capital  
8 spending. Next week the mayor will release the  
9 preliminary budget hearings were Council Members  
10 can ask questions about individual capital  
11 projects. The expense budget and the operation of  
12 the Queens Public Library System as well as the  
13 city's other library systems. So you will have, you  
14 will soon have plenty of opportunity to voice your  
15 concerns on the broader issue but for today please  
16 try to stay on topic. Since we have tree committees  
17 here today I want to ensure that every Council  
18 Member who wishes to speak will be able to do so.  
19 To ensure everyone has an opportunity to be heard  
20 each Council Member will be given five minutes to  
21 ask questions. If necessary a second round of  
22 questions will be allowed. In the second round each  
23 member will be given three minutes to ask  
24 questions. Now I will pass the mic to my co-chair  
25 Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer for a statement.

2 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
3 much Madam Chair and I want to thank our Finance  
4 Chair Julissa Ferreras for leading this important  
5 hearing and my co-chair the select committee chair  
6 on Libraries, his first official duties is this  
7 hearing. So I want to congratulate our colleague  
8 Costa Constantinides from Astoria. Also I know that  
9 Public Advocate Tish James has a statement as well  
10 that she'd like to read. The Queens Library is  
11 among the finest in the nation. And everyday  
12 thousands of people enter its doors and find hope,  
13 information, companionship, and safety. I'm very  
14 proud to have worked alongside its tireless staff  
15 who help all of our constituents improve their  
16 lives. The Queens Library makes every neighborhood  
17 better, smarter, and more prepared for the future.  
18 We all cared deeply about this institution. The  
19 people who work in its 62 community libraries and  
20 other facilities and the millions who visit the  
21 Queens Library every year. Last week's articles  
22 raised some serious questions about spending at the  
23 library and the way in which those decisions are  
24 made. It's our obligation as a council and as a  
25 committee to ask the relevant questions and to

2 receive answers that provide this body and  
 3 ultimately the people we represent with the  
 4 information they deserve to know. I know my  
 5 colleagues and I share one common goal and that is  
 6 to have an even stronger Queens Library, one that  
 7 provides life enhancing programs and services and  
 8 continues to enjoy the support of the public that  
 9 it deserves. I look forward to hearing the  
 10 testimony and I know my colleagues have many  
 11 questions for Mr. Galante. I know, and I'd like to  
 12 before I hand over the reins to our co-chair thank  
 13 Tamia (sp?) and Tanya Cyrus from the Cultural  
 14 affairs staff and Matt Wallis and Cody Ryder from  
 15 my staff. But now for the first time ever as the  
 16 chair of the Select Committee on Libraries I'd like  
 17 to ask my co-chair Costa Constantinides for his  
 18 opening statement.

19 CO-CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you  
 20 Council Member Van Bramer and very much looking  
 21 forward to looking, you know working with you and I  
 22 know you've been a strong public advocate for our  
 23 Cultural Affairs so I look forward to working with  
 24 you and of course our Finance Chair Julissa  
 25 Ferreras. So thank you. Good morning all. Thank you



2 for attending today's hearing. My name is Costa  
3 Constantinides and this is my first hearing as  
4 Chair of the Subcommittee on Libraries. Some of  
5 you my already know me. I am no stranger to the  
6 city council. I've worked for former Council Member  
7 Gennaro for close to, for close to six years. I'm  
8 excited about serving the City Council in this new  
9 capacity and I'm pleased to join my co-chairs  
10 Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer and Council Member  
11 Julissa Ferreras on this important hearing. I look  
12 forward to working with you on other important  
13 issues concerning our city's libraries. Like my  
14 colleagues I am also concerned about the recent  
15 allegations made about the renovations at the  
16 Queens Central Library. Although the Queens Library  
17 is independent non-for-profit corporation it  
18 receives the majority of its operational funding  
19 support from the city. I'm interested in hearing  
20 about the library's decision making process for  
21 capital projects and operating expenses and seek to  
22 learn what impact these decisions may have had on  
23 tax payer dollars and the 2.3 million library users  
24 who rely on the Queens Library System for their  
25 individual needs. I think with that I'll, I'll,

2 we're turning it over to Tish, to our public  
3 advocate Letitia James.

4 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you. They  
5 transferred me to my chair and I wanted to sit with  
6 the members of the City Council. First of all let  
7 me thank the chairs of these committees as well as  
8 the Queens Delegation; Council Member Van Bramer,  
9 Council Member Julissa, Julissa Ferreras, and  
10 Council member Costa Constantinides for your  
11 convening this important hearing, I hope I didn't  
12 butcher your name Costa, I apologize, on such short  
13 notice and for allowing me to make a statement on  
14 an issue about which I feel very strongly.

15 Libraries are the life blood of the community. Last  
16 year more people visited public libraries in New  
17 York than every major sports team and every major  
18 cultural institution combined. Libraries serve as  
19 so much more than a place to borrow books. In fact  
20 in this age of digitization of books and  
21 periodicals, usage of New York City libraries is  
22 way up; 40 percent programmatically, nearly 60  
23 percent in circulation. And as I told my  
24 constituents when I represented parts of downtown  
25 Brooklyn I was raised in the library in Park slope

2 in the stacks where I hid away and dreamed big  
3 dreams. In the City Council in the City of New York  
4 we provide funding to our cultural institutions  
5 including libraries that they can best serve the  
6 growing needs of the community, expand their  
7 offerings and contribute to our city's economic  
8 growth engine in the form of jobs for more New  
9 Yorkers. Today I am, I am here because the public  
10 deserves answers regarding the operation of our  
11 city libraries, employees have not received raises  
12 in the past four years. Meanwhile salaries of each  
13 of the three big, each, each of the three library  
14 system presidents surpasses a quarter of a million  
15 dollars each ranging from 250 thousand dollars to  
16 over 700 thousand dollars. In addition we have  
17 outsourced custodial staff. All of this while  
18 libraries in or near the rockaways are still  
19 shuttered more than 15 months after Sandy,  
20 essential buildings within a block of the Peninsula  
21 Library like the firehouse, police precinct, and  
22 post office are now open yet the library, an  
23 essential part of any community is still closed. In  
24 the Arverne branch which primarily serves public  
25 and affordable housing developments including

2 Edgemere, Ocean Bay, Ocean Village, and Arverne by  
3 the Sea are still closed. In the face of this  
4 ineffectiveness, bordering on injustice, I want to  
5 know what oversight and reporting measures are in  
6 place at the Queens Library. How could we increase  
7 transparency in the board's decision making process  
8 with respect to capital improvements and audits.

9 The Controller's office will begin an audit, a  
10 report, on each of our three library systems which  
11 is a step in the right direction. But right now I  
12 have a seat as an ex-officio member of the Board of  
13 Trustees of the Queens Library system and I will be  
14 looking into how we create more transparency and  
15 accountability with respect to library operations  
16 including the recommendations on salaries and  
17 capital budgets. We cannot afford to be wasteful  
18 with our limited resources. Excess is never an  
19 option especially when it comes to an institution  
20 that serves such a vital role to so many different  
21 people in communities. I hope that through this  
22 oversight hearing we gain a stronger understanding  
23 into operations of the Queens Library system. And  
24 again I want to thank the co-chairs and the Queens  
25

2 delegation for allowing me to make a statement.

3 Thank you very much.

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Madam  
5 Public Advocate. And if we can have Mr. Tom  
6 Galante. Please begin your testimony. And I'd like  
7 to acknowledge that we've been joined by Council  
8 Member Rosenthal, Council Member Lancman, and  
9 Council Member Miller. And Council Member Ulrich I  
10 just said Council Member Miller but I'll say him  
11 again; and Council Member Miller.

12 THOMAS GALANTE: Good morning. My name  
13 is Thomas Galante, I'm the President and CEO of the  
14 Queens Library. And with me today is Bridget Quinn-  
15 Carey, Chief Operating Officer of Queens Library.  
16 Also I'd like to point out, I have with me today,  
17 with us today is trustee George Stamatiades Board  
18 of Trustees and Steven Vanandin (sp?) who've come  
19 down this morning. I'd like to thank the chair of  
20 the Finance Committee Julissa Ferreras, the chair  
21 of the Cultural Affairs, Libraries, International  
22 Intergroup Relations Committee, and Majority Leader  
23 Council Member Jimmy Van Bramer, The Chair of the  
24 Subcommittee on Libraries Costa Constantinides,  
25 Queens delegation chair Mark Weprin, the Speaker of

2 the City Council Melissa Mark-Viverito and all the  
3 members of the Committee and the city Council. Also  
4 I'd like to thank public advocate Trish James for  
5 being here a. I appreciate the opportunity to  
6 testify today. I really do. I share the City  
7 Council's commitment to transparency. I want to  
8 thank the City Council for the many years of  
9 support. You have shown public libraries. We have  
10 accomplished so much together for the people of  
11 Queens. As many of you know, the Queens Library is  
12 recognized as one of the best public libraries in  
13 the world. Under my leadership which began, which  
14 we became the busiest public library in America,  
15 the busiest. In 2009 we were selected from all of  
16 the libraries in the entire country as the library  
17 of the year.. We pride ourselves on being  
18 innovative and forward thinking. I want to say  
19 upfront that the Queens Library welcomes a complete  
20 audit of city tax payer funds by City Controller  
21 Stringer. We have always welcomed their  
22 recommendations and suggestions by the financial  
23 audits that they complete of the Queens Library on  
24 a regular cycle. Queens Library is a nonprofit  
25 corporation. We were founded by Andrew Cornogy

2 (sp?) on the premise of a private institution that  
3 would deliver a public good, free information and  
4 resources to anyone seeking to improve their lives.

5 Today we remain more committed to that mission than  
6 ever before. Queens Library operates 62 community

7 libraries, seven adult learning centers, two

8 literacy centers, a library for teens, and the

9 children's library discovery center. We are among

10 the largest employers in the borough with an annual

11 operating budget of 125 million dollars and also a

12 capital budget of 327 million dollars. Through this

13 private/public partnership and importantly with a

14 robust leader ship and consistent support of this

15 city council. We are delivering for the 2.3 million

16 people of Queens. Last year over 650 thousand

17 people, more than ever before, took advantage of a

18 program offered at the library to enrich their

19 lives. Public libraries today are so much more than

20 books and computers. We have to innovative to keep

21 up with the changing would of information and

22 technology. We have to be part community center,

23 part educational institution, and part technology

24 company. I am proud to be the president who leads

25 this great organization through such dynamic times

2 for libraries. I started at the library as business  
3 manager in 1987. My education includes a bachelor's  
4 degree in business administration. A master's  
5 degree in business administration and a master's  
6 degree in library science. In 2005, aft a  
7 nationwide search, I was given the opportunity to  
8 lead the library when the Board of Trustees  
9 selected me for this position. We agreed to  
10 compensation at the same level as other New York  
11 City non-profits of similar size in scope which is  
12 where it remains today. I know I am very fortunate  
13 to be able to work for an organization that I love  
14 that has real value helping people throughout  
15 Queens. We have tens of thousands of stories that  
16 we could, of success stories every year. I know  
17 more than anyone that the single most valuable  
18 asset we have for continued success is our  
19 dedicated employees. The library employees, over  
20 1600 people across the borough. The team includes  
21 librarians, clerks, custodians program, and support  
22 personnel. And we have a few staff who came in this  
23 morning too that I gave them an early copy of the  
24 testimony when I saw them. Queens Library Employees  
25 are incredibly diverse and our retention rate is



2 very high. We hire and retain great people for a  
3 great cause. Let me be very clear. I hold each  
4 member of the library team in the highest regard. I  
5 deeply regret published comments that appeared  
6 insensitive to the hard work of our custodians and  
7 gave the wrong impression of the values that I  
8 hold. I have apologized to my staff and I extend  
9 that apology to each of you today as well. I value  
10 the work of all of our employees and the Queens  
11 Library supports professional development and  
12 advancement on every level I too am a product of  
13 that organizational value and I'm committed to do  
14 for every one of our employees. Unfortunately our  
15 hard working employees have not seen general wage  
16 increases since 2008 which is a matter of their  
17 contract negotiated by the city and the union on a  
18 citywide basis and not within the library's  
19 control. That said since 2008 the library has  
20 provided 513 well deserved promotions for our  
21 employees. This includes 33 custodial, maintenance,  
22 and logistics employees, 63 clerical employees, and  
23 30, 331 librarians. These individuals were  
24 recognized for their hard work and rewarded with  
25 higher titles and well deserved salary increases.

2 Last fall we developed and implemented a re-  
3 classification of the community libraries that  
4 created promotional opportunities for public  
5 service employees across all categories resulting,  
6 in fact, 15 custodial staff were promoted last  
7 month alone. The great recession took its toll  
8 during that same time. Beginning in 2008 we saw  
9 multi-million dollar government operating funding  
10 reductions every six months. Today our government  
11 operating funding is 16 million dollars last, or 17  
12 percent than it was in 2008. Since 80 percent of  
13 our operating budget funds the cost of employees to  
14 operate our libraries the significant funding  
15 reductions resulted in a hiring freeze and the  
16 reduction of 253 positions. Had it not been for the  
17 City Council working so hard to push back the  
18 executive operating budget reductions the prior  
19 five years the reductions would have been much much  
20 greater. For example this past June we faced and  
21 additional 30 million dollar cut on top of the  
22 prior cuts which was fully restored by your hard  
23 working and dedicated City Council Members. With  
24 the support of the City Council through budget  
25 negotiations, smart management, and by implementing

2 operating efficiencies the library has been able to  
3 maintain strong public service. We have preserved  
4 those crucial after school hours between 3:00 p.m.  
5 and 6:00 p.m. at every single community library  
6 from Monday through Friday with Saturday and/ or  
7 Sunday serviced at 20 locations. By way of  
8 historical comparison, I think this is important,  
9 after the recession in 2001, now keep in mind I've  
10 been through each of these myself right, with a  
11 recession in 2001 just 13 libraries were opened for  
12 service on the weekend. In the '91/'92 recession 18  
13 community libraries, a third of our libraries were  
14 open only two or three days a week. We got a, we  
15 had a budget cut of 18 percent in on year back  
16 there. Ensure through your efforts and ours we  
17 delivered more days of service through these  
18 tougher times when people were most in need of  
19 those critical resources. Even so, difficult  
20 decisions had so be made along the way for us to  
21 maximize hours of service. One in particular is the  
22 use of contract cleaners which I know is a concern.  
23 A challenge we faced was keeping the same number of  
24 facilities open with 20 fewer custodial employees.  
25 Though incredibly hardworking it became impossible

2 for the reduced custodial staff to maintain the  
3 standards of cleanliness that our employees and the  
4 public expect and deserve. Our custodians are the  
5 best they are. They handle a wide variety of  
6 responsibilities that are crucial to library  
7 operations. I know many of them by name. However,  
8 given the operating funding reductions and looming  
9 operating budget reductions in the city's financial  
10 plan it became necessary to further supplement  
11 their work with contract cleaners. The right to do  
12 so was negotiated between the union and the library  
13 and not a single custodian lost his or her job. I  
14 have the highest regard for our hard working  
15 employees; for the union that represents them, and  
16 for the union leadership. We have worked towards  
17 common goals for many years to deliver for the  
18 community. We do not always agree but we share a  
19 commitment to high quality library service, to more  
20 good jobs that people can raise families on, and to  
21 working together to make a significant difference  
22 in peoples' lives. I share in a long term vision of  
23 a robust workforce. There is good news. The fiscal  
24 forecast for the library is improving. With  
25 government operating funding stabilizing for the

2 first time in many years this past July the City  
3 Council negotiated a full restoration of library  
4 operating funding last year and that was maintained  
5 through this fiscal year. We have received no, we  
6 received no midyear city operating cut for the  
7 first time in six years and they were multi-million  
8 dollar cuts each time in the past. As a result our  
9 workforce has remained constant for nearly a year.  
10 In fact we gained two people. In fact last month we  
11 decided to fill newly vacated custodial and  
12 clerical positions. Additionally in the coming year  
13 if the fiscal trends continue we expect to be able  
14 to reduce reliance on contract cleaning  
15 significantly eliminating six locations that are  
16 currently cleaned by contractors in hiring full  
17 time employees. These are welcome changes and A  
18 long awaited turning point I think we can all feel  
19 good about. During the years that operating funding  
20 was reduced, capital funding which I think we all  
21 know is a very different funding source for  
22 building improvements remained robust. We seized  
23 the opportunity to renovate and upgrade our  
24 facilities so that as the economy improves Queens  
25 Library is positioned to be better than ever

before. Moreover through private fundraising and grants our program areas have expanded during these tough times into new important directions to serve the immediate needs of our patrons such as better access to job training and preparation for the new High School equivalency exams. Capital investments have improved a physical environment and we're nearing a full recovery from hurricane Sandy. Now I will address when we get later on Peninsula... right? Really would, would much like to do that. With the support of our elected officials all around the borough we have been able to upgrade, expand, and approve our facilities for the public and employees alike. Investment in the physical buildings is essential for many reasons. To deliver forward thinking innovative services to the public to implement a new service model for the future to protect the long term integrity of our facilities and to meet the rising demand for library space. Renovations always consider all public and all employee areas. They include installation of the most up to date customer service and materials handling technology all while respecting the unique character of the individual location and community

that the library serves. Many of our libraries had not been fully renovated since they were built or for many many decades. Ensure the capital investments that you make mean that more people gain access to free programs and resources. We have seen the results in the community time and time again. And I've got a few examples for you. When the new Queens library at Glen Oaks open just this past June replacing an old library that was half the size it shot up to one of the highest circulating libraries in the borough. In the Lindin building it was consistently in the bottom third. In Corona a 2005 renovation expanded the library by 50 percent. When it reopened program attendance sky rocketed 56 percent. Last year the library purchased commercial space and converted it into the new library at Mitchell Lindin (sp?) This reduced rental expense cost for the old rental library building. Now we have a beautiful new library for the public, all new work areas for our employees at the same cost as in the old, outmoded building. We've more than doubled visitorship in the new location. And program attendance is also up 30 percent. The list of innovative, positive,

2 community investments goes on and I have at least  
3 50 of them I can say. It includes the modernization  
4 of the Queens Library which provides extensive  
5 library services for the surrounding community. It  
6 is the main research facility for Queens. It houses  
7 all of the support departments to administer the 62  
8 libraries in the borough and achieves economy  
9 through centralized operations there. The building  
10 is by far the largest library in the system and  
11 among the busiest. It was built back in the 1960s  
12 and was badly in need of renovation to incorporate  
13 information technology and to make the library more  
14 interactive and responsive to customer needs. The  
15 objectives of the project are to return the Queens  
16 Library in Jamaica to the world class library its  
17 patrons deserve through a complete reconfiguration  
18 of renovation, all public areas on all levels. To  
19 modernize public and employee space including the  
20 first floor teen area, adult and cyber areas, lower  
21 levels, and the second floor support department  
22 area is too. To implement self-service technology  
23 that allows 24 by seven returns and automatic  
24 return sorting system that handles 2 million  
25 volumes annually. To increase the space of our



2 adult learning center which is a crucial service we  
3 deliver through construction and outfitting to  
4 serve more people seeking English Language learning  
5 in adult basic education. To upgrade the auditorium  
6 and adjacent community rooms and the restrooms and  
7 the lower level that will all attract marque and  
8 high profile authors and speakers to Queens.

9 Updating the 47 year old inefficient infrastructure  
10 to be energy and cost efficient. To consolidate  
11 6,000 square feet of office space and 5,000 square  
12 feet of public space currently housed in a nearby  
13 rental facility into the second floor of this  
14 building to save 156 thousand dollars in rent costs  
15 per year. Over the expiring 15 year lease, which  
16 expires next year okay, we have paid up 1.8 million  
17 dollars in the past for that rental that we will  
18 forego through savings beginning next year. Given  
19 the size of the building and the importance of  
20 remaining open to public the initiative has been  
21 structured in phases. The scope of work at this  
22 library is in line with the work done at every  
23 other library that has been renovated in the past  
24 eight years. 37 community libraries have been fully  
25 renovated for the public and out employees

including furniture to replace decades old furniture and equipment. And I should say the rest are in the pipeline too and that's our goal. The first floor renovation for the public includes a new cyber center with 72 public computer terminals, a technology training room, and a media center to lend popular video and audio. The adult services and reading area including a dedicated job and business academy as well as a consumer health and reference desk, quiet study area, and a teen library too. These areas have been completed. Construction is now underway for the circulation services area followed by the creation of a café and soft seating spaces for our customers. City Council funding paid for these costs and will partially fund improvements to the façade providing greater value to the public in attracting new users. Visitorship is up eight percent in the past year alone. And mind you while construction is going on too. The modernization of the library also includes the reconfiguration and renovation of centralized services that support the 62 libraries throughout the borough. This includes 12 support departments and division offices such as

2 Information Technology which ensure the network of  
3 1800 public computers remain operational. The  
4 modernization also includes offices such as the  
5 Logistics and Security Management Department, the  
6 Finance Department, Cataloging Department,  
7 President's Office, and conference areas for  
8 collective work and meeting spaces. In addition the  
9 archives which house a historical collection about  
10 the borough is being relocated in a large humidity  
11 controlled, secure storage area, constructed for  
12 archival and historical documents. The lower level  
13 improvements will also include completely  
14 renovating the public auditorium and adjacent  
15 community rooms as well as the construction of a  
16 new adult learning center. The center will be  
17 significantly larger and will be integrated back  
18 into the main library building. The infrastructure  
19 of the entire facility will also be upgraded as it  
20 is 47 years old and much of it isn't efficient,  
21 often in need of repairs, and a strain on operating  
22 funds. This includes roof replacement, masonry  
23 restoration, new large clear story windows, those  
24 are the really big windows on the front for those  
25 who don't know what a clear story is, I had to ask,

2 new HVAC system, elevator reconstruction, fire  
3 alarm system, security systems, garbage compactor  
4 system, and sewer ejector pumps. The self-service  
5 technology with material handling and sorting  
6 systems is already installed and operational  
7 providing 24 by seven access in handling thousands  
8 of items a day. The City Council allocated 3.9  
9 million dollars in capital funding, Council Member  
10 Comrie back in the day. With the balance of this 20  
11 million dollar initiative library revenue and grant  
12 sources when complete the investments will include  
13 8.3 million dollars for the first floor public  
14 service and employee areas. 2.1 million dollars for  
15 the second floor support services and department  
16 areas. 7.6 million dollars to upgrade exterior and  
17 infrastructure, 900 thousand to build a new adult  
18 learning center, and 1.1 million dollars for the  
19 new auditorium and meeting rooms. The 2.1 million  
20 dollar capital expenditure for the renovation and  
21 outfitting of the second floor office areas will be  
22 fully offset by operating budget savings achieved  
23 by eliminating the lease of nearby office space.  
24 From day one this project like any capital  
25 expenditure has been subject to a series of

2 internal and external controls and oversights.  
3 Financial activity for all construction involves  
4 procurement through competitive bidding and  
5 requirements contracts and adherence to the  
6 library's procurement policies. In addition for  
7 city funded construction a thorough review of all  
8 expenditures is conducted by the city's Department  
9 of Design and Construction and the city's  
10 Controller's Office. I would like to address the  
11 renovation of the executive office space which has  
12 raised questions. When the design team began to  
13 reconfigure and redesign this area we made choices  
14 to foster teamwork and innovative thinking. We took  
15 the office space that had previously served  
16 directors and turned it into an open work area. We  
17 then created a much smaller traditional office with  
18 a desk. During the design process of the support  
19 offices an idea was raised that we could turn  
20 underutilized space on an adjacent roof into usable  
21 meeting space. We thought it would be an efficient  
22 way to create a work area and a meeting space. It  
23 is much less costly than brick and mortar  
24 construction. It has been used extensively for  
25 staff and management work sessions, group, and one

2 on one meetings to host visitors including the  
3 Boston Library System from other libraries in our  
4 own many external partners. This work was completed  
5 with non-governmental funds, no tax payer dollars  
6 were expended on it, we decided it was a sensible  
7 approach to utilizing otherwise dead space. Overall  
8 the reconfiguration of the executive office space,  
9 including all meeting areas, and exterior work  
10 area, and furniture cost 132 dollars per square  
11 foot. In comparison the average cost for interior  
12 renovations and furniture, for everything on the  
13 first and second floors is 149 dollars per square  
14 foot. And the cost for similar, city managed  
15 interior renovations in our libraries that includes  
16 public and employee areas throughout is more than  
17 double that amount. All of the work was subject to  
18 the same set of thorough checks and oversights as  
19 the rest of the project. Now libraries are  
20 important to all of us. In Queens we don't have  
21 branch libraries. I changed that name like eight  
22 years. We have community libraries. Queens is a  
23 place of neighborhoods. The library is at the heart  
24 of them. They are the place you recall learning to  
25 read or spending long after school hours. They are

2 the place you go to gather with friends and  
3 neighbors and find a familiar face ready to help.  
4 There are countless stories being told, lives being  
5 changed every day. In five minutes we will be  
6 opening in every location, every location. This is  
7 the important work we do and I look forward to  
8 continuing it together. I appreciate so much the  
9 opportunity to testify today and I welcome your  
10 questions.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you very  
12 much for your testimony. We're going to make a  
13 small switch. We have our Queens Borough President  
14 here and I'd like to give her the opportunity to  
15 testify so if you can just...

16 THOMAS GALANTE: Chill off.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Yeah, step aside  
18 for a couple of minutes and our Queens Borough  
19 President Melinda Katz if you can read your  
20 testimony. And I also like to acknowledge Council  
21 Member Cornegy, Council Member Gibson, Council  
22 Member Levine, Council Member Levin, Council Member  
23 King, and Council Member Johnson, and Council  
24 Member Rodriguez. Thank you Madam Borough  
25 President.

2                   BOROUGH PRESIDENT KATZ: And how many  
3 times have I talked about the red button. Well but,  
4 at least when I was here though when it was off it  
5 was on and when it was on it was off. So clearly  
6 the new class has made a lot of great adjustments  
7 already. Let me thank you for allowing to testify.  
8 I, as you know, have half the trustees, are  
9 appointed by the Queens Borough President although  
10 all of them were appointed before I came in, I felt  
11 it was my duty to come in and thank all of you for  
12 having this hearing. I want to thank Chair Van  
13 Bramer, Chair Ferreras, Subcommittee Chair  
14 Constantinides. I know how to say it and we're  
15 teaching the city. But I think it's Costa, we are  
16 proud of you and we're glad that this is your first  
17 hearing and we welcome you to the fold. And members  
18 of the Finance Committee, the Subcommittee on  
19 Libraries, the Cultural Affairs, Libraries,  
20 International Intergroup relations and, all the  
21 Council Members that came here also from outside  
22 the borough of Queens to take an interest in how  
23 tax dollars are spent for the Queens Public  
24 Library. I have to be, first just really  
25 acknowledge the fact that the Queens Library is an



2 amazing, an amazing unique library system. It has  
3 the largest circulation in the country with over  
4 18.6 million items in FY12. But it also serves as  
5 all of you know the most diverse population in the  
6 world, arguably in, especially in the United  
7 States. And I think that's important to note, that  
8 the services they provide not only are for the  
9 education and to make sure that everyone can read a  
10 book and also to keep up with the times, but also  
11 it is serving the most diverse population in the  
12 United States. Millions of residents use the Queens  
13 Public Library every year. And not only to access  
14 its expansive collection right, but to take  
15 advantage of the free programming that has really  
16 been the cornerstone of a lot of our kid's lives  
17 and a lot of the senior's lives, and a lot of our  
18 families in the borough of Queens. As the president  
19 of the borough and the borough's biggest fan I can  
20 certainly learn something by the way, about  
21 branding. When it comes to the Queens Library you  
22 can't go on the subway system when you don't see  
23 someone with a Queens Library bag or you don't go  
24 to a senior center when someone's not talking to  
25 you about the library and I, I think that that's

2 important to note. I would like to take this  
3 opportunity to note that a lot of the greatness of  
4 the institution relies on the workers that are  
5 there, the custodians, the librarians, the folks  
6 that load the books on the shelves, the folks that  
7 clean the floors, the folks that greet people when  
8 they walk in, it is an amazing staff and I just  
9 want to throw that little note in there. Barn on  
10 the Board of Trustees of Queens Libraries, one of  
11 the most prestigious boards in the borough to sit  
12 on. Folks wants to be on the board of the library  
13 system. We had many folks reach out to me when I  
14 became the borough president for the appointments  
15 and it is considered one of the most prestigious  
16 board in the borough. And just so you know and I  
17 know a lot of folks when I came in here said oh  
18 you're testifying, half the trustees are appointed  
19 by the Borough President, half the trustees are  
20 appointed by the Mayor. Granted I've only been  
21 doing this about 35 days so I did not appoint the  
22 trustees but I have had many conversations. But we,  
23 half of them are also appointed by the Mayor and  
24 it's done alternately. In FY14 the city allocated  
25 over 150 million dollars in capital expense

2 including 35 million dollars in Mayoral and capital  
3 money and 22 million dollars in the council and the  
4 borough president as well just so you know a little  
5 bit of the dynamics. And it's all taxpayer money.

6 So it is therefore imperative to me and to the  
7 administration, and to the council I know that the  
8 residents of Queens and city taxpayers that there  
9 be transparency in this process. The, there needs  
10 to be a way for constituents to look at the  
11 computer, look at the internet, be able to easily  
12 access, have accessible to them how the money is  
13 spent, the process by which it's spent, where it's  
14 going, and it should be something that we should,  
15 in the future, look towards improving. And I think  
16 that every system in the entire world can use  
17 improving. And so I'm excited about the  
18 conversation today. The library has to hold itself  
19 accountable for maintaining the infrastructure,  
20 implementing core programs, making wise budgetary  
21 decisions that will not only benefit the library  
22 users of today but the generation of library users  
23 to come. But I really haven't lost site of the  
24 context that we're here today. Many of the issues  
25 raised by the media I take very seriously and

2 certainly the results of the hearing and the audit  
3 being conducted by Controller Stringer's Office  
4 will go a long way in shedding light on the  
5 decisions made and I welcome them both. But we're  
6 here today to reestablish the trust between the  
7 library and the people of the city of New York and  
8 I think that's important. I also believe that  
9 airing issues present is a great opportunity not  
10 only for the Executive Director but also for the  
11 Board of Trustees to take necessary fresh looks at  
12 its policies and how we move forward in proper  
13 governance. Any institution, even the best run  
14 institution in the world can benefit from a self-  
15 diagnostic that identifies which policies and  
16 procedures work well and which ones need to be  
17 revisited or revised. So for example the regular  
18 board trainee, the trustees on items such as how to  
19 read financial statements and budget documents or  
20 the establishment of an audit committee that would  
21 hold pre and post conferences with the auditors  
22 might be measures that I would suggest could be  
23 implemented here. And I look forward to hearing how  
24 the hearing goes today and what information that  
25 the council gets so that we can figure out which

2 new measures can be put in place. And there needs  
3 to be a simplified way as I said before for  
4 stakeholders here today and the public that  
5 supports this great institution to have the  
6 visibility into the process. There's nothing wrong  
7 with transparency. This is a council that is a  
8 newly elected progressive council. But even when I  
9 was here years ago we always talked about  
10 transparency and how folks can see what is going on  
11 with the money that is spent by city tax dollars.  
12 And I think that's an important thing. And, and the  
13 money that's spent should be self-evident to folks  
14 who want to find it. The trustees must be vigilant  
15 in my view and exercise their fiduciary  
16 responsibility to the fullest and at the end of the  
17 day the library's accountable to the taxpayers.  
18 Ensuring that this institution has rock solid  
19 procedures based upon best practices in the  
20 sectors, and the sector is my commitment to you as  
21 the person who has half the trustees as we move  
22 forward. And I believe that we are at a very very  
23 special point in time where all the stakeholders  
24 can come together in a constructive collaborative  
25 way to get answers to our questions and together to

2 make changes that will elevate the Queens Library  
3 to the next level of greatness. And so that it can  
4 be held up as an example of what good governance  
5 and effective oversight can achieve. And I thank  
6 you. I thank you for letting me interrupt your  
7 testimony from the library. And I look forward to  
8 hearing what happens in the testimony today. I'm  
9 happy to answer questions if you'd like but I have  
10 a feeling that you probably have a lot of questions  
11 for Tom.

12 BOROUGH PRESIDENT KATZ: Julissa's like...

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you very  
14 much Madam Borough President.

15 BOROUGH PRESIDENT KATZ: Thank you for  
16 your guidance on this. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And if we can  
18 have Tom, again if any members would like to ask  
19 questions please add your name to the cue. We, we  
20 have one already and I'm going to ask since we have  
21 three, I'm going to reiterate something that I had  
22 in my opening statement but since we have three  
23 committees here today I want to ensure that every  
24 Council Member who wishes to speak will be able to  
25 do so. To ensure everyone has the opportunity to be

2 heard each Council Member will be given five  
 3 minutes to ask questions. If necessary a second  
 4 round of questions will be allowed. In the second  
 5 round each member will have three minutes to answer  
 6 questions. I'm going to ask one question and then  
 7 we're going to give it over to the two chairs and  
 8 the public advocate. So good morning, are we still  
 9 in morning? Yes. I want to ask something specific  
 10 to capital projects and then at the end I'm going  
 11 to come back after everyone's had their  
 12 opportunity. How do capital projects and  
 13 improvements get approved? And does the board of  
 14 trustee approve all projects or just those over  
 15 certain dollar amounts?

16 THOMAS GALANTE: Okay. Capital projects,  
 17 we have a master list of all our needs. And I think  
 18 that was the quoted number that you mentioned  
 19 earlier. And then we go to each Council Member,  
 20 each State Assembly Member, each, each Senator,  
 21 anyone who will talk to us to seek funding to carry  
 22 out each of those projects. And as funding is put  
 23 in place then we initiate and move it forward. I  
 24 have to say that we do a lot of work to take  
 25 funding from multiple sources typically to put

2 together a project. For example the Bellerose  
3 Library that I can think of offhand that's  
4 currently in construction involves state grant  
5 allocations. It involves funding from the  
6 councilmen, it involves funding from the assembly,  
7 and funding from the senate. So the best way to put  
8 it is that we move everything forward as quickly as  
9 we can as soon as the money is put in place. One  
10 example I can give you that'll touch on the  
11 question on Peninsula, I think I can dovetail there  
12 if you don't mind. With that, the timing of that,  
13 that includes funding for FEMA, from FEMA which is  
14 paying a big chunk of the tab for Peninsula. If  
15 only the, that's the only library where we went  
16 directly into FEMA and they decided they would fund  
17 us directly. It involves insurance proceeds, a lot  
18 of donations that we received as well, state aid,  
19 state construction aid that we do receive a  
20 discretionary 1.2 million a year that we then  
21 allocate to really plug holes into certain projects  
22 and that is one. And it also includes city capital  
23 funding for us to buy the equipment component of  
24 that, through DCAS. So that project, to give you a  
25 quick time frame. Is that appropriate now Julissa?



2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Sure.

3 THOMAS GALANTE: Is that we began a,  
4 this, well this gives you a sense of how projects  
5 move along, I think to answer the overall question.  
6 Funding was not in place for that library. The  
7 other libraries down in the rockaways that were  
8 damaged were less costly to do, and we were able to  
9 take and move forward, get either private money or  
10 state money, the state came through with some money  
11 for us, to move it forward without going through a  
12 city DDC process. So we were able to get the  
13 seaside library opened back up by the fall. I have  
14 to say DDC did the broad channel library which is  
15 very small, was able to do that with requirements  
16 contractors and get that done by February which was  
17 really good. The Arverne Library was ready to open  
18 in December but the furniture truck, carrying the  
19 furniture from the Carolinas overturned and they  
20 had to redo the whole thing and we're looking at,  
21 in about two weeks that'll be opening up. It would  
22 have been December but they had to redo, remake all  
23 the furniture so...

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So Tom on, on  
25 average, what is the length of time.

2 THOMAS GALANTE: It depends on, well  
3 once the project has been funded...

4 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Right.

5 THOMAS GALANTE: ...it will move forward.  
6 When we do the project, when the Queens Library  
7 does it, a typical project takes six to eight  
8 months.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay.

10 THOMAS GALANTE: I have to say that  
11 probably 98 percent of the projects that the  
12 Council Members think of per say are projects that  
13 are funded and managed by DDC, not us.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And if I could  
15 just follow up on the Board of Trustee... How do you  
16 get approvals for your projects.

17 THOMAS GALANTE: For any project that is  
18 funded with city funding there is no internal  
19 processes per say, with the board other than  
20 reporting on all the work that's being done.  
21 Because the city manages it, OMB does, DDC, The  
22 City Controller, we don't cut a check. And that's  
23 the 327 million dollars of capital funding that I  
24 spoke about is city funding. Okay, so that's  
25 managed in the house on your guy's end. For

2 projects that we do, it's typically, we've been  
3 able, we've been very fortunate with some funding  
4 from the state, from the state assembly that has  
5 helped out with some funding towards projects and  
6 we have that state construction fund. So we're  
7 doing most all those interior renovations I  
8 mention, the 37 renovations were all done by us.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay.

10 THOMAS GALANTE: In that case...

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Mm-hmm.

12 THOMAS GALANTE: ...anything over 35  
13 thousand dollars is bid and it's approved and  
14 awarded by the board, at a board meeting. They meet  
15 every single month. There's also committees of the  
16 board that meet every two weeks, and that all goes  
17 through a board process. Also any expenditure of  
18 library funding, not DDC, but library funding for  
19 construction, building maintenance repairs over  
20 5,000 dollars is reported to the board of trustees  
21 when the order is issued on the monthly basis.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay, I have two  
23 additional questions and then I'm going to give it  
24 over to my co-chair. One is I know that in your  
25 testimony you said that the, the deck area was

2 completely done without one dollar of taxpayer  
3 dollar.

4 THOMAS GALANTE: Correct.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: How do we know  
6 that's so? What is the process that you have to  
7 ensure that not one dollar of taxpayer dollars went  
8 in that direction?

9 THOMAS GALANTE: I think one way would  
10 be that the controller, when he audits, he'll be  
11 able to see that for sure. And that is you know how  
12 the checks in the budget was all put together.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Right I, I  
14 understand the audit but I'm saying how do you  
15 know, or how does the system know the difference  
16 between your pots...

17 THOMAS GALANTE: Oh...

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: ...so...

19 THOMAS GALANTE: Oh, for sure. We have a  
20 very complicated but efficient structure to  
21 segregate all funding we receive. We, we take our  
22 fines and fees funds right, it goes into one  
23 separate checking account for all fines and fees  
24 and then disbursements come out of that for books  
25 and programs. We also have, for our city funds goes

into a separate checking account and all disbursements from city funds are all in one place. We would do the same for state funds, for federal funds is another checking account, state and federal, private funds, and also our workers comp funds. So we keep it all segregated fully, the assets, the checking accounts, and it runs through a really complex computer system so you can hit a button and you can see at any time and look it up and see what was the funding sources, what was it paid from, it's a really good system.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So did the board approve the deck renovations.

THOMAS GALANTE: The board does not approve renovations of design items. That was something that was a design team that got together. Keep in mind, I think it's important from a perspective and we're looking at the whole building right. And in doing that we're sure, we're actually integrating 6,000 square feet of office space that we rent now into the building. And that's a lot of space. We also have to plan for growth, we have areas that we expect to grow for our, for our strategic plan. Our development office to raise

2 private funds. I've added three extra people just  
3 in the last year and also for grant work. So we  
4 wanted to make sure that what we put together is a  
5 plan of spaces that will work for the next at least  
6 five years.

7 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So this deck  
8 would have been approved through the design of the  
9 entire building?

10 THOMAS GALANTE: Correct, correct.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And it would not  
12 then trigger, well it would have triggered the  
13 entire project because the library trustees approve  
14 anything over 5,000k.

15 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah, the board  
16 approves contracts, they approve contracts over 35  
17 thousand dollars. For example if we're renovating  
18 say the Arverne Library; we go out to bid, if it's  
19 our money I should say, if it's our money not city  
20 money right, if it's our, if it's library  
21 operations cutting the checks we actually go out to  
22 bid through a competitive bid process, our  
23 purchasing office does that with our general  
24 council with our Capital and Facilities Department.  
25 And then they get me a recommendation that lays out

2 and it describes the project, in a paragraph or two  
3 of the work and the scope that's being done and  
4 then also the bid results that goes to the board  
5 and the board approves it. We've, we often show the  
6 board, you know it depends on the project and how  
7 much time we have, but we actually showed designs  
8 and the boards at ribbon cuttings and all the  
9 events that we do. But they do not get involved  
10 with the detailed design of any given library or  
11 the, or the, my offices.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay, I'm going  
13 to have some second, part of the second round  
14 questioning for you. I'd also like to take this  
15 opportunity and he just stepped out but we were, we  
16 were joined by our former colleague Leroy Comrie so  
17 anytime we can have him here in our space. And now  
18 the Deputy Borough President, Council Member, Co-  
19 chair Jimmy Van Bramer.

20 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: Thank you very  
21 much Chair Ferreras again for leading this hearing.  
22 Mr. Galante I don't think you've actually  
23 introduced the person who's sitting to your right  
24 and some people have questions.

25 THOMAS GALANTE: Oh I did.

2 UNKNOWN FEMALE: ...very beginning.

3 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah, at the very  
4 beginning.

5 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: You did?

6 THOMAS GALANTE: Bridget Quinn-Carey...

7 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: Okay.

8 THOMAS GALANTE: ...who's, now Bridget is  
9 our Chief Operating Officer. That's why I thought  
10 it would be good for her to be here since we're  
11 talking in operations.

12 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: Great, not  
13 everyone's met Bridget but I have a couple of  
14 questions about the custodial outsourcing and some  
15 of the issues related to that. Number one I want to  
16 thank you for apologizing to the staff who were  
17 offended. As you know I was raised by a janitor who  
18 cleaned schools and so I feel very strongly about  
19 this particular issue. You mentioned in your  
20 testimony that because funding was held harmless  
21 this year that you're in a position to reduce the  
22 reliance on the contract cleaning significantly  
23 eliminating six locations that are currently  
24 cleaned by contractors and hiring I assume several  
25



2 full time employees. This is good news because as  
3 you...

4 THOMAS GALANTE: Right.

5 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: ...know I fully  
6 oppose any outsourcing here. How is that you can  
7 hire the new employees if the funding is  
8 essentially held harmless number one? And then I  
9 have a follow up to that.

10 THOMAS GALANTE: Funding is held  
11 harmless... What do you mean by that, just...

12 [cross-talk]

13 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: Well you say that...

14 [interpose]

15 THOMAS GALANTE: let, let, let me tell  
16 you the plan is that, maybe that will answer the  
17 question.

18 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: What's that?

19 THOMAS GALANTE: The plan is that we  
20 have facilities that we know are going to be  
21 getting bigger. As a big part of that we'll be  
22 opening up our new Elmhurst Library and the  
23 decisions to have made that that would not be  
24 contract cleaning but we'll be hiring new staff to  
25 do that. And in doing that the funding that will

2 be, the extra funding to be honest with you to do  
3 that will be coming from other costs within the  
4 library.

5 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: So, so that's,  
6 that's, that's actually where I'm, I'm getting...

7 THOMAS GALANTE: Okay.

8 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: ...at right. If...  
9 [crosstalk]

10 THOMAS GALANTE: ...budget or...

11 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: There were, there  
12 were 32 that were outsourced right? Is that, what's  
13 the number of custodial... [interpose]

14 THOMAS GALANTE: Right now it's...  
15 [interpose]

16 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: ...positions that  
17 were outsourced?

18 THOMAS GALANTE: Well, we had 22 less  
19 positions okay? Of which we have I believe is it  
20 seven? If you were to take the FTE for contract  
21 cleaning I think it's seven. I think this, the  
22 contract cleaning comes to seven full time  
23 equivalents. So it's a relatively small number of  
24 full time equivalents.

2 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: So, what I'm  
3 getting at is it, it sounds to me like you're  
4 moving in this direction which obviously I think is  
5 a great direction to go in which is to eliminate  
6 these outsourced custodial contracts and get back  
7 to hiring full time staff who obviously do an  
8 incredibly important task...

9 THOMAS GALANTE: Right.

10 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: ...of making sure  
11 that our libraries are, are clean and safe. So are  
12 you going to, today say that you're, you're open to  
13 moving in that direction and, and, and heading in  
14 that direction of eliminating outsourcing of  
15 custodians because it sounds to me like if we can  
16 find other monies to, to start this process for  
17 these first positions that then we can continue  
18 that process and fully eliminate the need for  
19 outsourcing of custodians.

20 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah it really is a, it  
21 really is a matter of money in the end. We have,  
22 one example, our Middle Village Library has been  
23 contract cleaned since it opened in 1991. We have a  
24 half dozen that have been contract cleaned since  
25 they opened and they tend to be smaller libraries.

2 Alright, they're not the biggest ones, they're the  
 3 smaller guys. But in the end, give you an example,  
 4 we saved a half a million dollars with the contract  
 5 cleaning that was added okay. A half a million  
 6 dollars a year. And what we were able to do with  
 7 that was in November we implemented that, starting  
 8 in this past summer we opened the Flushing Library  
 9 on Sundays with that savings which is about a 200  
 10 thousand dollar cost and we implemented a  
 11 promotional and advancement program for our  
 12 custodial staff, librarian staff, and our clerical  
 13 staff so that libraries that became busier, as they  
 14 became busier that they would receive higher  
 15 titles. So that was an incentive program for all of  
 16 our staff to work hard to do outreach into the  
 17 community, to grow their customer base, and as they  
 18 did then they would be, that library would be  
 19 eligible for higher level titles which means they  
 20 would get increases in pay because the work was  
 21 greater and more complex. And about 150 thousand of  
 22 that savings went into that too.

23 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: So that was the  
 24 change that was made just past year right?

25 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah, yeah.

2 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: ...Essentially. And,  
3 the Middle Village situation is 1991 right?

4 THOMAS GALANTE: Yep.

5 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: That was predated?

6 THOMAS GALANTE: Yep.

7 CO-CHAIR: But there was a, there was a  
8 conscious decision this year to, to outsource those  
9 positions and to change, to make that change.

10 THOMAS GALANTE: Right.

11 CO-CHAIR: And, and for, for you the  
12 ability to move in this good direction which I...  
13 [interpose]

14 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah, we do want to, we  
15 do want to move in that... It really, to be honest  
16 with you is that if, you know we are, we're down 16  
17 million dollars, if we were to get all of that  
18 funding back tomorrow the whole world would be  
19 different from that perspective. Right now what  
20 we're trying to balance right is putting books on  
21 the shelves for people too right. Our book budget  
22 is down about half of what it used to be because we  
23 wanted to preserve our staff for days and hours of  
24 service. We actually made a choice. I mean, last  
25 five years was tough on everyone including me right

2 and the council right. We had a midyear budget cut  
3 that forced us to not buy a single book for six  
4 months. So we're trying to replenish our book  
5 budget at the same time too. I mean it's many, many  
6 millions of dollars of operations.

7 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: Right, I, I  
8 understand all of that. But my basic premise is if  
9 you're finding to eliminate these several  
10 outsourced cleaners how much is that?

11 THOMAS GALANTE: We didn't run the  
12 numbers on that but that will not be extremely  
13 expensive to bring those down, it will not be.

14 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: But then...  
15 [interpose]

16 THOMAS GALANTE: ...the cost differential  
17 would not be extremely expensive.

18 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: Well I guess then  
19 there's a, a, a...

20 THOMAS GALANTE: The bigger guys here is  
21 Flushing and Central, you're looking at a half a  
22 million dollars of extra cost.

23 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: But then you're  
24 going higher new custodians.

2 THOMAS GALANTE: Yes, for those  
3 locations there.

4 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: Right, which is  
5 great, and they'll be full time employees...

6 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah, it's Elmhurst,  
7 it's Kew Garden Hills. You know there's a, a  
8 handful of them there.

9 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: So will you  
10 revisit the outsourcing of contract employees.

11 THOMAS GALANTE: Oh, for sure we will. I  
12 mean I've been through three economic cycles in  
13 this job and I've seen the funding, operating  
14 funding go down, and the operating funding come  
15 back up. And it's because people in Queens, and  
16 people in the city love their libraries. The city  
17 council recognizes that and the city Council comes  
18 through to get the funding back to us when the, the  
19 economy improves. So when the economy is fully back  
20 where the council has the funding back to us from  
21 where we were we could totally relook at that.

22 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: But the funding  
23 was kept, was kept the same this year which is we  
24 baseline... [interpose]

25 THOMAS GALANTE: Correct, correct.

2 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: ...which is great  
3 and you're still able to move in this direction.

4 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah this is over the  
5 next year. As... [interpose]

6 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: Right.

7 THOMAS GALANTE: ...for, another words  
8 Elmhurst's will be reopening in six to nine months.  
9 So we've got some time here. It's also a little bit  
10 off I'm assuming the economy is getting better and  
11 funding will get better to make it easier to do  
12 that, to be honest with you.

13 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: So I, I just want  
14 to end that line on you're, you're, you're open to  
15 and I believe going to revisit... [interpose]

16 THOMAS GALANTE: I'm open to it...  
17 [interpose]

18 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: ...the outsourcing  
19 of custodial services which is very important...  
20 [interpose]

21 THOMAS GALANTE: Yep.

22 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: ...to me and I think  
23 this council and to the workers of the Queens  
24 Library. And then I, I know we have lots of  
25 questions so I'm not going to ask all my questions



2 right now but you do mention the archives and it's  
3 not everyone's passion or main issue but it's  
4 something I care an awful lot about. And the  
5 archives currently is, is on the second floor and  
6 is a public area right...

7 THOMAS GALANTE: Right.

8 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: ...the public can  
9 access that? And you're proposing to move it to the  
10 basement of the building which obviously also has  
11 some public functions. Are you reducing the size of  
12 the archives and are you going to deaccession  
13 materials because I believe the archives are  
14 incredibly important...

15 THOMAS GALANTE: Right.

16 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: ...piece of, of the  
17 mission of, of a library and I would not want it to  
18 be reduced or there be a reaccessioning of  
19 materials or a deemphasizing of the archives  
20 particularly because it is a public service that  
21 is... [interpose]

22 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah.

23 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: ...that has an  
24 existing... [interpose]

25 THOMAS GALANTE: Very important.

2 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: ...space which is a  
3 nice space on the second floor which is also  
4 housing the administrative offices to move it to  
5 the basement, I would be very concerned about...  
6 [interpose]

7 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah.

8 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: ...any  
9 deemphasizing, reducing, or reaccessioning.

10 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah, we're good there.  
11 What we've got is..., the lower level of central, we  
12 call t C-Level for everyone's benefit is a public  
13 service area where we have a large auditorium that  
14 has not been renovated in 50 years. It looks  
15 terrible okay. Off of that we're building a new  
16 adult learning center and the archives will be  
17 located as part of that whole public service area  
18 that's going to all brand new. The, they'll be, the  
19 deaaccessioning will be, we will gradually be doing  
20 that, not for anything relating to Queens. We have  
21 collections right now that cover Long Island. And  
22 we're going to be working with historical societies  
23 there to see who would, might have an interest in  
24 some of that. But the whole idea of the work we're  
25 doing there is to be able to improve it. Right,

2 right now we do not have humidity controlled large  
3 areas to store all these old documents. So a big  
4 part of this was down, doing it down in the lower  
5 level is to create a large area for storage for  
6 these documents so that they can be preserved and  
7 protected.

8 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: I just, I know we  
9 have lots of questions...

10 THOMAS GALANTE: ...and then put them  
11 closer to the people too because on the second  
12 floor we get about a dozen to 15 people a day who  
13 visit and to digitize it and get it out on the web  
14 for people too.

15 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: I, I just want to  
16 say again I would hope that you would be open to  
17 reconsidering on reaccessioning and that we could  
18 continue that discussion. I'm not going to belabor  
19 it now because we have... [interpose]

20 THOMAS GALANTE: Sure.

21 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: ...many many council  
22 members who want to ask questions but  
23 reaccessioning materials from any archive, any  
24 library, any institution is a very very serious  
25

2 matter and I think it should be an open discussion  
3 before any permanent decisions are made.

4 THOMAS GALANTE: Sure.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Council Member  
6 Constantinides.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CONSTANTINIDES: Thank  
8 you Chair, Chairwoman Ferreras and our Chairman Van  
9 Bramer. Good morning Mr. Galante, thank you for  
10 your testimony today.

11 THOMAS GALANTE: Thank you.

12 CO-CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: Just to sort  
13 of circle back to capital projects. Basically what  
14 you had said before is that it's determinant on  
15 dollars of being available to the library.

16 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah.

17 CO-CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: And that's how  
18 it sort of gets into the Kew?

19 THOMAS GALANTE: Yep.

20 CO-CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: What role does  
21 necessity play into that?

22 THOMAS GALANTE: It's a good point. We  
23 receive discretionary funds where we have an  
24 ability, I have an ability with my team to my team  
25

2 to make a decision as to allocations okay. It's not  
3 a lot of money.

4 CO-CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: MM-hmm.

5 THOMAS GALANTE: It's state wide. What  
6 the state does is the state provides library 14  
7 million dollars. The governor has held true to that  
8 number each year even through the tough times  
9 Queens gets 1.2 million based on a formula of that.  
10 1.2 million doesn't go very far with 62 libraries.  
11 So what we tend to do is it will be a spot where  
12 the best example I can think of is Bellerose  
13 because it's happening right now where a mark came  
14 through with a half a million dollars. And what we  
15 focused on there was using that,, the city funding  
16 for the equipment, the self-service equipment and  
17 so forth which is a quarter of a million dollars  
18 and the furniture which is about a quarter of a  
19 million dollars. And allocating about 600 thousand  
20 of the state construction aid to do the interior  
21 remodeling. So our, the prioritization really is,  
22 we have a number of libraries in certain areas of  
23 the borough Northeast Queens in particular that  
24 have a lot of work that's needed. Simply because  
25 from a political perspective there has not been a

lot of funding forthcoming from that area for decades. While some areas I can think of council members or the borough president have really, really come through and our capitalist are, are very small. One that comes to mind is in Council District 27 where there's been a lot of support for libraries in that district for a number of years. So when it comes to our allocations we don't have a lot to work with on the grand scale of things. But I have to day we've done an unbelievable job I think of piecing together funding from the governor from the Assembly, from the Senate, from the City Council, even from Congress a little bit to bring things together. And it takes years sometimes. So the point is, is that we want to say big better libraries everywhere in the borough. That's our goal. So we work hard at doing that through working with every member and when discretionary funding comes available it's not a lot but it's used to plug a hole for us to be able to move something forward.

CO-CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: So, so putting the Central Library renovations into the Kew be, before other libraries might be due not only to

2 necessity but to the funds available to the library  
3 system to get that done, to do all the projects you  
4 talk...

5 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah, to put it in  
6 perspective like Central's, I think it's like,  
7 that's a great question. It's a 20 million dollar  
8 project. Central probably needs another 30 million.  
9 It still needs more money but we're covering big  
10 big chunks of the most important areas of the whole  
11 building. When I say 30 million that would involve  
12 actually expanding, redesigning, cutting, we've  
13 actually looked at this, cutting holes to make  
14 public service areas, take the second floor where  
15 we have administrative offices and turn that into  
16 public spaces okay. And then get us out of that  
17 building. We've looked at lots of scenarios. But 20  
18 million gets us to a place that is going to make a  
19 beautiful, every public area being redone and areas  
20 not touched in decades done. In perspective we have  
21 a 28 million dollar library project at Hunters  
22 Point. We have a 30 million dollar project going on  
23 at Elmhurst. We just built a new library for 20  
24 some million in Glen Oaks. In far Rockaway we have  
25 a 20 some million dollar new library in design

there. So it's not, you know we have three, we have done, my team, and the members of this council. The Borough President have been unbelievable in Queens in supporting library expansion and renovations.

The mayor's office has, in the past has typically been five million dollars a year is what we've received. So that 327 million is a really respectable number. I'm not sure what it is for the other systems but it's, it is by far the largest capital expansion in our organization's history.

And it's so needed because our libraries are bustling at the seams. Every one of them needs a teen library or a teen area. That is a huge demographic group that we are working on very very hard. So that's why as we redo, a big part of redoing the libraries, like at Central we have the largest teen library now in the city by far. 14 thousand, no it's 6,000 square feet just for kids, just for teens. We have 14 thousand square feet.

That's a lot, that's the size of your typical branch for the new children's library discovery center that was built with funding from the borough president. So to get back to your point, it's that central is a really important component of the



2 system and it's a huge, it's our second busiest  
3 library in the borough but we have large  
4 initiatives that are city managed, particularly are  
5 city managed.

6 CO-CHAIR CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you, in  
7 the interest of time I'll pass it back to Chair,  
8 Chairwoman Ferreras for my colleagues to ask other  
9 questions. I'll come back as well.

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Chair  
11 Constantinides. And now our Public Advocate Tish  
12 James.

13 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you.  
14 First, let me thank you for the update, for  
15 updating this body regarding the status of Arverne  
16 and Peninsula. It appears that both of those  
17 branches will be open. Two, and again could you  
18 just give us a date with respect to Arverne and  
19 Peninsula.

20 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah I can give yah...  
21 Arverne is, we're looking at sometime in March from  
22 the furniture delivery. Okay, so done in March.

23 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Uh-huh.

24 THOMAS GALANTE: What we're looking at  
25 for Peninsula I, I believe the target is November

2 right, is the last I heard, is Novemeber. To give  
 3 folks a sense just from a timing in, we lost some  
 4 time waiting for the federal government to  
 5 authorize funding and then decisions to be made as  
 6 to whether the city would do the work because it's  
 7 a city owned building or the library would be able  
 8 to do it. And we came to an agreement with DDC in  
 9 May, FEMA came through and finally told us we could  
 10 do the work ourselves and they would give us 90  
 11 percent reimbursement back on the damages from the  
 12 storm. We then decided we want to do the whole  
 13 library over while we're at it. FEMA will only  
 14 cover things damaged from the storm. So we pieced  
 15 together state construction aid, some of the  
 16 Council Members work. So it's been a complete  
 17 redesign to redo that. We're looking at November.

18 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: That you that's,  
 19 that's a great Segway to my second question. Could  
 20 you please explain to me the difference between  
 21 library operational money and city funds?

22 THOMAS GALANTE: Sure.

23 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Now the library  
 24 operation apparently triggers the board oversight  
 25

2 and approval, city funds does not, it's funded  
3 through DEC.

4 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah.

5 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Can you just  
6 explain the two tracks?

7 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah, for sure. There's  
8 two tracks there and there's also another track  
9 that's even bigger that I think is, was, was, that  
10 people may not understand in general.

11 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay.

12 THOMAS GALANTE: I'm sure you do. There  
13 are two sources of funds that we have. We have  
14 expense budget funding...

15 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Yeah.

16 THOMAS GALANTE: ...we have capital  
17 funding.

18 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Correct.

19 THOMAS GALANTE: Expense budget is,  
20 another name for that is operating funding is what  
21 you'll hear right. So we can't use capital, capital  
22 funding no matter how robust it is to pay for  
23 salaries obviously okay. But then within capital  
24 funding there really is two large directions it  
25 could be. One is city capital funding.

2 Predominantly that, the 327 million dollar program  
3 that we, we mention is all city capital funding.  
4 The way that works is a, a councilman, the borough  
5 president, the mayor will allocate funding within  
6 their discretionary funds based on their priorities  
7 towards libraries, schools, or what have you. And  
8 funding is allocated to us. We then work with DDC,  
9 the city's Department of Design and Construction  
10 who does the construction and manages the entire  
11 project. The contracts are registered by the city.  
12 Not a single dollar flows through the Queens  
13 Library. So as such we report it to the Board of  
14 Trustees as to what's going on. But there's no need  
15 for authorizations of any sort because we don't  
16 spend a dollar.

17 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Got it. The  
18 library operational funds; that includes private  
19 funds?

20 THOMAS GALANTE: Yes.

21 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And, and on  
22 average how much, how, private funds, how much  
23 private funds do you receive.

24 THOMAS GALANTE: Private funds are  
25 roughly, depending on the year between three and

2 five million dollars a year in private funds and  
3 private donations and corporate grants and so  
4 forth.

5 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And...

6 THOMAS GALANTE: Our goal is to double  
7 that in the next three years. We're... [interpose]

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: I understand.  
9 And that's primarily through fundraising and events  
10 and things... [crosstalk]

11 THOMAS GALANTE: Yes, yes.

12 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And in regards  
13 to, there's been a lot of media attention  
14 specifically on this issue. And I don't mean to  
15 disrespect you but it has, it's an issue that I  
16 have an obligation to raise and that is executive  
17 pay.

18 THOMAS GALANTE: Yep.

19 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Executive pay  
20 primarily is, falls under the jurisdiction of the  
21 board.

22 THOMAS GALANTE: Yes.

23 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Do they  
24 determine how much you are paid? And that's a  
25 contract that when you're first hired correct?

2 THOMAS GALANTE: Yes.

3 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And that  
4 includes certain perks correct?

5 THOMAS GALANTE: Yes.

6 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And that  
7 includes I believe a certain amount of funds for  
8 drive or 30 to [interpose]

9 THOMAS GALANTE: 30...

10 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: ...20...

11 THOMAS GALANTE: ...30...

12 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: ...37.

13 THOMAS GALANTE: 37 thousand yep.

14 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And that is your  
15 contract for a specific period of time.

16 THOMAS GALANTE: Correct.

17 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And that is  
18 approved by the board?

19 THOMAS GALANTE: Correct.

20 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And the board is  
21 appointed by individuals outside of your...

22 THOMAS GALANTE: Correct, half by the  
23 borough president and half by the mayor.  
24  
25

2 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Got it. And is  
3 your salary paid through city dollars or private  
4 dollars?

5 THOMAS GALANTE: Yep.

6 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: It's all city  
7 dollars?

8 THOMAS GALANTE: Yep.

9 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Including the,  
10 the driver?

11 THOMAS GALANTE: No I don't have a  
12 driver. What I, the structure that we have, it's  
13 not like a commissioner or something like that from  
14 the city end. It's a 37 thousand dollar, not to  
15 exceed amount to, for the library to purchase a car  
16 that I select within that maximum to drive it and  
17 every three years or, I'm telling you contract  
18 amounts but I have no problem but this is really a  
19 personal matter, I have no problem with it though.

20 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Right.

21 THOMAS GALANTE: At 100 thousand miles  
22 or three years I can replace it, trade in the  
23 vehicle but it's a library owned vehicle...

24 [crosstalk]  
25

2 THOMAS GALANTE: Just for the record  
3 it's something that is rather customary with my  
4 positions in other organizations of our size.

5 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And is, is it  
6 your position that the salary that you receive is  
7 consistent with library presidents in this nation?

8 THOMAS GALANTE: Not in the nation I  
9 would say no. The, in some cities you have  
10 structures like this where Andrew Carnegie [sp?]  
11 founded us and we were private in some, your part  
12 of government and you're an agency within the city.  
13 And others you actually report off to a town you  
14 know and it like, a lot of the libraries are within  
15 towns. The, the structure that the organization has  
16 had is something that I think has been so  
17 effective. The way, the way the salary was  
18 pagged[phonetic] and it was a matter of principle  
19 in a way for me and also the board was to establish  
20 what other New York City, non-profits pay on  
21 average for an organization with our number of  
22 employees and our budget size come up with what  
23 that normal competitive amount would be and to set  
24 it at that and that's what was done.



2 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And, and your,  
3 is your contract performance based? Do you have to  
4 raise funds, private funds or is it, or is it just  
5 a straight...

6 THOMAS GALANTE: It's performance based  
7 that if I don't perform I'm out of a job.

8 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And how do you  
9 define performance?

10 THOMAS GALANTE: Ah, each year the board  
11 of trustees goes through a very extensive process,  
12 actually a policy that's been adopted on that where  
13 at the beginning of the year there are benchmarks  
14 set on my performance and a written review the same  
15 as it's done, the same as I do for all, for another  
16 170 nonunion employees that we have as well that's  
17 performance based okay. And it has the job  
18 description in metrics and measurements and KPIs in  
19 it and so forth. And based on that, the board at  
20 the end of the year, each, each library board  
21 member completes the performance review, all the  
22 results are tallied by the person who heads up the  
23 executive committee of the board. They all meet, go  
24 through it, and review it. And then when they get  
25 done it then goes to the whole board to review the

2 results of it. And then I have the board chair sit  
3 down with me and say Tom here's how we felt you did  
4 and here's how your, well how your average numbers  
5 came out.

6 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: I understand.

7 THOMAS GALANTE: And I've received  
8 really good performance reviews in the past because  
9 I felt like we've done a really good job at the  
10 Queens Library.

11 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you, and  
12 my last question is in regards to the contracting  
13 out of the union workers. Apparently union workers  
14 are hired at a rate of \$35 and the outsourcing of  
15 subcontractors is, is you, you pay them at a rate  
16 of \$15 an hour. And so in your testimony you  
17 indicated that you would now start hiring back  
18 union workers and, and not subcontractors is that  
19 correct?

20 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah I, we plan on  
21 doing that if the economy and the funding at least  
22 stays stable. I have to give that caveat. If we  
23 start having cuts again because the economy goes  
24 south... This is about providing the council and our  
25 customers with maximum hours to our service. It

2 really really is. I want to have a workforce of  
3 full time people that are employed by the library  
4 everywhere. But I also know this council rightfully  
5 so and our library users wanted to maximize hours.  
6 So there are times that we make cost decisions that  
7 we have to make from that balance that in another  
8 world we wouldn't make. And that's kind of the  
9 situation here.

10 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And that  
11 contract with that subcontractor is that reviewed  
12 by the board?

13 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah, it was actually  
14 bid out.

15 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay.

16 THOMAS GALANTE: It was bid out to  
17 various contractors and it was approved by the  
18 board I believe in April, something like that.  
19 That's over, anything over 35 thousand dollars for  
20 a service, maintenance, repair, construction, you  
21 name it, we have, I just have to say this just  
22 because it's come up you know, we have a very  
23 active board that is a very very good group of  
24 people that all come from the community in Queens  
25 that are very very talented that spend a lot of

time volunteering to be on our board. They're out trying to raise money, they're out representing the library in the community, two members are here that are very good people that work very hard for the library. I also have to say, I want to mention what Melinda had said which I think was so right, people who know how I operate, I am always raising the bar, always, on myself and on our organization. So I like the idea of what Melinda said which no matter how good we are we can be better and I know that. And I'm sure there are ways we can improve transparency, oversight or what have you. I have to say I would really want to make sure that that's done in a way that it doesn't make sure we're not nimble for us to be able to be an effective organization and we get bogged down in process. And there's that balance obviously that needs to be sought.

BOROUGH PRESIDENT KATZ: Thank you and I look forward to serving on the Board.

THOMAS GALANTE: Thank you, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Madam Public Advocate. Council Member Koo, followed by Council Member Crowley.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you. Mr.

3 Galante thank you for coming here to give us a very  
4 detail testimony. I have to salute you for running  
5 a very good library system. And the library system  
6 Queens is one of the most businesses in the whole  
7 country. So we thank you for your service. But  
8 being a Council Member I want to ask you some  
9 questions. I always, I've asked all the questions  
10 in advance and then you can answer them  
11 accordingly.

12 THOMAS GALANTE: Got it.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Sir you gave in  
14 your testimony, you said that you agree the same  
15 compensation at the same level as other city  
16 nonprofits of similar size and scope which is where  
17 you remain today. This is the first question. So  
18 can you tell me how much other CEOs of other  
19 library systems of similar size that get paid or  
20 their compensation package? The second question is  
21 the board members, how many board members do we  
22 have to, and how many is appointed by, by you, or  
23 by borough president or by, by the mayor so that we  
24 know you don't actually control the board? The, the  
25 third question is you, do you help do fundraising?

2 Okay, and how much of a total operating budget how  
3 much... [crosstalk] what's the percentage of the  
4 budget is from private donations?

5 THOMAS GALANTE: Okay.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Those are my  
7 questions, thank you.

8 THOMAS GALANTE: Councilman Koo, okay on  
9 pay, the last study that was done by the library.  
10 The comparatives that we use, we do not take and  
11 say the two other library systems. We don't do it  
12 that way because New York Public is a larger  
13 institution with more scope. What we do do is we  
14 actually compare it, we say there's databases out  
15 there that you could all go to as well quite  
16 frankly, anyone could, and you can actually go out  
17 and say for New York City non-profits you have to  
18 pay about 900 dollars, a thousand bucks to, to  
19 subscribe to the service and we do this because  
20 we're doing this for all of the salaries within the  
21 libraries where we look at competitive prices, what  
22 we should pay for any given job. So you can go out  
23 to that service and you can say look at all the  
24 non-profits, it's based on IRS filed tax returns  
25 that all have to be reported in with the top five,

2 five highest paid peoples' salaries. And you can  
3 then say give us a range based on the size of the  
4 organization. So we actually ran a range of 50  
5 million to 150 million in annual revenue. Which the  
6 more I think about it we should have ran 75 million  
7 to 175 but for even a little bit smaller on average  
8 from us the average, the last data available is  
9 2011 tax returns because it takes time for people  
10 to file the tax returns and it to get posted. But  
11 in 2011 the average salary was 383,945, my number  
12 was 373,210. The, so and if you're mark that to  
13 2013 by using what comp studies say I'm paid about  
14 8,000 below that number. That's just peanuts right.  
15 On the comp, do we have the comp, the comp I know  
16 is much higher, the total comp when you do those  
17 studies. I'm just talking about general, I'm going  
18 to stop talking about myself. I'm going to talk to,  
19 and give you the overall. Total comp average,  
20 that's not, is it 490? The total comp is 499, six,  
21 667 is the average of this group. It's 30  
22 organizations is what it came out to. There were 30  
23 New York City non-profits in that revenue stream of  
24 that size. Oh I'm sorry, the second question, thank  
25 you Bridget, the number of board members, there's

2 19 board members. I should point out in addition  
3 the Public Advocate is an ex officio member of the  
4 board right, which is, it's a full blown board  
5 member is what it means but the person doesn't  
6 vote, but they're at every single meeting and they  
7 have a representative that sits in on every  
8 meeting. Also the mayor has, is also on the board,  
9 the borough president, the speaker of the city  
10 council, and the city controller. So all five the,  
11 the borough president and all four citywide  
12 officials actually are on the board and they sit in  
13 on every meeting with, well their representative  
14 does. And, so there's 19 half appointed by the  
15 mayor, half appointed by the borough president.  
16 Alternatively is where it's at. And then on the  
17 help with fundraising and the percentage of the  
18 budget for private funds; we have a lot of, we have  
19 a foundation board that we continue to look to  
20 develop with people that also will help support  
21 opening doors for us to help us with grants and to  
22 provide funding for the library. And we have some  
23 very very active people there and we continue to  
24 try and grow that. The percentage of the budget  
25 it's about five million, it's about five percent, a



2 little less than five percent of our operating  
 3 budget. We would like, we do, I, I have to say we  
 4 have a goal of doubling our non-city revenue  
 5 sources in the next three years that we just  
 6 established two months ago from all sources from  
 7 federal grants, state grants, and private sources.  
 8 It is what pays for most all of the programs that  
 9 you see and hear about at the library, the ESOL  
 10 programs, and all that. That's all paid with non-  
 11 city funding. We use city-funding basically to keep  
 12 the doors open and the basics for books. That's  
 13 really the focus for city funding.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Can I just  
 15 follow-up to your comprebals. When you said that  
 16 you have comprebals for other non-profits can you  
 17 give examples of the, of a few of the 30 that  
 18 you're, that the comprebals come... [interpose]

19 THOMAS GALANTE: You know I, I mean it's  
 20 a comp study, I don't know Brooklyn Law School,  
 21 Julliard School, Wagner College, I could rattle off  
 22 you know... you know... What these are, educational and  
 23 cultural art institutions. That was the group that  
 24 was pagged[phonetic] and Brooklyn Public has you  
 25 know hit that database group as well.

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay.

3 THOMAS GALANTE: And just to, just to  
4 point out, that was what was decided in 2005. I had  
5 a principle in 2005 to be honest with you that I  
6 did not want to be paid less than the average when  
7 I felt I would give the organization a lot more.

8 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay, Council  
9 Member Crowley.

10 CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: Thank you to all  
11 our chairs. Good afternoon almost Mr. Galante. Do  
12 you believe that your compensation package is too  
13 high?

14 THOMAS GALANTE: I believe it's fair.

15 CHAIRPERSON CROWLEY: I think it's too  
16 high. Based on the comparisons you've made to other  
17 nonprofit organizations they do not rely on on  
18 government dollars as much as Queens Library does.  
19 In addition to that Queens Library, the vast  
20 majority of your staff, their contract is  
21 negotiated by the city and the vast majority of  
22 your land is owned by the city. And you're more in  
23 my eyes a city entity than a traditional nonprofit  
24 organization. And I believe that your salary should  
25 be aligned with that of a commissioner and your

2 management staff should be aligned with that of  
 3 city management. And you know if you look at your  
 4 compensation you said the last five years have been  
 5 tough for you, for your management. But the numbers  
 6 I've seen from your 990 forms indicate that you've  
 7 received 32 thousand dollars in raises, that top  
 8 management of Queens Library has received 10 to 34  
 9 thousand dollars in raises, all of this while your  
 10 work force has been reduced by 253 in the field  
 11 doing the work at the libraries. In addition to  
 12 that when you came to us in 2010 when we were  
 13 negotiating the 2011 budget, a very difficult  
 14 budget. You had promised that there'd be no more  
 15 layoffs. That year there were 44 layoffs in  
 16 September. Your work force in the libraries are  
 17 continuously asked to do more with less. And it  
 18 seems that your management is getting compensated  
 19 more and more. I don't believe that's in the best  
 20 interest of the taxpayers and certainly not the  
 21 users of Queens Library. Now as it relates to your  
 22 board of trustees is there anybody on the board  
 23 that is an advocate for labor or your workforce?

24 THOMAS GALANTE: I got a, there's a good  
 25 answer to that. Our trustees, their focus is our

2 customers and the people of the borough. In order  
3 to effectively do that we need a strong work force  
4 that is dedicated to their job and to get it done  
5 and we do. But we make decisions every day, this  
6 board and myself that's based on what we believe in  
7 our hearts and our minds to be in the best interest  
8 of every person in the borough who uses our  
9 service. And we know that we need a strong  
10 workforce to do that. I couldn't say that any  
11 clearer at least in what I think is the whole,  
12 that's the whole thing.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I'm putting,  
14 submitting an LS request today just so my  
15 colleagues know that there'll be a member of the  
16 board of trustees on all the library systems that  
17 represents the work force. As it relates to the  
18 contracting out of cleaners, managers, managerial,  
19 sorry, those that do the maintenance within the  
20 libraries are they receiving prevailing wage, what  
21 is the prevailing wage according to the City of New  
22 York as it relates to somebody who is a custodian.

23 THOMAS GALANTE: I don't think there's a  
24 prevailing wage for, I mean our custodians are  
25 paid, our staff are paid based on DC 37 and we bid

2 out the job. It was about 15 dollars an hour for  
3 the cleaning contractor. And I have to say that  
4 cleaning contractors are used all throughout the  
5 city, 10 and a quarter. Well, is this, this is  
6 something I should not be, I don't think I should  
7 be disclosing that though. I don't think it's right  
8 to disclose that, what it... [crosstalk]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: I just want to  
10 know if you're paying prevailing wage with city tax  
11 dollars.

12 THOMAS GALANTE: Prevailing wage applies  
13 to construction contracts with city funds and we  
14 follow prevailing wage... [interpose]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: As it relates  
16 to compensation for the... [interpose]

17 THOMAS GALANTE: But for a... [interpose]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: ...for doing...  
19 [interpose]

20 THOMAS GALANTE: ...you know... [interpose]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: ...maintenance.

22 THOMAS GALANTE: ...for cleaning  
23 contractors or things like that I do not believe  
24 prevailing wage would apply to that.  
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: But DC 37 when  
3 they negotiate the contract with the city they have  
4 a prevailing wage for, for those that do the  
5 maintenance.

6 THOMAS GALANTE: Well the city bargains  
7 with DC 37 citywide and establishes the pay scales  
8 and we pay that.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Okay, well as I  
10 said earlier I believe that there needs to be a  
11 labor representative on the board. They don't have  
12 be unionized but they should be there to speak up  
13 for the vast majority of the people who are working  
14 out there in the field. In addition to what I said  
15 earlier I believe that your compensation package is  
16 way too large. You make twice as much that as the  
17 mayor of the city of New York. Your management  
18 staff makes more than most city management staff.  
19 As I said earlier you are very very different than  
20 a nonprofit such as an educational institution that  
21 isn't, gets it's endowments from people who have  
22 gone there or people who are given their own  
23 private dollars not, not city government dollars.

24 THOMAS GALANTE: Well I respect what  
25 you, you're thinking.

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council  
3 Member Crowley. We will have Council Member Lancman  
4 followed by Council Member Miller.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Good morning.

6 THOMAS GALANTE: Good morning.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: So as an avid  
8 library user I just made the, the Flushing Library  
9 last night at 8:55.

10 THOMAS GALANTE: Hmm, and they were  
11 probably trying to close down.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Yeah well you  
13 know that, we, we had some books on, on hold and  
14 the librarian that I ran into was very very helpful  
15 [crosstalk] as they always are as I travel the  
16 system hunting and pecking for books that my kids  
17 need for school usually in, in tracking those,  
18 those down. Before I get into the, the, the main  
19 body of what I'm interested in which is frankly  
20 the, your compensation. I just want to follow up on  
21 something I heard earlier and get a better  
22 understanding of the fines and, and fees which I am  
23 a consistent...

24 [laughter] [interpose]

25 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Including last  
3 night. They wouldn't let me take the books out  
4 until I got my fines down. Are those fines and  
5 fees, are they segregated in some way, how are they  
6 accounted, could you just explain that a little  
7 bit. We have a very, we have a very efficient  
8 organization that emanates I think from, somewhat  
9 from me and the people that I have around me. We  
10 have a, as you, probably when you paid your fines  
11 you probably used the self-service technology there  
12 at Flushing now that we have that up where you can  
13 use a credit card, debit card, or cash. The cash  
14 being, making sure that every person in Queens  
15 could do it by cash because not everyone has a  
16 credit card debit card. The money goes into that  
17 machine, gets emptied out by our staff, the line  
18 staff there and it goes into a separate checking  
19 account that is just fines and fees. And then we  
20 have a budget for it that it, it goes to the board  
21 that's approved by the board that is used for the  
22 disbursement of library operating activities. It's  
23 roughly about, it's about two and a half million  
24 dollars a year that we collect in fines and fees.  
25 It's gone down in recent years so, which is kind of



2 I think an interesting fact. But the actual...

3 [interpose]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: That's because  
5 sometimes I make my kids read down their fines.

6 THOMAS GALANTE: [laughter] Well that's  
7 a great, you're a very well, very well educated on  
8 this. We have a program for our kids, for kids to  
9 actually read down your fines where they get a  
10 library buck if they work in the library and they  
11 sit and read for a half hour they get a, a buck to  
12 take off their fines. So we have a lot of ways that  
13 we do help people who otherwise can't pay. But the  
14 point is is that there is an actual budget for it  
15 and half of it, at least half of it typically goes  
16 to books to replenish our book budget and more or  
17 less the rest goes to programs and some it goes to  
18 staff development and that's more or less the  
19 gist[phonetic] of it, right Traci? Yeah. The cost  
20 of our collection agency comes out of there. If you  
21 go too far and you ignore us a long way there's  
22 actually a collection agency that will contact you  
23 to make sure that you bring back your books or pay  
24 the fines, when it reaches a certain threshold I  
25 would say.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: I don't, I  
3 don't think I've ever gotten that far.

4 THOMAS GALANTE: No...

5 [crosstalk]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: ...haven't gotten  
7 that deep... [interpose]

8 THOMAS GALANTE: And I have to say that  
9 the city controller right in our, the library's  
10 contract with the city going back about...

11 [interpose]

12 [crosstalk]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: What is...  
14 [crosstalk] Sorry to interrupt what is the...

15 [interpose]

16 THOMAS GALANTE: ...The city controller  
17 has the right to audit that.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: What is the  
19 threshold for, for being sent to collection.

20 THOMAS GALANTE: 25 dollars, after, I  
21 think it's 25 dollars but it's after we've  
22 contacted you about four times over 56 days.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Got it. So let  
24 me ask you directly about your, your compensation  
25 because it's the, the issue that has come up most

2 when I've been speaking with constituents in, and  
3 at, and at meetings in the last week or so. And  
4 it's been touched on but it, it seems to be an  
5 extraordinary salary for, as Council Member Crowley  
6 mentioned or, or alluded to, what is for all  
7 intents and purposes a city funded entity. I mean  
8 if I'm not mistaken 95 percent of your budget seems  
9 to be city funding.

10 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah it's, right now  
11 our funding is 80 percent, roughly 80 percent city,  
12 did I see that right, about 80 percent right? Our  
13 goal is if we can keep raising revenues that are  
14 non-city it will become smaller to be honest with  
15 you. To be less reliant on the ebbs and flows of  
16 city funding so that we can have a constant  
17 service... [crosstalk, interpose]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: ...that's a good  
19 goal but we're not, we're not there yet so if you  
20 could, you tell me if you can, so I can tell my  
21 constituents if I can why does that someone who  
22 runs the library system that is always struggling  
23 and, and, and gasping for, for, for dollars which  
24 is, because it's such a wonderful asset so often  
25 crowded and, and overused why it is that you

2 warrant a salary that's approximately 400 thousand  
3 dollars... [interpose]

4 THOMAS GALANTE: Here I'll, I'll tell,  
5 I'll tell you what I would say, let's say it that  
6 way because I don't set my compensation, the board  
7 does. But I'll tell you what I would say. Here's  
8 what I believe through my education and experience  
9 over lots of years. You need to make sure, for any  
10 business, any educational institution, any  
11 government right, that you've got good leadership,  
12 strong management, because you get what you pay for  
13 and you'll end up, you want to have people, and I'm  
14 not talking about me, I'm talking about my  
15 leadership team included who are going to be smart,  
16 efficient, and save money by doing strategic things  
17 too. That can be great at bringing in money and  
18 generating money. So I think it's important to also  
19 have continuity of leadership in an organization. I  
20 am the 11<sup>th</sup> person to head up the Queens Library in  
21 like 105 years. I believe that one of the reasons  
22 why the organization is as strong as it is, is it's  
23 had great leadership in the past because this  
24 board, or the board 10 years ago 20, 30, 40 years  
25 ago paid a competitive salary for comparatives in

2 other parts of the city. Otherwise you don't keep  
 3 people. And I know on my end it's one thing that I  
 4 mentioned to the board in 2005, I said I want to  
 5 stay with this organization and retire here. So  
 6 it'd be nice to have a salary that was competitive  
 7 so in two years, four, or five I don't bounce to  
 8 somewhere else because I got kids to put through  
 9 college and what have you like anybody else. So the  
 10 point is I think I would tell people that you  
 11 should pay fairly for what the job is and how  
 12 easily that person could easily go to another job  
 13 of comparable or more salary. That's all I could  
 14 say but I'm, I'm talking about, I'm not talking for  
 15 the board here, that is a board item that the board  
 16 decides right. But I know that from my business  
 17 acumen I just think that's mark business.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: One last quick  
 19 question. In your experience with the, the board of  
 20 trustees and the way it functions and operates and  
 21 oversees the library system. Do you, do you think  
 22 that if the council were to have some direct  
 23 appointments to the board, if the board structure  
 24 was, was changed in some way. Because you have the  
 25 mayor, you have the borough president but the, the

2 third leg of that stool in terms of the, the  
 3 library's funding and, and oversight is represented  
 4 by the, the speaker ex officio but, but no direct  
 5 appointments. Do you think that that would upset  
 6 or, or disturb or, or be a step backwards in terms  
 7 of the board being a functioning supportive  
 8 efficient body?

9 THOMAS GALANTE: I probably should not  
 10 answer that question really. I, I can tell you  
 11 this. We have a board that I've seen operate for 27  
 12 years now that has done an unbelievable job. If, I  
 13 mean everyone here I, I'd like to thank that when  
 14 you, everyone here looks at the big picture of the  
 15 Queens Library and all it's accomplished alright;  
 16 library of the year 2009. I'm lucky enough it seems  
 17 like everywhere I go, every month or two I'm  
 18 picking up an award. We just won an award, I got an  
 19 email last night, there's so many great stories  
 20 that are getting lost here with this, the, the work  
 21 we're doing here which needs to be done. We just  
 22 won, the Glen Oaks Library was selected from, to be  
 23 the one building in the entire United States, what  
 24 was the... It's the architects, Architect America, it  
 25 was picked as, and this done on a library just

among buildings for design. It was picked as the one library in the state, then it went up against, it was a national competition of one in each state and it was all voting online and all kinds of stuff and we just found out last night we won. So the point I want to make is this. Our organization is great because of a lot of things. It's because of a great staff. But I, I have to also say I'm so proud when I hear someone talk about our great staff and the person at Flushing because I put in the processes and hired them. I've, every time I hear a good thing about the folks there I've, I'm a part of that, we're all a part of that, the board's a part of that. And our board meets every couple weeks, they go through great times where we win awards and we do these great things and they have to go through times like this too. And they're volunteers from the Community that give their heart and soul to the organization. So when it comes to board organization there's lots of ways to govern and I'd be open to anything in my own mind right. I think I'm open to anything, that's the way I approach things right. But I think in the end I think you got to look back and say look at how

2 great this organization is and all it's  
3 accomplished. It's arguably the best in the world.  
4 We have people that visit us from around the world  
5 every month to come in and see how we do business.  
6 I have had the state department sending me to other  
7 countries to help train how they should have our  
8 service model in other countries. So we're all very  
9 proud of what we do and the board included. My  
10 concern here is that to take something great let's  
11 make sure it's greater and let's not make it less  
12 great. So that's, if the, if the changes, if  
13 there's any changes made along the way as long as  
14 it's in the interest of making us greater that's  
15 what we got to focus on because we want to be  
16 greater. We're great but we always want to be  
17 greater.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LANCMAN: Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Mr. Galante in  
20 the spirit of keeping this hearing moving I'm going  
21 to ask that you make your responses a little  
22 shorter.

23 THOMAS GALANTE: You got it.

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: But factual and...  
25 [interpose]



2 THOMAS GALANTE: Yes.

3 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: ...to the question.

4 So please keep that in mind. Council Member Miller  
5 followed by Council Member Ulrich.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Good afternoon  
7 Madam Chair and Chair Van Bramer and  
8 Constantinides. Thank you for giving us this  
9 opportunity of, of oversight this morning. Let me  
10 quantify my position by saying that I chair the  
11 Labor Committee here, Civil Service and Labor and  
12 obviously those questions will be related to that.  
13 So there's been a lot of talk about contracting out  
14 work and, and so I just want to get into the meat  
15 and potatoes of that. My first question is how  
16 many, how many non-managerial employees do you  
17 employ?

18 THOMAS GALANTE: Oh, non-managerial, I  
19 would say, managerial probably about 200 including  
20 each of the, including union represented staff that  
21 manage our libraries...

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Mm-hmm.

23 THOMAS GALANTE: ...and our divisions. We  
24 have a number of quote what you would view as  
25 management positions that are in the union.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: How many non-  
3 managerial... [interpose]

4 THOMAS GALANTE: How about... [interpose]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: ...employees do  
6 you have?

7 THOMAS GALANTE: Non-managerial, it's  
8 about 12, 1200 non-managerial I would say roughly.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: How many of  
10 those are Union employees?

11 THOMAS GALANTE: The Union represents  
12 all of our, let me say, maybe this will help with  
13 the answer. The Union represents our entire full  
14 time work force except for about 150 full time jobs  
15 that have been negotiated out. And we have a work  
16 force of roughly 900, right now we have about 950  
17 full time employees, so it'd be about 800 Union  
18 represent full time employees and 150 non-union  
19 full time employees.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Out of that 150  
21 how many of those job titles, descriptions or jobs  
22 were formally done Union employees?

23 THOMAS GALANTE: None really. We've, the  
24 contract, the local agreement, the way the, let me  
25 give you a sense of the way it works from a

2 contractual end. We have a local agreement with the  
3 local Union, Local 1321 which is part of DC37 okay.  
4 And that Local bargains with the library along with  
5 DC37 for a local working conditions contract. But  
6 the compensation and the pay and the benefits of  
7 all that stuff is all bargained by the city of New  
8 York, with DC37 on a citywide basis. And then  
9 whenever they settle citywide flows right down to  
10 the local level. So that, for example we have IT  
11 positions or our HR Department...

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Mm-hmm.

13 THOMAS GALANTE: ...Personnel Department  
14 is not part of the Union because it was bargained  
15 with the Union decades ago that our HR Department  
16 would not be represented in the Union. Is that,  
17 that, it should, answers...

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: You do know I'm  
19 a former Union President right so I, I'm, I'm well  
20 versed in... [interpose]

21 THOMAS GALANTE: My uncle's a,  
22 [crosstalk] my uncle's a Union President right, you  
23 know I get it.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Yeah and I also  
25 know that that agreement while it, that you talk

2 about that allowed you use these nonunion employees  
3 or transition them over was very vague and  
4 ambiguous and there was some, some Union  
5 disapproval of that right. So it's not like that,  
6 this was an agreement that you guys, that they went  
7 along with. So I, I think the, the point I'm trying  
8 to make is, is you talked often about value in  
9 employees. In fact you talked about fair  
10 compensation for employees.

11 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I, and, and what  
13 Council Member Crowley alluded to that in fact it  
14 wasn't fair compensation and whether or not these  
15 were industrywide wages that were being paid is, is  
16 that the case?

17 THOMAS GALANTE: I think that, I mean  
18 I'm a believer in fair compensation for every  
19 employee but I don't represent them. I don't  
20 bargain for them or represent them so... Does that  
21 get to your question?

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: In terms of your  
23 custodial staff what, what are their assignments?

24 THOMAS GALANTE: Our custodial staff  
25 typically come in at 6:00 in the morning, leave at

2 2:30 in the afternoon for most, most of the guys  
3 and gals.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Do they maintain  
5 facilities, do they do... And you know what, what  
6 kind of work... [interpose]

7 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah, they don't do,  
8 they don't do like electrical repairs, plumbing  
9 repairs, they do janitorial work throughout the  
10 whole building on a daily basis. We also have Union  
11 represented maintenance staff that are in city  
12 classifications called library maintainer. And they  
13 do, they're handyman and they do work throughout  
14 the system fixing things that break.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: In, in terms of  
16 somebody's projects that, that have gone forth or,  
17 and, and it is work done in house by these  
18 facilities to maintain it?

19 THOMAS GALANTE: Some of it... yeah some  
20 of it is. It all depends if it's a small little job  
21 somewhere and they're not overloaded then we might  
22 do that. But in a lot of cases we're actually using  
23 the work, through the capital funding to get the  
24 work done. [cross-talk] because our guys, our guys  
25 are... [interpose]

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: ...capital  
3 funding... [interpose]

4 THOMAS GALANTE: ...really busy all the  
5 time.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Capital funding  
7 doesn't preclude your in house people from doing  
8 the work does it?

9 THOMAS GALANTE: No it doesn't but it's  
10 the size of the scope of the work. We have, I think  
11 it's about 12 guy, 12, 12 staff right, still at 14,  
12 we're at 14 oh we need to include Central's two  
13 guys yeah. So we have 14 maintainers that are busy  
14 all the time going around...

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Throughout the  
16 system?

17 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah for the whole  
18 system. So 62 libraries, 14 maintainers that are  
19 getting you know, to do odds and ends repairs  
20 throughout the system. And they're busy. We  
21 actually have a, we're very automated on that too.  
22 We have a work order tracking system where staff  
23 will report, anyone in this, in the library can  
24 report something's broken, they get a ticket, it  
25

2 goes to their handheld, they open the ticket, they  
3 close it.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: So how does this  
5 work get done with only 14 employees. You, you  
6 would think that these guys are working really hard  
7 and... [interpose]

8 THOMAS GALANTE: Oh they are working  
9 hard.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Yeah and, and...

11 THOMAS GALANTE: I got to tell you...

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: But how does the  
13 work get done and are you considering bringing in  
14 more people for, for this particular... [interpose]

15 THOMAS GALANTE: I would love to hire  
16 more people. We just need funding, we would need  
17 funding to to that really and...

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Operating...

19 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah, operating  
20 funding.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: ...expenses.

22 [crosstalk]

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Council Member  
24 Miller if you can just wrap up your question.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay.

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you.

3 THOMAS GALANTE: Keep in mind what  
4 we're, what we are dealing with is the 16 million  
5 dollar cut back. I mean that's been tough.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: OS operating  
7 expense, and, and let me ask you very quickly about  
8 your, some of your private funding and you're  
9 private funding is it funded specifically for  
10 capital projects and/ or is there anything that  
11 precludes you from soliciting operating expenses.

12 THOMAS GALANTE: Okay, the private  
13 funding is rare that capital funding's received.  
14 Although I just got word yesterday we might have a  
15 donor for one library that I need to follow up on  
16 that could be a large donation. Usually what donors  
17 provide is funding for a discreet item that meets  
18 their interest. So our after school programs or we  
19 have tutors for kids after school is largely funded  
20 through private donors. Also we have what we call  
21 teen mentors that are actually working with folks  
22 to how to learn, help them with using computers,  
23 those are donors. So donors have, and they  
24 typically for us our 50, hundred thousand dollar  
25 donations are for discreet programs that they have



2 an interest in. [crosstalk] not for capital work  
3 [crosstalk]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Thank, thank  
5 you.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council  
7 Member Miller. Council Member Ulrich followed by  
8 Council Member King.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Thank you  
10 Chairwoman Ferreras. Tom I want to thank you for  
11 your testimony but I'd like to remind you that  
12 while it's good to highlight all the wonderful  
13 things about Queens Library and certainly you're  
14 preaching to the choir. The reason why we are here  
15 is in response to a very negative story that  
16 appeared in the daily news detailing some very  
17 disturbing things; extravagant salaries, expensive  
18 renovations, and an apparent lack of proper  
19 oversight, and governance of the Queens Library  
20 System. And so based upon that premise I'd like to  
21 examine some of the fiduciary responsibilities of  
22 the board of trustees. And maybe you're not the  
23 best person to answer these questions. If you have  
24 to call anybody else up that's fine too.

2 THOMAS GALANTE: Let's start with the  
3 board of trustees. What fiduciary responsibilities  
4 would the board of trustees have. Are there  
5 committees that handle certain areas such as  
6 reviewing employee contracts annually or  
7 biannually. Is that disclosed publically, what type  
8 of transparency is in that process?

9 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah, yeah good,  
10 because if you do one at a time then I can cover a  
11 lot of it.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Yeah.

13 THOMAS GALANTE: I've been there 27  
14 years so I understand how it all works... can explain  
15 it well. We have, the board has many many  
16 committees. They have a Finance Committee, they have  
17 a Buildings and Grounds Committee, they have a  
18 Committee on Standards of the Boards Committee  
19 which kind of sets rules for the boards and, and  
20 bylaws. They have an Investments committee, they  
21 have an Insurance committee, they have a Technology  
22 Committee and I'm missing a few. Every committee  
23 has six to seven members and the work is done at  
24 the committee level and then comes to the whole  
25 board because 19 people, it's kind of difficult to

2 have 19 folks all meet on every topic. One  
3 committee of the board, we call it the  
4 Administrative Committee, another way to view it is  
5 Executive Committee. It is composed of all of the  
6 past chairs of the board and there are ten members  
7 to that as well as the current chair of the board  
8 and the vice chair. They meet every month and we  
9 have a meeting tomorrow night for example. And  
10 really any matter involving the expenditure of over  
11 35 thousand dollars out of the, with our size of  
12 the scope goes to the board for consideration. The  
13 Buildings and Grounds Committee if it involves  
14 facilities, they're a very active board with lots  
15 of activity. The Security Committee, George Chair  
16 is our Security Committee. He wanted to make sure I  
17 pointed out the Security Committee which meets  
18 three times a year to go over matters as it relates  
19 to books and so forth you know and library  
20 security. We have members that are involved in a  
21 national level on matters who are, that are viewed  
22 as experts like on security matters in libraries.  
23 So, and we have board members that have been on the  
24 board for a month or two and we have some that have  
25 run the board for 35 years. It's a very diverse

2 board and a very active board working with the  
3 library.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: So at some point  
5 the board of trustees determined that your  
6 compensation package was just and commensurate with  
7 that of other 30, other educational or cultural  
8 institutions in the city. Does the board of  
9 trustees also approve or disapprove of hiring and  
10 firing not only of executive staff but of the  
11 regular employees of the Queens Public Library.

12 THOMAS GALANTE: They do in the end.  
13 There's a check and balance there. The, the board,  
14 I report to the board monthly on all appointments,  
15 resignations, retirements, leave without pays,  
16 return from leave of absence. It gets reported to  
17 the board monthly so they see all that activity  
18 they question that. But the person who runs the  
19 organization on a day to day basis that does the  
20 hiring and firing is me. And I, it's something that  
21 I am the final review and sign off but it goes  
22 through an HR process and attorneys and so forth  
23 before any matter is done and, and teams of people  
24 who do recruiting. I have to say what everyone,  
25 whenever anyone talks about a great employee at the

2 Queens Library, or a bad employee, not going to  
3 always happen too, it's on my back, and, but it  
4 makes me feel good because we have, we did a lot of  
5 work to change our, when we do hiring and when we  
6 do promotions we changed out the people that do  
7 that work to try and bring in great people.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Yeah, okay. Well  
9 I only have 30 seconds left let, let me come to  
10 some of the ones that I really want answers for.  
11 You said you get what you pay for along those lines  
12 are you permitted to earn outside income? Do you  
13 earn outside income, you get 400 thousand dollars a  
14 year working for Queens Public Library. Do you earn  
15 any outside income?

16 THOMAS GALANTE: Well that's not  
17 something, I mean today we're here about the  
18 operations, the Queens Library so I'm not going to  
19 talk about...

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: I just want to  
21 make sure that if you are earning any outside  
22 income that's not distracting your ability to run  
23 the Queens Public Library System.

24 THOMAS GALANTE: No let me, I'll finish.  
25 Today's about the operations of the library but we

2 do not preclude any employee from the library from  
3 have a second job, outside income or whatever they  
4 decide to do on their own time.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Yeah I, you know  
6 I'm, I'm disappointed by some of your answers today  
7 to be quite honest with you. And I think that this  
8 council, the mayor's office, the borough president,  
9 and every other elected official who is a stake  
10 holder and an investor in the public library system  
11 has a lot of work to do to restore the public's  
12 confidence in our ability to serve them with public  
13 libraries. This will not be the last hearing and  
14 this will not be the last that you hear from us on  
15 this matter.

16 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you  
17 Councilman Ulrich. We will have Council Member King  
18 followed Council Member Rosenthal.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Good afternoon and  
20 thank you Madam Chair, Mr. Chair, Mr. Chair. Thank  
21 you President Galante for being here and testifying  
22 today. I'm going to stay on the same road as my  
23 colleague Council Member Ulrich did. My question is  
24 very simple. Yes we are here responding to, as the  
25 borough president mentioned about trust issues from

2 this article that came out in the daily news and my  
3 concern and my question, my question would be to  
4 you now do you feel over the past months or years  
5 that there has been any mismanagement and the  
6 decision making has been done to, the monies that  
7 were spent for renovation or capital projects or  
8 just hiring firing and if and... I'll stop there and  
9 then I have another question for you.

10 [crosstalk]

11 THOMAS GALANTE: No I do not. I think  
12 that, I think it's easy for anyone to take any  
13 decision, and easy for me to do it as well and to  
14 second guess it right. Every decision that's made  
15 by anyone in their lives has lots of factors that  
16 were going on at that moment and information that  
17 they have to make that decision. And all too often  
18 some people, you can second guess why a person made  
19 a decision they made because you don't have all the  
20 information that they had at that time or you just  
21 weren't in that time and space.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay, secondly I  
23 heard during your testimony knowing that 80 percent  
24 of the funds that come through, that, that helps  
25 the library function is the city money do you think

2 right now that your job with the salary that you  
3 make is, and the work that you do is comparable to  
4 the mayor since you make more than the mayor.

5 THOMAS GALANTE: Oh I think the mayor  
6 has a bigger job than mine that's for sure. So...

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: He's compensated  
8 less than you.

9 THOMAS GALANTE: I think whoever sets  
10 his salary might no, not going to go there. The  
11 point I want to make is our organization sets the  
12 salary for each position to be competitive with the  
13 marketplace so that we can retain talented people  
14 without overpaying, not underpaying so you lose  
15 them because you want to grow people, you want to  
16 bring them along and you want to retain your top  
17 talents you know. And that's how we set  
18 compensation and the board makes their own choices  
19 in compensation and how they would do that but I  
20 have to say that I believe that's what they, when  
21 they decided in 2005 that was the principle behind  
22 it was let's pay what we need to keep talent; not  
23 underpay but not overpay.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay I'm, I'm not  
25 saying that you are overpaid but I would like for



2 you, now you mentioned about your children, you  
3 know that, you know you have to send your children  
4 to college. I know a number of us have children  
5 that we're sending to college, we don't nearly make  
6 the money that you make and I know I have parents  
7 in my district who make 50 and 60 thousand...

8 THOMAS GALANTE: Yep.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...who have to  
10 figure out how to get their children to college. So  
11 I'm going to ask you to take that out of your  
12 testimony when you talk to people because it's, I  
13 find it offensive to the parents who are struggling  
14 each and every day who are not nearly making the  
15 income that you're making and still have to find a  
16 way to get their children to college. And in  
17 addition to that you mentioned that you're having  
18 challenges keeping books on shelves. Would you be  
19 willing to, since we are here because people are  
20 having an issue with the compensation of maybe  
21 giving back some of that compensation make sure  
22 they have more books in some of your libraries to  
23 take a proactive approach to solving some of the  
24 problems financially that you're having.

2 THOMAS GALANTE: I'll write a check if  
3 you write a check.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Alright just...

5 THOMAS GALANTE: I'm fundraising right  
6 now. My point is I do donate money to the library  
7 each year...

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Mm-hmm.

9 THOMAS GALANTE: ...and I would you know.  
10 I'm always looking for people to help with that.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Okay.

12 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Alright, I, I  
14 thank you for your time today...

15 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: ...I appreciate your  
17 answers.

18 THOMAS GALANTE: You got it.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER KING: Alright, thank  
20 you.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council  
22 Member King. Council Member Rosenthal followed by  
23 Council Member Cumbo.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: You know I'd  
25 like to pick up on what Council Member King just

2 mentioned. I too was deeply, deeply offended when  
3 you said look you got to put your kids through  
4 college.

5 THOMAS GALANTE: That is an...

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I have two  
7 kids and I have to put them through college as  
8 well. Your janitors who work for you which is by  
9 the way how many, how many full time employee  
10 janitors...

11 THOMAS GALANTE: 72. 72.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: 72, and how  
13 many contract ones do you have?

14 THOMAS GALANTE: Six, I think it's six,  
15 six full time equivalents.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Six full time  
17 employees is that...

18 THOMAS GALANTE: We can get that, we can  
19 get back to you on that if you like.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: You don't  
21 have that now. This, the purpose of this hearing  
22 is...

23 THOMAS GALANTE: We will get you...

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...about that  
25 topic...

2 THOMAS GALANTE: ...they'll grab those  
3 numbers.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...and you  
5 don't have it? I'll wait. I'll put my five minutes  
6 because I'm hazarding a guess that those 72  
7 employees and the six contract workers, that some  
8 percentage of them have to send their kids to  
9 college too or want to and maybe they can't. You're  
10 sticking with the 72.

11 THOMAS GALANTE: Somewhere between six  
12 and ten. How's that?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Well your  
14 staff member is putting the piece of paper in front  
15 of you. And for a guy who makes over 400 thousand  
16 dollars a year I think you should know these  
17 numbers.

18 THOMAS GALANTE: Eight, yeah throughout  
19 the borough 18.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: What? Eight,  
21 18, 6, 7 what was the number?

22 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah, there is 18  
23 contract employees that are employed... [interpose]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: You were at  
25 six.

2 THOMAS GALANTE: ...in the libraries.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And I just,  
4 I'm trying to follow you very hard here because you  
5 were at 20 reluctant.

6 THOMAS GALANTE: Tomorrow it might be 20  
7 or it might be 16. I can just tell you that at  
8 right now it's 18 contract employees and 72 full  
9 time custodians.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay, it was  
11 six five minutes ago so, maybe five minutes ago  
12 your salary was half or a third as well, oh, maybe  
13 not. Let me ask you, I'm trying to follow the  
14 timing on page three of your testimony. It looks  
15 like you attritted out 20 custodial employees and  
16 at the same time you made a management decision not  
17 to fill those positions but instead with the  
18 current staff because there were pay freezes, you  
19 made a management decision to move them into  
20 different titles so that they would be paid more  
21 money and at the same time contract out those 20  
22 FTE custodial staff. Am I reading that testimony  
23 correctly on page three.

24 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah let me... No, not  
25 entirely really.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: No, because  
3 that's what it says.

4 THOMAS GALANTE: Would you like me to  
5 explain it?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Even though  
7 difficult decisions had to be made along the way  
8 one in particular is the use of contract cleaners.  
9 A challenge we face was keeping the same number of  
10 facilities open with 20 fewer custodial employees.  
11 And you said that in the same paragraph you said  
12 that no one lost their job so you didn't fire  
13 anyone. That tells me they were attrited out yes?

14 THOMAS GALANTE: Correct.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay, so then  
16 you had to get the work done so you contracted out.  
17 Plus you had more work to be done because in the  
18 answer to a question to Councilman Van Bramer you  
19 said you had a larger library in Elmhurst so you  
20 had more work to be done. So you chose, as a  
21 management decision...

22 THOMAS GALANTE: Made a decision.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: You made a  
24 decision...

25 THOMAS GALANTE: Made a decision.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...making 400  
3 thousand dollars a year, you made a decision...

4 [crosstalk]

5 THOMAS GALANTE: I made a decision that  
6 implement a hire...

7 [crosstalk]

8 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...that you're  
9 not going to fill those union jobs with union  
10 workers who could possibly, possibly at 35 dollars  
11 an hour possibly send half of their child to  
12 college and instead contract out the service and  
13 pay someone 15 dollars an hour where there's no way  
14 that family could send their kids to college but  
15 possibly get financial aid through the federal  
16 government, our taxpayer dollars to go to college.  
17 Well, what are you telling me.

18 THOMAS GALANTE: I'm telling you that we  
19 made a management decision to go into a hiring  
20 freeze... [interpose]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Hiring  
22 freeze?

23 THOMAS GALANTE: ...2008.  
24  
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Hiring freeze  
3 but not a job position freeze right? You said that  
4 you gave...

5 THOMAS GALANTE: I can, I mean it's in  
6 the testimony.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...516 people  
8 title changes who deserved but 516 of your 1600  
9 employees got title changes up right? Salary  
10 freeze... [crosstalk] just trying to understand your  
11 400... [crosstalk, interpose]

12 THOMAS GALANTE: Well, would you let me...  
13 [crosstalk, interpose]

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...thousand  
15 dollar a year managerial... [crosstalk, interpose]

16 THOMAS GALANTE: ...would you like me to  
17 answer your question... [crosstalk, interpose]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah,  
19 waiting.

20 THOMAS GALANTE: Okay. We went into a  
21 hiring freeze because we started off getting a  
22 three million dollar budget cut and every six  
23 months we got a two or three million dollar cut...  
24 [interpose]



2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Let me tell  
3 you as...

4 THOMAS GALANTE: ...And as the cut...

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: the mayor of  
6 the city of New York who makes 200 thousand dollars  
7 a year, he had to deal with billions of dollars of  
8 shortfalls. You manage. That's the money...

9 THOMAS GALANTE: ...and they went into a  
10 hiring freeze too I believe.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: And you make  
12 decisions. That's your job right? So keep going. So  
13 you were managing the loss of money... [crosstalk]

14 THOMAS GALANTE: So we went into a  
15 hiring freeze and... [interpose]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...and you  
17 chose to increase pay for 516 workers. Go ahead.

18 THOMAS GALANTE: ...and as the hiring  
19 freeze continued we decided not to promote, we  
20 decided to promote from within instead of hiring  
21 externally. As a result our workforce who are here  
22 somewhat too...

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Do they make  
24 400 thousand dollars a year?

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Council Member  
3 Rosenthal if you could wrap up your questioning.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Sure. Sorry...

5 THOMAS GALANTE: They...

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...keep going.

7 THOMAS GALANTE: ...we have a librarian  
8 here, two librarians I just saw now and they're  
9 good people. I went to school with one of them.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yep, my dad  
11 was a librarian. He didn't make 400 thousand  
12 dollars a year and he ran the system, a college  
13 system. I'm really disappointed in your lack of  
14 understanding of why you're making these decisions.  
15 I'm really disappointed in your lack of ability to  
16 give me a rational for why you tossed 20 families  
17 who could have had good prevailing wage jobs and  
18 you didn't replace those jobs with union employees.  
19 And that tells me that there are 20 families out  
20 there whose kids aren't going to college.

21 THOMAS GALANTE: I respect...

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you  
23 very much.

24 THOMAS GALANTE: ...respect your opinion.  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Council  
3 Member Rosenthal. Council Member Cumbo.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you Madam  
5 Chair. Thank you very much for your testimony here  
6 today.

7 THOMAS GALANTE: Thank you.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: This is a very  
9 challenging day for me in this way because I have  
10 also run a not-for-profit organization and feel a  
11 certain kinship of course with the library system.  
12 So I think from the testimony today as well as a  
13 lot of the questions that were brought up, it seems  
14 to me that these are more systemic issues or these  
15 are broader issues than what's happening in terms  
16 of the testimony and the questions here today. It's  
17 part of a much larger issue than what's happening  
18 at this particular time. And I, I guess the  
19 challenge that I face is that through this  
20 testimony what you're describing here today are  
21 practices that are kept throughout the entire New  
22 York City area by many not-for-profit organizations  
23 as well as the library system as well. And so the  
24 challenges that because of how this was reported  
25 that you're going to be singled out in this way.

2 One of the challenges that I noted is that in the  
 3 not-for-profit field that I feel it's something  
 4 that we have to address in our world is that  
 5 because of the vast difference between capital  
 6 investment on the city as well as the amount of  
 7 investment on the expense side that many  
 8 organizations such as yours and throughout New York  
 9 City utilize capital expenditures or projects in  
 10 order to attract expense dollars, in order to  
 11 attract...

12 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: ...private dollars  
 14 and private donations. And these sorts of things  
 15 have created a system that is in some ways  
 16 spiraling out of control because we're constantly  
 17 trying to keep up with the pace of capital  
 18 expenditures and the only way we can do that is by  
 19 expanding that base of capital projects so that we  
 20 can attract private dollars. And it seems in some  
 21 ways that that might perhaps be somewhere and where  
 22 you found yourself but also many other people as  
 23 well. I also understand as a, a not-for-profit  
 24 leader my salary as a not-for-profit leader was  
 25 under 50 thousand dollars for an institution that I

2 ran for many years. The challenge with that is that  
3 my institution is nowhere near as comparable as  
4 yours but when I would hear about the salary ranges  
5 of not-for-profit leaders that far exceeded  
6 hundreds of thousands of dollars in that way I had  
7 to put on another hat in that way in the sense that  
8 many not-for-profit leaders also talked about what  
9 you talked about in the sense of having to attract  
10 the very best and to secure them. One of the things  
11 that was brought to my attention was that when  
12 you're making 50 thousand dollars you are locked  
13 out of the ability to attract donors to you. You  
14 are locked out of the rooms where five and ten  
15 thousand dollar dinners are happening. You're  
16 locked out of the golf clubs, you're locked out of  
17 the travel trips, you're locked out of the  
18 conferences, you're locked out of the ability to  
19 attract private dollars to your institution. And so  
20 I understand in some ways why those salaries are  
21 where they are at but I would also say at the same  
22 time, I would say that we as a council when we are  
23 giving resources at the, the dollar amount that  
24 it's up to us in our prudence to make sure that  
25 these salary levels are not exceeding what the

2 public should feel comfortable with in terms of how  
 3 we're spending our dollars. For me the only  
 4 challenge that I have with this is that while there  
 5 were so many budget layoffs and while there were so  
 6 many cuts and furloughs my question or two in that  
 7 during this same time I believe Council Member  
 8 Crowley alluded to it. But during the same time I  
 9 believe that an executive director president should  
 10 be exploratory in their services. If we're all  
 11 speaking a budget crunch we should all feel that  
 12 budget crunch. And what I wanted to know is during  
 13 this particular time that these issues in terms of  
 14 finance challenges were happening did your  
 15 executive staff at the same time that we're asking  
 16 our staff to tighten their budgets, experience  
 17 furloughs and experience layoffs did your executive  
 18 staff at the same time also take on that as an  
 19 exemplary demonstration of we're all in this  
 20 together.

21 THOMAS GALANTE: Yep.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: And I think that  
 23 that would be very important. And if it didn't  
 24 happen I think that's what the public also needs to  
 25 see and understand moving forward that when we're

2 all experiencing budget tightening we all have to  
3 experience it together. The other challenge is with  
4 hurricane Sandy. Now I understand and reporting can  
5 happen in, in certain kinds of ways, the renovation  
6 of the executive offices which I understand. I  
7 understand that you have to have a functioning  
8 place where people are able to work and there  
9 aren't leaks and those sorts of things. But the  
10 capital, and I understand that capital projects  
11 happen over a long period of time. What I want to  
12 know from myself is did the capital expansion idea,  
13 the concept for this happen prior to hurricane  
14 Sandy hitting, and having that, that negative  
15 impact on those libraries. Did the planning for  
16 those executive renovations, did those happen prior  
17 to what happened with hurricane Sandy? So those two  
18 questions, thank you.

19 THOMAS GALANTE: Yes, before hurricane  
20 Sandy, it's part of the overall central library  
21 modernization plan. And I'm sorry your second  
22 question?

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: My second  
24 question, or the first one rather...

25 THOMAS GALANTE: Oh, the raises. Yeah.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Mm-hmm.

3 THOMAS GALANTE: During the downturn we  
4 reduced management, senior management by 30 percent  
5 okay. So we did, we had reductions enforced that  
6 were done in a number of areas for us to economize.  
7 So in those numbers that you see involves a number  
8 of decisions for nonunion employees to bring that  
9 down. There were no pay increases in general but we  
10 had a lot of restructurings that we did really  
11 quite frankly as a result of the downsizing that  
12 still are here today. And I'd like to thank you  
13 know, the one thing that really helped change the  
14 picture for us, you know I mentioned the budget  
15 cuts that we've been through. And everyone's been  
16 through tough times right, library included. The  
17 one thing that libraries and cultures had looming  
18 in front of them with every budget was the lack of  
19 base lining. And those in the council I think  
20 understand that. When you're running an  
21 organization you have the responsibilities of the  
22 organization on your shoulders and you have a  
23 budget cut occur and you know they, two to three  
24 million every six months. But when, each time that  
25 the council came through and restored 25 million or



30 million in our budget, you know 30 some percent, it wasn't included in the city's financial plan for the year after. So I would have, like the council would come through, I'd get the phone call, we got 23 million restored of 25 and it was a day to celebrate no layoffs and so forth. But I also knew 365 days out I'm facing a 25 million dollar cut. So in November, when the November plan was done and the prior mayor base lined library funding which hadn't been done in years because they continued not to baseline. But when they decided to baseline that changed our perspective on lots of things here. And that's why I can talk today about the possibility of reducing contract cleaning because the world changed from that day forward for us that I did not have a 30 percent funding reduction looming in front of me every single day. And it also gives the council an opportunity when budgets come along for this May/June the council's always stuck up for the libraries in a big way. It gives an opportunity for maybe funding to start to be restored back that we had lost which would mean hiring back workers, looking at the, on all these different things. And I, I come from an experience

2 of being through that cycle three times before  
3 downturn, upturn, when Speaker Quinn, when she  
4 became speaker in 2007 we had a work force of 106,  
5 we had 165 people that we hired in a matter of four  
6 months to re-bring back six day service. We're  
7 already doing strategic planning so in the event we  
8 get a great phone call this year or next we could  
9 implement that quickly for the council. So...

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Just wanted to  
11 add that I think it's important to note for the  
12 public that with capital construction projects it's  
13 not that if you're undertaking one capital project  
14 that you can switch midstream in order to do  
15 another...

16 THOMAS GALANTE: Right.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: ...capital project  
18 that might be a more pressing need. And so I feel  
19 that the danger in what's happened here is that  
20 there's been given an impression that you have  
21 taken capital dollars and you have utilized them  
22 for something that was not timely.

23 THOMAS GALANTE: Yep.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Whereas the truth  
25 is that these capital projects take a great deal of

2 time and that it takes a lot of time to implement  
3 and that this was not prioritized over the  
4 restoration...

5 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: ...and the  
7 restoring of libraries that were damaged through  
8 hurricane Sandy. Thank you.

9 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah we...

10 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you  
11 Council...

12 THOMAS GALANTE: Yep.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: ...Member Cumbo and  
14 because of time I jut to want inform the finance  
15 staff that our briefing that we were going to be  
16 having after this hearing is going to be  
17 rescheduled so that we have more time to, both for  
18 the briefing and to finish up this Committee  
19 hearing. I'd like to follow up, we're going to be  
20 starting our second round, so if anybody has second  
21 round questions. So I know that you said that, the,  
22 the earth change and everything changed when the  
23 mayor base lined. We have a new mayor. This mayor  
24 base lined on his way out.

25 THOMAS GALANTE: I've heard about it.

2 CHAIRPERSON FERREARS: We have a new  
3 mayor with very tough budget constraints.

4 THOMAS GALANTE: Yep.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So, does the  
6 world change again in two months? So how, how much  
7 did it change in, in the fact that you may have to  
8 face the same things you were facing in October  
9 that you thought were resolved in November but you  
10 may have to face it again in June.

11 THOMAS GALNTE: Yep, I think that's a  
12 great question. The world changed in a big way  
13 that, the way the struck... the, the, the looming 30  
14 million dollar cut that we had up, right up through  
15 November was based on six years of city pegs that  
16 kept accumulating and accumulating through those  
17 down times. For everyone's perspective you know  
18 back in like say five years ago we might, we had a  
19 budget cut I think proposed of 11 million. Then  
20 the, because the city had to look, do across the  
21 board cuts during the year and nothing was base  
22 lined it became 16. And then the year after because  
23 the city had to do across the board cuts to all  
24 agencies, the 16 for the year after became 21 and  
25 it kept growing and growing. The point I want to

2 make is by it being base lined. Even if the mayor  
 3 has to do a citywide peg of let's say four percent,  
 4 or five percent, or six. It's still four million,  
 5 it's not 30. And we're not in a position when we  
 6 have worry about risk of laying off 400 people with  
 7 let's say with a 30 million dollar cut you see. So  
 8 I also feel like libraries, the politics in the  
 9 city and the priorities in the city when it comes  
 10 to universal Pre-K, when it comes to early  
 11 childhood education. And all the priorities I hear  
 12 and see... this progressive, of the progressive  
 13 members of the council are so aligned in the focus  
 14 on Community and services directly into the  
 15 community. I feel really strongly that the more the  
 16 city sees libraries as this partner that can  
 17 execute strategy for you directly in the  
 18 communities when it comes to education whether it's  
 19 for seniors, after school programs, I think  
 20 libraries are positioned to really effectively  
 21 carry out these goals.

22 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Right.

23 THOMAS GALANTE: So I...

24

25

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: I just, I'm just  
3 hoping that we can keep the Queens Library out of  
4 the newspaper because as we have...

5 THOMAS GALANTE: I...

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: ...as we have this  
7 progressive agenda and as we have, we're working  
8 really hard we also have to go through budget  
9 negotiations and conversations. So that's why this  
10 hearing is important because I wanted to give you  
11 the opportunity...

12 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah.

13 CHAIRPERSON FERREAS: ...as my co-chairs  
14 and every member that has stayed throughout this  
15 hearing so that we can hash this out.

16 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah.

17 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: But understand  
18 that these moments make everything more complicated  
19 for us all.

20 THOMAS GALANTE: Right.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Because we have  
22 constituents to respond to, we have budget  
23 negotiating teams to respond to, and delegations to  
24 speak at. So I just wanted to talk about briefly, I  
25 know that you were saying, we were talking about

2 your salary and compensation. I just wanted to  
3 follow up. How long is your contract?

4 THOMAS GALANTE: It's a five year  
5 contract.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And your five  
7 year contract is revisited automatically every five  
8 years?

9 THOMAS GALANTE: It's, it's revisited  
10 really every year that the board does my  
11 performance review.

12 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay, and is  
13 there an automatic pay increase?

14 THOMAS GALANTE: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And what is your  
16 increase.

17 THOMAS GALANTE: It's tied to the same  
18 principle that whatever the average increase for  
19 other people in my position in the city is what I  
20 get each year.

21 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So it's not part  
22 of your contract to increase?

23 THOMAS GALANTE: No it's part, in the  
24 contract it... [interpose]

25 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Right.

2 THOMAS GALANTE: ...has that I will  
3 continue to be kept at the average through an  
4 annual adjustment based on whatever the averages  
5 are for everyone else.

6 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So there's a,  
7 every year there's a, an assessment that's done on  
8 what the increase is that year. There's no  
9 percentage, an automatic... [interpose]

10 THOMAS GALANTE: Correct.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: ...percentage?

12 THOMAS GALANTE: Correct. There's no  
13 automatic percentage. It's based on what happens in  
14 the rest of the world.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay, very good.  
16 We're going to open up to the second round Public  
17 Advocate James and then Council Member Ulrich.

18 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Thank you Madam  
19 Chair. Mr. Galante you stated earlier that your  
20 compensation package should be compared to not-for-  
21 profits throughout the city of New York and that it  
22 was, and your salary was comparable is...

23 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah I've said that.  
24 That's how, that was the decision that was made by  
25 the board was to pay it to that level.



2 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: And I really  
3 don't want to single you out but unfortunately  
4 you're the poster child for what I would argue is  
5 excessive executive pay. When you look at Chicago's  
6 public library their executive director, their  
7 salary is 191 thousand dollars. When you look at  
8 Los Angeles' public library their executive  
9 director is 290 thousand. Unfortunately in the city  
10 of New York your salary as was indicated as 446,  
11 the borough of Brooklyn is 333 and in New York  
12 Public Library it was 711, there's some indication  
13 that it might have been reduced but then there's  
14 some who argue that it really has kept, it's  
15 remained at 711. It's also important to note that  
16 the Queens Borough President, the Queens Borough,  
17 Borough Public Library, the percentage of public  
18 funds that goes to your budget is not as was  
19 indicated 80 something percent, it's in fact 98.7  
20 percent, 98.7.

21 THOMAS GALANTE: No, we should talk to  
22 you and... [crosstalk, interpose]

23 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: Okay, that's  
24 what was given to me and if, if I'm mistaken then  
25 please correct me. I was, I was provided

2 information based on fiscal year 2012 that the  
3 percentage of public funds is 98.7 percent. If I am  
4 mistaken please correct me.

5 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah we'll, yeah we'll...

6 PUBLIC ADVOCATE JAMES: I also,  
7 according to this document, in the Brooklyn Public  
8 Library the percentage of public money is 98.5  
9 percent. Again that president makes 333 and I'm  
10 also dismayed at the fact that the Brooklyn Public  
11 Library has proposed to close some libraries in  
12 fact sell them off for some luxury condos in, in  
13 New York. The percentage of public funds is 91  
14 percent. I think what you're hearing, you spoke a  
15 little bit about politics and the politics that  
16 you're hearing amongst members is really consistent  
17 with a progressive agenda, agenda which really,  
18 which really I think speaks to values that suggest  
19 that executive pay should be comparable to middle  
20 management pay and/or it should be tied to rank and  
21 file and that it should not be disproportionate.  
22 And clearly based on the salary, that salaries that  
23 have been reviewed today, your salary would suggest  
24 to some members here including myself s  
25 disproportionate and therefore excessive. And

2 should be aligned with the salaries of that of the  
3 Chicago Public Library as well as Los Angeles. That  
4 being said, that's really a statement and not a  
5 question. So my, we're moving forward, we're not  
6 looking backwards. We have a new mayor in the city  
7 of New York. It appears that the board should be  
8 right reconstituted and it should be reconstituted  
9 as well as, I would argue from the office of public  
10 advocate and lead controller. Not, ex office with  
11 not a, with not a vote but as a full-fledged member  
12 of the board. And I know that a number of members  
13 has, who have already indicated to me and emailed  
14 to me during this hearing are putting it, putting  
15 in legislative request. Two, it, I would argue that  
16 similar to members of the city council and elected  
17 officials we submit conflict of interest boards  
18 which highlights whether or not we have outside  
19 income. We public, publically disclose all of our  
20 income. I was in the newspaper recently because  
21 unfortunately I did not estate some rental income  
22 during a campaign. I corrected that and included  
23 that. Again, transparency and openness. And I  
24 believe that in fact if there is any outside income  
25 that you in fact receive, it should be disclosed to

2 tax payers. So I just think that you know moving  
 3 forward the mayor of the city of New York obviously  
 4 shoulda[phonetic] really appoint individuals  
 5 obviously who are concerned about growing  
 6 disparities and obviously who reflect this  
 7 progressive agenda which is reflected through the  
 8 comments that were here today. And lastly let me  
 9 just say that you talked about in order to get all  
 10 your smart and efficient people who you know it  
 11 requires paying them a salary of 446 thousand  
 12 dollars. And let me just close by saying that I  
 13 know a lot of smart and efficient people who get  
 14 paid a lot less. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you Madam  
 16 Public Advocate. Council Member Ulrich followed by  
 17 Council Member Rosenthal.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Thank you Chair.  
 19 I, I want to follow up. I realize I was restrained  
 20 by time before. And I made a statement at the end  
 21 and I really didn't give you a chance to respond. I  
 22 said that we have a lot of work to do to restore  
 23 the public's confidence and, and the public library  
 24 system. And I guess the follow up to that so that  
 25 you respond to that statement and provide your own

2 answer is what steps are you prepared to take,  
 3 maybe you or the board collectively to restore the  
 4 public's trust in the public library system. What  
 5 specific steps are you prepared to take so that we  
 6 do not have to answer those concerns that our  
 7 constituents have when they read stories in the  
 8 daily news.

9 THOMAS GALANTE: For sure. Today was a  
 10 first big step with having this hearing so that we  
 11 could be transparent, answer all these questions  
 12 and put together the testimony right? We will be  
 13 getting this testimony as whether, as well as other  
 14 facts out into the community, posted on the  
 15 website. What we've done for the last I guess five  
 16 days now nonstop throughout the weekend you name it  
 17 is putting together information sheets and  
 18 compiling information for all of you so that we  
 19 covered each topic. I know I have folks here taking  
 20 notes as well of questions that have come up. So  
 21 we're going to make sure that we get that out.  
 22 We're in the business of information and we're  
 23 pretty good at getting it out you know. So we will,  
 24 we'll make sure we do that.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: So, so hopefully  
3 you will be able to report back to this committee  
4 perhaps during the budget hearings of specific  
5 steps that you and the board of trustees agreed  
6 upon to increase transparency in terms of the  
7 management of the library, the decision making at  
8 the Queens Public Library, the budget, the internal  
9 budget of the Queens Public Library. Perhaps you  
10 might be able to report back to the Finance  
11 Committee, and the Library Committee, and  
12 subcommittee of what specific steps you will take  
13 to implement that process. I'm hoping that that...  
14 [interpose]

15 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah sure we would have  
16 no problem doing that.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Okay, and then,  
18 and then as a secondary to that what steps do you  
19 plan to take to restore our trust in your ability  
20 to serve the public. And, and why I ask that  
21 question is, is based upon my experience here over  
22 the past five years serving on budget negotiating  
23 team, remembering you coming to the council members  
24 in the Queens delegation asking for a bail out and  
25 full restoration. We gave you full restoration and

2 a million dollars more specifically so that you  
 3 wouldn't have to reduce library hours and lay off  
 4 employees and a month before Christmas people get  
 5 the pink slips. That was two fiscal years ago. So  
 6 that was an experience that I personally never  
 7 forgot. I know that certainly the people who were  
 8 laid off never forgot that. But moving forward you  
 9 will come before this council and ask for money  
 10 again. What can you do to assure us that we can  
 11 trust you and trust the board of trustees and all  
 12 the people running the Queens Library, to run it  
 13 efficiently and honestly?

14 THOMAS GALANTE: Just to get to the  
 15 point on the reductions. We had a midyear, you know  
 16 at, for the 2009 adopted we have three million  
 17 dollar cut, 2010 a five million dollar cut, 2011  
 18 three million, 2012 two million, 2013 two million,  
 19 and then midyear we got hit with between one and  
 20 three million dollar cuts mid-year on a top of  
 21 that. So we did not have any year where there was  
 22 increase in funding to the library, went down by  
 23 multi millions.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: That is  
 25 inaccurate, you are in error there and I would ask

2 the finance division to take a look at that. Maybe  
3 perhaps you're factoring in pag cuts or, or other  
4 considerations but I know for a fact that you came  
5 to us with a magic number and a doomsday plan and  
6 you showed us a sheet of paper saying that if we  
7 did not restore that amount of money that there  
8 would be layoffs, there would be library reduction  
9 and, and service hours. We restored that money and  
10 actually gave you more money than you asked for and  
11 people still lost their jobs. [crosstalk] I will  
12 stand corrected and I... [interpose]

13 THOMAS GALANTE: ...okay...

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: ...I would like  
15 the finance division to do that.

16 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: But, but I would  
18 like you to answer the questions.

19 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah, in restoring the  
20 trust right? [crosstalk]

21 COUCIL MEMBER ULRICH: ...restore the, not  
22 only the public's trust but restore...

23 THOMAS GALANTE: ...the council.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: ...the council's.

25 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah, for sure.



2 COUNCIL MEMBER ULRICH: Thank you.

3 THOMAS GALANTE: I think, I'd like to  
4 think we're starting that today, having an open  
5 dialogue. We have people here today who feel that  
6 salaries is something that should be part of that  
7 dialogue. I believe we should be talking about  
8 libraries and I think we should be talking about  
9 expanding library services, growing them, or being  
10 as best we can with the funding that we do have. I  
11 think that I've been forthcoming and open and  
12 answered every question that you've had truthfully  
13 and to the best of my ability. I've worked for the  
14 library a long time and there's a number of people  
15 here I've known for years, some folks I've known  
16 for 27 years you know. And I think the people that  
17 know me understand I'm a straight shooter. And I'm  
18 always pushing the bar for the library to be better  
19 year after year. I think that we deliver, I really  
20 think we do. I mean we get hampered sometimes when  
21 it comes to city funding and city capital projects,  
22 it does have a autocracy to go through, through the  
23 city that we're all well aware of but we work hard  
24 so does DDC and others to try and carry it out. So  
25 I, I really, to be honest with yah, I think we can

2 stand really on our record of you know when, like  
 3 take hurricane Sandy. When that storm hit we were  
 4 down there in full force. We won all kinds of  
 5 awards for the great work we did to help the folks  
 6 in the rockaways, we raised two million dollars of  
 7 private funding that's currently delivering  
 8 programs down there. A 1.4 million dollar grab from  
 9 the state so when it comes to trust Eric I think  
 10 the best way to put it is we will continue to do  
 11 our very best to deliver for the people of this  
 12 borough and the people that use our libraries and  
 13 to deliver for you. I can't control what's written  
 14 in the press but what I can do is tell you straight  
 15 up every time I see you or in hearings what's the  
 16 real deal, what we're doing and we will continue to  
 17 work hard to rebuild that trust too.

18 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you  
 19 Councilman Ulrich. Councilman, Council Member  
 20 Rosenthal.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Just three  
 22 quick follow up questions of fact. Councilwoman  
 23 Ferreras asked, you have a five year contract. Did  
 24 you say when it's due?  
 25

2 THOMAS GALANTE: It's a five year  
3 contract that is evaluated each year by the board.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I'm waiting  
5 for the answer to my question. What year did it  
6 start?

7 THOMAS GALANTE: It started in 2005 and  
8 it's been extended... [interpose]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So let's do  
10 the math together. So 2005, then it was renewed in  
11 2010?

12 [crosstalk]

13 THOMAS GALANTE: I don't know the dates  
14 off hand... [interpose]

15 [crosstalk]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So then  
17 hypothetically... [interpose]

18 [crosstalk]

19 THOMAS GALANTE: ...but I can tell you...  
20 [interpose]

21 [crosstalk]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...it would be  
23 renewed in 2015? You don't know?

24 THOMAS GALANTE: No, I didn't bring my  
25 contract renewal dates with me but I can tell you

2 that roughly, so I just don't want to be, said that  
3 I said something inaccurate and be set up for that  
4 quite frankly... [interpose]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I don't know  
6 the answer, I'm not tricking you... [interpose]

7 [crosstalk]

8 THOMAS GALANTE: So I'm giving you a  
9 ballpark... [crosstalk, interpose] from memory,  
10 roughly every two to three years. Roughly you have  
11 a two year period at least that was the experience  
12 with the board the last time to do a nationwide  
13 search and to select someone. So basically when the  
14 contract has two or three years through it then it  
15 ends up being a discussion and renewed or not.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay, I'm so  
17 confused. I really thought you were just going to  
18 say 2015, 2017 so I'm getting this murky...

19 THOMAS GALANTE: As of right now, as of  
20 right now it is...

21 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...answer.

22 THOMAS GALANTE: ...2019. It's a five year  
23 contract.

24

25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So it just  
3 started? We're in 2000 what, 14? So it just  
4 started? Your...

5 THOMAS GALANTE: Five year contract.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...new  
7 contract? As of when? January? Or did it start in  
8 2013?

9 THOMAS GALANTE: The contract renew, has  
10 an automatic renewal component to it for a, over a  
11 five year period.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So it started  
13 when?

14 THOMAS GALANTE: It started in 2005, was  
15 extended two or three years later and every few  
16 years after that.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Could  
18 somebody please find out the answer to my question.

19 THOMAS GALANTE: Ask, ask it again then.  
20 What are you asking specifically and I will give  
21 you a specific answer.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: It's a five  
23 year contract.

24

25

2 THOMAS GALANTE: You asked me when it  
3 expired, it expires five years from now. That's a  
4 clear cut answer.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So five years  
6 from now, so another words it was renewed now?  
7 Yesterday? A month ago? Two months ago?

8 THOMAS GALANTE: The contract renews  
9 automatically on its own. I just answered that.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: In January?

11 THOMAS GALANTE: It renews..

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Give me a  
13 month and a year, that's what I'm asking.

14 THOMAS GALANTE: It renews on a regular  
15 basis.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: That's not a  
17 month or a year.

18 THOMAS GALANTE: I'm not sure where  
19 we're going here.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: I just want  
21 to know when the renewal is of your contract. And  
22 if I can repeat back what you're saying to me;  
23 you're saying that at some point in the last period  
24 of time it was renewed so that now it's next due in  
25 2019.

2 THOMAS GALANTE: Correct.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Which is five  
4 years from 2014.

5 THOMAS GALANTE: Correct.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Which  
7 hypothetically means it was renewed in January...

8 THOMAS GALANTE: It was just renewed.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...but you're  
10 not actually saying a month and a year.

11 THOMAS GALANTE: As I said it...

12 [interpose]

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: That was my  
14 first question. I'm sorry I...

15 THOMAS GALANTE: It has an automatic  
16 renewal.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...just didn't  
18 understand the question, the answer so if I could  
19 just ask my two other supposedly really...

20 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Council Member if  
21 you can just ask your two questions... [interpose]

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Yeah, yeah.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: ...and we'll allow...

24 THOMAS GALANTE: Automatic renewal.  
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay, what is  
3 the, I don't need to know the dollar amount, what  
4 is the source of your income in addition to your  
5 salary from the Queens Public Library.

6 THOMAS GALANTE: I'm not, I'm here for a  
7 hearing on the operations of the Queens Library.  
8 I'm not here for anything other than that.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Okay. And  
10 when do you plan to end the outsourcing for the  
11 janitorial services and higher back the 18 FTEs.

12 THOMAS GALANTE: We will not be hiring,  
13 I did not say we would be hiring back all 18. What  
14 I did say was we have six locations.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Sorry...

16 THOMAS GALANTE: I did not say we'd be  
17 hiring back all of the 18. I said that we have six  
18 locations that we will, over the next year, be able  
19 to phase that out and that in the event the economy  
20 continues to stay where it's at and then if things  
21 continue to get better then we will look at that  
22 for all of the contract cleaning. But I...

23 [interpose]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So and that's  
25 a...



2 THOMAS GALANTE: ...have to tell you that  
3 my allegiance, my allegiance is to the people of  
4 Queens to deliver the most services that we can  
5 deliver with a great work force. And I would like  
6 to have an entire work force be full time  
7 employees. It takes funding to do that and that's  
8 the reality of it.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: So 18 FTEs,  
10 those people, those contracted people are in six  
11 locations?

12 THOMAS GALANTE: No those 18 are in... 14?  
13 ...14 locations. We've been contract cleaning..  
14 [interpose]

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Is it  
16 appropriate...

17 THOMAS GALANTE: ...since at least 1991.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: ...for us to  
19 get a list of those 14 locations? Just curious.

20 THOMAS GALANTE: I don't know we'll ask,  
21 we'll check into it.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSENTHAL: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Yes, if you could  
24 just provide the 14 locations to the Committee I'd  
25 greatly appreciate it. So a little bit more than

2 just looking into it. And if you could just, I  
3 think, we are, anyone else have second round  
4 questions. Oh, Council Member Miller sorry and  
5 thank you.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: I have just a  
7 follow up to Council Member Rosenthal. In terms of  
8 dual employment are any of your employees required  
9 to submit information pertaining to dual  
10 employment?

11 THOMAS GALANTE: No, we have a, we allow  
12 our employees, our employees come into work and do  
13 their job and what they do when they're not at  
14 their job quite frankly we do not limit them, no.  
15 They can get a second job.

16 [crosstalk]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: That, that's for  
18 every employee of the Queens Library System?

19 THOMAS GALANTE: Pardon?

20 COUCNIL MEMBER MILLER: That pertains to  
21 every employee of the Queens Library System.

22 THOMAS GALANTE: Yes, every employee of  
23 the Queens Library. Yep.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MILLER: Okay.  
25

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Thank you. Mr.  
3 Galante can you just tell me what the book budget  
4 is?

5 THOMAS GALANTE: Oh, we just reported,  
6 it is... Off of here? What do you got? What's the  
7 total? Six mil, all sources combined? Right now  
8 it's six million dollars.

9 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Six million  
10 dollars and is that fully funded?

11 THOMAS GALANTE: No, it's, it used to be  
12 about 12 million dollars, our peak was 12 million  
13 and before the economy went bad it was 10 million.

14 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So at six million  
15 what are we, are we purchasing enough books for the  
16 entire system or, I mean it's half the budget...

17 THOMAS GALANTE: No, we could use... A  
18 reasonable measure that other libraries use is a  
19 robust materials budget, it's 20 percent of your  
20 operating budget which for us would mean over 20  
21 million. Now, to be honest we've never seen those  
22 days and our highest as I mention was 12 our, the  
23 peak, we were right around ten, we're down to six.  
24 There's virtually, I think city money is zero  
25 right, or just about zero. Yeah, city funding is

2 zero in the book budget because we wanted to make  
3 sure we preserved our work force and didn't have to  
4 lay off with the cuts.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: So currently, I  
6 know that in, some of our budget conversations in  
7 the past year you've talked about not being able to  
8 buy books in that particular fiscal year so...  
9 [crosstalk] ...where are we in that conversation.

10 THOMAS GALANTE: That was a stop get  
11 measure only. We had a, it was a 4.5, roughly four  
12 million plus midyear cut to us in, that was in the  
13 November, hit November maybe three years ago. And  
14 in fact it was through discussion with a trustee  
15 who said Tommy hey you know what our employees  
16 matter most, to heck with the books. We made a  
17 decision which was really different the more we all  
18 thought about it to say you know what we got to  
19 keep our people, keep our hours and not buy books  
20 for six months. We can always rebuy books. We have  
21 six million on the shelf you know but they're not  
22 being refreshed as much as we would like and we're  
23 not, we don't have as many copies as we'd like. So  
24 I guess the point is is that we need, to give you a  
25 sense of the mix the 16 million that we've lost.

2 We've generated a number of economies through this  
3 down time. And as that money comes back we'll be  
4 able to put large amounts of that back into the  
5 book budget if that funding is able to come along  
6 from state in various sources. And also hire back a  
7 work force to expand out our program in huge ways.  
8 The thing I feel really really good about is that  
9 during this downturn with all the capital invests  
10 that we've made to expand and renovate libraries  
11 and the self-service technology we've put into  
12 place. And all the grants we've been able to  
13 secure. We will definitely be bigger and better  
14 than we've ever been before and books included as  
15 part of that's, big, big component. Digital books  
16 as well I have to say with, you know with ebooks.  
17 What I think most people, I'll do it very shortly  
18 but people don't realize that ebooks comes along.  
19 People need this and need content in both formats  
20 not just one or the other. They like to read in  
21 print, they like to also grab digital. So it's  
22 something where we should be expanding book  
23 budgets, not contracting them so that people have  
24 the content in whatever format they need at any  
25 given time.

2 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay, and your  
3 fines and fees the, I know that you said that you  
4 have a separate account for that. Those monies are  
5 used for what exactly?

6 THOMAS GALANTE: Primarily for books,  
7 it's primarily books and programs that we offer.  
8 And also for staff trading and conference which is  
9 a small portion of that but for staff development  
10 and that's, that's it really right? Yeah that's it.

11 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay, I'm going  
12 to have my...

13 THOMAS GALANTE: Except for, I have to  
14 say you know I mean there's little things but...

15 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Mm-hmm.

16 THOMAS GALANTE: ...just for the record  
17 you know it's, but it, that's the gist of what it's  
18 used for.

19 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay.

20 THOMAS GALANTE: I know we pay our  
21 accounting firm out of there, I know we pay our  
22 collection agency out of there. But the point is,  
23 is that's the gist of where it's at.

24 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: Okay, we're going  
25 to have some other points to follow up with you on

2 and I'm waiting for the documents that you're going  
3 to be submitting to the committee. I'm going to  
4 actually pass this over to my co-chair and then  
5 we'll close it out. Co-Chair Van Bramer.

6 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: First of all thank  
7 you very much Chair Ferreras for leading this  
8 important hearing and I, I just want to say in  
9 closing, follow up on a couple of things Mr.  
10 Galante. One is that I believe that what came out  
11 of this hearing with regard to the contracting out  
12 of, of custodians is a commitment from you and I  
13 know you had a couple of different points on this  
14 throughout the hearing but that, but that you are  
15 committed assuming that the bottom doesn't fall out  
16 financial from the city to ending the, the  
17 contracting out of custodians. And that is the  
18 direction that we're moving to. And, and I would  
19 hope that, that you would come back to us you know  
20 with a plan for that ultimate change which I think  
21 is a good and necessary change...

22 THOMAS GALANTE: Right.

23 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: And, that is a  
24 commitment.  
25

2 THOMAS GALANTE: It's a commitment. It  
3 all comes down to funding. It is a commitment.

4 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: And the second is  
5 , Council Member Ulrich you know said a number of  
6 things and I think you know that I start from the  
7 place that the Queens Library is one of the best  
8 library systems in the country and that this  
9 hearing while difficult for, for you and your team  
10 here is an important piece of our oversight  
11 responsibilities and getting us to a better place.  
12 But it does not in any way diminish the importance  
13 of libraries and the amazing work that's done every  
14 single day at libraries. So if anything I hope  
15 coming out of this hearing there's a commitment to  
16 actually increasing funding for libraries and that  
17 we would, we would not in any way diminish support  
18 for libraries. That's my feeling and my commitment  
19 as obviously the chair of the Cultural Affairs and  
20 Libraries Committee but your piece in that that  
21 obviously is to be responsive to Council Member  
22 Ulrich's questioning in that there are concrete  
23 steps that you can take and...

24 THOMAS GALANTE: Mm-hmm.  
25



2 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: ...that senior  
3 management can take and come back to the committees  
4 in terms of what you've learned today. And maybe  
5 there are things that can be streamlined. Maybe  
6 there are improvements that can be made. The Queens  
7 Library is a great library system but it too can be  
8 made better. So I, I also want to get from you one  
9 last time affirmatively that that's your commitment  
10 to these committees to this body and, and that  
11 you're, you're, you're willing, ready, and able to  
12 take on that, that challenge. Because...

13 THOMAS GALANTE: 100 percent.

14 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: Which is great.  
15 Thank you. And that has, no one knows better than  
16 our finance chair obviously. The preliminary budget  
17 will be released on February 12<sup>th</sup>.

18 THOMAS GALANTE: We were wondering about  
19 that.

20 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: What's that?

21 THOMAS GALANTE: We were wondering about  
22 that, that it hadn't come out yeah.

23 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: Yeah, I hope I  
24 didn't just make news but I believe it's February  
25 12<sup>th</sup> and the preliminary budget will be released

2 and, and then we're going to go into budget  
3 negotiations.

4 THOMAS GALANTE: Yeah.

5 CO-CHAIR VAN BRAMER: And, and  
6 ultimately my goal, and all of our goals should be  
7 to have libraries open in every community six days  
8 a week and in as many communities as possible seven  
9 days a week. Because the reason that this committee  
10 meeting is so important is because libraries are so  
11 important. Because we talked a little bit about the  
12 progressive agenda and it's certainly a case that  
13 I'm going to make as the majority leader that there  
14 are few institutions that are as progressive as  
15 public libraries because public libraries are free  
16 and open to every single person who walks in that  
17 door regardless of income or immigration status or  
18 anything. Nothing is more progressive than a public  
19 library. So our, our obligation is to fight that  
20 fight and to take the lessons from this hearing,  
21 move forward and make sure that the Queens Library  
22 and all of our libraries are, are stronger. So I  
23 want to again, end where I began which is to thank  
24 you for the apology when it came to the janitorial  
25 staff and for the commitment to end that

2 outsourcing which I believe is a mistake and to,  
3 and to do the necessary work to make the Queens  
4 Library stronger.

5 CHAIRPERSON FERRERERAS: Thank you. Mr.  
6 Galante we just want to and I guess trustee members  
7 that are here we're going to be following up and  
8 digesting everything from this hearing. We will  
9 follow up with a letter both with recommendations  
10 and additional questions we'd like you respond to.  
11 For us to do that we'd also like to have the  
12 materials that were requested throughout the  
13 hearing for the committee so that we're able to  
14 better organize and get you that information as  
15 soon as possible. This was an oversight hearing and  
16 you know it was really about getting information  
17 and facts. And there's still some things that are  
18 pending that we will be following up on. So I thank  
19 you for coming to testify and thank all the  
20 committee members for sitting it out and asking  
21 your very poignant and important questions. And if  
22 you two have additional questions please be sure to  
23 get them to the Committee because we can follow up  
24 with the Queens Library System. Thank you very  
25 much.

2 THOMAS GALANTE: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON FERRERAS: And we'll call  
4 this hearing adjourned.

5 [gavel]

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date February 10, 2014