

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

JOINT COMMITTEE ON FINANCE, SENIOR CENTERS, AND AGING

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November 21, 2008

Start: 12:00 pm

Recess: 1:30 pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E:

LEWIS A. FIDLER
MARIA DEL CARMEN ARROYO
JAMES VACCA
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Gale A. Brewer
Vincent J. Gentile
Mathieu Eugene
Anthony Como
Melissa Mark-Viverito
Letitia James
Miguel Martinez
Rosie Mendez
G. Oliver Koppell
Robert Jackson
Diana Reyna
Vincent Ignizio
Inez E. Dickens
Simcha Felder

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

Edwin Mendez-Santiago

Commissioner

New York City Department for the Aging

Angeles Pai

Deputy Commissioner

New York City Department for the Aging

2 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: ...the room,
3 please. [Pause] Okay. This is a joint hearing
4 of the Committees on Finance and Aging and the
5 Subcommittee on Senior Centers. My name is Lew
6 Fidler, I'm the Assistant Majority Leader, I am
7 acting as Chairperson of Finance until Council
8 Member Weprin returns, hopefully shortly. I just
9 want to remind everybody that today's hearing is
10 not--does not include testimony from the public.
11 All testimony from the public will be heard on
12 Monday at 3 o'clock in these chambers. This
13 Committee also has to yield this room at about 1
14 o'clock to the Education Committee, so to those of
15 my colleagues who have questions, we are
16 instituting a two-question rule--that means two
17 questions, not two questions in 47 parts.
18 Obviously, we have a large group of people here
19 today, I want to ask you all not to applaud if you
20 like the comments or react, you know, in a verbal
21 way to anything that is said here. Obviously,
22 this is an issue of significant importance to the
23 City Council, to the people of the city of New,
24 York, that is one of the reasons why this room is
25 so full and, you know, the--I know emotions are

2 somewhat charged, but in order to be able to get
3 the testimony and the business done, we ask you
4 all to cooperate with us as fully as possible. I
5 want to turn the gavel over to Chairperson Arroyo
6 for an opening statement.

7 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you, Mr.
8 Co-Chair, it is a pleasure to co-chair this
9 hearing with you and my colleague, Council Member
10 Jimmy Vacca, who chairs the Subcommittee on Senior
11 Centers. Welcome to all of you and thank you all
12 for being here to hear testimony from the
13 Department for the Aging on the 2009 November
14 budget plan. I'd like to thank first the
15 committee staff for all of the work in preparing
16 for this hearing, Pakhi Sengupta, who is the
17 Finance Analyst for the committee, Kris Sartori
18 and Shauneequa Owusu, who is the Policy Analyst,
19 for the work that they do to make us all look very
20 smart. The Committee looks forward to hearing
21 testimony from DFTA about the several and very
22 problematic cuts proposed in the November 2009
23 fiscal plan released by the Mayor. This plan
24 includes elimination of some very critical
25 services in our communities and those services

2 include elder abuse programs, the Congregate
3 Service Initiative, the intergenerational
4 programs, adult day care, and some non-core social
5 services, and the total city funding cut of \$4
6 million in senior services. [Pause] As committee
7 chair and this Council has voiced both very
8 privately with the administration, and more
9 recently, very publicly, our concern about the
10 recent Senior Center RFP and the agency's move to
11 modernize senior services citywide at a time such
12 as the one that we are experiencing in our city
13 with regards to the fiscal conditions of our
14 residents and our overall budget, it is very
15 concerning that DFTA at a time such as this would
16 move forward to change the network of senior
17 services in our city. Troubling is the least of
18 the words that come to mind the number of vital
19 programs that would be affected by this plan and I
20 look forward to the Commissioner's testimony and
21 now I turn it over to my co-chair Council Member
22 James Vacca.

23 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Before we go to
24 Chairperson Vacca we've been--let me introduce the
25 Council Members who are here for this hearing. In

2 the front row we have Council Members James, Mark-
3 Viverito and Como, to my right, Council Member
4 Koppell and Council Member Jackson, and to my
5 left, Council Members Martinez and Reyna.
6 Chairman--Chairperson Vacca.

7 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Thank you, Chair
8 Fidler, Chair Arroyo. Unfortunately, today we
9 hear of cuts, we're not going to hear too much of
10 the cut that's going to be out there very, very
11 soon and that is, what's going to happen to our
12 senior citizen centers. What you may not hear
13 today is that there's an RFP out to run the senior
14 citizen centers that has taken away Council money
15 that we allocated in this Council for
16 transportation, for rent for senior centers, for
17 increased meal allowances for senior citizen
18 centers, our Health Aging Initiative money has all
19 been taken and put into the Senior Center RFP,
20 along with all the money that the borough
21 presidents have for aging programs. Even with all
22 this money taken without the Council's permission,
23 without the permission of the borough presidents,
24 lumped into one RFP, we still face the closure of
25 75 to 85 senior centers here in the city of New

2 York. They don't call this a budget cut, they
3 call this modernization. Modernization, ladies
4 and gentlemen, here means consolidation and that's
5 the bottom line and when, even after all this
6 money was taken, you cannot get an answer as to
7 whether or not our existing senior centers will
8 stay open, then we have a right to be mad and we
9 have a right to be concerned. Mega centers are
10 going to open, supposedly smaller centers then
11 will be closed. The Department for the Aging owes
12 us an explanation, this is an item highest on our
13 agenda and as Chair of the Subcommittee, I hope
14 that sense will prevail and that the RFP will be
15 withdrawn.

16 [Pause]

17 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Thank you,
18 Chairperson Vacca. We've been joined by Council
19 Members Ignizio and Gentile. And, Commissioner
20 Mendez-Santiago, I think Council Member Vacca has
21 thrown down the gauntlet and we pass it to you for
22 a response. Thank you.

23 [Pause]

24 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: ...and I am
25 the Commissioner for the New York City Department

for the Aging, joining me today is Deputy Commissioner Angeles Pai. First, let me thank Chair Arroyo, Vacca, and Fidler and the rest of the members of the Aging and Finance Committee for holding this hearing to discuss the November plan for 2009. Despite a challenging budget climate, the city's commitment to aging services remains strong. Individuals age 60 and older are the fastest-growing age cohort in the city and the population of city residents who are age 65 and older in 2030 is expected to be 44% greater than in the year 2000. As part of the All Ages Project announced earlier this year in partnership with the City Council, Mayor Bloomberg has charged each city agency with thoroughly examining their age-friendliness in order to ready themselves for this projected surge in the population of older New Yorkers. Based on the findings of these assessments, the Mayor's office is working with DFTA and other city agencies and the Council to develop an agenda of program and services for older adults that will enhance New York's position as an age-friendly and livable city. In keeping with our agency's mission to work for the

2 empowerment, independence, dignity, and quality-
3 of-life of New York City's older adults, DFTA
4 partners with community organizations to provide
5 essential core services. These core services--
6 case management, home delivered meals, and
7 congregate programs--are provided to thousands of
8 older adults throughout the diverse communities of
9 New York. Each day, approximately 17,000
10 homebound elderly receive a nutritious home
11 delivered meal that assist them in safely
12 maintaining their independence. Each year, over 8
13 million congregate meals are served at senior
14 centers to thousands of older New Yorkers. Last
15 year, DFTA-funded case managers provided
16 approximately 400,000 hours of service to older
17 adults to ensure that they receive all the
18 supports and benefits to which they are entitled.
19 In keeping with the Mayor's vision of enhancing
20 New York's position as an age-friendly city, DFTA
21 has spearheaded an ambitious agenda to modernize
22 its case management services, home delivered meals
23 programs, and senior centers to better meet the
24 challenging needs of our city's growing population
25 of older adults. Modernization began with the

2 redesign of the case management system. As of
3 July of this year, DFTA and 23 community
4 organizations that now provide case management
5 services successfully completed the transfer of
6 all case management clients. The redesign created
7 more clearly defined service areas to reduce
8 overlap and redundancy and build greater
9 accountability into the system. In addition, all
10 home delivered meal clients now benefit from a
11 comprehensive assessment to determine potential
12 eligibility for a myriad additional benefits and
13 entitlements. The Department is currently working
14 towards the transition of the home delivered meals
15 programs in order to promote greater meal choice
16 and delivery flexibility for clients, including a
17 greater focus on special dietary and culturally
18 appropriate meals. The rollout will begin in
19 January with the Bronx and Staten Island, followed
20 by Queens, Manhattan, and Brooklyn. The
21 transition will be completed by April 2009.

22 Lastly, as you are aware, the Department released
23 a request for proposal for senior centers earlier
24 this month. DFTA aims to create a consumer-
25 centered network of healthy aging centers where

2 seniors can enjoy an array of activities that
3 promote physical, social, and mental wellness.

4 Our commitment to these three core services allows
5 us to continue to provide a continuum of service
6 options to support older adults with different
7 abilities and needs ranging from those who are
8 healthy and leading active lives, to those who are
9 homebound and challenged by illness. As you are

10 aware, however, the city faces a \$4 billion
11 cumulative budget gap for fiscal 2009 and fiscal
12 2010. All city agencies, including DFTA, have
13 been called upon to make difficult choices by
14 adopting reductions, while at the same time
15 seeking to maintain the high quality of services
16 to which New Yorkers are accustomed. DFTA's
17 target for budget reductions in FY '09 is
18 \$3,975,000 and this will increase to \$6,543,000 in
19 fiscal '10, which represents a 2.5 reduction--a
20 2.5% reduction in city tax levy in '09 and a 5%
21 reduction in fiscal '10. But even in this
22 difficult budgetary climate, I am pleased that
23 none of the DFTA-funded senior centers in New York
24 City Housing Authority facilities will close due
25 to budget shortfalls. Moreover, I am pleased to

2 report that DFTA and NYCHA are working
3 collaboratively to develop a strategic plan for
4 the transition of senior services funded by NYCHA.
5 Reducing or eliminating programs is never easy.
6 We value and recognize the importance of our
7 programs which impact the lives of thousands of
8 older New Yorkers every day. In deciding where to
9 undertake reductions, DFTA engaged in a careful
10 strategic planning process to ensure that our
11 agency is able to continue to meet the needs of a
12 wide range of older New Yorkers through programs
13 and services that have the most far-reaching
14 positive affects in their lives. This planning
15 process resulted in a continued commitment to
16 sustain the agency's initiatives that serve the
17 greatest number of seniors--DFTA's three core
18 programs: home delivered meals, case management,
19 and senior centers. These core services comprise
20 almost 60% of the agency's budget and 60% of the
21 city tax levy portion to that budget. After a
22 careful examination of our limited portfolio of
23 city tax levy funded programs, we identified
24 programs other than our core services for
25 reduction that met the following criteria: first,

2 the number of clients served by the programs were
3 limited in scope and second, comparable services
4 are offered by other agencies and community-based
5 organizations. Accordingly, DFTA will no longer
6 fund the following programs: Social Adult Day Care
7 at \$2,360,000; Elder Abuse Prevention at \$850,000;
8 Intergenerational Programs at \$1 million; the
9 Congregate Services Initiative at \$200,000; and
10 some non-core social services at \$935,000. We
11 will also reduce supplemental city funding to the
12 federally funded Caregiver Support Program by
13 \$880,000. In choosing to preserve its core
14 services and implement reductions in other
15 programs, DFTA made a deliberate decision not to
16 implement across-the-board cuts because we believe
17 that this option would seriously threaten the
18 ability of our community partners to continue to
19 offer quality core services. For example, an
20 across-the-board cut could jeopardize our senior
21 centers' ability to remain open as cooling centers
22 during heat related emergencies in the summer.
23 This option could also result in a reduction of
24 the days or hours of operation of community senior
25 centers, which is not the appropriate direction

2 for our aging network. Also, we are well aware
3 that many DFTA-funded core programs will likely be
4 subject to cuts from the state or federal
5 government. Thus, in the midst of these
6 difficulties, I am confident our decision to
7 protect our core services from reduction at this
8 time. For each of the programs that are subject
9 to reduction, we are working to identify
10 appropriate alternative services for affected
11 clients and are in the process of developing
12 transition plans and protocols. DFTA will hold
13 cluster meetings with each of the program sponsors
14 to discuss which agencies will continue to operate
15 through other funding sources and, for those that
16 will not, we will determine close out procedures
17 that offer our assistance in redeployment of
18 staff. Social Adult Day Services, or SADS,
19 provide group and individual activities in day
20 care settings to physically and cognitively
21 impaired older adults. DFTA funded SAD programs
22 serve less than one quarter of 1% of older New
23 Yorkers. While the elimination of these services
24 is regrettable, we believe that these clients can
25 be served through other available options,

2 including state-funded SADS programs and the
3 Medicaid-funded and Medical Day Care and Homecare
4 programs, as well as a variety of private pay
5 options for those with the appropriate income.
6 While DFTA-funded Elder Abuse Programs provide
7 counseling and other assistance, these are not the
8 only programs supported by DFTA or other city
9 agencies that assist victims of elder abuse.
10 DFTA's in-house Elderly Crime Victims Resource
11 Center will continue to work with clients and link
12 them to appropriate resources. Additionally,
13 there are resources for victims of elder abuse at
14 other city agencies, such as the Mayor's Office on
15 Domestic Violence, which administers Family
16 Justice Centers in two boroughs. Services are
17 also available through community-based programs
18 funded by the Crimes Victim Board, as well as
19 through the New York Police Department, District
20 Attorney's offices, Safe Horizons, and various
21 court systems. And thanks to the leadership of
22 Council Member Vacca and the passage of Intro 737-
23 A, all aging service professionals will now
24 receive training in elder abuse issues and every
25 senior center will offer educational programs

2 regarding elder abuse. In addition, opportunities
3 for youth and older adults to interact will
4 continue to exist after the proposed reductions to
5 DFTA's intergenerational programs. Throughout the
6 city of New York, intergenerational programs are
7 available through the Department of Education, the
8 Department of Youth and Community Development, and
9 community-based organizations. Further, the RFP
10 for senior centers that was released by DFTA
11 earlier this month presents an opportunity to
12 transform the delivery of congregate services. As
13 you know, the anticipated growth in the senior
14 population has been marked by changing needs.
15 Today's older adults are living healthier,
16 independent, and active lifestyles. National
17 research on senior centers has shown that the
18 expectations of older adults with regards to
19 customer service, programs, and activities differs
20 greatly from seniors just a generation ago. There
21 is a growing movement across the country to
22 modernize senior centers around a mission of
23 promoting health and wellness and consequently
24 making senior centers more attractive to older
25 adults from a broad range of ages from those just

2 recently turned 60 to those above age 80. The RFP
3 for senior centers is designed to achieve these
4 goals. In addition to expanded health and
5 wellness activities, the modernization of
6 congregate services provides us with an
7 opportunity to create a more inclusive environment
8 in senior centers. For example, older adults with
9 physical or cognitive impairments should be
10 welcomed into senior center activities rather than
11 segregated into stand-alone social adult programs.
12 We also encouraged that the inclusion of--we also
13 encourage the inclusion of intergenerational
14 activities and programs for the caregivers of
15 older adults in senior center programming.
16 Despite these difficult fiscal times, I am
17 confident that we can continue to work together to
18 provide quality programs for our city's older
19 population within the confines of the budget.
20 Doing so requires creativity, innovation, and a
21 willingness to change and I look forward to
22 partnering with you in this endeavor and I now
23 welcome your questions.

24 [Pause]

25 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Commissioner,

2 before someone sitting in that seat takes a verbal
3 beating, I usually start with an expression of
4 love and so I want to--I do want to say to you
5 that I have, during my seven years on the Council,
6 have appreciated both yours and your agency's
7 support for the senior programs throughout my
8 district and I do think that over that time you've
9 done a terrific job. But I do want to, you know,
10 say this that, you know, in talking in the last
11 few days about the Mayor's ill-advised decision to
12 withhold the \$400 property tax rebate checks, I
13 referred to hypothetical Mrs. Goldstein in my
14 district or Mrs. Goulston [phonetic], it really
15 doesn't matter, a 72-year-old some odd constituent
16 who's living on Social Security and, you know, my
17 feeling that the administration has been somewhat
18 insensitive to those people. And I think, you
19 know, with age comes some perquisites and one of
20 them is the right to be a little bit cynical and
21 resistant to change that's being forced upon
22 people. Your testimony went very, very lightly
23 over the RFP issue and all of the other things
24 that you talked about have to be taken within the
25 context of the RFP and what it's going to do to

2 the lives of Mrs. Goldstein and Mrs. Goulston
3 because they have a right to know that they are
4 going to have a local program that they are
5 comfortable with and are used to that they can
6 continue to go to. And so I guess I would ask
7 you, before I turn it over to Chairperson Arroyo,
8 to just speak for a moment with a little bit more
9 specificity. Can you guarantee the people sitting
10 in this room, to Mrs. Goldstein and Mrs. Goulston,
11 that their senior centers will not close at the
12 end of this RFP process and that modernization
13 does not in fact mean a consolidation of senior
14 centers?

15 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: What I can
16 guarantee Mrs. Goldstein and all the other older
17 New Yorkers who currently visit our senior centers
18 is that the RFP's intention is to continue to
19 enhance and improve senior centers. I've had this
20 debate, sir, with Council Member Vacca over the
21 past few years, when you ask me for a guarantee,
22 since this is a Request For Proposal, I can't
23 guarantee who the winners and losers will be.
24 What I can guarantee is that our intention in
25 putting out this RFP is not to close senior

2 centers, but to enhance them. We've worked
3 collaboratively with our community partners,
4 seniors, and the City Council over the last two
5 years in being able to develop in the RFP a
6 methodology that allows for a competitive playing
7 field for senior centers that are currently small
8 and who feared that they would not be able to
9 compete by developing the neighborhood senior
10 center model and at the same time, we're creating
11 an opportunity for building some more robust hub
12 senior centers that will benefit every senior and
13 who will work with all the senior centers that are
14 around them. So our intention, sir, is not to
15 close or consolidate programs, but I can't give
16 you a guarantee because, again, it's a competitive
17 process. I don't know if one particular sponsor
18 may decide not to compete or to run again; another
19 sponsor may lose to someone else who writes a
20 proposal that on its merits is stronger. So our
21 intention is not to close any centers in the RFP,
22 we don't mandate any consolidations and, as I
23 shared in my testimony, we have avoided any cuts
24 or closures of senior centers due to budgetary
25 reasons. We are not closing any of the centers

2 currently in NYCHA and there are no plans to close
3 senior centers. It is why we've made these tough
4 decisions to preserve our core and looked at
5 cutting more strategically these targeted programs
6 that, while important, we think that a stronger,
7 robust senior center network can really benefit
8 more people than the programs that, unfortunately,
9 we're going to have to target for closure.

10 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Mr.

11 Commissioner, I never questioned your intentions
12 and I never would. When we restructured the after
13 school program in the city of New York into what
14 is now called the OST, we had many of the same
15 concerns on the other end of the age spectrum.
16 That RFP was not permitted to move forward until
17 there was a letter of agreement with the Council
18 that both quantitatively and qualitatively the
19 services would not be diminished. And I would say
20 to you that we're not yet in that place, and it
21 is--it would be unfortunate if this RFP was
22 allowed to continue to move forward until we reach
23 that, until we reach that point and I, again,
24 would join my colleagues and the speaker in urging
25 you to withdraw it. Chairperson Arroyo.

2 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Just one
3 comment and then I'll defer to my co-chair and
4 I'll come back to my questions. In all the years
5 as an administrator, one of the things that we
6 were responsible for in our system was to ensure
7 that we trained staff to understand that intent
8 and impact are two different things and how we
9 judge whether an organization is guilty of
10 encouraging a hostile work environment is the
11 impact that the worker complaining perceives. So
12 the impact of the intentions are what we're
13 concerned about, not your intentions. I think we
14 agree that we need to improve our senior services
15 and that we have already, given the announcement
16 of this RFP, seen providers really step up and do
17 exactly what it is that this RFP is requesting.
18 So for that I think the exercise has already given
19 us some good results, but the impact is certainly
20 the concern that we have with regards to moving
21 this RFP forward. Council Member Vacca.

22 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: ...before
23 Council Member Vacca, I want to acknowledge that
24 we've been joined by Council Member Brewer and
25 rejoined by Council Members Eugene and Dickens.

2 CHAIRPERSON VACCA: Commissioner, I
3 thank you for your testimony and I too commend you
4 for your hard work. My only statement is that
5 when you say that we--and I agree with Chair
6 Arroyo--we should improve and enhance our senior
7 citizen centers, but we can improve and enhance
8 them without throwing 327 of them up in the air
9 and waiting to see what comes down and who
10 survives and who doesn't. That's what the RFP
11 does--it throws all of them up in the air at one
12 time and we will see who survives, we will see who
13 does not. That means--and if you read the RFP,
14 I'm sure you have, Commissioner, of course--with
15 the mega centers that you propose, with the
16 funding stream involved, there is an obvious
17 indication that centers are going to close. Why
18 should we wait until that time comes when people
19 will shrug their shoulders and say, well we didn't
20 want this to happen, but that's the way the
21 process went. Well that's not acceptable and
22 senior citizens in this city are not drinking the
23 Kool-Aid, period. They know what's going on, they
24 know what's going on, and I end my statement by
25 saying this, my chair, Chair Lew Fidler mentioned

the \$400 rebate and we in the Council question the Mayor's authority to relinquish the rebate because it was Council-legislated. Well, I question the authority of your agency to take money that the Council earmarked for specific senior citizens services, take them and baseline them without our permission for a totally different or even unknown service. We have no--you took the transportation and the meal money that we gave. God, at this point, meal money when we know what the economy is bringing to seniors, you took the meal money, you lumped it into an RFP and we have no idea if the meal money is going to end up being meal money or whether the mail money is going to have to be rent money because you took away the rent money, too. On what authority, on what basis? The anxiety that's out there is real, it gets more real every day, and it gets real because from the very beginning of this process people like myself have warned that we were going into uncharted waters and it's one of the very few times in my involvement that I've seen are still going into uncharted waters once the RFP is issued. We have an RFP issued and we have nowhere--no idea where

2 we're going. We have no idea of the result of the
3 RFP. It's impossible to believe this. It's
4 impossible to believe this and to think that this
5 is not even a budget cut--imagine if we had budget
6 cuts, then we'd be up the creek for real. This is
7 all guised on the modernization. This was
8 initiated before the budget crisis. Please,
9 enough already.

10 [Pause]

11 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: I would--again,
13 I would ask that we don't have applause. If you
14 want to indicate approval for something that was
15 said verbally, you can do. All right? And if you
16 want to indicate opposition to something that was
17 said, you can do this, but please, the verbal just
18 will prevent us from doing the business that we're
19 here for.

20 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Okay.

21 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Chairperson
22 Arroyo.

23 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you.
24 There are a couple of--two questions and then I'll
25 defer to my colleagues. Core services are defined

2 how, Commissioner?

3 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: We've
4 defined core services as, again, those three main
5 components that really were the foundation of our
6 agency back in the 70s. It's the congregate
7 senior center, the home delivered meals program,
8 and our case management services. We looked at
9 them and the need to preserve the core, as I
10 mentioned in my testimony, because they serve the
11 maximum number of older adults and the programs
12 that we are unfortunately targeting, we believe
13 that, one, not only are they savoring--serving
14 smaller numbers of older adults, but that we can
15 find alternatives to be able to transition those
16 seniors to other services that provide comparable
17 types of assistance.

18 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: One of the
19 concerns--I've sat now through, this is probably
20 my fourth hearing on this plan and every agency
21 that has come before us has testified that they're
22 relying on another agency to pick up the slack
23 created by the reduction in that agency's budget.
24 [Pause] Has there been a cross-referencing of
25 everything, every agency that's expecting the

2 other to pick up and, given that every agency is
3 passing the buck, which one is going to be able to
4 absorb the service load that the others are
5 passing on?

6 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: I can only
7 describe what we've done. It's, again, an
8 unprecedented time with the fiscal challenges that
9 we face and we scrutinize every single program
10 that we provide at the Department, then looked at
11 what services were available in sister agencies
12 and, not just in the public sector, but looking at
13 others that are funded through state means or
14 grant programs or other not-for profit initiatives
15 and tried to determine where there would be as
16 minimal an impact as possible. We have spoken to
17 sister agencies, but, as you know, Council Member,
18 we've been doing this over the last six years
19 because we believe in collaboration and we believe
20 in creating New York City as a senior-friendly
21 city and that we have to talk to other agencies
22 and collaborate. But we have at the Department
23 reached out to our sister agencies in the city
24 system to review what they offer, look at the
25 services that they provide, and begin to establish

2 a protocol for transition of clients as we can to
3 those other services that many other city agencies
4 and not-for-profit agencies do provide.

5 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Well given that
6 that's such an incredible part of the
7 administration's plan, I'm going to just give you
8 an example of why I think this is a real, real
9 serious problem. Upwards of maybe a year and a
10 half or so ago we talked about the transfer of the
11 SCRIE applications to the Department of Finance.
12 We're still waiting for that transition to be
13 completed. In the process of transferring or
14 counting on other agencies to provide the services
15 that DFTA has traditionally provided through its
16 partner providers, how long is it going to take
17 before those services are truly available to
18 seniors in the city and if we have not completed
19 this intentional transfer of a service from one
20 agency to the other, what makes you think that any
21 of these others are going to be any more
22 successful?

23 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: It's a very
24 different situation, the other services already
25 exist in many of these city agencies. What the

2 SCRIE transfer delay has really been regarding our
3 concerns and working collectively with you as the
4 City Council to address some of the civil service
5 concerns that are around the transferring of 35
6 lines from the Department to Department of
7 Finance, we're working really aggressively with
8 the Office of Labor Relations and others to still
9 have this move forward. We do believe that
10 Finance will improve the functioning of the SCRIE
11 program to make that program more accessible to
12 seniors and that we can avoid some of the
13 duplication that DFTA now currently provides.

14 But, for example, the Mayor's office to combat
15 domestic violence already has two Justice Centers
16 up and running, they have already been involved in
17 issues of elder abuse and I spoke to the
18 Commissioner there who understands our concerns
19 and is more than willing to work with us in
20 ensuring that seniors who can benefit from
21 services at those Justice Centers will have that
22 opportunity. The City's Human Resources
23 Administration runs Adult Protective Services and
24 I again have reached out to the Commissioner there
25 and to the staff at Adult Protective services and,

2 for people who meet the criteria of Adult
3 Protective Services, of course, they will again be
4 more than willing to take on and support those
5 clients. There are also many not-for-profit
6 organizations that are funded through crime
7 victims funds and other sources that currently
8 exist and would be able to, again, in a
9 transition, provide support to individuals that
10 might be in their catchment area or vicinity.

11 And, as I mentioned in the testimony, the
12 Department's own Elderly Crime Victims Resource
13 Center, which has expertise on elder abuse and has
14 really been a catalyst to develop the elder abuse
15 network in New York City, will continue to also
16 work directly with clients, but also refer them
17 appropriately to many other organizations that do
18 work on the issue of elder abuse throughout the
19 city.

20 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Okay. So what
21 I'm going to ask that we work on after this
22 hearing and in the next week or so is for us to
23 sit and go through the providers affected by the
24 reductions that have been identified, where
25 they're located, where is there an opportunity in

2 that community to link seniors to those services
3 across the board for every program that has been
4 identified for elimination. I also want to
5 understand how many people will be filing for
6 unemployment as a result of the reduction of these
7 programs. I realize that it's not a reduction of
8 DFTA's FTEs but these are providers that are
9 contracted to provide services that have hired
10 people to do that, provide service. So I want to
11 have an understanding of what the impact is going
12 to be with regards to the number of people who can
13 potentially be unemployed as a result of these
14 reductions.

15 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: We share
16 those concerns and, again, as I mentioned in my
17 testimony, in every past effort that the
18 Department has undertaken where we've seen
19 employees of our not-for-profit partners be
20 displaced, we've worked with our not-for-profit
21 partners to ensure that those employees were able
22 to find employment either in the new agencies that
23 took over or in the private market and we again
24 will commit to work with our community partners
25 through our employment program to assist any not-

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE, SENIOR CENTERS, AND AGING 32
2 for-profit employee who is affected by any of this
3 transition.

4 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Okay. So we'll
5 have committee staff reach out to--

6 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: --your staff so
8 that we can have a discussion and--

9 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: Yes,
10 anytime.

11 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: --and see if we
12 can correlate--

13 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: Of course.

14 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: --the service
15 reduction with service availability and
16 communities affected. The bottom line here is
17 that we could not afford for any senior to fall
18 through the cracks of any of the services that
19 could be missing and communities. There are a few
20 other members who have questions I have--

21 MALE VOICE: I got it, I got it, I
22 got it.

23 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: --one last
24 question and it's with regards to the RFP and by
25 no means does this question indicate that we are

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE, SENIOR CENTERS, AND AGING 33
2 supporting this RFP, but given the short time left
3 senior providers have submitted questions
4 regarding the RFP and there is a bidder's
5 conference scheduled in the very near future.
6 Will those providers or those questions be
7 answered as part of that conference that is being
8 scheduled for December--that's scheduled for
9 December 2nd?

10 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: Yes, at the
11 bidder's conference--

12 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Okay.

13 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: --that's the
14 appropriate venue. We do track all of the
15 questions and they will be addressed at the
16 bidder's conference or any questions that are
17 raised at the bidder's conference itself. We do
18 encourage anyone who is interested in the RFP to
19 attend the bidder's conference. Let me share that
20 again and, trying to be environmentally sensitive,
21 we have encouraged people to download the RFP
22 instead of mailing it and we've had over 800 plus
23 downloads and maybe 50 that have been personally
24 picked up at the agency. So there has been some--
25 a great interest in the RFP and the bidder's

2 conference will be on the second and we encourage
3 everyone to attend and all of that information is
4 available on our website.

5 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you,
6 Commissioner, and, again, I just want to join the
7 chorus of those of us who are very concerned about
8 this RFP and urge the agency to withdraw it until
9 we find ourselves in a much better financial
10 situation in this city so that we can ensure that
11 we can protect senior services citywide. Thank
12 you, Commissioner.

13 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Thank you,
15 Chairperson Arroyo. We have--currently have five
16 Council Members signed up for questions, I want to
17 remind everybody that we are supposed to be out of
18 the room at one and that Council Members are being
19 asked to ask only two questions and to restrict
20 the speech. Council Member Brewer followed by
21 Council Member Dickens.

22 [Pause]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you
24 very much. In your testimony, you talked about
25 the--I think the former RFP and the case

2 management and I'm just wondering I know that also
3 was viewed as not a necessarily a budget savings,
4 but what--are people actually getting--do you have
5 the same number of people getting meals or more or
6 less than you had previous to case management?

7 'Cause in my experience there are people who are
8 being lost between the former provider and the
9 current case manager.

10 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: I'm not
11 aware that we are losing anyone. The case
12 management transition, as you're aware and we've
13 discussed this previously, was plan to take over a
14 number of months to ensure a seamless transition.
15 I've been meeting directly with our case
16 management providers on a sort of, almost a
17 quarterly basis and we've discussed some of their
18 concerns. We did add a number of dollars, and Ms.
19 Pai will confirm how much, to the case management
20 system so that we could build a more robust
21 system, but we, to my knowledge, are--have not
22 decreased the meals, the meals continue at the
23 same area, at the same level.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Do you have
25 those numbers?

2 [Off mic]

3 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: How much we
4 increase case management by?

5 ANGELES PAI: For the case
6 [crosstalk]--

7 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: You need to
8 identify yourself for the record.

9 ANGELES PAI: I'm sorry, I'm Angel
10 Pai, I'm the Deputy Commissioner for Planning and
11 Fiscal Operations at DFTA. In terms of case
12 management increases, we actually increased the
13 budget by 36% from 16.7 million to 22.7 million
14 from the beginning of FY '08 to FY '09. In terms
15 of the actual numbers of hours that we were asking
16 our case management providers to produce, as the
17 Commissioner noted in his testimony, there had
18 been about 400,000 case management hours produced.
19 This increase funding is now at about asking our
20 providers to produce about 500,000 units.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Five hundred
22 thousand of hours, units of hours.

23 ANGELES PAI: Yes.

24 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: Of case
25 management service, yes--

2 ANGELES PAI: Yes.

3 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: --that's how
4 we measure it.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. My
6 second question is the--some of these programs
7 that you talk like a Social Adult Day Program,
8 how--I mean, I think what happens with seniors,
9 and you know this better than I, is if it's not
10 even--as an example, you said there are other
11 places that people can go when one has experienced
12 violence from grandchildren or something that's
13 bothering one tremendously in terms of a domestic
14 situation, but everyone likes to have it on site,
15 where they know the people and that's something
16 that I think gets lost when you say, well we can
17 go to the domestic violence outreach team that's
18 located somewhere else. So the Social Adult Day
19 Program is another example. How many seniors will
20 be impacted if these cuts go through?

21 ANGELES PAI: So as the Commissioner
22 had noted, the proportion of older New Yorkers
23 that are actually served through that particular
24 program is very small. It is less than one
25 quarter of 1%, which translates to under 300

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE, SENIOR CENTERS, AND AGING 38
2 clients and that program has an annual cost of,
3 again, over \$2 million.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And do you
5 know where those clients are? Are they citywide
6 or in one particular location?

7 ANGELES PAI: That's a citywide
8 number and our program folks are working to
9 develop the transition plans for those particular
10 clients.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: All right.
12 I have more, but go ahead, I know two, I'm trying
13 to follow the program.

14 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Thank you,
15 Council Member Brewer, we really appreciate it.
16 Council Member Dickens.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you,
18 Mr. Chair--

19 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Followed by
20 Council Member Mark-Viverito.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: --and I too
22 will try to follow the program. It's very
23 difficult now that we have the Commissioner here
24 and most of us have at least 10 questions.
25 However, on the RFP, the first thing is just a

2 statement, the keywords in your testimony that
3 causes us fear belies what we believe will happen
4 just by their mere meaning and that's hub and
5 cluster, which denote a centralization, meaning
6 the closing of the centers. So when I look at
7 your testimony and I listen to you and I hear hub
8 and cluster, the mere meaning of the words that
9 you utilize denotes that there will be centers
10 closed, even though you verbally say they will not
11 be. I'm not asking for a response it's a
12 statement. Now my question, the RFP you talk
13 about is modernization of the centers which will
14 better be used for our seniors. The city is in a
15 very bad downfall economically. We're talking
16 about cutting services, even in your testimony on
17 page two you state several programs that DFTA will
18 have to cut funding for. Why do you find at this
19 time, when our seniors are the most vulnerable,
20 they're impacted the most severe, when credit is
21 not available, money is not there for essential
22 services for them, what makes you think that this
23 modernization in the long one--run will actually
24 save money for the city when our seniors are the
25 ones that's going to be so severely impacted and

2 they always are when there's an economic downfall.
3 Our seniors are the ones that suffer first [pause]
4 they're the ones that suffer first. I'd like to
5 know why you think this is going to save and how
6 much money are you expecting it to save and is the
7 savings coming from what will wind up being the
8 closing of many of our centers, hub and cluster.

9 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: The purpose
10 of modernization is not to cut or close centers or
11 to look for financial efficiencies in that regard.
12 In fact, the RFP as put out, is with a higher
13 dollar amount than what's currently in the system
14 for congregate services. What we've tried to do
15 is address some of the infrastructure needs of the
16 network by being able to allow in the RFP
17 organizations to bid for perhaps a higher amount
18 as we state in the RFP for the neighborhood model
19 senior center to apply up to \$500,000 and for the
20 hub program up to a million, so we are not doing
21 this to reduce dollars. But if I can address your
22 concern again and I know others have stated it
23 regarding what you believe the word hub or others
24 denote. The purpose of the hub is not to diminish
25 or consolidate the smaller neighborhood senior

2 centers, it's to offer seniors additional robust
3 programs that they can work with, that they can
4 visit. So the senior who visits their local
5 senior center today might next Monday go to the
6 nearest hub to take advantage of a program that
7 might be focusing on diabetes education or
8 diabetes management but still be a member and
9 visit their local program all the time. So
10 they're not intended in any way to replace and
11 since we've increased the bottom line in the RFP
12 we anticipate having more competition and more
13 models and more programs that will benefit
14 seniors. In the long run, however, Council
15 Member, I do think that a more robust senior
16 center network, home delivered meals program, and
17 modernized case management service will save money
18 to the city by helping seniors avoid
19 institutionalization and be healthier and be more
20 active throughout their entire life course so that
21 those programs that focus on health and wellness
22 will have long-term cost-effectiveness to the
23 city, as well as improve the quality of life of
24 the people who visit those programs.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Well then

2 you're telling me with the higher cost, bottom
3 line, the RFP is at a higher cost bottom line,
4 we're in a downfall economically and yet you're
5 saying that this will benefit my seniors because--
6 I'm not convinced, I'm sorry, I hear your
7 testimony, but I'm not convinced that the smaller
8 seniors citizen centers that service so many
9 people--because my seniors can't walk, I've got
10 seniors right here, right now, they cannot walk 10
11 blocks away. And there's difficulty, some are in
12 wheelchairs and there's difficulties, some of the
13 buses, the thing doesn't work to go up and down
14 just for them to get on it. So, you know, when we
15 talk about the creation of a hub and if it's a
16 higher cost and it seems to me it might be
17 beneficial to put some of that into the smaller
18 senior citizen centers so that they can be
19 utilized and be as effective. Maybe--I'm not an
20 economist--

21 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: What may
22 help clarify that particular point, and I'll ask
23 Ms. Pai to clarify the numbers for me, when we
24 look at our current senior center budgets, the
25 average senior center budget is somewhere around

2 \$300,000. In the RFP, we're giving those
3 providers the opportunity to bid for higher
4 amounts so that they can describe to us how with
5 more dollars they can increase services, and again
6 I'm talking about the smaller local senior
7 centers. So that's part of an agreement that we
8 had reached with the City Council going back over
9 a year to look at a RFP that would create a level
10 playing field so that the smaller organizations
11 did feel that they have an opportunity to compete,
12 and not only compete, but strengthen their
13 programs. That's why I always say that the RFP is
14 really intended to strengthen all the senior
15 centers. So we're not really taking money away
16 from anyone to focus on those hubs, but really
17 looking at infusing the system with more support.

18 [Pause]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Well, I've
20 been told I can't ask the next question I had.
21 My--that was the one question with two parts.

22 [Off mic]

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: The Elderly
24 Crime Victims Resource Centers, how many of them
25 are in northern Manhattan?

2 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: Of the
3 programs?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Yes, the
5 Elderly Crimes Victims Resource Center.

6 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: Well there's
7 only one Elderly Crime Victim Centers, that's the
8 one that operates out of DFTA at 2 Lafayette.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: So then
10 everyone in Manhattan goes down to Lafayette
11 Street?

12 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: Not
13 necessarily.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: All right.

15 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: That's the
16 question that I think--

17 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Where do--
18 where does--where do my northern Manhattan
19 residents go? That's my question.

20 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: Again, those
21 are the issues that we would work out in the
22 transition with the current providers as well as
23 others in the neighborhood, it depends on what the
24 actual need of the person is. They may go, for
25 example, depending on their issue or their case,

2 they might get support from Consumer Affairs if
3 it's something with financial concerns, they might
4 get support from the local district attorney's
5 office that runs an excellent program, an elder
6 abuse and mistreatment. They may get support from
7 a local domestic violence program that, as I said,
8 many have expanded their work to address issues
9 and concerns of elder abuse. So it really depends
10 on the situation, there are multiple alternatives
11 available.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you
13 so much. Are there any providers in northern
14 Manhattan that do this--and, yes, I heard you,
15 Chair.

16 [Pause]

17 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: I'd have to
18 research that and get back to you, ma'am, I don't
19 know all the providers off the top of my head.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Would you,
21 please?

22 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: Yes.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: I, for one, am
25 shocked that you don't know all the providers off

2 the top of your head, Commissioner, I, yeah,
3 thought you were an expert, I really did. Council
4 Member Mark-Viverito, followed by Council Member
5 James.

6 [Pause]

7 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Yes, we
8 worked it out. Yeah. No, I had I asked prior to
9 her. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Council Member
11 James, followed by Council Member Mark-Viverito.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Thank you
13 very much. A rose by any other name is still a
14 rose and a cut by any other name is still a cut,
15 whether you call it modernization or otherwise, it
16 is still a cut. And I know that because in case
17 management services in downtown Brooklyn and in
18 lower Manhattan they have suffered--they have
19 realized a cut already, but that's--so I'm really
20 concerned obviously with the reorganization and
21 share the concerns of all the Chairs who have
22 previously spoken. But my primary concern--or I
23 should say one of my--an ancillary concern is the
24 impact on community-based organizations and
25 organizations of color. Council Member Arroyo as

2 Chair of--I am Chair of Contracts and she has
3 spoken to me as well as other members of the
4 Black, Puerto Rican, and Asian Caucus have spoken
5 to me about the impact of modernization and
6 reorganization on small community-based
7 organizations and particularly organizations of
8 color, which are being adversely impacted by all
9 of these RFPs and all of these efforts to save
10 funds. In downtown Brooklyn there have been
11 organizations who have taken over who do not
12 reflect the community that they serve, that are
13 not culturally sensitive, that do not hire
14 locally, and that in fact come from wherever and
15 have basically displaced and put out of business
16 organizations that have been in existence for a
17 very, very long time and organizations that have
18 hired locally and know the community inside and
19 out. As Chair of Contracts in--over the last few
20 years, the City Council has passed a law to ensure
21 that businesses--that there has been an
22 affirmative action policy in the city of New York.
23 The last time I reviewed the numbers of DFTA, DFTA
24 unfortunately has not met its target with respect
25 to hiring businesses of color. Can you please

2 indicate to me as a result of this modernization
3 whether or not your agency will ensure, ensure and
4 or meet its target with respect to contracting
5 with businesses--community-based organizations of
6 color in the city of New York in the area of human
7 services?

8 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: I can't
9 address that specifically, I'd have to get back to
10 you, I'm not sure what figures you're referring to
11 but let me just share that I have the same
12 concerns that you're raising in regards to making
13 sure that our system is open to the city's
14 diversity and it's been perhaps one of my missions
15 in life to really focus on getting all of our
16 services to be both culturally and linguistically
17 accessible to all older adults. So I'm not sure,
18 Council Member, what cuts you're referring to in
19 Brooklyn, if it's the minority organizations that
20 lost an RFP in case management--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Yes.

22 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: --while
23 unfortunate, that's part of the procurement
24 process, they did not have as competitive a
25 proposal as the winning organization. I know

2 that's an issue that we've debated, we've talked--

3 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: Yes.

4 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: --about, but
5 in the language of all of our RFPs, if you recall
6 we've had this conversation, we've put in very
7 strong language to ensure that not only do all of
8 our organizations have the capacity to reach the
9 city's diverse older population, as you know, but
10 it's important to always remind the record that
11 over half of the seniors that we serve today
12 represent either communities of color or immigrant
13 communities. That's why in our--all of our RFPs
14 we have language that stresses the need for
15 cultural competence and linguistic competence.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JAMES: No, and I
17 recognize and understand that. In fact, I've
18 reviewed your RFP and, in fact, and you're
19 absolutely correct, the language is there,
20 however, the outcome of the RFPs does not reflect
21 the language and the vast majority of the
22 businesses that have been awarded contracts do not
23 reflect the great diversity that you just
24 described. And so I would urge your agency to be
25 more sensitive to that and to be conscious of that

2 and I also urge you to look at the Mayor's
3 Management Report where, in fact, the numbers are
4 indicated and not only your agency, but all
5 throughout the city of New York, the Mayor of the
6 City of New York has been abysmal--has a failed
7 this city of New York with respect to awarding
8 contracts to organizations of color throughout the
9 city of New York in every area, not just human
10 services, but every area, and the best way that we
11 can address unemployment and poverty is to hire
12 more businesses of color in the city of New York
13 and have them also benefit from the procurement
14 opportunities in the city of New York. I thank
15 you.

16 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Councilwoman
17 Mark-Viverito followed by Council Member Koppell.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: Thank
19 you, Mr. Chair, and, basically it's to kind of
20 piggyback a little bit on what my colleague Tish
21 James has brought up and, you know, we had the
22 same discussion and I was very involved with some
23 of the CBOs with regards to ACS and the
24 contracting of organizations to serve the foster
25 care population, which we, as we all know, is

2 disproportionately African-American and Latino.

3 There is a serious concern, you know, when we're
4 talking about the core services and the

5 modernization that you've laid out, I think that a
6 good assessment as to how you should proceed with

7 this RFP, which I also want to join very strongly
8 that it should be rescinded, but in terms of

9 determining how you should proceed is by looking

10 and evaluating how has the case management and the

11 home delivered meals consolidation, how has that

12 occur, 'cause in my community, speaking to my

13 advocates, it's been disastrous, disastrous and if

14 that's an indication of where we're heading, it's

15 not a good path. Now going back to what Tish was

16 talking about, you know, I know that in the

17 consolidation of the case management, in

18 particular for my region and for my area, our

19 local CBOs do not have an opportunity to compete

20 with some of the larger, more well-established

21 organizations and it ends up being a disservice to

22 a large portion of my constituency when you do

23 have organizations that in reality are not really

24 grounded in cultural competency. And it puts

25 additional strain on our smaller CBOs who are

being approached to help kind of breach that gap. That is something is--I'm very concerned about, you know, we need to figure how we're going to rectify this situation, not to talk about the home delivered meals, which has also, according to the advocates that I've been speaking to, been really disastrous. So, again, we should be evaluating-- have you evaluated as DFTA where things have gone with the case management and the home delivered meals consolidation and why aren't you using that as a basis as to how to proceed with the RFP with the mega centers and the senior centers?

EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: Just two quick responses to that, I know we're pressed for time, but in terms of the overall issue that we just followed up in terms of affirmative action and access to contracts. We share those concerns, we've worked very closely with our not-for-profit partners in the RFP for senior centers, again, in a commitment we made with the City Council. The not-for-profit umbrella organizations will be providing training and one of the concerns was around this particular area to make sure that we're sensitive to the minority organizations that

2 are going to bid. One of those partners--

3 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:

4 [Interposing] Do you have a--excuse me. I don't
5 want to interrupt you, but do you have a sense
6 that maybe a non-profit organization that maybe
7 has a budget of \$800,000 that is maybe providing
8 services out of one senior center or two, you
9 know, are they really, in all honesty, going to be
10 able to compete in this RFP?

11 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: Yes.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: No, I
13 don't agree with that. I don't agree with that.
14 So, I mean, you know, this again is the concerns
15 that we raise--

16 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO:

17 [Interposing] Well let me just, let me just also,
18 for the record, I disagree with your description
19 of our transition in case management as
20 disastrous. I actually believe and meeting with
21 our case management organizations that, yes, we
22 had a couple of areas of concern, but that that
23 transition worked very smoothly and all seniors
24 are served. The home delivered meals transition--

25 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:

2 That's [crosstalk]--

3 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: --has not
4 begun and that will begin in January and, as I
5 stated in my testimony, it's done on a monthly
6 basis to ensure that as we rollout this transition
7 that again every meal is served and not one client
8 misses service. In terms of the--

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:
10 [Interposing] Are you--can I ask you a question?
11 Are you providing less amount per meal than what
12 was originally proposed? What was originally said
13 by DFTA? This is, I mean, originally said by DFTA
14 was going to be the cost per meal versus where it
15 is now.

16 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: In
17 actuality, I believe--

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:
19 [Interposing] Didn't that go down?

20 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: No. It's--I
21 think what you're referring to is that in our
22 negotiations with the bidders we did negotiate--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:
24 Right.

25 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: --the price

1 COMMITTEE ON FINANCE, SENIOR CENTERS, AND AGING 55

2 that some submitted down, but the actual prices
3 that are awarded are either at or above the
4 current prices for home delivered meals programs.
5 But let me just one--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: Okay.
7 [Crosstalk]

8 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: --one other
9 thing I think it's important for the record that
10 in the home delivered meals award decisions, a
11 number of minority organizations were awarded very
12 large contracts both in central Brooklyn, in
13 Manhattan, the Bronx, so that we do have a very, I
14 think, diverse group of organizations that will be
15 running our home delivered meals programs across
16 the city.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: Okay.
18 So I thank you for your answers, but I want to
19 just join my voice in saying that really based on
20 where things have gone up to now and there's still
21 a lot of questions to be answered with regards to
22 case management and home delivered, that the RFP
23 for senior centers should be rescinded. Thank
24 you.

25 [Pause]

2 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Thank you.

3 Council Member Koppell followed by Council Member
4 Reyna and remind you that we have a two question
5 limit 'cause we were supposed to be done five
6 minutes ago.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: I'll try
8 and obey the injunction of the chair on two
9 questions. The first question is with respect to
10 the Social Adult Day program, and I don't disagree
11 with your basic objective to preserve core
12 services as being the number one priority when we
13 have to face cuts. However, there has to be some
14 recognition of the fact that some programs, such
15 as this one, indirectly affect core services
16 because they're not--the personnel that provide
17 these services and the monies that support those
18 services and the facilities that support those
19 services are not exclusively devoted to those
20 services. So if you have a person in the senior
21 center who spends half his time on Social Adult
22 Day Care and the rest of the time on other things
23 and then you eliminate the money for the Social
24 Adult Day Care, you then eliminated half the
25 amount of his salary and he's not going to be

2 available to provide other services. Or the
3 nurse, who provides some assistance to people who
4 have Alzheimer's in the Social Adult Day Care,
5 maybe a quarter of her salary is allocated to
6 this. So when they get a lump sum, let's say 25
7 or \$50,000 for Social Adult Day Care, that helps
8 pay for part of the staff. When you eliminate
9 that Social Adult Day Care, you're making more
10 difficulty to keep their basic staff and that is a
11 fact. For Riverdale Senior Services in my
12 district, which has this program, that's exactly
13 what they're saying, it's not only going to impact
14 this program, it's going to impact their delivery
15 of the, what you call, the core services. So what
16 are you going to do about that?

17 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: I understand
18 your point, sir, and that's why in our transition,
19 we need to look at each contract differently
20 'cause not all are at the same level, but as I
21 mentioned again in the testimony, it's why I think
22 the RFP gives us a creative opportunity to
23 strengthen senior centers, because senior centers
24 can follow that model. Four of our SADS are
25 currently co-located and work with senior centers,

2 so why not have congregate programs across the
3 city build their capacity to be able to serve more
4 physically and cognitively-impaired older adults
5 and do it within the congregate network so that
6 any organization who bids on this has the ability
7 to say, this is one of the areas that we want to
8 strengthen in our senior center.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Well I
10 think that's fine, I don't disagree with that, but
11 then don't cut off this program until you've
12 replaced it, as you indicate. Don't cut this
13 program until you make sure that the centers that
14 provide this program, which at least one of which,
15 there may be others, but one of which is in my
16 district, is able to cover that cost in its
17 general budget. That's what I ask of you and we
18 can talk about that individual center separately
19 from this. And but then going to the second
20 issue, which is, it's related, it has to do with
21 the RFP. One of the problems that I see, again in
22 my district and others may have the same problem,
23 is that your \$500,000 budget for the non-hub
24 centers may be less than what some of these
25 centers are getting today and that creates a major

2 problem because if they're operating because they
3 have high rent or other costs at above 500,000 but
4 they don't serve, I think for the hub you have to
5 serve 200 meals, so they don't serve 200 meals,
6 but their cost is more than 500,000 and they fear
7 now that, you know, they'll kind of be put out of
8 business because of their current cost structure.

9 So the RFP says--it says at--to at least one
10 center in my district, I know this--it says to
11 them, either apply to be a hub or you can't
12 continue to operate more or less the way you've
13 been operating. And they really probably can't be
14 a hub, they're probably not big enough and even if
15 they were big enough, there's another center that
16 wants to be a hub so they'll be in competition.
17 That's the reality of what you've put forth.

18 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: Not so, sir,
19 I think there are many assumptions that
20 individuals have made concerning the RFP that will
21 be clarified, as the Chairs said earlier, at our
22 bidder's conference, that again--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL:

24 [Interposing] And when is that?

25 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: December

2 2nd. Again, what we are allowing in the RFP is
3 flexibility. The same organization can bid for a
4 neighborhood center model and bid at the same
5 time, but in a separate proposal, for a hub so
6 that they can try to compete at both levels. But
7 there's, again, in the RFP as you read it
8 carefully we say on average, those numbers in
9 terms of meals are averages and again, we will
10 clarify in the bidder's conference the questions
11 that people have about the actual number of meals
12 that they should target, as well as budget
13 questions because it says up to an amount so,
14 again, organizations will differ in how they
15 prepare their proposal and bid on this. So,
16 again, I urge all of the providers who are
17 currently providers and want to continue to be
18 providers to attend the bidder's conference so
19 that we can hear all of their very specific
20 questions and concerns and clarify many of the
21 incorrect assumptions that people are making after
22 reading the proposal.

23 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Can I or a
24 member of the staff come to the bidder's
25 conference?

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2 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: Sure, it's
3 open.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER KOPPELL: Okay.

5 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Okay. Thank
6 you, Council Member, again as the number of
7 Council Members gets added to this list, I have to
8 be mindful again two question limit. Council
9 Member Reyna followed by Council Member Mendez.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Thank you,
11 Mr. Chair. Just wanted to ask you, Commissioner,
12 currently do all senior centers have leases
13 negotiated and are those--is that negotiated lease
14 amount budgeted into the bottom line operating
15 dollars necessary to run the senior center?

16 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: I'll ask Ms.
17 Pai to try to be more detailed, but just from my
18 perspective, the system is very varied. We have
19 some organizations that are in New York City
20 Housing Authority property where they don't have
21 rent, although there are a few who do have leases
22 with NYCHA. We have--

23 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: [Interposing]
24 But--and stay right there, Commissioner--it's my
25 understanding from the previous testimony of

2 Chairman Hernandez that those NYCHA centers
3 operating DFTA programs will now have to pay rent.

4 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: No, that's
5 incorrect. What we're doing is--if I could just
6 do a general response and then talk specifically
7 about NYCHA--we have some senior--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Right.

9 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: --centers in
10 NYCHA that don't pay rent, we have some in what
11 are called city lease buildings where the city
12 through DCAS is paying the lease, there's a very
13 small number there, and then the rest are not-for-
14 profits that are renting private space either from
15 a private landlord or it may be a sponsor owned
16 space. Some of them are in a church or religious
17 buildings, some are in private spaces across the
18 city. What we've tried to do in the RFP, if this
19 is where the question is coming from, is ask
20 everyone--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: You're one
22 step ahead of me.

23 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: --is ask
24 everyone to include the rental cost or their
25 estimate for the rental cost so that when we

2 compare proposals, we're comparing proposals sort
3 of apples to apples, not comparing someone's
4 budget that has no rent with someone with a budget
5 that has rent. So those are the concerns, but
6 it's not that they have to budget for rent when or
7 if they win that award. I don't know if I've
8 responded--if Angel [crosstalk] add anything?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: [Interposing]
10 But if I can just, if I can just--I find that
11 there's a miscommunication between NYCHA and DFTA
12 right now because we just heard testimony that
13 there will be DFTA programs, that DFTA will now
14 take on as a budgeted responsibility that NYCHA
15 had been carrying since 2002 transferred to DFTA.

16 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: That's a
17 different point. What I think that that--and I
18 was not here for the NYCHA testimony--it was that
19 the money that previously funded our DFTA senior
20 centers came out of NYCHA's budget. That money is
21 now added to DFTA's budget as tax levy money--

22 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Right.

23 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: --in the
24 November plan.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Right.

2 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: So that DFTA
3 will self-fund those programs in NYCHA facilities,
4 but there--it's not about paying rent in NYCHA
5 facilities.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: But will they
7 be paying rent?

8 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: No, there's
9 a number of open and vacant NYCHA facilities that
10 we will attach to our RFP as an appendix to allow
11 the community to know that these facilities are
12 available, they can then enter into negotiations
13 to try to lease those vacant facilities.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: I just want
15 to note, I, as well as many other members who were
16 here for the NYCHA hearing on the budget, that
17 these expected centers will have a responsibility
18 to pay rent to NYCHA. So I'm trying to understand
19 A, does DFTA have an assessment of every center
20 and which ones pay rent and to who and I'd like to
21 receive--you know, I'd like this Committee to make
22 available this list of each center, who provides
23 them space, and the lease structured amount, and
24 whether or not there is a lease because, you know,
25 we're trying to modernize, but yet we really don't

2 know what we're modernizing, and according to the
 3 RFP, there is no structured calculated amount
 4 dealing with space cost. And I know I had senior
 5 centers that were not paying rent that are now
 6 because of a real estate boom and economic crisis
 7 combination, are now being charged an annual rent,
 8 which was never factored into their budgets. You
 9 know, increases that they're seeing now they're in
 10 back rent, so they're in arrears and then there's
 11 negotiated leases that I don't know if they're
 12 being negotiated with the city of New York so that
 13 we're not being overpriced. And do we, as a
 14 Council, have a say in that negotiation similar to
 15 what ACS does, which presents leases here through
 16 DCAS during our finance committees.

17 ANGELES PAI: So I'd like to
 18 reiterate two points that the Commissioner made
 19 to--as the Commissioner noted there are a--our
 20 sponsors have a variety of lease arrangements.
 21 They could be in sponsored-own sites, sponsor
 22 lease sites, they could be in city-owned sites,
 23 city lease sites, or NYCHA space. The fact is
 24 there are a very small number of senior centers
 25 that are actually in city lease space, it's less

than 10%, it's under 30, and we know the cost of those leases. The RFP asks those providers to go ahead and actually note in those options I just delineated to know which ones, you know, they're in. And, again, another point that the Commissioner made around the NYCHA space, there are two different pots of NYCHA sites that we're talking about, those DFTA NYCHA sites where DFTA senior centers are currently in, there hasn't been any thought around, again, charging any kind of rent that you're talking about. The Commissioner noted there is a separate pot of NYCHA sites that are currently vacant that have never been occupied by DFTA senior centers or sponsors and that pot is going to potentially be open for any senior center sponsor that potentially wants to go into that community, into that property and, in fact, those sites that, again, are not currently occupied by DFTA sponsors, will potentially be paying rent for those new sites. So I think that's the discrepancy, because, again, there has never been thought right now around having DFTA NYCHA sites starting to pay lease costs.

COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: I think,

2 again, I have to indulge the point that DFTA and
3 NYCHA have to get reconfirmation on the
4 understanding of what you're going to take on as a
5 responsibility once again and the issue that there
6 is an expectation confirmed by the Chairman that
7 rent will be paid. So my question goes back to
8 the beginning, which is the [pause] do all senior
9 centers have negotiated leases and are the lease
10 amount included in their operating budgets so that
11 we have an understanding as to where are our
12 senior centers located, do they have a lease, how
13 much is that lease, and whether or not they pay
14 rent at all or are they in arrears? Because, you
15 know, whenever I go to a different senior center
16 and I start talking about these things because
17 everybody's fearing this RFP, now this is the
18 biggest issue I have. And the most common
19 denominator where one senior center has been able
20 to be, you know, graced with the zero rent space
21 and is now being charged, but it's not part of
22 their operating dollars and the Council was able
23 to negotiate a space cost amount, thanks to our
24 Chair, to be able to take that into consideration,
25 but it's not part of the operating budget that

2 DFTA awards as part of the contract. And that is
 3 not being taken into consideration I think on the
 4 RFP because you're asking to note it in their
 5 proposal as they refer to it, but it's not as if
 6 it's being factored as an amount as part of their
 7 operating dollars. And so I need to see a listing
 8 in order to help me understand what is this varied
 9 leasing option, those that have leases and those
 10 that don't, what is the situation there and make
 11 it available for the committee to have at least an
 12 opportunity so that before this RFP continues to--
 13 unless it's going to be tabled and rewritten so
 14 that a lot of these points are going to be taken
 15 into consideration. Thank you. And I'd like an
 16 answer if whether or not we can get that list to
 17 this committee.

18 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: Well we will
 19 provide you with the list, but, again, I just want
 20 to clarify that there are different centers in
 21 different situations and the answer may take much
 22 more time than the committee has, but I want to
 23 clarify again that I do really urge everyone
 24 interested to attend the bidder's conference
 25 because these issues will be discussed there, but

2 if it's--just to get to one example that you gave,
3 if you are currently paying rent, regardless of
4 where you're getting the money to pay rent, when
5 you bid on the RFP you have to include rent within
6 your bottom line. If you're not currently paying
7 rent, we're asking you to estimate what the cost
8 would be only so that we could have budgets that
9 are comparable, but that rent would not come out
10 of your bottom line. So I know that may not
11 answer your question wholly, but those are the
12 kind of issues--

13 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: [Interposing]
14 Commissioner, can I--

15 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: --that will
16 be at the bidder's conference.

17 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --rather than
18 go around in circles, can I just simply try and
19 paraphrase your answer in terms of the NYCHA
20 centers. That, if you're in a site now that is
21 not paying rent or you're going to compete to run
22 a program in a site that's now not paying rent,
23 you will not be expected to pay rent, but if you
24 are looking for a NYCHA site that is currently not
25 the site of a senior center and you want to use

2 it, then you will be expected to pay rent and that
3 would be the revenue stream that Mr. Apple was
4 talking about when he was--

5 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: Yes.

6 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --in this chair
7 before, is that correct [crosstalk]--

8 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: That's
9 correct, sir.

10 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Okay. Thank
11 you. And I just want to clarify one other
12 statement, you said that a list will be appended
13 to the RFP--

14 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO:
15 [Interposing] It's--at--will be handed out at the
16 bidder's conference--

17 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: --so the RFP is
18 out there, but the appendix is not?

19 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: The--that
20 particular appendix will be handed out at the
21 bidder's conference.

22 ANGELES PAI: So clarification just,
23 as everyone knows, we're on city procurement
24 rules, there will be an addendum that will be
25 issued that will include that. So it's not going

2 to be an appendix, it will be an addendum.

3 EDWIN MENDEZ-SANTIAGO: Addendum,
4 sorry.

5 ANGELES PAI: Yes.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER REYNA: Clarify, an
7 addendum to address what?

8 ANGELES PAI: The NYCHA sites that
9 the Councilman was just referencing that are
10 currently vacant, not occupied by DFTA senior
11 centers.

12 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Clearly there's
13 a need for greater clarity on that question.
14 Council Member Mendez.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Yeah, I
16 don't have any clarity on this yet. Because, not
17 just today, but in previous hearings, the Chairman
18 of NYCHA said that anyone in a NYCHA facility will
19 need to start paying rent. Not-for-profits, many
20 of them running senior centers in NYCHA
21 facilities, have contacted me saying they've
22 gotten bills and new paperwork to pay rent and I
23 just need to try to understand exactly what you're
24 saying right now in terms of DFTA-funded
25 organizations in NYCHA sites, right?

2 ANGELES PAI: Currently in NYCHA
3 sites are not expected to pay rent. As--

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ:
5 [Interposing] Are not expected to pay rent--

6 ANGELES PAI: Not at this time.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: --this
8 month, this year? The Housing Authority has told
9 us that they are going to start charging rent for
10 anyone in a NYCHA facility irrespective if it's a
11 senior center or community center, they're not
12 going to--they're going to keep maintaining their
13 own NYCHA run senior centers, but they have made
14 it clear on the record today and previously that
15 they will be charging rents, so I'm not quite
16 understanding.

17 ANGELES PAI: We will be working
18 with NYCHA around these issues, but our
19 understanding again is the fact that if there is
20 currently a DFTA senior center in a NYCHA site,
21 that we are not expecting to have that particular
22 site charged rent. Again, there's a new--there's
23 another category of NYCHA sites where--

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Well they
25 [crosstalk]--

2 ANGELES PAI: --DFTA is not
3 currently occupied, where, if in fact, a senior
4 center wants to go into that space, where there
5 may in fact be rent charged.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Well, I
7 would like to work with the Chair of the Aging
8 Committee because there is a contradiction between
9 information I've gotten in the past and
10 information that I'm getting here today and I
11 certainly want to get that clarified. Thank you.

12 [Pause]

13 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: And obviously
14 the right-hand needs to talk to the left hand a
15 little bit here. Chairperson Arroyo.

16 [Pause]

17 CHAIRPERSON ARROYO: Thank you, Mr.
18 Chair. I will follow up with a couple of
19 questions, but also to reiterate the concern that
20 agencies or authorities come before us to testify
21 and one is saying the--is relying on the other and
22 apparently just this whole rent issue raises the
23 concern that I articulated earlier about how real
24 this is cross agency discussions and planning
25 about--to ensure that seniors don't fall through

2 the cracks. So Council Member Mendez and I will
3 follow up with both the Commissioner and the Chair
4 on a separate conversation so that we can get
5 clarity to what seems to be an incredible
6 contradiction given yours and his testimony.
7 Three follow-up questions which relate to the
8 current fiscal year and some outstanding concerns
9 that advocates and providers have. We've heard
10 that the borough presidents' money has been taken,
11 I'm not sure that that's accurate, for this year,
12 but what is the status of the contracts for
13 providers that have--are receiving that funding
14 through DFTA. What's the status of those
15 contracts?

16 ANGELES PAI: So we're working with
17 the Deputy Mayor's office and the borough
18 presidents' office to distribute those borough
19 president funds for this fiscal year. And that
20 has always--

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ:
22 [Interposing] For this fiscal year.

23 ANGELES PAI: --and that has always
24 been the case.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Okay. And

2 the 3% COLA that agencies were scheduled to
3 receive in this fiscal year, what's the status of
4 that?

5 ANGELES PAI: We're working to
6 process that COLA, we're going to be sending
7 communication out to our providers 'cause they
8 need to provide us some information in terms of
9 the staff and then we'll be kind of issuing those
10 funds.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: And then--

12 ANGELES PAI: And it'll be
13 retroactive back to the [crosstalk]--

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ:
15 [Interposing] Okay. So and then wrapping up--

16 ANGELES PAI: --this year.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: --the
18 overall issue of budget for this year, there are
19 going to be changes, there have been changes
20 already, reductions post-budget adoption. Are you
21 going to do anything to streamline this process so
22 providers are not signing multiple amendments to
23 their contracts?

24 [Pause]

25 ANGELES PAI: I mean, of course, we

2 will try to ensure that that's minimized, I just
3 don't know from kind of like the legal procurement
4 perspective but--

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ:

6 [Interposing] Can you speak up because--

7 ANGELES PAI: [Interposing] Oh, I'm
8 sorry. Of course, we would try to minimize that
9 kind of paperwork, but I don't know from the legal
10 and procurement perspective what's necessary,
11 so...

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Okay. Well
13 that's fair. I want to thank you, Commissioner,
14 always, for your work and diligence and your
15 willingness to always talk to us about the
16 concerns that we raise. It is a difficult time,
17 change has to happen, we need to be mindful how
18 that change is implemented. And, again, thank the
19 advocates for your work and your incredible
20 commitment to the seniors of our city. It is
21 through your advocacy that we, as members, become
22 better informed about the impact on community.
23 Although we individually have an incredible
24 understanding of our individual districts, as
25 members serving the city, it certainly helps us

2 understand the citywide perspective a great deal
3 more. So I want to thank you all for your work
4 and, again, urge, Commissioner, pull that RFP,
5 don't make us go through this process.

6 CHAIRPERSON FIDLER: Commissioner,
7 before we conclude the hearing I want to note that
8 we were joined by Council Member Simcha Felder and
9 I just want to add my final remark, which is,
10 contrary to the belief of the editorial boards of
11 The Daily News and the New York Post, Council
12 Members do understand what a difficult time we are
13 in and are prepared to make hard choices. And,
14 you know, we know that not every program--if there
15 was an infinite number amount of money, we could
16 fund all of the really good things. The problem
17 here, Commissioner, is that DFTA is proposing an
18 RFP that purports to be revenue neutral that just
19 compounds the problems of the things we can't
20 afford to pay for anymore. And I want to just,
21 you know, again urge you that, you know, the RFP
22 is really not ready for prime time and it may
23 never be, but it certainly--this is not the right
24 time and we urge you to withdraw it, go back to
25 the drawing board, work with this Council to try

2 and come up with a solution. You know, actually I
3 would say, if it ain't broke, don't fix it and I
4 think senior centers, and you can take credit for
5 this, I think senior centers in this city run
6 pretty darn well and we ought to keep them running
7 as darn well as we can. That concludes this
8 portion of the Finance and Aging hearing. We will
9 be taking a 5 to 10 minute recess before Finance
10 reconvenes with Education. Again, if you are
11 leaving, please do so quickly and quietly and we
12 are recessed.

13 [Off mic]

14

15

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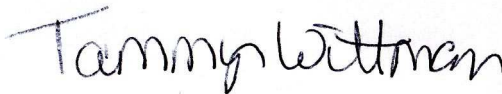
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C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Tammy Wittman, certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature_____

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Tammy Wittman", is written over a horizontal line.Date ____December 5, 2008_____