

CITY COUNCIL  
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENTAL OPERATIONS

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October 27, 2009  
Start: 11:16 am  
Recess: 11:23 am

HELD AT: Council Chambers  
City Hall

B E F O R E:  
HELEN SEARS  
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
Simcha Felder  
Erik Martin Dilan  
Larry B. Seabrook  
Inez E. Dickens  
Peter F. Vallone, Jr.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS: Government  
3 operations is about to begin. Councilman Dilan.  
4 Councilman Dickens, Councilman Seabrook,  
5 Councilman Simcha Felder, we are about to begin.

6 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Keep it down,  
7 please.

8 CHAIRPERSON SEARS: This is going  
9 to be a very short meeting. All right? Are they  
10 ready?

11 MALE VOICE: Yes.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER SEARS: Okay. Good  
13 morning and welcome to the hearing on the  
14 Committee on Government Operations. I'm Helen  
15 Sears, Chair of the Committee, and I'm joined by  
16 my colleague: Simcha Felder to my right, Erik  
17 Dilan from Brooklyn, joined by Larry Seabrook from  
18 the Bronx, Inez Dickens from Manhattan.

19 Today, the Committee will vote on  
20 Reso 2166-A, a Resolution calling upon the federal  
21 government to pass H.R. 658, which would help to  
22 increase community input as the United States  
23 Postal Service recognizes branches throughout the  
24 City of New York and the country, and also calling  
25 upon the Postal Service to use a significant

1  
2 portion of the 3.5 billion increase in its  
3 operating costs budget received when President  
4 Obama signed into law, Public Law 111-68 to  
5 prevent the closing of as many postal locations as  
6 possible throughout the city and the nation.

7 Last week we heard excellent  
8 testimony on this resolution and it is clear to me  
9 that this is an important step for us to take in  
10 helping to keep our post offices open.

11 The Committee is dedicated to  
12 continuing to do whatever we can to ensure that  
13 the City's post offices stay open and continue to  
14 serve our residents.

15 I also would like to note that the  
16 USPS declined to appear personally at our hearing,  
17 but did send written testimony in advance of last  
18 week's hearing.

19 And I would now ask my colleagues  
20 if they have anything further to add? The Chair  
21 recommends a yes vote. And with no further  
22 questions, I'll ask the Clerk to call the roll.

23 WILLIAM MARTIN: William Martin,  
24 Committee Clerk, roll call on the Committee on  
25 Governmental Operations, Resolution 2166-A.

Council Member Sears.

CHAIRPERSON SEARS: Aye.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Dilan.

COUNCIL MEMBER DILAN: Aye.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Seabrook.

COUNCIL MEMBER SEABROOK: Yes, with permission to explain my vote. I just want it to be noted that it's important for this resolution. One of the proposed closings of one of the post offices is in my district and it's the largest money-producing post office that's in the entire district, and it's the highest concentration of senior citizens in that zip code and they do all of their business in that post office--their money orders and paying their other bills, and everything else. So it means a lot for that area when it is the single largest postal producing office that's there, and so I would hope that it's taken under consideration. And I vote aye.

CHAIRPERSON SEARS: And I can assure you that this Committee will do everything that we can to see that that stays open. It's kind of ludicrous, the largest revenue-making, it sounds so typical of government, I have to say

1  
2 that.

3 WILLIAM MARTIN: Dickens.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Permission  
5 to explain my vote, Madam Chair? Thank you. With  
6 the closing of so many of our post offices and  
7 particularly the one that's in my community at  
8 140th Street between Adam Clayton Powell and  
9 Frederick Douglass. The adverse effects and  
10 impacts that this would have upon our senior  
11 population and upon our families having to walk,  
12 in many instances and in this instance, more than  
13 10 blocks in order to purchase stamps, and a  
14 community where we don't have bank accounts and we  
15 instead rely upon the purchase of postal money  
16 orders to pay our bills, this is a terrible thing  
17 that is being done.

18 And so I strongly support and sign-  
19 on and vote affirmative for this resolution.

20 CHAIRPERSON SEARS: Thank you. And  
21 just one final note, just to remind the members of  
22 the Committee that we heard at the testimony about  
23 the Blue Room, which is really absolutely insane,  
24 where they are taking postal workers, placing them  
25 in this blue room doing nothing all day long when

1 there are windows that are closed in post offices.

2 So that practice I find is outrageous, so I think

3 we must all remember that. Thank you very much.

4 No further?

5 MALE VOICE: Yeah, we have more.

6 CHAIRPERSON SEARS: Oh, we have  
7 more.

8 WILLIAM MARTIN: Vallone.

9 CHAIRPERSON SEARS: Oh, we are  
10 voting on a postal resolution, Councilman Vallone.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Aye,  
12 whatever you say [off mic].

13 CHAIRPERSON SEARS: Chair  
14 recommends a yes vote.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: [Off mic]

16 CHAIRPERSON SEARS: How do you  
17 vote?

18 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I vote  
19 aye.

20 CHAIRPERSON SEARS: Thank you.

21 WILLIAM MARTIN: Felder.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: Madam  
23 Chair, may I be excused to explain my vote?

24 CHAIRPERSON SEARS: You may indeed.

1  
2 COUNCIL MEMBER FELDER: First, I  
3 want to thank the leadership of the Chair on this  
4 issue, very critical issue. And just to add,  
5 although those neighborhoods that will be affected  
6 the most in a negative way, it affects them more  
7 than anyone else, but this resolution has a lot  
8 more to it than just the closings of those  
9 particular branches because these closings are  
10 symbolic of the Postal Service and its agenda to  
11 cut service everywhere. I think that growing up  
12 the Postal Service, whether it was the post office  
13 itself or delivery, there was no other service  
14 that matched the service of the postal office and  
15 the delivery people.

16 Today, it's not that way and as a  
17 result of poor service and losing money, they're  
18 just doing what everybody else does: cut, cut,  
19 cut, cut. And if you go into almost any branch,  
20 and I've gone into many, not throughout the city,  
21 but certainly my district, it's horrendous, you  
22 have people on lines for an hour, an hour and a  
23 half to do simple things and, unless the machine  
24 is working and some of the seniors don't touch  
25 machines, don't have credit cards, you're left

2 waiting in line for an hour and a half.

3 So I would just say that this  
4 resolution is wonderful and it has a lot of  
5 meaning, again, for those particular areas that  
6 are being closed, but it has a lot more meaning  
7 for service in general, and I applaud your  
8 leadership on this issue.

9 CHAIRPERSON SEARS: Thank you very  
10 much. I also wish to thank the Speaker, who has  
11 certainly been on top of this issue. No other  
12 further questions or comments?

13 WILLIAM MARTIN: Final vote, final  
14 vote.

15 CHAIRPERSON SEARS: A final vote,  
16 please.

17 WILLIAM MARTIN: Vote on Reso 2166-  
18 A is six in the affirmative, zero in the negative,  
19 and no abstentions. Item is adopted.

20 CHAIRPERSON SEARS: With that, I  
21 thank you and the Government Operations Committee  
22 is now adjourned.



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 Tammy Wittman

Date November 4, 2009