

1 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT 1  
2 CITY COUNCIL  
3 CITY OF NEW YORK  
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5 TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES  
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7 COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY  
8 MANAGEMENT  
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10 March 14, 2025  
11 Start: 10:07 a.m.  
12 Recess: 2:30 p.m.  
13  
14 HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall  
15  
16 B E F O R E: Joann Ariola,  
17 Chairperson  
18  
19 COUNCIL MEMBERS:  
20 Carmen N. De La Rosa  
21 Oswald Feliz  
22 James F. Gennaro  
23 Kristy Marmorato  
24 Lincoln Restler  
25 Kevin C. Riley  
Lynn C. Schulman  
Susan Zhuang

COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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

Robert Tucker  
Commissioner NYC FDNY

Mark Guerra  
First Deputy Commissioner NYC FDNY

John Esposito  
Chief of Department NYC FDNY

Kevin Woods  
Chief of Fire Operations

Lizette Christoff

Michael Fields  
Chief of EMS

Nafeesah Noonan  
Associate Commissioner NYC FDNY

Zach Iscol  
Commissioner of NYCEM

Christina Farrell  
First Deputy Commissioner NYCEM

Christopher Blanco  
Chief Financial Officer NYCEM

Sharon Brown  
Self

Christopher Leon Johnson  
Self

Sakeena Trice  
NYLPI

Michael J Northmore  
Self

Nancy Carbone  
Friends of Firefighters

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4	UFOA	
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2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Sound check for the Committee  
3 on Fire and Emergency Management. Today's date is  
4 March 14, 2025 being reported by Danny Wong in the  
5 Council Chambers.

6 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Good morning and welcome to  
7 the New York City Council Preliminary Budget hearing  
8 on Fire and Emergency Management. At this time, can  
9 everybody please silence your cellphones? If you  
10 wish to testify, please go to the back of the room to  
11 fill out a testimony slip.

12 At this time and going forward, no one is to  
13 approach the dais. I repeat, no one is to approach  
14 the dais. Chair, we are ready to begin.

15 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: [GAVEL] Good morning and  
16 welcome to Fiscal 2026 Preliminary Budget hearing for  
17 the Committee on Fire and Emergency Management. My  
18 name is Joann Ariola and I am the Chair of the Fire  
19 and Emergency Management. Today, we will review the  
20 Fire Department and New York City Emergency  
21 Management's Fiscal 2026 budgets to understand how  
22 they address the needs of all New Yorkers.

23 I would like to begin by thanking the members of  
24 the Fire Department for their sacrifices over the  
25 past year. The frontline responses of the EMT's,

paramedics, fire fighters are on display every day because of their direct life saving actions, our city is a safer place. The Fire Department's EMS and Fire Fighters are known as New Yorks best and bravest and I believe those nicknames are apply given. I would also like to thank the members of the New York City Emergency Management team. They have been working incredibly long hours to assist in New York City's response performing a job that they often did not get enough credit for and a job that was not in your job description to do.

The Fire Department's Fiscal 2026 Preliminary Budget totals \$2.6 billion with funding for 17,177 positions. The departments fiscal 2026 budget has undergone moderate changes in the preliminary financial plan, increasing by \$6.94 million since adoption. The plan includes four new needs for the Department FDNY in Fiscal 2025 totaling \$104 million. The Fire Departments Fiscal 2025 to 2029 capital commitment grand total is \$1.1 billion with funding for 332 distinct projects.

During our hearing today, the Committee would like to discuss the Departments new needs in the current fiscal plan. This includes the additional

\$72 million for personal service costs including additional funding for overtime expenses and \$29 million in various OTPS adjustments. The Committee would like to revisit these items and others such as the recent Chalmer Settlement, EMS pay parity and the Departments increasing reliance on overtime.

We would also like to our safety inspections, increasing wait times for fire emergencies and the ongoing lithium ion battery situation. Over the past year, the Committee has held oversight hearings on a wide range of topics including hearings on the city's efforts to improve ambulance response times.

The Departments response and preparedness for this flash flooding events and most recently a hearing regarding the Departments response and to the preparedness for wildfires. While these hearings were not necessarily budget hearings, as we all know, we often need to spend money to get results, and that's exactly why we're here today to make sure money is being spent on FDNI and Emergency Management so that you can get the results that we need so that our city can be safer.

I would like to thank our Committee Staff for their hard work, Financial Analyst Tanveer Singh,

2 Unit Head Aliya Ali, Committee Counsel Josh Kingsley,  
3 Political Analyst, Policy Analyst William Hongach,  
4 and my Chief of Staff Phyllis Inzerillo. I would  
5 like to welcome Commissioner Tucker. It is your  
6 first Committee Hearing before this Committee and we  
7 think that you're doing - I think that you're doing  
8 an amazing job and you've brought a lot of positive  
9 change to the Department in the short time that  
10 you've been made the Commissioner and I look forward  
11 to working with you closely in the future. I'd like  
12 to thank our Fire Fighters, our EMTs, Paramedics, and  
13 the Department Civilian staff for the work that they  
14 do. I'm looking forward to hearing from the  
15 Commissioner. The Committee Counsel will now swear  
16 you in.

17 Before that, I just want to recognize that we've  
18 been joined by is Cristi here? Council Member  
19 Zhuang, Council Member Schulman and that's all thus  
20 far. I turn to Committee Counsel so that you can be  
21 sworn in. We're joined today by Commissioner Robert  
22 Tucker, First Deputy Commissioner Mark Guerra, Deputy  
23 Commissioner Lizette Christoff, Chief of the  
24 Department John Esposito, Chief of Fire Operations  
25

Kevin Woods, Chief of EMS Michael Fields, Associate Commissioner Nafeesah Noonan.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you so much Chair. Can you just raise your right hand just to confirm the following: That you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth before this Committee to answer honestly to Council Member questions? Just recognize you do say that. Go ahead, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: So, we're just going to put a hold on that for one moment because Chair Schulman, CM Schulman is part of another budget hearing today, so she would just like to make a statement so she can get to the next budget hearing.

COUNCIL MEMBER SCHULMAN: Yes, thank you for the accommodation Chair Ariola and I want to welcome everybody from the Fire Department. Commissioner Tucker, I want to echo the Chairs remarks about everyone in the Fire Department, EMS. I am going to ask - I know that there are representatives from the Mayor's Office here but I'm going to ask in your testimony and also with the questions that you be as honest as possible with us about that resources that you need. I know of some specifically in my district



that I'm going to try and help to fund and also I used to work at the Emergency Medical Service on the Administrative side and there needs to be some kind of parity done for them because we want to make them all one big family. So, with that, I apologize for this but the budget meeting I am in is with the speaker and so, I want to make sure that we're able to get the resources we need for you guys, so thank you very much. Thank you Chair.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you CM Schulman. Commissioner, you may proceed.

ROBERT TUCKER: Thank you very much Chair Ariola and the members of the Fire and Emergency Management Committee. I want to thank you for this opportunity today to discuss the Preliminary Budget for New York City Fire Department for Fiscal Year 2026. It is a great honor to be in this Chair as the 35<sup>th</sup> New York City Fire Commissioner.

2024 was a strong year for the Fire Department. While the Fire Department faced increases in both fire and emergency medical service calls, the FDNY's dedication to fire prevention, education, and outreach saved lives. Fire related fatalities decreased by 25 percent compared to the prior year.

We also saw a significant reduction 67 percent of deaths related to fires caused by lithium-ion batteries. Even one death is too many, but through the tireless work of EMS personnel and firefighters, 2024 was a safer year for New Yorkers.

We have been working with members of the Council for the last few years on measures to reduce the harm from fires caused by lithium-ion batteries. In 2023, the city experienced 18 fatalities related to this threat. I'm proud to report that in 2024, that number fell to six. This positive outcome is the result of numerous proactive steps that we took to address this issue. This included frequent outreach and safety messaging, aggressive inspections and enforcement, and a targeted \$1 million advertising campaign. We launched the FDNY Lithium-ion Battery Task Force which inspected nearly 600 e-bike shops in 2024 alone. That's a 25 percent increase over the inspections from 2023.

Members of the taskforce including our Fire Prevention Inspectors and members of the Bureau of Fire Investigations, our Fire Marshals issued 426 FDNY summonses, 138 violation orders, 32 criminal summonses and in the most egregious cases worked with

our partners at the Department of Buildings to vacate seven dangerous buildings.

We're still seeing a large number of fires caused by lithium-ion batteries but our safety messaging is getting through and we're seeing safer behavior from New Yorkers who use these devices. More people are charging and storing their devices outdoors when possible. Yesterday, I declared 2025 Fire Prevention Year in New York City to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of National Fire Prevention Week.

In conjunction, I announced the release of Community Risk Profiles for all 59 Community Boards in the city, which provided detailed analysis of each neighborhoods emergency preparedness and vulnerability to fire incidents. Over the course of the year, we will focus on the top 100 most fire prone blocks of the city, providing personalized fire safety education to residents on those blocks, including door to door outreach, community events, and awareness campaign. This is a team effort though and I know that our partners here at the Council will help us fight these challenges together. We will do everything possible to help keep communities safe.

2 Many of the Council Members here today have  
3 hosted FDNY fire safety presentations in your  
4 districts. Fire and Life Safety Outreach was a top  
5 priority for the Fire Department in 2024, and it will  
6 continue to be in 2025. The Fire Safety Education  
7 unit is comprised of active duty members who are  
8 specially trained to conduct community outreach and  
9 educate the public with critical life saving  
10 strategies. They focus on fire prevention and  
11 perform a variety of targeted presentations tailored  
12 to the audience of each respective presentation.

13 In 2024, the Fire Safety Education Team conducted  
14 roughly 3,200 presentations for more than half a  
15 million New Yorkers. This represented a 37 percent  
16 increase over the previous year. We also have a  
17 variety of active mobile cardiopulmonary  
18 resuscitation units. In this unit, FDNY EMTs and  
19 paramedics teach New Yorkers from every corner of the  
20 city to perform compressions only CPR. We have heard  
21 numerous stories about members of the public training  
22 in CPR in one of our programs and then successfully  
23 using the skills that they've learned to save a life  
24 in their own communities.

One example that we like to cite took place in 2023 when two students from the FDNY high school in Brooklyn encountered a friend's family member who was unresponsive and gasping for air. Putting their CPR training into use, the students worked together to perform chest compressions, contact 911 and keep the patient alive while EMS responded and transported the patient to the hospital. These efforts, which are carried out in partnership with the FDNY Foundation assist New Yorkers while helping themselves and their neighbors. You never know when you might be put in a situation to save a life. And I would encourage everyone to participate in a mobile CPR program. I invite you to contact us to schedule fire safety and CPR events as well as to schedule fire and EMS recruiting demonstrations for members of your committee. We are always looking for New Yorkers to join the FDNY and we need your help.

We had successes in the area of Recruiting and Retention in 2024. The Fire Fighter Recruitment Campaign which wrapped up last fall resulted in approximately 34,000 individuals filing to take the fire fighter exam. The data driven targeted campaign, which we called All Heroes Welcome, was a

comprehensive outreach program to reach potential fire fighter candidates from every area of New York City. We advertised in ten languages, using online and social media resources, traditional media such as radio and key community newspapers, as well as an aggressive advertising push on the transit system throughout the city. Of course, our most valuable recruitment asset was our own members and for the Fire Fighter Campaign, we had an impressive group of active duty fire fighters who spoke at schools, houses of worship, community meetings, career fairs, colleges and block parties. I want to thank the Council for partnering with us on this important campaign. A number of Council Members held events in their districts or helped us promote events that we were hosting. I'm encouraged by the fact that eight percent of the filers were women. Recruiting for civil service exams is a process and we know from previous cycles how important it is to keep our candidates interested and prepared, from taking the written exam to completing necessary physical testing and being sure that they enter the academy in shape and ready to train. We use a variety of tools to engage candidates, including mobile academies, online

and in person information sessions, tutorials, workout sessions, outreach from mentors and fraternal organizations and persistent communication to continue pushing them from one step of the process to the next.

We also had a very strong cycle for Emergency Medical Technicians. We had our sights on a goal of 3,000 potential candidates and ultimately we have signed up 3,500. A majority of those test takers signed up to enter the FDNY EMS Trainee Program. These candidates will go through 16 weeks of paid training at the EMS academy and become New York State certified EMTs. At a time when the entire country is facing difficulties in recruiting for EMS, we are literally creating our own new EMTs.

Another positive development for the department was the recent promotion of Deputy Chief Michele Fitzsimmons. After beginning her career with the Department in 2001, Deputy Chief Fitzsimmons is now the highest-ranking female fire officer in FDNY history. Her promotion shatters the glass ceiling for women everywhere and it is an important reminder that promotional opportunities in the FDNY know no limits. She is a model for women and girls

everywhere who will look to the path that she created to see themselves rising through the ranks of the FDNY.

A new challenge that we face this fall was the great proliferation of brush fires. Fighting brush fires is not new or unusual to the FDNY but in late 2024, a prolonged drought and persistent dry conditions led to drastic increases over a short period of time. To give you a sense of that increase, we had roughly 120 brush fires in October and November of 2023. The number more than quadrupled to over 500 fires over the same period of time in 2024. We were proactive in our efforts to combat this surge. Launching the Departments first ever brush fire taskforce. We used innovative approaches to keep the city safe, deploying drone teams to assist fire operations at active fires as well as in a preventive capacity. Scouting areas of potential fires to ensure efficient responses is important and we're doing that.

We were fortunate that these fires didn't cost lives of any New Yorkers and were mostly contained to isolated areas and did not cause widespread damage to buildings or homes. We continue to learn from our



experience here and from the experience of our counterparts in Los Angeles and other parts of the country. As with any challenge, the FDNY faces, I have every confidence that our members will learn and improve and continue to keep New York City safe. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you Commissioner and I'd just like to say that I really commend you for your on the ground approach for the Fire Department and in how we call it, leading from the front. You are on the ground, in fire houses, talking with fire fighters, talking with EMS workers, meeting with leadership and I think that that's the way to go and it's refreshing because I don't think we've had this in the past but now that you've had the position for over six months, what are your primary objectives for the department for your first year?

ROBERT TUCKER: I think that we're meeting several of the primary objectives. The first objective obviously is to keep our members safe and to keep New York City residents safe and we are working hard to do that in many ways. I also wanted to take a CEOs look at the FDNY coming from the business community for 25 years and we have done a

very, very thorough look at the FDNY from A to Z and we've identified areas that are working really well and we've identified areas that need more attention and we're giving that attention where required. So, I think we're on a good track thus far. It's 214 days into it and I feel like we've established a very solid team, many of whom are here today and I thank them for their support.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: I would agree, 100 percent retention is key. So, you had mentioned the testing that's coming up for both EMTs and fire fighters. So, what is the expected timeline for the upcoming fire fighter EMS academies and will there be any delays because of fiscal constraints?

ROBERT TUCKER: We don't anticipate any delays but I'm going to ask Commissioner Noonan to give you the stats on that, Nafeesah.

NAFEESAH NOONAN: Can you hear me now? Thank you. We don't anticipate any delays. We, for EMS specifically, we plan to hold three EMS training classes as well as three fire classes for Fiscal Year 2026. We are on track to fill those classes. We have been focusing on making sure that we are ramping up on our recruitment efforts for EMS because we know

that that has been a challenge in the past and as the Commissioner mentioned, we did pretty well this past winter, of this current winter on our numbers and we are working on focusing on reducing attrition there, right? So not letting much time lag there and making sure that we are reviewing people, getting them to pass their physical exams and into the hiring process. So, we have a class coming up this spring and then another class this fall that we feel confident that we'll be able to fill fully.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Yeah, I've definitely noticed even on social media that there has been a real push for recruitment and notification of tests coming up and preparation classes that are being given. I see that all over social media and kudos to you again, it's something that we haven't seen in the past. I know that you had said that uhm, was it Heros for All? Is that what it was called?

NAFEESAH NOONAN: All Heros Welcome.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: All Heros Welcome. So I think that that really speaks to the diversity issue that has always come up when it comes to the Fire Department. So, Heros for All and being that everyone is welcome to take the test, to pass the

test, to become a fire fighter, to become an emergency medical technician, to become a paramedic and you said eight percent of the filers were women. Can you give me percentages on other demographics?

NAFEESAH NOONAN: Sure, in terms of filers, we saw 4 percent Asian, 25 percent Black and 27 percent Hispanic. We saw about 35 percent of our filers were White. We are now in the process of administering the exam, so we will see where those numbers land at the end of the examination period.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: And you also - I was going to ask about mentorship programs but you spoke to that in your testimony. So, my next question is does the Department employ any part-time or per diem EMTs? If not, how can that help in the staffing issues in the EMS currently?

ROBERT TUCKER: At the present time, no we don't employ any per diem EMTs. As I said, we are really reviewing the emergency medical service from all angles and all options are on the table to make certain that we can provide the best prehospital care to the people of the City of New York, and so, we are thinking in the box, we're thinking out of the box and we're working with the support of the Mayor and

City Hall to be as creative as possible to make sure that New Yorkers, when they call 911 get the prehospital care they need.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Now, I think that your CEO approach to this is very unique and I think that it works. It worked for Bloomberg when he was first elected and continuing the good work that then his predecessor had done and taking the CEO approaches is really I think that will work.

So, I know I couldn't do anything without my staff. The staff is tantamount to what I can get done and I always say, I make the promises and they make it's kept. So, how has the reduction of civilian headcount in the department effected the department?

ROBERT TUCKER: First of all on the critical emergency services that we provide to the New Yorkers, there is no impact. We are always going to staff our fire engines with the minimum manning required and there's no doubt that that will happen 365 days a year so be assured that public safety is not in jeopardy.

On headcount generally where we are down, what I could say is that you know particularly in our Bureau

of Fire Prevention, we are sometimes slower at getting the job done but we get the job done never the less. I would like to get - you know I am working very closely with the budget director and the city has authorized a new set of promotions on the uniform side that's coming in April for Lieutenant and Captains and Fire Marshals, which we're grateful for. The sooner we normalize the - rightsize the headcount, the more quickly overtime will come down and you know certain other efficiencies will be accomplished.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you. End to end response times for life threatening. This is about emergency medical responses increased from 10 minutes and 37 seconds to 11 minutes and 21 seconds in the first four months of 2025, FY25. What do you think the key factors are to contributing to this delay and what steps are being taken to improve response delays?

ROBERT TUCKER: Yeah, again you know I'm almost manically focused on EMS and response times is certainly a critical part of my focus. What I would say is that there's no one thing that's going fix the response time issue. Response times are up for a lot

of reasons and Chief Fields and his staff are working tirelessly again to be creative about ways we can get ambulances on the street. We have several new programs running right now that I'd like to highlight. One is that I now have an EMS officer in certain problematic emergency rooms because where we're seeing significant delays is when our EMT's and paramedics bring patients to emergency departments. We're waiting more than 40, 45 minutes just to deliver the patient. If we can bring that time down by having an EMS officer in the emergency department to help move things along, the ambulance will get back on the street in an available capacity sooner.

Another thing that we're trying, I think, is working rather successfully is our paramedic response units. Those are non-transport units that are getting critical lifesaving paramedic level medicine to our most acutely sick people in New York and once they provide that service, they don't take part in the transportation and so they move on to the next call. We're going to need to find some balance and I'm working very hard on it, on who we bring to the hospital and who are able to divert away from that and our paramedic response units are really helping

move things along faster scene to scene to scene.

Finally, we very recently changed a long standing policy around the ten minute rule we call it. Where patients were essentially using our ambulances like taxi cabs and saying, I want to go to this hospital. Today, we are only going to bring patients in most instances to the closest hospital. That's going to change response times because that too will take a 20 minutes ride or a 30 minute ride to a hospital of your choice, turn it into a 10 minute ride and I'll get those 20 minutes back.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Yeah, I would agree, coming from a hospital network that had a very busy ER and a trauma center and is backed up constantly, I could see how and I you know physically witnessed that your EMT drivers were there just waiting around for their patient to be triaged and then told that they were going to be admitted or whatever and they then left. So, I think that that's very, very positive. Are there any other out of the box ideas that the Fire Department can use to keep ambulances in service, instead of being you know taken out of service? Like we had just at our last hearing, a father testified that his son died of a cardiac arrest from an asthma



attack and there were so many ambulances so close but they were out of service because they were out of fire. So, how do we prevent that from happening in the future?

ROBERT TUCKER: We certainly - I certainly know that story and am heartbroken by the outcome there. As you said, I am a hands on Commissioner. We had a seizure at a 5<sup>th</sup> alarm fire unrelated to the fire yesterday in the Bronx but on a contiguous block. We were able to move units that were assigned to the fire to the seizure and that went very effectively. The Mayor and his staff have given the Fire Department the green light to proceed to build a new EMS computer assisted dispatching platform. The one that we're currently using is at the end of life and has been for a while. We're going to build that right on top of the Fire CAD system that we built internally. I think the more we can get our fire apparatus, of which 50 percent of the runs that our engine companies are going on citywide are now medical. If the more we could get are engines talking to our ambulances and unify the dispatching of those two systems which we're going to start to build ourselves, the more creative we can be and then

1 if we bring in AI and we bring in some of the tech  
2 that's available to us through outside partners like  
3 Oracle and Google and Microsoft just to name a few, I  
4 think we're going to get to the point and time where  
5 we're going to understand based on a data driven  
6 approach where calls potentially are going to come  
7 from before we get them and we're going to be able to  
8 triage them in piece act one and piece act two,  
9 better and more efficiently than we're currently  
10 doing that.

12 I think the technology exists today to dispatch  
13 our ambulances and our fire trucks more efficiently  
14 and I have from the day I walked into FDNY seven  
15 months ago or so, been extremely focused on tech and  
16 tech solutions to bring efficiencies to the fire  
17 department that don't currently exist.

18 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Alright and that would  
19 really and truly help EMS units when they have to  
20 especially during peak hours, have to get and high  
21 demand hours to get from one place to another and I  
22 think that it is time that - well the CAD system we  
23 know has been failing. I give you credit, a lot of  
24 credit for realizing that and working hard to build  
25 your own system knowing what the fire department

needs and I'm sure it will come at a much lesser cost than the CAD system and that's what we're all about. You know working smarter, not harder and we will uhm, I think that's a great idea and people are afraid of AI and they're afraid of any type of tech but there are good ways to use these tools and that's how we have to use them. We have to use them in the right way to make this city better. I'd like to note before we go on that we've been joined Council Member Riley and Council Member Marmorato. I will now yield to Council Member Zhuang who has a question.

COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: Thank you. Thank you Chair. I have a brainstorm question. I had - if you put squatter house fire, three words in Google, I have a house in my district that had a fire six times in past three years. The house had a fire because they have squatter live there and I really appreciate FDNY really go to help the people and I heard they had a couple of people get injured in the job also. I really appreciate your work but are we able to do something to prevent those house that have squatters live there before the fire happens? It's happened six times already and the last time there was a big fire, a woman lost a life there and the fire went to

next door neighbor. Now, six families become - they don't have a home anymore. So, are we able to do something to prevent this type of instance happening?

ROBERT TUCKER: Yeah, thank you very much for your question and obviously that's a concern. I'm going to ask our Chief of Department John Esposito to give you a more specific answer but I want you to know that we have a very robust fire prevention division and the team led by Chief Tom Currao, who is here this morning are out in the community. I talked about some of the statistics but they are out doing fire prevention in commercial buildings, in residential buildings, in store fronts on lithium-ion battery enforcement. The members of the fire prevention team at FDNY including our amazing fire prevention inspectors are doing a fabulous job but on your specific question, I'd like Chief Esposito to address it.

COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: Thank you.

JOHN ESPOSITO: Good morning. So, those type of buildings where we have squatters, we generally consider them to be vacant buildings although there are people living in them. That tells us that they're usually not kept up in good condition and

when there is a fire there, it's extremely dangerous for our fire fighters. When we identify that type of building, we would notify the Department of Buildings to have the building sealed and then you know keep up and follow through to make sure that the building is sealed so that nobody can get inside of that. That building, that's down in Brooklyn correct?

COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: Yes.

JOHN ESPOSITO: So, we've had significant fires there and the most recent fire that was a fatality there as well.

COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: Yes, yes.

JOHN ESPOSITO: So, you know we can keep up and identify the buildings but it does seem to be a problem.

COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: Is that anyway - this is just brainstorm. Anyway you guys can patrol the area or NYPD can patrol that area more?

JOHN ESPOSITO: We're not always able to patrol. If we do become aware of it, as we are with this one, we can notify Department of Buildings that it's sealed.

COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: Okay, even if it's sealed, people still break in.

JOHN ESPOSITO: Yeah, I mean, I can if you - after the hearing give me the address, I'll work with Commissioner Tisch and her team to provide some additional patrol over there. You know the fire department is not a - in the patrol business but we partner with the NYPD every single day and work very, I work very closely with the police commissioner and her staff and speak to them regularly and I'm happy to work with her and her team. They're doing a great job and we want together on this.

COUNCIL MEMBER ZHUANG: Great, thank you so much. Thank you all for doing great work. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Next, we'll hear from Council Member Marmorato and then Riley.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Hi, good morning.

JOHN ESPOSITO: Hi.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: First, I'd like to thank you all for your service. I come from a family of Fire Fighters. My dad was chief in the 3<sup>rd</sup> battalion. He retired about 2004, 2005, so I appreciate all the work you do and God Bless your families for giving you guys to us here in the city to protect us. Thank you.

I just have a couple questions. I've been told that the Bronx is the only borough without a dedicated hazmat engine. Why is that and how can this be rectified and who currently responds to these type of natural disasters?

JOHN ESPOSITO: So, thank you for that question. So, yes, currently right now, we have five engine companies spread throughout the city that are considered hazmat technician units. In addition, we have eight squad companies, including two in the Bronx that are hazmat technician units. So, currently those squad companies would perform the hazmat technician duties along with hazmat Company One which comes out of Queens and covers the whole city. With that said, we are proposing that engine company 67 will be designated a hazmat technician unit and they will be tasked with covering the entire Bronx so that each borough will have a hazmat technician engine dedicated to covering that borough.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Where is 67 located?

JOHN ESPOSITO: 67 engine is located in the 7<sup>th</sup> division, which is in Manhattan but they're very quickly across the river into the Bronx and they would be tasked with covering the Bronx.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay, thank you. Now let's talk about the auxiliary radio communications. I've seen reports that there's interference in high rise buildings and fire fighters are unable to communicate. Now this really upsets me because I remember during 911 that my father was telling me that they had the same issues. I think it was 18 truck by Delancy that they knew something was wrong and I think the lieutenant at the time, he told me a story that because there was no communication, he decided to make that decision to get his guys out and you know it did end up saving their lives. Why is this still happening and how can we make it better?

JOHN ESPOSITO: So, after 911 and you're absolutely correct. On September 11, 2001, we were severely handicapped with our communications ability in the World Trade Center. Since that, our communications have greatly improved.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay.

JOHN ESPOSITO: Including the Auxiliary Radio Communications System, which is in the fire code that high rise buildings need to install this in their buildings. What we have learned as the years have gone on is that we have better ways to improve our



communications. So, the Fire Department is proposing ARCS 2.0 which will eliminate that interference that occasionally occurs. The interference occurs when a system in one building is turned on and we're trying to operate another building. It is possible for it to happen. It has not hampered our efforts fighting fire but to avoid that, we have a subsequent - we have other plans that will require code revision that will make it easier for the fire department and easier for the building owners and still yield the result that we want, which is great communications in high rise buildings and large area buildings.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Yeah, we can't have any mistakes going forward. We got to protect you guys. Now, we know that the NYPD has a lack of cars for patrol and staff officers to use them. Does the FDNY also have that problem?

ROBERT TUCKER: You know we have a big fleet no doubt. We certainly, there are areas where we could use more cars absolutely in EMS in particular. Uhm, the demands on our fleet are high. We do have over 200 mechanics but nevertheless, riding around 24/7 in this city creates a lot of wear and tear on our fleet.

2 And so we could always while we have a pipeline  
3 that exists currently of apparatus that we buy and  
4 the city has a schedule you know they've provided us  
5 of when and how we purchase firefighting apparatus,  
6 other aspects of our fleet. We could always use  
7 more.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: And what is like the  
9 life expectancy for like a truck or a ladder and kind  
10 of like a ballpark number for like a cost?

11 ROBERT TUCKER: Uhm Commissioner Christoff has  
12 those numbers and she's going to give them to you  
13 with the average age of our engines, our pumpers, our  
14 ladder companies. We have several different ladder  
15 companies; some you know rear tiller - Commissioner  
16 Christoff will give you all that.

17 LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: Sure so for fire apparatus,  
18 the life cycle for those is actually part of the UFOA  
19 contract. So, we replace the vehicles used by engine  
20 companies, pumpers before they turn 12 years old and  
21 we replace ladders before they turn 11 years old.  
22 Right now, the average age of our pumpers is a little  
23 less than six and a half years. We have a couple  
24 different kinds of ladders, as the Commissioner was  
25 referring to. So, our 75 foot tower ladders, average

age is about six and a half years. 95 foot ladders, a little over nine years. For TDA's, it's a little over ten years and for rear mount ladders, a little over eight years.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay so when it comes to their life expectancy or end of life, will you have the money saved up to purchase new and when you do purchase new, do you purchase like a whole fleet?

LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: We do purchase sizable quantities at a time. So, right now, we actually have 200 plus pieces of fire apparatus on order. Unfortunately, we saw post COVID that a lot of the timeframes for getting those vehicles back from the manufacturers have increased substantially. So, right now we do have some vehicles that are over age from what our mandated replacement cycles are. Not because we didn't have the funding to put in the orders. We have been putting in the orders on time but because the timeframe from when we put in the order to when we receive the vehicle has lengthened considerably.

So, we're actually accelerating. We have been accelerating those orders, so that we're putting in

the orders earlier, so that we're more likely to get the vehicles on time.

ROBERT TUCKER: I think it's important also to add that while we have a real schedule vis-a-vis the apparatus. The more the city budgets to increase our headcount, for example in the Bureau of Fire Prevention, the more cars we need to increase to get those people out in the field doing the inspections. And so, what I'm not seeing is a direct correlation on that and I'm trying to work very productively with the budget director on fleet and fleet size because we are sometimes hampered. The work gets done, it just gets done slower because for example, we don't have cars to give our fire inspectors to go out into the field. So, they use public transportation. When they do that, it happens, it just happens slower.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Where is the biggest budget deficit?

ROBERT TUCKER: Around fleet?

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Hmm, hmm.

ROBERT TUCKER: It's not you know I think the city has focused very intensively on engine and ladder company apparatus. I think response cars, first line supervisor cars, chiefs cars for example,

but we're in - you know we're really pushing hard. We've got good coms going with the Deputy Mayor's Office for Public Safety on this and with the budget director and I believe there will be some progress on that.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: I think my brother used to drive the Chief Officer around and if they drove anything like him, their life expectancy is not going to be very long at all.

ROBERT TUCKER: As I said, there's a lot of wear and tear on our vehicles. Some of the response vehicles that our Chiefs are in are at the end of life and you know really from a - we want those cars to be new and in tip top shape because again, talking about correlating, our vehicle maintenance costs go down if the cars are newer. It's when the cars have you know 150,000 miles on them and you need to replace a transmission. That becomes less cost effective.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Yeah, absolutely I could totally see that. Now, do you find that there is enough funding allocated to mandates for fire apparatus replacements? Is it kind of -

2 ROBERT TUCKER: Yeah, as Commissioner Christoff  
3 mentioned, fire apparatus and the purchase of that is  
4 mandated in our fire fighters contract, I'm sorry  
5 fire officers contract and uhm there was a really  
6 terrific article in the New York Times recently about  
7 fire apparatus and sort of the business of building  
8 fire trucks all over the country and I think that you  
9 know New York is doing than the national average but  
10 nevertheless there is a shortage of fire, of new  
11 apparatus and we have the orders in so there's no  
12 complaint from FDNY on purchasing fire trucks going  
13 forward. As Commissioner Christoff said, we have  
14 over 200 pieces of apparatus currently on order.  
15 What our complaint is that the companies that we've  
16 order it from aren't getting it to us fast enough but  
17 that as the New York Times highlighted is a national  
18 problem.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay, so I think that  
20 - so what is an emergency crew truck? Because I know  
21 that our officers reached out to and I think every  
22 single borough is going to have one, is that correct?

23 ROBERT TUCKER: That sounds great so we'll take  
24 them.  
25

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: No, I can only afford  
3 my borough at least try to find funding for my  
4 borough but what does the emergency crew truck do?

5 ROBERT TUCKER: Maybe our fleet maintenance.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay.

7 ROBERT TUCKER: Yeah, yeah, so our fleet  
8 maintenance crews are doing really commendable work.  
9 There is a lot of work as I said fleet maintenance is  
10 a big, big part of what we do. I actually was at the  
11 5<sup>th</sup> alarm in the Bronx yesterday. We send a large  
12 contingent of auto mechanics and fleet maintenance of  
13 people to multiple alarm fires because they're you  
14 know in the freezing cold apparatus you know can  
15 break at the scene and we need them there. We need  
16 vehicles to get them there and we need vehicles that  
17 can bring with it certain parts and equipment to fix  
18 right at the scene those vehicles, our firefighting  
19 apparatus. And so, what I think you're talking about  
20 is those types of vehicles.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay, alright, Chair,  
22 can I just have two more questions?

23 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Absolutely.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay. What can my  
25 office as City Council provide funding for your

officers? I know that we try to help with structural at the fire houses. We try to help with the upgrades but are there anything that we can use our discretionary funding to assist with the fire officers? I don't know if it's like, if we're allowed to do like I know you guys have washer and dryers that break very easily. Like is there anything that you could think of off the top of your head that we can help fund?

ROBERT TUCKER: Sure, what I would say first of all is thank you. The entire Council has been incredibly generous. We will ask you for help now. We - we - there are things that the Council can help with. They're not large you know major projects but Council Member Schulman called me the other day and asked me if she could replace the door of a fire house in her district. That's incredibly generous and we appreciate that and even though it doesn't - you know when we're talking about an almost \$3 billion budget you know that's a couple of hundred thousand dollars. It's needle moving to me and I'm deeply grateful that you would ask. We have projects. We were in Queens the other day with the Borough President. The Chair was there, so was



Council Member Schulman. I made a presentation and left with \$3.5 million of the Borough Presidents generosity to buy 15 response vehicles for Queens County. If I knew I could go to any borough, which I go to regularly anyway and come home with a duffle bag full of money like that for projects that are really lifesaving, I would be there. So, can I came back to you with some individual projects and perhaps - great, so in addition to - so thank you Jason and thank you for all of your work that you're doing for us. So, we asked you for the crew truck but we also asked you for a command car for EMS.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Yup.

ROBERT TUCKER: And believe it or not, command cars in EMS, that's like our lieutenants are in those and that's the first line supervisor. They're paramedics. That's really, really important and I have found that we are very short on command cars. Not because we don't have them but because they're broken. And so, that lieutenant who we expect to be out in the field supervising EMT's and paramedics then ends up staying in quarters. That's not the best use of her or his time, and so, if you give us one, I promise you it will be in your district.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay definitely. We  
3 actually through our Metro North rezoning, we were  
4 able to secure \$1.5 million for engine 72 for the  
5 façade and the roof. So, hopefully - the money is  
6 there, so just start working on the city and being a  
7 pain in the neck to try to make sure that they follow  
8 through with this.

9 ROBERT TUCKER: My specialty, thank you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: One last curve ball.  
11 Did you ever name the robot dog? The last one?

12 ROBERT TUCKER: We'll get back to you on that.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: My suggestion is  
14 Chief.

15 ROBERT TUCKER: Oh, I like it, okay when we come  
16 see you with the requests we'll figure out and  
17 update.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Of course, absolutely.

19 ROBERT TUCKER: Okay, sounds great, thank you.  
20 Thank you for your questions and thanks to your dad.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Thanks Chair.

22 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: I suggest name him Rocky  
23 after my Boston terrier but Council Member Riley.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you Chair. Good  
25 morning Commissioner and good morning to your team.

ROBERT TUCKER: Good morning.

COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: I kind of want to piggyback off my colleague Council Member Marmorato with speaking about technology. How is technology being integrated into the fire house upgrades to improve response time and fire fighter safety?

ROBERT TUCKER: So, uhm I said it already. I'll say it again. I think that technology is really the key to lots of unsolved puzzles within the FDNY and I'm extremely focused on not only reviewing, understanding and operationalizing the existing technology within the Department, which would tell you is impressive but I would also say that there's a lot of work that needs to be done and I am spending a lot of time working internally with our folks in the Borough of Technology Services but also meeting with outside vendors and other fire departments and public safety agencies to see what they're doing that we can learn from. We don't have to invent the wheel. We sometimes can just look to our neighbors and other partners. I sent a delegation of chief officers including the Chief of Department out to California to meet with the Chief of the LA County Fire Department during at the very end of their horrific

brush fires and wild land fires that they suffered through to see what technology they were deploying. We are using drones and robots. We are you know have computer dispatching. We have fiber going into every fire house now, so we've upped the speed with which we can communicate and every second counts and fiber is making it faster to get messaging from our 911 ACTs to the firehouses. But I'm not done yet. There have got to be things that we could do to make it better, make it faster. You know we are open to reviewing and understanding technology. We're not afraid of it. We are embracing things like AI and the future of how AI will impact the FDNY and I think it will impact us.

We're talking about things like encryption in our radios. So, we're really at the cutting edge but we want to even get better and the Deputy Mayor's Office of Public Safety hosts a technology committee meeting where the Chief Tech Officer is from various agencies that fall under the Deputy Mayor meet regularly to discuss what's going on in their agency. So, I think we've got some learning happening internally. We learned from our sister agencies within the Adam's Administration and I think we're spending a lot of

time because of my experience in the last 25 years before I came to the fire department meeting with partners from the biggest tech companies in the world.

COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you Commissioner. How is the department improving living in working conditions in fire houses, particularly in high demand areas within this budget?

ROBERT TUCKER: Yeah the average age of our fire houses is about 100 years. That's both a beautiful thing and a challenge. We have several ongoing projects to upgrade the physical space of our fire houses, which include gender neutral and accommodations and accommodations for female firefighters. That population is growing and I'm very proud of that but we need to accommodate for that. We are somewhat victims of our own real estate because these beautiful old firehouses are exactly that. We have about 25 or so firehouses, maybe just a little less, firehouses that have a repair need. We have many, many more firehouses with smaller repair needs. We have lots of projects going on right now to upgrade firehouses.

Getting back to the Chair excuse me about a project in Far Rockaway, we are going to hopefully get a shovel in the ground on that firehouse in August. You probably know but it's worth repeating, those projects aren't done by the FDNY. They're done in consultation but we're not ultimately responsible for building new fire houses. I'd like to have more responsibility over repairing our firehouses and not going outside to that. We have people internally in the fire department who are capable of that. That's an area where we might benefit from increased headcount because of the cost. We might see decreased costs on that but you know again, I've been very transparent with the budget director. He's been very, very open and willing to discuss things like that with me where the curves connect and I've gotten a lot of cooperation from OMB on seeing it a little bit differently than how we've been doing it in the past.

But for the project in Far Rockaway, that's going to be built by a third party, not by us but fire houses are the older they get, the more repair they could use.

COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you Commissioner.

Just three more quick questions. The first one with fire houses, if you don't have the answer today that's fine if you could just get back to me. If you could provide an assessment of the current conditions of the fire housing in District 12 in my Council District. I want to be very supportive and helpful regarding the budget to see if I can help those fire houses out, so that's not really a question. It's just -

ROBERT TUCKER: Thank you very much for that offer and we'll - I got pens on both sides.

COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: I see it. I see it working.

ROBERT TUCKER: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Next question. I wanted to talk about diversity within the fire department. Do you have any data on the demographics with diversity in the fire department right now?

ROBERT TUCKER: Yes. So, that you know the fire department is under a consent decree operating with the federal monitor and it's extremely important to me that we are more than compliant in that area. I am pleased to say that in the 214 days that I've been

the fire commissioner, I think we, the department has made very significant progress, not just under me and not just under my predecessor and her predecessors but there is progress and there is still work to be done. Nafeesah, do you want to give the numbers, please?

NAFEESAH NOONAN: Sure if you're speaking overall or were you specifically looking for titles?

COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Overall.

NAFEESAH NOONAN: Okay, uhm if we're speaking about overall, we have about our White male population is about 54 percent. We are seeing about a total of three percent women and this is overall fire, EMS and civilian. Our Hispanic population is about 18 percent. Our Black population is about 12 percent overall, and uhm our Asian population is a little over 4 percent.

COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you. And definitely Commissioner, I appreciate the work that you and your predecessors have been doing. Numbers are increasing, not rapidly as we would like them to increase but would love to continue partnering with you to see if we could do some outreach within our communities, working with our high schools maybe to



let them know how to go about taking the exam as well. And my last question, fire prevention is something extremely important. We want to make sure that these fires are being prevented. How much of the FDNY budget is allocated to fire prevention and what is the allocation for exactly?

ROBERT TUCKER: Commissioner.

LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: So, we might have to get back to you on the budget numbers because I don't know if I have them in front of me but I certainly can give you headcount numbers.

COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Okay.

LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: So of our overall budgeted headcount, that's a little over 17,000. Obviously most of that is uniformed and EMS after that but our largest civilian group is fire prevention. So, we are budgeted for about 552. We have about 522 active right now. Some of those vacancies are in the fire protection inspector title series. We're looking to have a class in the coming months. Fire protection inspectors make up about 350 of the 522 and the other titles you know range from various engineering titles, various project management and plan review

titles as well as like clerical and administrative support.

COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you.

ROBERT TUCKER: I think it's important just to note that many of those titles are generating revenue for the city and so, I think it - you know I don't know if they're revenue neutral but they're out there performing tasks that are generating revenue for the city.

COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: We appreciate that. We need as much revenue as possible for our city so we do appreciate that. Commissioner and your team, thank you so much for being here today. Commissioner would love when you do get those fire houses, if you want to come to the district and we maybe could tour them together to see the capital improvements they need but thank you.

ROBERT TUCKER: Consider it done. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you. I just wanted to say, you spoke about the meeting that you held in Queens. It was certainly unique and you had Council Members there that were from this Committee that were in Queens and also Community Boards and the Borough President and the fact that you were there was as I

1 said very unique and yes, we did realize a get from  
2 that meeting but you also mentioned the fire house.  
3 Had that meeting not taken place, the Borough  
4 President, the Community Board and our office would  
5 not have known about that shovel going in the ground  
6 in August. In fact, we were of the impression that  
7 it was underfunded and wouldn't be happening but  
8 because of you, your First Deputy Commissioner and  
9 Jason Shelly did the background work, and I want to  
10 thank my Chief of Staff Phyllis Inserillo for working  
11 with you on that. We found out that there will be a  
12 shovel in the ground.  
13

14 So, that type of dialogue, that type of meeting  
15 in smaller groups that you are really in favor of,  
16 really does get a lot of work done and there out of  
17 that meeting, we walked out not thinking oh, well  
18 just another meeting. That meeting really garnered a  
19 lot of support for the FDNY and also you wound up  
20 walking away with money like you said and the Borough  
21 President is committed to it. And he called me  
22 yesterday and he was so happy about the fire house  
23 because it really does need to be replaced and I  
24 thank you for the work that you did in the  
25 background. So, I just, I want to get back to a

fleet maintenance. Of the 200 items of fleet that you have outstanding. Is there a timeline for when they will come?

LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: Yes, so we're currently receiving an order of rear mounts and tower ladders is coming in now and we expect that squads and high pressure pumpers will be following that but we do have estimated dates for all the items on order. They're just a little bit longer than they had been historically.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: What's longer?

LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: In some cases, it's relatively short but in other cases it is a little bit longer. Hold on. So, right now we have 7 pumpers and 63 ladders that are behind schedule. And so, we are tracking those with what the estimated delivery dates are and what the original dates were. I mean in some cases, like five or six months beyond when we were originally anticipating that they would come in.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: And do you think that's because and they're critical delays let's face it, because we need this apparatus on the street. Do you think that in addition to the backlog because of

COVID but we're now in 2025, do you think a lot of that is because of procurement right here from OMB? The procurement process?

LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: I think in general we've had a lot of cooperation in terms of putting in our orders earlier. We've had to do accelerations in the last few capital plans and we'll probably have to continue doing that in order to get our orders in even sooner to make sure that ultimately the vehicle delivery lines up. But we have been working with OMB to accelerate those things as we approach them.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay and so a lot of the fleet is outdated? So what happens when an apparatus is outdated and it has to remain in service?

ROBERT TUCKER: I'm going to ask Chief Esposito to talk about our spare fleet and etc..

JOHN ESPOSITO: Sure, so even though some of our fleet is outdated, we don't see a safety concern with that. Every apparatus that's in service is inspected by the firefighters and the officers twice a day. So when an apparatus is outdated, they can only respond to emergencies. So a report of a fire, a report of a medical call, they would respond. They are not able

to use that apparatus for other things such as building inspection or hydrant inspection.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay and how much funding is allocated in this current budget for fire truck maintenance replacement and how does this compare to prior years?

LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: Yeah, so we don't separate out the maintenance funding by fire trucks and ambulances, so kind of combined to maintain our fleet. As the Commissioner had mentioned earlier, we have about 240 staff and our OTPS budget right now is at \$42.5 million. Some of the OTPS money that we got is part of the preliminary budget actually went towards that to increase the amount that we had available for things like auto parts.

That OTPS amount is a little bit higher than prior years so we spent you know \$31 million in FY22, \$37 million in '23 and \$39 million in '24, so our budget has gone up a little bit in '25. It does go down again in '26, so that's something that we're looking at and it might need to be adjusted in the future. In terms of sort of vehicle replacements, that happens through the capital budget. Overall in the 11 year window from '25 to '35, we had \$761

million funded for vehicles in our budget. That includes \$430 million for frontline fire apparatus, \$151 million for supervisory specialty and support vehicles, and \$181 million for initial equipment on all of our vehicles. Oddly enough the capital funding for ambulances is not in our capital budget, it is in the Health + Hospitals capital budget. But the are funded \$462 million across the plan window for our ambulance replacements.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Why is that since EMS is part of the Fire Department? Why doesn't the fire - why isn't the Administration allowing the Fire Department to embrace EMS fully and incorporate it fully, so that it's part of your budget?

LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: So there are long and complicated historical reasons why that have to do with Medicaid funding but there have also been changes to Medicaid funding recently and so, that is something that we're looking at for the future, whether this is still something that makes financial sense.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Yeah, I mean when it comes to EMS, they can't just be a little bit pregnant. They are either part of the FDNY or they're not. So,

we'll - I'll do whatever we need to do, however I can help to make sure that they are respected, get their pay parity and become full fledged members. You know even through funding for their vehicles.

As long as we're on the topic of their vehicles, what is the average mileage and where on the FDNY's ambulance fleet and how often are ambulances being replaced?

LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: So, the average mileage for our ambulance fleet is 36,080 miles right now and we aim to replace ambulances every five to six years.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: And how does the FDNY ensure that ambulances are adequately maintained to handle the increasing demand for EMS service?

LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: So they're on a 45 day preventative maintenance cycle.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay so my next question has to do with budget. So, what is the current budget for ambulance repairs and replacement? Does that come from your budget or H+H?

LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: That comes from our budget. So, it's the same budget that I talked about before, the same 240 staff and OTPS.



CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay and have there been advancements such as electrical hybrid models? And is the FDNY considering that for its ambulance fleet to reduce emissions and improve efficiency?

LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: So, all of our current ambulances are equipped with auxiliary power units that work as an anti-idling measure. They work with solar panels to keep the batteries charged and to minimize idling time.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay.

ROBERT TUCKER: Just so you know Chair, we're trying in this beta paramedic response unit, we are trying to use battery operated vehicles for that. It's an experiment. You know that's complicated because we don't have charging at every ambulance station but we're seeing how that's working in an attempt to go as green as possible.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: I appreciate your answer. I'd like to mention that we've been joined by Council Member Feliz. Just before I - Council Member Feliz has a question but I have just one follow up here. How many fire houses and stations would you say are in need of immediate repair and do you have cost estimates?

2 ROBERT TUCKER: Commissioner Christoff.

3 LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: I think we would have to  
4 follow up on that. I mean we do have information on  
5 outstanding work orders, fire houses and what we know  
6 to be our priorities for you know replacements and  
7 reconstruction projects, which we generally work down  
8 in priority order given the funding that we have  
9 available but we can follow up with specifics.

10 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: That would be great because  
11 often times and I visit the fire houses often. I do  
12 see they're in desperate need of rooves and they have  
13 leaks in their changing rooms, in the locker rooms,  
14 in the showers, water is running when it shouldn't  
15 and we were able to mitigate a lot of those issues  
16 only because our office got involved. So, what is  
17 the timeline for when a complaint is made about an  
18 issue structurally to when it gets fixed? And if you  
19 don't have that, you can get back to me with that as  
20 well. You can follow up with that.

21 I now yield to Council Member Feliz.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Thank you so much Chair.  
23 I just want to start by thanking you all for your  
24 service. Every single day we see members of the FDNY  
25 putting your lives at risk to save people in all of

our communities and our city. So I just want to start by thanking you all, you and your team for all the work that you do for the people of this city.

A few questions about fires in general but specifically e-bikes but I guess the first question is more of a general one. Can you give us numbers regarding how many fires did we have in 2024? Can you give us a breakdown by borough if you have that and also give us a breakdown by borough if you have that? And also give us information about the top five causes. I'm sure e-bikes is one of them.

ROBERT TUCKER: By boroughs?

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Uh yup, maybe total for 2024 and then yeah, breakdown by borough.

ROBERT TUCKER: Give me one second and I'm going to give you the answer.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Take your time.

ROBERT TUCKER: You're talking about structural fires?

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Yes.

ROBERT TUCKER: Got it. Let us follow up with you on that. I mean we don't have - you know we have it broken down but not as specifically as you've asked and so we'll come back you on that.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: What about total amount of fires in 2024?

ROBERT TUCKER: The issue that we're having is you know are you talking about responses? Is it a garbage can that's on fire or a fire that you want us to add in? That's what they're fumbling around with now, car fires, etc., but we have some - yeah, I mean exactly. This is from the Mayor's Management Report? Yeah, so do you want to just give him what's in the MMR and then we'll come back to you more specifically as it breaks down with structural fires.

LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: Yeah, so as reported in the MMR so for last Fiscal Year FY24, the number of structural residential fires was 19,544. The number of structural nonresidential fires was 4,465. The number of nonstructural fires was 12,260.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: That's a lot of fires. Uhm, last year and the year before we passed legislation to strengthen FDNY's enforcement powers on the issue of e-bikes. So, can you talk to us about what systems we have in place? Also, what triggers that system including, for example calling 311 to report unlawful sale for e-bikes? Talk to us about that system a little bit.

2 ROBERT TUCKER: Yeah, well first of all, I want  
3 to thank you for all the work that the Council has  
4 done in helping us fight e-bike fires. We have  
5 reported a 67 percent decrease in fire deaths. We  
6 had a very successful campaign around the you know  
7 educating the public on ways to store and charge e-  
8 mobility devices hopefully outside of their homes.  
9 We have worked very closely with UL to try to get  
10 more certified batteries into the system and where  
11 we're seeing big problems is with uncertified  
12 batteries that tend to be less expense and therefore  
13 more attractive for purchasers. Uhm, we have a  
14 lithium-ion battery taskforce that's out in the field  
15 doing all different kinds of enforcement including  
16 working with the Department of buildings to vacate  
17 seven locations that we deem to be so dangerous that  
18 the building had to be shut. We are not ever going  
19 to stop talking about lithium-ion battery fires,  
20 which we see a lot of because they're extremely  
21 dangerous to our members and they're extremely  
22 dangerous to the public and uhm what we really need  
23 in addition to the help that you and the state have  
24 given us is federal legislation to stop the import of  
25 these batteries at ports and to give one agency, a

1 federal agency the authority to oversee the  
2 regulation around these batteries because the great  
3 work that the City Council has done in helping us,  
4 which has yielded much better numbers, isn't as  
5 effective if you can just go across the river to New  
6 Jersey and buy something that's legal there and not  
7 legal here. So, the federal legislation will really  
8 help us and we were close, then we weren't but I  
9 think we're back on track again to get that  
10 legislation passed in Washington DC.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Yup, yup, thank you for  
13 the information. Can you give us information about -  
14 or maybe compare the 2023 and 2024 number? Something  
15 you mentioned, there's been a decrease of like 65  
16 percent in deaths. Can you give us the numbers on  
17 that and also the amount of fires. My understanding  
18 is that the deaths are down but the fires are pretty  
19 much; the numbers are pretty much the same if I'm  
20 correct.

21 ROBERT TUCKER: So, in 2021 we had four deaths.  
22 In 2022 we has six deaths. In 2023 we had 18 deaths  
23 related all to lithium-ion battery fires. And then  
24 happily in 2024, we had six but I say happily in  
25 that, that's the 67 percent decrease but be aware and

assured that we are not going to stop talking about this till zero is the number.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay, what about numbers regarding general fires, regardless if there was a death or not. Do you have any numbers on that? If not you could send it over after.

ROBERT TUCKER: So, you're talking about non-yeah, in the MMR.

LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: Yeah, the civilian fire fatalities as reported in the MMR. So, the number for the year prior to last year FY23 was 102 and the number for last fiscal year FY24 was 74.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Hmm, okay.

ROBERT TUCKER: And I would just note, I think it's current that we're at 22 right now. We were at 19 this time last year. That's not a happy trend.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Okay and last question, actually two more questions. How big is the team that does inspections regarding these defective e-bikes that are being sold? How big is the team? How big is the budget? And also any - do you think what we have is enough at least to be able to properly enforce or do you think more is needed?

ROBERT TUCKER: I'm going to let Commissioner Christoff give you specific numbers but you know again, where we're talking about the type of danger that we're talking about to members of the department and to the 8.3 million New Yorkers and numbers that are still you know six in 2024, I think that uhm, I think that uhm, you know the more we have the better. I think that you should be assured that we are deploying resources both from our Bureau of Fire Prevention, from the Fire Operations and from Fire Prevention at this very proactively.

But you know I think it would be a mistake to sit here when we've had six deaths in 2024 and 18 in 2023 and say we've got this thing solved. We're far from that but Commissioner.

LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: Yeah, so just to echo that, you know this is something that all of our fire companies are looking out for when they're out in the field and it's something that all of our fire inspectors are also looking for but we do have a special inspection team in fire prevention of five staff that focus on this.

JOHN ESPOSITO: And our Bureau of Fire Investigation works with other city agencies to



conduct the enforcement of the bike shops and the other stores that sell these batteries and distribute the batteries that don't comply with our rules and laws.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Alright, thank you so much. A final question/point yeah, definitely agree we need federal legislation on this issue. We could pass a million laws on the issue but if people could just go to not even New Jersey but Yonkers, anywhere outside of the City of New York and just purchase these e-bikes, we'll go back to square one. So definitely agree with you n that.

Final question. Uhm anyway we could strengthen FDNY's enforcement powers or do you think that what we have now is enough based on the issue that we have, which is you know a City of New York being effected but also being effected due to other cities and states around us bringing in e-bikes unlawfully and causing the issue?

ROBERT TUCKER: You know I think the Council has been great and I think the Department has really reacted well to the laws that you have helped us with. I don't know that it's your specific question but I'm very proud of the FDNY's response lately to

parking on fire hydrants. This has been an absolute disaster in the last few months. We had two people killed in a fire in Brooklyn. A car was directly on a fire hydrant in front of the fire building. We had two people killed in the Bronx in a fire in a temple, a car parked directly on a fire hydrant and I'm very proud of the people in FDNY that creatively came up with the concept to serve a criminal summons on the owner of the vehicle. First time we ever used that statute and a judge in the Bronx has the discretion to fine up to \$5,000 and fine the owner of that vehicle \$4,000. The Council should know that in yesterdays five alarm fire in the Bronx, we were confronted with a vehicle parked on the fire hydrant. We personally served that owner as well and that will find its way through the Bronx criminal courts. We hope although we did not have a death, we hope that the court finds that behavior to be abhorrent and we ask all New Yorkers to please stop parking on fire hydrants. Seconds count and we need to get water on fires fast and when we have cars parked on fire hydrants, one you can't see the hydrant and two, you certainly can't attach a hose as quickly and effectively to it when a car is right next to it.

COUNCIL MEMBER FELIZ: Right, yeah, alright thank you so much. No more questions. Thank you Chair and thank you all in the FDNY for your service.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA Thank you. Council Member Riley.

COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you Chair. Commissioners, one more question. We've heard anecdotal reports of backlogs in 911 response times. While we understand that 911 operators are not within your budget, can you provide insight into delays between constituent calls and operators actually answering?

ROBERT TUCKER: I'm just, I'm just, I just want to make sure I answer your question. So are you asking about the amount of time it takes between the call and the call answering.

COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Yes, the call and the call answering and then you guys actually responding because we're hearing issues that uhm, constituents are calling 911 and sometimes they're getting the voicemail while things are actually taking place and happening. So we just wanted your you know input on that, even though 911 operators are not part of your budget.

ROBERT TUCKER: Well, yeah I mean, stories like that are horrifying to me and I'm willing to work with my other agency Commissioners to you know colleagues to address that. No one should get voicemail when they call 911. Obviously we do have people calling 911 that we'd rather call 311 or some other you know make a different type of call but we want every single person that calls 911 for FDNY services to get a call taker on the phone who is knowledgeable, who is empathetic and who is capable of dispatching the appropriate apparatus or ambulance to the scene as quickly as possible.

So, there's no excuse to get voicemail when you call 911.

COUNCIL MEMBER RILEY: Thank you Commissioner and just would love your partnership and working with other agencies to make sure that we can address this the right way because as you said, nobody should call 911 and get a voicemail. So thank you Chair for the last question.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Yeah I mean I have called 911 myself and was put on hold and so, and we have addressed it at other hearings but it is a problem and it could be part and parcel of why there is an

increase in delayed response times. But the citywide response time to structural fires has increased from five minutes and ten seconds to five minutes and 25 seconds. In addition to say 911 calls, would you say that the dispatch times - would you say that there has been an increase in response times due to street designs, redesigns, traffic congestion, bicycle lanes, bus lanes etc., etc.?

ROBERT TUCKER: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Yeah, it's a simple answer. We all know it. So congestion pricing. How does the FDNY anticipate NYC's congestion pricing plan and how will it impact the fire fighter response times, particularly in heavily trafficked areas during peak hours?

ROBERT TUCKER: Well look, congestion pricing is here and we're dealing with it on several fronts. I don't have a good answer for you on whether it's impacted response times in a positive way or in a negative way. There's no doubt for us it's a challenge because we assign fire fighters and fire officers and the EMT's and paramedics in the congestion pricing zone and now they're paying a toll to come to work. We're certainly hearing about that

from our members. We have had worked closely with the Deputy Mayor for Operations and with OMB and we are putting in place a reimbursement function for those members who we detail in and out of the congestion pricing zone but we're working closely with the UFA and UFOA on this. I think that we're productively having conversations around it. We are - we have in place a transportation mechanism now for fire fighters who require transportation in and out of the congestion pricing zone from their fire house to the detailed fire house. We currently detail about 150 fire fighters a day from the home fire house to either across the floor we call it or to another fire house. Not always in and out of a district but there are a lot of details to moving fire fighters around so that we have minimum manning and congestion pricing is something that we're working with and around.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: So, the reimbursement, which I think is great that they would be reimbursed. Is that something that's in effect now or you're looking to have it be in effect?

ROBERT TUCKER: We have City Hall's cooperation on reimbursement for detailed fire fighters only.

So, you know yeah, going into the congestion pricing zone. So, assuming you go from one area in Queens, for example, into midtown Manhattan we will reimburse you for that. That mechanism is getting into place as we speak and City Hall has given us the green light to move forward on that reimbursement but there's more work to be done.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Right because if I heard correctly, EMS workers and fire fighters can be moved at any time from one fire house to another to cover. So, then they would be going in and out of the congestion zone again, so that's a problem.

ROBERT TUCKER: Yeah, it's less of a problem in EMS because they're moving in EMS vehicles but our fire fighters are not moving in fire department vehicles.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Right that's a problem, okay. We're going to talk about the promotional exams. So, what impact has EMS to fire fighter promotional exams had on EMS staffing levels? And how does FDNY plan to address any resulting headcount gaps? And I know that we have classes coming out so I was very happy to hear that the amount of people who have applied, thank you for mentioning that is

astounding. So I imagine that is one way that you're working towards closing those gaps?

ROBERT TUCKER: Yeah, so the next three promotional classes into the fire academy are almost exclusively going to be EMT's and paramedics coming from those ranks. As you heard from Commissioner Noonan, we are - we recruited about 3,500 people to take the test. Ultimately it's our experience that about ten percent of those people will end up becoming EMTs. So, that's about 350. You don't have to be an economics major to figure out that 1,000 out and 350 in leaves a gap. And so, and so we're concerned about that no doubt and we're thinking about ways to fill that gap and I'm working closely with the members of the senior staff both in fire ops and EMS ops to figure out what to do about that. We don't think that the path from EMS to fire is a bad one, so I don't want anyone to interpret what I'm saying that in some way that that's not right. But there's no doubt that we have a crisis nationally in EMS recruiting and we're not going to just be able to replace the fire fighters or the EMTs and paramedics who are going over to fire ops in the traditional methods that we have in the past.



2 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Do you think that it's  
3 because of the EMS wages, the pay parity? I know EMS  
4 workers that want to make this their career. They  
5 don't want to become fire fighters but they have no  
6 choice because they cannot sustain a family and be  
7 providers while making the money that EMS workers  
8 make, and we've been crying pay parity for a very  
9 long time. So, is that part of your discussion for  
10 retention? Because that would be the best way to  
11 close a gap is if there was retention in the ranks.

12 ROBERT TUCKER: We have some - sorry. We have  
13 some fabulous career EMTs and paramedics. God Bless  
14 You.

15 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: God Bless you.

16 ROBERT TUCKER: Many of whom you know we rely on  
17 and the city relies on heavily. The EMT's - they are  
18 at the bargaining table now and are negotiating with  
19 the city. The Mayor and City Hall have supported  
20 something along - similar to what you're saying.  
21 There's no doubt with 1.6 million calls for service a  
22 year; that's an astronomical amount of work and EMTs  
23 and paramedics are doing an unbelievably heroic job.  
24 There's going to have to be a moment of reckoning  
25 that in this review that I spoke about earlier, that

1 we're going to need to do things differently  
2 regarding pre-hospital care in New York City. And  
3 when I say that I want to be really clear that I'm  
4 not in any way criticizing how it's been done. I'm  
5 just saying that on a go forward basis, we're going  
6 to have to do it differently. I don't think there's  
7 one fix Chair. I think that rebuilding the EMS CAD  
8 will help response times. It will even help the  
9 quality of life and morale of the EMTs and paramedics  
10 and the ambulance because I've been in an ambulance.  
11 I'm not an EMT or a paramedic or a fire fighter but  
12 it's hard to even read the screen. I mean, I've got  
13 glasses hanging around my neck. The font size is  
14 embarrassingly large on the things that I've printed  
15 and I'm still wearing my glasses.

17 You know, we've got a lot of work to do with EMS  
18 and I have a commitment from the Mayor to be you know  
19 to be thoughtful and even reinventive if I have to be  
20 with regard to EMS. And I would say that you know  
21 nothing, nothing is off the table.

22 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: I'm happy to hear that  
23 because you know the vast disparity in wages for them  
24 has caused morale to lessen and caused a lack of  
25 retention and caused you know larger gaps and

honestly they are going out on more calls and that's why I say that FDNY has to embrace them and funds have to be allocated.

ROBERT TUCKER: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: So that their wages can be increased and I know you believe that and I believe that and we can work together towards that if you need a champion.

ROBERT TUCKER: Yeah, I'm looking forward to working with you and the Administration on this. As I said, I have a lot of support from the Administration on the way I'm approaching it. Again, it goes back to that CEO approach. I think that you know we're all wearing the same patch here Chief Fields and many of the EMS Chiefs over here. We're all wearing the same patch with one agency and we're going to operate like that on a going forward basis.

There are things we can do in addition to reviewing the pay that I think would take because look, so many people in FDNY work at FDNY because of the mission. It's not just about the pay. And so, pay is a factor but we've seen where a pay increase doesn't change necessarily enough of the things to make people want to come to work and do their job

productively and I'm really focused on it, and I believe that it's one of the reasons I'm sitting here. I think that the Mayor saw in some of the ideas that I put forward to him during the process that we went through to improve EMS from where it is and build a pre-hospital care system that will work well into you know 2050 and beyond.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you. Let's talk about overtime. So, the Mayoral director on overtime control has been placing strict limits on overtime spending across all city agencies, including FDNY and EMS. Given that FDNY has long relied on overtime to compensate for the staffing shortages and high call volumes. These restrictions may impact response times, recruitment and overall service delivery. What percentage of FDNY and EMS operations currently rely on overtime to meet service demands and how this changed since the implementation of the mayoral directive?

ROBERT TUCKER: I'm going to let Commissioner Christoff give you the specific numbers but what I would say is that you and the Committee and the public should know that neither the Mayor nor the OMB Director wants public safety impacted by the overtime

directive. Where we can look at overtime differently is in our discretionary overtime, not necessarily in our uniformed member overtime. The numbers will inherently come down. We're about to promote how many captains? 48 more captains and 64 more lieutenants. The more we get the right number of captains and lieutenants and battalion chiefs and deputy chiefs in the seats and fire fighters in the seats. Naturally there's an expense that comes along with that but the overtime expense will come down. And so, I'm working very closely with the OMB Director on that. He just approved 26 Fire Marshals and four Supervising Fire Marshals. That will bring down overtime.

So, I think you know we're starting to be able to make the argument more coherently but overtime, we're operating on a lot of overtime in the fire department. Commissioner.

LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: Yeah, so to follow up on what the Commissioner was saying on the fire side, over 80 percent of our overtime is tied to field operation. So, that's staffing posts in the field. That's contractually mandated field overtime, including the overtime that's built into fire fighter schedules as

well as overtime related to late calls or moving fire fighters across different locations to equalize staffing.

On the EMS end, 70 percent of our overtime is related to field operations, staffing ambulances. It goes up to a similar 80 percent if you include overtime associated with emergency medical dispatch, which our EMS call takers and dispatchers that respond to 911 calls for medical emergencies. None of the overtime control measures are aimed at reducing public services. So we're not looking to reduce the number of units that are in operation at all. The focus on reducing that kind of field overtime has come on the side of trying to increase headcount. So, on the fire side, we've been looking to accelerate fire fighter classes, get them through more quickly. We did actually work with OMB in the summer. They approved additional resources to help us with processing candidates. So, they approved an additional 24 staff for us, primarily in our candidate investigation division but also including folks in health services and in other parts of the department to make sure that we were able to process candidates quickly in order to get those classes

through. We've also you know made some changes on the training side to double the number of fire lieutenants that we can promote at one time.

So, traditionally we've done about 32 at a time but as the Commissioner noted, our next set of lieutenant promotions is actually going to be 64 and those 48 captains that we also talked about are positions above our budgeted headcount and we are doing that in order to bring down this kind of ordered over time. The focus otherwise has been on you know the remainder of our overtime, which is discretionary. So it's making sure that full duty personnel are in the field as much as possible. That we are leveraging our light duty personnel for any non-field tasks that can happen and seeing where we can reduce things in non-field areas.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Yeah, it just makes sense. If you have all your lines filled and you have the staffing, your overtime comes down. It's easy, right and now it seems that if you have the - I know often times lines are funded but no one ever gets hired. So I don't think that that will happen with you at the helm. Do we have any other questions? Oh, I see we've been joined by Council Member Lincoln Restler.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Great, thanks so much  
3 Chair Ariola. Oh too excited. Thank you  
4 Commissioner and team. Good to see you all today. I  
5 have a few random questions. I just want to start  
6 with a parochial one, which is we had a tragic fire  
7 in our district on Thanksgiving Day, so four months  
8 ago. This was a manhole explosion on Remsen Street  
9 in Brooklyn Heights, some of you may remember.  
10 Firstly, just want to thank the men and women of the  
11 FDNY for showing up on a holiday and keeping our  
12 community safe.

13 What bothered me though about this particular  
14 incident was five days before members of our  
15 community reached out to the FDNY to come and  
16 investigate because there was smoke coming out of the  
17 manhole. FDNY came right away closed it out, five  
18 days later the manhole explodes, sets a car on fire,  
19 blows through an apartment building. People still  
20 haven't been able to move back into their homes.  
21 Fortunately no body was killed but it was a terrible  
22 incident and I've essentially gotten you know pats on  
23 the head and radio silence from Con Ed and FDNY in  
24 the intervening four months and members of the  
25 community want to get answers on what happened and



why and I understand that it takes some time for the fire marshals to provide a report but it's very frustrating to not be able to say anything to my community about what happened here and what we're doing about it to make sure that the community is safe because we've had other fires in Brooklyn Heights ever since relating to other manholes that I do not believe were related but have freaked everybody out.

So, A, how do we get answers more quickly in general? And B, is there anything that you can say about this specific incident or who I can follow up with to get answers in the immediate future?

ROBERT TUCKER: I'm going to ask our Chief of Department to address the specific Thanksgiving Day incident and then of course we'll figure out how you can get answers more quickly from us on a going forward basis.

JOHN ESPOSITO: In an aging city with the infrastructure as old as it is, manhole fires unfortunately are a common occurrence. So we do work together with Con Edison to respond and mitigate them. The specifics of the Thanksgiving Day other than the fact of where the fire broke out, which was

unusual for us in our experience, we'd have to defer to Bureau of Fire Investigation and get their report and see if we're able to share that.

ROBERT TUCKER: Yeah, the Chief Fire Marshal is not here but I will meet with the Chief Fire Marshal today and we'll get back to you on that.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I really appreciate it. I think it's you know I don't mean to harp too much on a single incident but it worries people when they call in. They call an incident, FDNY comes investigates, we think everything is okay and then five days later we have a tragedy. Uhm it just - and then we don't get answers for four months to understand what occurred. I get that these issues are complex. I get we have aging infrastructure but there's got to be a way for us to improve communication and be able to - because you know I look like an idiot as the Council Member when people keep asking me, what happened, we need information. I don't like that. I don't like that we don't get any information when we request it repeatedly and repeatedly and repeatedly.

Okay, just a couple other items I wanted to ask about. Recently, we redesigned McGuinness Boulevard.

1 This is a tertiary issue of import to the fire  
2 department but I think it's an important one.  
3 Recently we redesigned McGuinness Boulevard with the  
4 Department of Transportation, as many of you may  
5 know. It was a big fight over many - over a couple  
6 of years. We were able to design much wider bike  
7 lanes than had historically been utilized around the  
8 City of New York that can accommodate EMS ambulances,  
9 even fire trucks as far as I understand. Is this a  
10 design; I'm not sure who the right person to direct  
11 this question to if that's you Commissioner or  
12 someone else. Is this a design you all are familiar  
13 with? Do you think it's a better, potential approach  
14 that can help ensure expeditious emergency response  
15 times as we look to accommodate safe cycling with  
16 protected bike lanes in more and more neighborhoods  
17 around the city?

19 ROBERT TUCKER: Look, from where I stand it's  
20 more a Chief Esposito comment. I would like to keep  
21 our emergency apparatus on the streets and only in  
22 the event of a major emergency invade the secured  
23 space for bicycles and other e-mobility  
24 transportation. It sort of reminds me of a thought  
25 that I was having about you know years ago, the

question could be asked, can you drive on the sidewalks and the answer is no, not unless there was you know a really major emergency or reason to do so.

We work with DOT very effectively and Commissioner Rodriguez and I speak regularly and I know my staff and his staff speak regularly. What's important to me and we have through our City Planning units and other units within the fire department, the ability to make sure that our fire and our EMS apparatus can get down the streets. We don't want anything to impede that and you know there's complicated neighborhoods in lower Manhattan for example, in Greenwich Village and other areas, in Brooklyn Heights for sure that make it sometimes more complicated and we've made accommodations. Including rear tiller mounted fire trucks with someone in the back steering the back of the fire truck but I don't know that we need necessarily to be more involved in that process than we already are.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Okay, for what's it's worth, I want to you know want to make sure that we achieve a network of protected bike lanes around the city so it's safe for cyclists and we reduce unnecessary deaths and serious injuries for people

riding a bicycle and protected bike lanes are a proven way to improve pedestrian safety as well. But we don't want to do it at the expense of emergency response times. So we just want to be very mindful of every design that we're doing that's in a collaborative way. I know that's been a priority of Chair Ariola and I'm intrigued by the design on McGuinness Boulevard as we achieved a road diet there that has significantly already improved pedestrian safety in the neighborhood that it could be an alternative approach for ensuring expeditious response times.

And so, we'll be looking carefully at the data. I understand we don't want ambulances and fire trucks in bike lanes when they don't absolutely need to be. I appreciate that being your response Commissioner but I do think it's worth looking at if we can afford the space for some wider bike lanes that can allow for that when there is congestion in a given area that's a worthy approach.

The last thing I'd like to ask if I may is around congestion pricing, for which I'm a big advocate. Can you speak to improved emergency response times I lower Manhattan south of 59<sup>th</sup> street for both FDNY

and EMS over the first two and a half months of this year?

ROBERT TUCKER: We don't have the data on -

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Even for January?

ROBERT TUCKER: No, not yet.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: When will we have that data?

ROBERT TUCKER: Uhm you know I think we need a little more time on it. We had a long talk about congestion pricing already. Congestion pricing in my opinion is not, there's no one fix that's going to improve response times.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Certainly not.

ROBERT TUCKER: And I don't think the key here is congestion pricing. I have no opinion on congestion pricing except the opinion I rendered to the Chair.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: But I didn't ask - with all due respect, I didn't ask for your opinion. I'm just asking for the data.

ROBERT TUCKER: I'll get you the data.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: So, when will we have the data? When do we normally - what's the normal lag time on emergency response time data? When should we have it? Quarterly, monthly, what is it

that I'm looking for here? I thought it was monthly data. I thought we should already have had it by now. I'm a little confused. My staff has been tracking it on a weekly basis, so I'm eager to understand.

ROBERT TUCKER: Yeah, I think we'll be able to give you something in the next few weeks.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Yeah, in all fairness Council Member it is a brand new method and so, even the stats that we're getting from the MTA are not exact. So, I think that you want exact stats and that's what you're waiting on.

ROBERT TUCKER: Well, yes and we don't have it broken down in the CP zone specifically.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: Sure, but you have it broken down by -

ROBERT TUCKER: Citywide and boroughwide.

COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: But you have nothing that's a smaller catchment area than boroughwide response times?

ROBERT TUCKER: We don't break it down that way but we will for you in the next few weeks. We're working on it now.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER RESTLER: I think it's critically  
3 important in real time the Governor is talking to the  
4 President today in the oval office about this issue  
5 and the issue is pending in the courts and we have a  
6 lot of data points on how many people are going to  
7 the theater and how many pedestrians are out there  
8 and what the congestion times are and all different  
9 kinds of things but the emergency response time data  
10 will be very powerful for a lot of folks to  
11 understand whether this is something that's having a  
12 positive impact in saving lives. So, we do  
13 appreciate whatever you can share as quickly as you  
14 can share it, and with that, I will shut up. Thank  
15 you very much for the latitude Chair.

16 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you. I just want to  
17 ask you a couple as long as we're talking about the  
18 federal government. So, how much of the federal  
19 funding does the FDNY currently receive and what  
20 percentage of the Departments budget is reliant on  
21 these funds?

22 ROBERT TUCKER: So the Department receives about  
23 \$110 million, \$113 million of federal funding. Much  
24 of that funding is World Trade Center related and we  
25 rely on it and it's important to us.



2 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: And have you received any  
3 guidance from federal agencies regarding any  
4 potential changes to that funding?

5 ROBERT TUCKER: We only were impacted very  
6 quickly and momentarily in one research grant that  
7 was a part of the World Trade Center grant that  
8 compared health, cancer diagnosis from fire fighters  
9 in New York City with diagnosis from fire fighters in  
10 other major urban cities. And that grant, when we  
11 learned that it was being terminated, that's a grant  
12 that comes through Einstein. It's a medical grant  
13 but we have the money. That was - we worked together  
14 with our elected officials and that was turned back  
15 on.

16 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: That's good to know. I  
17 just, I want to go back the wildfires because they  
18 seemed to have spiked. So do you have any factors  
19 that you think contributed to the severe increase in  
20 brush fires for the same period from 2023 to 2024?

21 ROBERT TUCKER: I mean it was incredibly dry  
22 during that period of time. We did see some brush  
23 fires in some very unique locations like right in the  
24 middle of Prospect Park. I was at that fire. We had  
25 a very significant brush fire in Inwood Park in

Northern Manhattan where we had some very unique water problems. There are no hydrants right in the middle of these thick forests if you will. For in Inwood we brought one of our large fire boats up the Hudson River and drafted water from the Hudson River into Inwood Park, you know it's pretty unique. I mean we have the capability of doing that but it was a challenge.

I think the most significant contributor to the brush fires was how dry it was and for such a long period of time.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Hmm, hmm, I agree. Okay, I now yield to Council Member Marmorato.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Alright so just give me one second, let me get my notes up here. So I just want to talk a little bit about the fire marshals. What's your operating budget for the fire marshals and how many do you have?

LIZETTE CHRISTOFF: So our budgeted headcount for fire marshals is 110 and we currently have 92. Our budgeted headcount for supervising fire marshals is 26 and we currently have 24. As the Commissioner mentioned earlier, we do approval to move forward with a fire marshal class, so we will be having a

class shortly for at least 26 fire marshals and we will be proceeding with promotions for four supervising fire marshals.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Do have any issues with like recruitment?

ROBERT TUCKER: No, I think we have a pretty - we have a list. It's a promotional exam. A list and we you know, we'll take people off of that list.

COUNCIL MEMBER MARMORATO: Okay, cool. Alright thank you so much. Thank you Chair.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: We've been joined by Council Member Nurse and I don't believe she has a question at this time.

If there are no other questions, then I just want to say when you're in your talks, I kind about beach units because many of us have beaches in our district and we really do need some EMS beach units down there because people can get a little silly during the summer time when they're at the beach and at the local restaurants and bars. So, there's a lot of injuries.

ROBERT TUCKER: Yeah absolutely. Thank you for that and also I met with the Parks Commissioner

recently about our joint activities in the Rockaway in specifically.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay and just in closing, I would like to make a statement. I had many of these hearings before and the fact that you came so prepared but not just you, you brought a team that really had your back. That if you needed an answer, it was provided and that's not what we see often. I already, I'm seeing a lift in morale with the members of your department just in this room right now under your leadership and what we heard from our members and from you is that we have a lot of needs because we have a lot of ideas, a lot of ideas that you have and your team has. You're thinking out of the box. You're doing a lot of critical thinking and we need money for that and that's why we have to take all things into consideration and that's why I continue to implore the Mayor to fund \$1 billion to the fire department that would be shared with EMS so that you can get all these things done. Because things - we're having more fires, not less fires. We're having more injuries not less injuries. People are calling 911 for more things, not less things. We need to have a fleet that's up to date. We need to

really grow with AI and all the different measures that you want to take place and we can't do that with little drops of money here and drops of money there. You have been flatlined. The Fire Department has been flatlined for a lot of years. You didn't realize any PEGs and we were supposed to be very thankful for that. No, we need money. We need money in order to get things done and I think we need to now be compensated for all the years that we didn't get anything and \$1 billion is not a lot of money in the scheme of things, when it's for a department that has been getting the job done and that's probably the down fall and the reason why because no matter what, you always got your job done. You made sure the person got to the hospital. You made sure the building on fire put out. You made sure that people were rescued. You did that with lack of resource and staffing. I don't want to hear that anymore from the Administration. I know the Administration is here but I've spoken to the Mayor directly about it. This is not - it's not you know any outside you know inside baseball or speaking behind anyone's back. \$1 billion is the ask from this Committee, from this Chair for the FDNY so that they can do their job.

Thank you Commissioner Tucker for all that you've done thus far. First Deputy Commissioner Guerra for always being on the other side of the phone when we call and for going out into the field and making your fire fighters feel that you have their backs. Thank you so much.

We can now - you guys are dismissed. Thank you so much. [02:04:28] - [02:04:40] We're going to do a five minute break and then we'll have NYCEM come in.

RECESS [02:04:44]- [02:17:46]

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Good afternoon. We're now continuing with the Fire and Emergency Management Budget hearing and we are joined by Commissioner of NYCEM Zach Iscol, First Deputy Commissioner Christina Farrell and Chief Financial Officer Christopher Blanco.

We'll now ask Committee Counsel to swear in the panel.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you Chair. Just raise your right and affirm that you will tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth and to answer honestly to Council Member questions.

Recognizing that you do affirm that. Thank you. You may go ahead.

2 ZACH ISCOL: Alright, good morning Chair Ariola  
3 and members of the City Council. I am Zach Iscol,  
4 Commissioner of the New York City Emergency  
5 Management Department. I am joined today by our  
6 First Deputy Commissioner Christina Farrell and our  
7 Chief Financial Officer Christopher Blanco.

8 New York City Emergency Management has a big  
9 mission. We lead the development of the city's  
10 Emergency Management plans and the coordination of  
11 multiagency response to emergencies in New York City.  
12 We also education the public about preparedness and  
13 advance long-term initiatives that reduce risk and  
14 increase the resiliency of New York City. Due to  
15 climate change, social and economic issues,  
16 international conflict, cyber threats, disease  
17 outbreaks, and aging infrastructure, new and  
18 worsening emergencies continue to threaten New York  
19 City. Bottom line, our job is to do everything we  
20 can to prevent emergencies, to ensure the city is  
21 prepared for them, to respond and manage them, and to  
22 then help the city, New Yorkers, businesses,  
23 communities, and neighborhoods recover as quickly as  
24 possible.

Last year, NYCEM monitored 3,331 incidents from our Watch Command and responded to 786 planned events and no-notice emergencies across the city, deploying staff and equipment alongside our sister city, state and federal agencies, and private and nonprofit sector partners. These included an extraordinary range of events and incidents. A 4.8 magnitude earthquake struck near New York City on April 5<sup>th</sup>, a global IT outage involving crowd strike software impacting city governments, companies and organizations around the world in July. In the fall of 2024 drought brought us the driest spell in the city's recorded history.

The drought led to unprecedented challenges including a two week stretch between October and November in which the FDNY responded to 229 brush fires citywide, the highest amount in a two week period in New York City history.

We activated and managed the city's Emergency Operations Center 19 times for severe weather, flooding and other disruptions around the city, allowing us to coordinate with partners to address critical issues and maintain essential services. We also continued supporting the city's asylum seeker



response operations as they evolved to meet  
challenging needs throughout the year.

The people and communities of New York City are  
at the heart of what we do. In 2024, we launched the  
city's first ever citywide multilingual mailer to  
every residential address in the city to encourage  
all New Yorkers to sign up for Notify NYC, the city's  
official source for free emergency alerts. We  
introduced new emergency messaging channels on  
WhatsApp, Threads, and Facebook. We strengthen  
partnerships with youth, seniors, elected officials  
and hard to reach communities by attending community  
meetings, supporting local events, offering hundreds  
of training sessions and ready New York presentations  
and engaging with local and ethnic media outlets.  
And our Community Emergency Response Team program  
welcomes 79 new volunteers who now participate in  
community preparedness events and support first  
responders.

It is also our privilege to support other  
jurisdictions recovering from emergencies. NYCEM  
manages New York Task Force 1, one of 28 taskforces  
across the country that make up the FEMA National  
Urban Search and Rescue USAR Response System. The

task force is comprised of NYCEM, NYPD, and FDNY personnel who are fully trained and equipped to respond to natural, technological and human caused disasters.

In 2024, New York Task Force 1 deployed to two incidents, in September, 46 people and two canines from New York Task Force 1 deployed to North Carolina following Hurricane Helene. The team conducted extensive searches of areas impacted by infrastructure collapse down trees, mudslides and heavy flooding. In October, 81 personnel and four canines from New York Task Force One deployed to Orlando following Hurricane Milton. The team assisted searching for survivors in collapsed buildings providing emergency medical care and conducting water rescues.

We are also innovators in leveraging the latest technologies to enhance emergency preparedness priorities, preparedness and response. In collaboration with the Drone Task Force, NYCEM deployed drones to monitor shark activity on city beaches during the summer, culminating in a new shark protocol. We initiated a pilot program to use robotic devices to inspect infrastructure in

hazardous conditions such as compromised buildings.

NYCEM is also exploring how art generative artificial intelligence tools can enhance preparedness, response and recovery efforts.

NYCEM continues to coordinate the City's Recovery Working Group, which focuses on new priorities, including heat resiliency strategies and temporary flood protection measures. In collaboration with the Mayor's Office of Housing, Recovery Operations, NYCEM facilitated a Post Disaster Hurricane Recovery Focus Group to identify strategies for rapid post disaster housing support. NYCEM connects city partners to FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Funding, a critical federal grant program focused on risk reduction and provides the technical assistance needed to successfully apply for these programs. This has resulted in hundreds of millions of dollars in grant awards to support projects that make our city better prepared for future disasters. And this is just a fraction of the work the New York City's Emergency Managers do.

Before detailing our budget, I would be remiss if I did not discuss some of the macro issues facing emergency management at this time, particularly

funding. Federal grants make up the majority of NYCEM's budget with 66 percent of our agencies budgeted headcount supported by federal funds. Over the last five years, we have seen cuts to these federal grants nationally while also facing reductions in funds. With falling funding and growing costs due to inflation and other economic factors, emergency managers across the country are being asked to do more with less.

I cannot think of any more critical investment in safeguarding New Yorkers during times of emergency then in the people who manage those emergencies. NYCEM staff are under compensated compared to peers at similarly sized city agencies. NYCEM staff are undercompensated compared to peers at similarly sized city agencies and their compensation does not account for the dual roles our staff must fulfill.

In addition to their day to day responsibilities, staff rotate on 24/7 on call teams. Where they're responsible for immediate coordination of a city's response to an incident. This involves significant off hours, weekends and holiday work that is currently not accounted for in staff salaries. Our team has developed a comprehensive salary

restructuring and advancement policy over the last year, provide career pathways and ensure we retain and grow the experience needed within the ranks of New York City Emergency Management to prepare for, respond to and recover from future emergencies facing New Yorkers.

I also want to take a minute to address another issue of pressing concern. The impacts of cuts to federal spending and the federal workforce, especially at FEMA and other federal agencies we depend upon should not be underestimated.

Across the country, emergency management 101 is that the local jurisdiction, whether a small town or county, a large city like New York, or a state is in charge of managing an incident. But once that emergency exceeds their capabilities, they are able to turn to the state and then the federal government for support. Federal agencies provide unique expertise and capabilities that support local preparedness, response, recovery, surveillance and mitigations. Agencies like the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration NOAA, are an irreplaceable partner for weather forecasting. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, which conducts

national disease surveillance and the Federal Communication Commission, which supports wireless emergency alerts, just to name a few. We will need to ensure that we properly prepare for and manage the consequences of emergencies in the absence of the fully capable federal agencies that have supported emergency management efforts over the past several decades.

Historically, when an incident occurs that exceeds local or state resources, the federal government will involve all necessary department and agency capabilities and organize the federal response coordinated by FEMA. While all emergencies start and end at the local level, federal agencies play a dominant role in several disaster scenarios including civil defense, nuclear accidents, extreme weather, disease outbreaks, bioterrorism and counterterrorism. But we are in the midst of a period of major change for the US Emergency Management System and we must prepare for a world where we cannot depend on the historic structure of state and federal support that exists before, during, or after emergencies. And I want to be clear that this concern predates the current administration. Over the last few years, New

York City and many other cities across the state and country had to manage one of the largest humanitarian crises largely on our own with little help from the federal government.

So today, I'm announcing a 90-day process that NYCEM will commence immediately to assess our risk as we as a city can better understand what we will need to do to mitigate and prepare for this new context. NYCEM will use this process to outline solutions and propose novel approaches to grow our local emergency capacity. This will include working with regional partners to private sector and the state to fill gaps created by federal cuts to budgets workforce and the agencies we depend upon. We will proactively develop an emergency management system that will lead the city's efforts to be better prepared for the foreseeable and unknown threats that lie ahead.

With that said, let me now provide a snapshot of our budget for the next fiscal year. Our projected total fiscal year 2026 city tax levy expense budget is \$79 million. We rely on our City Tax Levy Expense Budget to support the agencies administrative, technological and operational costs. The projected fiscal year 2026 City Tax Levy Personnel Services

2 budget is \$12.9 million, which supports the 82  
3 personnel lines paid directly through our tax levy  
4 funds. This includes \$1.2 million in funding for 16  
5 staff members dedicated to working on increasing  
6 communication and services to people with  
7 disabilities, access and functional needs.

8 Our projected Fiscal Year 2026, Other Than  
9 Personnel Services budget is \$66 million, which  
10 includes \$44.5 million for the agencies asylum  
11 operations. The remaining \$21.5 million covers all  
12 agency operating at administrative costs. This  
13 budget includes a significant portion of  
14 nondiscretionary funding. These funds are designated  
15 to cover our warehouse lease, utilities and  
16 telecommunication costs, including the maintenance  
17 and operations of our emergency operation center and  
18 our backup facilities. This money also supports our  
19 fleet and all additional equipment, supplies and  
20 material needed to run the agency.

21 I would like to close by expressing my admiration  
22 for our dedicated emergency managers who in addition  
23 to their day to day roles are also responsible for  
24 immediately coordinating the city's response to an  
25 incident. They accomplish both roles with exemplary



professionalism and service to their city. I'm honored to lead this agency and I know that the expert team at New York City Emergency Management will continue to set the model for what emergency management should be.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I look forward to working with the Council and we are happy to take your questions. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you so much for your testimony Commissioner and it is always a pleasure to see you and your Deputy Commissioner and your Chief Financial Officer. I will just ask my colleagues if they have any questions at this time.

Because you touched on the federal government and we have a new Administration and I appreciate you saying that a lot of your cuts had come before this Administration. What steps have NYCEM taken to prepare for the possibility of losing federal funds and do you have alternative funding that you're seeking in the event?

ZACH ISCOL: Yeah thank you for your question. So, we have seen this reduction in federal funds over the last number of years and Chris can talk a little bit more about it but after 911, the federal

government set up a program, the Urban Area Security Initiative which is a grant program that is responsible for two-thirds of our federal - of our agencies funding. That funding over the last number of years has been diluted as more and more jurisdictions tap into those federal funds. So, this is not something that is new, although there are significant changes that possibly could be occurring with this new administration. They're looking at revamping FEMA, possibly doing away with FEMA. There are cuts being made to some of these agencies that we depend upon for disease surveillance, weather forecasting, communications. So one of the things that we're doing now as I mentioned in my testimony is we're launching a 90 day review starting today.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Excellent.

ZACH ISCOL: To look at how can the city, the region, our private sector, our partners with the state, the authorities, our sister agencies, how can we fill those gaps in this new normal to make sure that we are there for New Yorkers?

So, not the best answer for your question other than say, we'd love to work with you over the next 90

days and certainly come back and brief you on those recommendations for what we can do going forward.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: I think it's commendable that you even have that in place. I think that's great because we don't know what the future holds but you're preparing for it and that's good and I always that you know NYCEM is a little agency that has a really big job and you do your job. So, we really appreciate it and you've been working outside of your general mission for a very long time and you did an incredible job with that mission and I am glad to see that you're back to emergency preparedness and doing that the actual meeting for the NYCEM is.

So, we have spoken about emergency shelters. We've spoken about evacuation, you know routes and things of that nature and I just want to touch on because obviously my district is, the majority of it is an evacuation route and a lot of the districts that were not normally throughout the city have now become an evacuation route.

So, what planning have you done for areas like that? Where you'll need places for people to go for a short period of time before they can get back into their homes?

ZACH ISCOL: Yeah, so our most comprehensive plan that the city - you know we have hundreds of plans for the city and one of things that Christina just spearheaded is an amazing revamp of how we do all hazards management. So that we're not just prepared for events that we know are likely to occur but also any type of hazard that could impact the city, even those that are unforeseen.

Specifically as it relates to coastal storm evacuation and the underlying areas, there's been a lot of work that we as an agency in the city has done post Hurricane Sandy to revamp our coastal storm plan. Looking at our sheltering operations, making sure that they are accessible and certainly revamping the way that we do the hurricane evacuation zones and there's a lot of public communication that we do throughout the year, especially leading into hurricane season to make sure that residents are aware of the zones. That they are capped into the proper communication channels, and that we are working the timelines to make sure that we are safely able to evacuate those areas should the need arise.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Most of our questions were on like outreach and such and you really answered it

1           comprehensively in your testimony and I was one of  
2           the people who received the notification via mail you  
3           know to join you know the ex, you know NYC, Notify  
4           NYC, which I was already a member of. But so I think  
5           that a lot of the questions were answered in your  
6           testimony and I really do appreciate that because  
7           public awareness is something that everyone always  
8           talks about. We don't have enough public awareness  
9           but honestly sometimes people you know, I can send  
10          out a notification you know in various ways and then  
11          people say, geez I had no idea you were having that  
12          concert. Why didn't you tell me? You know so I get  
13          your - I understand your task at hand.

15          In areas that are vulnerable to these types of  
16          flooding, like normally, we're not talking about  
17          flash flooding or anything but just what are specific  
18          steps that you're taking to assess and mitigate  
19          vulnerabilities in these areas? Especially where  
20          there are subway systems or areas that are transit  
21          deserts. You know we have in my district right now,  
22          the A-line to Rockaway is ended because they're  
23          redoing the tracks. So, that leaves one less way to  
24          get off the Peninsula so transportation is a problem  
25          and so, I know you're aware of it and I know that

you've thought about how are we getting everybody off the peninsula. So, just if you could give us an overview of by the city you know, by boroughs, what do you have in plan to get people from an area that was flooded to a place that is safe?

ZACH ISCOL: Yeah, that's a great question and I know that you know this better than anybody. You and I, I can't count the number of times -

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Yeah, we've been up to our knees in water. I get it.

ZACH ISCOL: That's being generous. Up to our waist in water together, canvassing, making sure residents are okay together more than a few times. So, different parts of the city are susceptible to different types of flooding. The coastal areas of the Rockaways in particular, parts of Staten Island, lower Manhattan, Brooklyn, we are a coastal city. Those are susceptible to stormwater, coastal storm flooding, right. That is water that comes into Jamaica Bay, into New York Harbor.

We're pretty good at both forecasting and understanding where that water is going to go and what areas are susceptible of flooding and we have some lead time in those cases to communicate to the

public who live in those areas. To work with different organizations that serve in particular vulnerable populations, people with disabilities and functional needs to be able to move them out. Working with our partners at the MTA. Working with different transportation groups that can support people with disabilities and functional needs in particular and to give people the time they need to move out of those areas and into our shelter systems.

I think the bigger concern right now or another concern is the areas outside of the coastal storms that are susceptible to flooding due to rainfall.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Right.

ZACH ISCOL: That is much harder to predict. It is much harder to forecast. We might know that we're looking at moderate to extreme rainfall somewhere across the city but knowing exactly where those storm cells are going to line up. If they're lining up over areas that are susceptible or less susceptible to flooding, that is very, very difficult to forecast ahead of time. And generally, you may not even know that there is the concern of a flash flood until you're maybe a few hours away.

And so, one of the things that we're doing is really working very closely to educate the public. Making sure that they know that when a watch is issued, that they need to start preparing to act. When a warning is issued, they need to act. Providing them in our communication, letting them know that there are places that they can go that are city run that are safe shelters at least for temporary periods of times. If you live in a basement below grade apartment some place that is more vulnerable, but a lot of it in those cases is really around the public communication. Christina, to you have anything that you would want to add to that?

CHRISTINA FARRELL: Yeah, I would just say and I know that you're aware of this but we also after Hurricane Ida set up a basement apartment notification group and you know one thing as technology has evolved, notify first came to be in 2009. You know people have gotten away from phone calls and they've gotten into text and emails and you know notifications on social media but for most people, that isn't going to wake you up in the middle of the night. That's not going to get your attention



in the way that may be needed. So, this space and group that we are you know working on in very specific districts, it's phone calls. So, it could be a landline, it could be your cellphone, it could be however you would get a phone call but that's the difference. So, it will be intentionally disruptive to wake people up because as Zach said, it could be a couple hours or you know it could be a lot quicker. But as we get into coastal storm season and you know looking at other heat season and things we do, continue to push and look at different ways to use Notify to the best of our ability.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you.

ZACH ISCOL: And just wanting to add, I think you know as we are going into our coastal storm season prep, one of the issues that you just flagged in regards to the MTA and the subway shutdown out on the Rockaways, that is something that we'll be working very closely with to make sure that we have contingencies in place.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Right, yes, definitely and I know that this doesn't come under your purview but in those coastal areas, where we see walls are kind of falling apart and things like that. How does NYCEM

coordinate with agencies like DEP and DOT and the DOB, especially now with the City of Yes, where there will be more basement apartments that are you know utilized because they're in zones where it's legal and ADU's where they're legal. You know this just puts just another layer of what you need to know and how you need to mitigate and where you need to notify and or remove people for their safety.

ZACH ISCOL: So, we do work with them in a couple of different ways. So, number one is, we managed a process to develop the City's Hazard Mitigation Plan, which is a federal requirement to make us eligible to federal funding. That plan accounts for many of these different hazards that we need to deal with and we also look at a lot of the data and look at what are some of the tools and things we can do to mitigate those types of hazards across the city. And that is updated very regularly.

One of the things we're looking at putting into it for example is wildfires in the next addition of the Hazard Mitigation Plan. I think in addition to that, our agency provides a lot of technical assistance to agencies in order to apply for federal

grants and other types of funding, specifically related to those types of issues.

And so, we not only do the risk analysis with the Hazard Mitigation Plan but then we work very, very closely with the agencies to make sure that they have the resources in order to actually address them properly.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: I'm actually glad to hear though you're getting involved in the wild fire issue because we saw some wildfires that we never did before and we spoke about it with the last panel and I think that FDNY could be helpful with their water trucks to get out there and kind of when the ground is as dry because we have drought just to temper down and water that area you know in the park, at Forest Park in my district and I know the Parks Department goes out there and you know waters just the ground regularly so that there aren't any fires. You know so Parks Department - this really is - like it's almost every agency in the city that you're going to have to work with for these types of brush fires and they're very dangerous.

So, I appreciate that you already have that in effect and do you know, it's DEP I understand that

with the rain gardens and stuff like that but do you have any input as to where they go or where do you think they're needed? Do you have those conversations with DEP?

ZACH ISCOL: Yeah, we work very closely with DEP on that as well as the Mayor's Office for Climate MOCJ.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay, great. And I think you have answered all of my questions and I don't see any other members here. So, I'd just like to say thank you. Thank you for always being honest. Thank you for always being available and from someone who comes from a flood zone, thank you for being on the ground with me and you know you have a great team in place and now - oh, I do want to ask you this. Were you given, when you were doing the work you know with the intake centers, you had gotten more people, more lines of people for NYCEM or you were working with the same budgeted lines?

ZACH ISCOL: We had I think one additional person but to be fair, we brought in a number of great contractors and consultants who were managing that with us. So, initially and this is something that we sort of normally do as we're managing emergencies is

our team really in the early days was managing everything and then over time we displaced them with consultants and contractors that we managed and they became a core part of our asylum seeker operations. You want to add something?

CHRISTINA FARRELL: Yeah, I just wanted to add that we did - we were able to bring on one additional person but we also for our different units, any time we have an emergency like that and something that goes over so long, we're able to work in a lot of our planning assumptions. So, for example, we had only used our stockpile, our emergency supply stockpile before for hurricanes but we started using it for the respite sites, for shelters, for other things. We also used - I surged staffing models, so we had city staff that might have spoken specific languages, may have mental health training or other things that could come and work. So, you know it's been 12 years since Hurricane Sandy but over the last couple years one of the silver linings of all the work that we did with asylum seekers is that we got to rotate our stockpile but also see how we could do resupply and everything in a very systematic way. We also work through staffing challenges. We got some language

capability that we didn't have before. So, right now as we start - as we sunset our asylum seeker operations, we are looking at what we learned. Like Zach said, the different ways that we brought in contractors, so uhm you know if the next big event is a hurricane or a citywide blackout or something else that he talked about in his testimony, we can use these lessons learned from the last two years in asylum seekers.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Okay and is there in this fiscal year, what would you say is your projected budgetary ask?

ZACH ISCOL: Specifically related to asylum seekers or overall?

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: No, no, overall.

ZACH ISCOL: Chris, do you want to go into the numbers for our process here?

CHRISOPHER BLANCO: Sure. So I can give you an overview of some of our primary requests for new needs. All these are really related to structural underfunding and so, I'll break it down by PS OTPS and capital needs.

So, as alluded to in the Commissioners testimony, most of our needs are PS related. Obviously we've

gone through several rounds of PEGs, as all agencies have due to the asylum seekers impact on the budget and other economic factors. So, I think number one, we're requesting \$2.9 million in the baseline to fund the reduction in - to offset the federal reduction in funding as we discussed. Over the last five years, we've seen about a 20 percent reduction in the overall allocation of homeland security funding to the City of New York. NYCEM has seen a much smaller reduction but as a result, we're scheduled to lose ten heads beginning next fiscal year and looking to hope to sort of make that restored in the baseline.

Additionally, we're requesting an additional \$1.9 million in the baseline related to shifting additional heads off of the volatile federal grants given just a bigger picture discussions around federal funding. Also as mentioned in the testimony, we're looking at \$1.5 million in the baseline tied to reformulated agency salary restructure, just to bring our staff inline with other federal - excuse me, with other city agencies and ensure parity across the city as well as create more career pathways for folks since we're a nonunion agency.

And then also looking just at a \$3.3 million overall structural deficit and this is due again to various PEGs that have happened over the years and essentially what that means is, we don't have enough funding to hire up to our budgeted headcount. So, this funding, we restore that to allow us to get to the full levels of staffing that we have in the budget.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: What is your full budgeted headcount?

CHRISTOPHER BLANCO: We have 242 heads across the entire agency. As we mentioned, 160 of those are grant funded, so the math in that is about 82 city funds.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Gotcha, okay, thank you.

CHRISTOPHER BLANCO: And then just OTPS quickly, \$477,000 for critical software and license needs across the city. \$300,000 for vehicle maintenance. Our entire vehicle budget and equipment, maintenance budget was zeroed out through previous PEGs and we've been self-funding that with surpluses elsewhere and then finally on the capital side, we put in a \$9.1 million request to upgrade our radio systems just due to sort of outdated nature, things of having to



upgrade those systems to be in line with NYPD's new requirements around encryption. We've gotten verbal commitment from OMB on that one, so we're currently working through with DCAS who funds our capital projects. And then finally, a \$2 million ask to build out the Queens Borough office. We received an approximately \$1 million from Congressman Swasey to build a site in Fort Totten Park in Queens.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Oh nice, great. Okay, anything that you need from us? From me, to be helpful to get those asks realized? Please don't hesitate to loop us in.

ZACH ISCOL: We will for sure and I think that the one sort of thing I would underline in that is that our - you know and I've said this in my testimony but the people who work at our agency are our most important investment and I think as Chris just said, you know we are not unionized and we don't have many civil service at our agency. And I think what that means is that when you were thinking about coming to Emergency Management for a career, unlike agencies also just because of the diversity of jobs that our people fill. We're a small agency as you said. We're the little engine that could but when

you think about career pathways, it's really, really important for us that the people that we have at this agency know what a career looks like in emergency management because you don't want to lose that experience. You want to see people grow. You want to see them flourish and I think that ensures that we have a really strong foundation. It's something that Christina and I think about all the time. We have a bias for promoting internally and filling more senior positions. Right now 100 percent of our executive staff positions are filled, which is fantastic but I think in some of those budget lines, we're really looking to help improve salary equity with our sister agencies and ensuring that there are real career pathways for folks at Emergency Management. I think that is probably the greatest investment that the city could make in Emergency Management.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: I couldn't agree more. I thank you so much for your testimony and I don't want to see big flood come but come on out to the district anytime.

ZACH ISCOL: That's part of it is I know I'm going to see you out there.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: You know it.

2 ZACH ISCOL: I know I will see you out there.

3 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thanks so much for coming.

4 I appreciate it.

5 I'm just going to pause for three to five  
6 minutes. [02:51:22]- [03:02:06]. I'd just like to  
7 make an announcement, although our public testimony  
8 is not supposed to begin until 2:30, because the  
9 hearing ended sooner and you are here in present, I  
10 don't want to have you have a misuse of your time,  
11 therefore we will take public testimony now for the  
12 people who are present and then take a break to the  
13 people who are joining at 2:30.

14 So, I just need to read. I now open the hearing  
15 for public testimony. I remind members of the public  
16 that this is a government proceeding and that decorum  
17 shall be observed at all times. As such, members of  
18 the public shall remain silent at all times. The  
19 witness table is reserved for people who wish to  
20 testify. No video recording or photography is  
21 allowed from the witness table. Further, members of  
22 the public may not present audio or video recordings  
23 as testimony but may submit transcripts of such  
24 recordings to the Sergeants at Arms for inclusion in  
25 the hearing record. If you wish to speak at today's

hearing, please fill out an appearance card with the Sergeants at Arms and wait to be recognized. When recognized, you will have two minutes to speak on today's hearing topic. The budget for the Fire Department and for New York City Emergency Management.

If you have a written statement or additional written testimony you wish to submit for the record, please provide a copy of that testimony to the Sergeant at Arms. You may also email written testimony to [testimony@council.nyc.gov](mailto:testimony@council.nyc.gov) within 72 hours of the close of this hearing. Audio and video recordings will not be accepted. For in person panelists, please come up to the table once your name has been called. And I will now read the names of the people who are in the first panel. Sharon Brown, Christopher Leon Johnson, Sakeena Trice, Michael J. Northmore, Nancy Carbone, Michael Tracey.

Although they may not be in the room right now, they will be given a chance to testify at 2:30 if they return. So, please, we'd love to hear your testimony.

SHARON BROWN: Hello, my name is Sharon. Before I begin, release the hostages, let Yawas people go.

Defend Israel and happy Purim to everyone whose Jewish.

It's paramount to have funding for the FDNY and the EMS in excess of \$1 billion for both \$1 billion is not enough. Since it's a combined unit, EMS and separately FDNY combined. Previously the police officers, they were going to get \$1 billion. So, if you have two agencies FDNY and EMS, \$1 billion would not be enough for two agencies and getting new vehicles and different things like that. That's not going to make it \$1 billion.

They must prepare for terror attacks major and they also - we don't expect it but we have to prepare for it and they must expect minor terror encouragements also. So they need funding in excess of \$1 billion. The man cover situation and fire cannot happen. We need training for disaster situations above the norm. So we see things like the man cover situation and we know Con Ed needs to coordinate with the FDNY, EMS and also with NYPD and they need to check on every man cover hole within and without to find out what's going on under there. They need to also check balconies, the infrastructure, roads and bridges. Balconies over

the past couple of decades, they have been coming loose and things like that, so the infrastructures and things, roads and bridges need to be checked on. Emergency Management funding has to exceed what EMS and FDNY and NYPD get.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you so much for your testimony.

SHARON BROWN: You're welcome.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Ma'am.

SAKEENA TRICE: Good afternoon. My name is Sakeena Trice. I am a Senior Staff Attorney with the Disability Justice Program at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest. Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony today on behalf of NYLPI. NYLPI is deeply concerned about the city's practices relating to the involuntary removal of individuals who have mental illness diagnosis or psychiatric evaluation. Additionally NYLPI urges the City Council to mandate significant changes into the Behavioral Health Emergency Assistance Response Division Program, as it is a deeply flawed pilot which merely proports to be a nonpolice response to people experiencing this with health crisis but instead it is part of a long tradition of policing,

criminalizing and under and mis serving people with mental disabilities.

Funding be heard in its heard and its current diverse money from what we need, a true nonpolice crisis response system that dispatches the team of peers. There must be changes to be heard and both changes include using emergency medical technicians who are not city employees. 24/7 operating hours, calls routed through 988 and above all, Be Heard must prioritize the self-termination of people with disabilities. People in crisis are calling for help and being met by police and EMT's who send them to the hospital without asking question or providing onsite treatment and they send them to the hospital against their will. New York City must create and invest in a mental health care system that offers truly voluntary services that are community based and evidence based and culturally competent. There is no hard evidence that shows that involuntary commitment is more effective than voluntary treatment, so we must invest in voluntary services to save lives.

Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you very much. Mr. Gorman.

2 JOE GORMAN: Good afternoon. My name is Joe  
3 Gorman and I am the son of a retired FDNY Captain.  
4 I'm also proud to work for Friends of Firefighters.  
5 An organization founded with the mission of  
6 supporting New York City's bravest. In the aftermath  
7 of 911, our founder Nancy Carbone established this  
8 organization upon witnessing first-hand the immense  
9 emotional and mental toll of our city fire fighters.  
10 Since then we've remained steadfast in our mission,  
11 providing free, independent and culturally competent  
12 mental health support to active and retired FDNY fire  
13 fighters and their families. New York City fire  
14 fighters confront some of the most harrowing  
15 emergencies facing trauma and life threatening  
16 conditions daily.

17 A recent survey conducted by SUNY New Paltz  
18 revealed that more than 68 percent of first  
19 responders have experienced stress while 53 percent  
20 reported that they have experienced symptoms of  
21 depression. Burnout and anxiety among other mental  
22 health challenges identified by the respondents and  
23 38 percent reported to have symptoms of post-  
24 traumatic stress disorder. Sadly, the suicide rate  
25



among firefighters is higher than that of the rate of the general public.

80 percent of respondents said the stigma associated with mental health is an obstacle to seeking assistance. Culturally competent mental health resources remain scarce, and traditional employee assistance programs often fail to meet the first responders' unique needs.

Counseling is the foundation of our work, providing firefighters and their families with critical, confidential support free of charge. Because we do not accept insurance, our clients face no session on caps, no limitations on frequency and no restrictions on session lengths, ensuring they receive the care that they need when they need it and however they want it. Our clinicians at Friends of Firefighters are seasoned therapists with diverse backgrounds, all of whom have a deep understanding of the firefighter community and its values. They employ a variety of evidence based approaches and tailored methods that allow us to address a broad spectrum of firefighting specific mental health challenges.

Today, I am here because we are at a critical point. The demand for our services has surged, nearly tripling since 2018. Last year alone, we provided nearly 4,500 counseling sessions, yet our fundraising efforts have not kept pace. Friends of Firefighters respects \$633,000 to cover the cost necessary to deliver direct services and conduct critical outreach to the New York City fire fighters and their families. Thank you to the Chair for your continued and unwavering support and thank you to the Committee for their consideration.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you for your testimony. On Zoom, I'd like to call upon Tyler Weaver.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Starting time.

TYLER WEAVER: Okay can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Yes sir.

TYLER WEAVER: Okay great. Hi, good afternoon. My name is Tyler Weaver. Before I begin I'd just like to quickly thank Committee Chair Joann Ariola, her staff and the other Committee Members for the attention they bring to FDNY issues that are of importance to everyone in New York City. I also want to acknowledge the very hard work that the fire

fighters and EMS personnel perform every day to keep the city safe.

When it comes to the 2026 budget, I believe some additional funding is going to be required to address the issue of the high response times for EMS. As the Committee Members already know these long response times impacted my family in December 2023 when our son Nicolas suffered a cardiac arrest in the Bronx and waited 19 minutes for an ambulance.

While that event is just a single data point, New York City's Local Law 119 official data on emergency response show that advance life support ambulances in the Bronx, every month since the end of 2023 are taking more than ten minutes to arrive, 75 percent of the time.

If you do the math with about 48,000 ALS calls per year in the Bronx, this means approximately 36,000 people in the Bronx each year are being forced to wait long times for the highest level of EMS care, which are the advanced life support units.

As the Committee report for today's meeting indicates, EMS faces major issues with staffing and this issue has been ongoing for years. When you dig into the reasons why staffing is a problem, the same

answer keeps popping up mainly that EMS personnel in New York City are underpaid and that this causes high turnover and difficulty in attracting and keeping the proper amount of people needed to staff units at the correct level. When one considers that an even higher number of EMS staff and ambulances would actually be needed to start bringing down the high response times, it ought to be clear that EMS funding and resources needs to be higher than the preliminary budget proposes.

Previous years Mayor Management reports indicated that in the past, 25 percent of cardiac arrests were able to be taken to the hospital with the return of their -

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: I do have a question for you Mr. Weaver. So, I don't know if you were watching the hearing but I did bring up and again I want to give you my deepest condolences. Your son is an example, a poor example of what's happening and I think that your insight into you know what needed to be changed and talking about pay parity and the amount of vehicles that we have and the fact that

vehicles go out of - you know ambulances are out of service because they're at a fire and they can't go to you know a few blocks away just to address someone who is critically, you know acutely sick and so, we're addressing all those things. So, I'd like to hear what more you have to say.

TYLER WEAVER: Okay yeah, I almost was able to complete what I wanted to say here. Thank you. What I was just going to say is that uhm in the past, you know the Mayor's Management Report, we're showing that 25 percent of cardiac arrests were able to be taken to the hospital with their you know pulse returned, but that number now has been lower at 20 percent. And if you do the math of 25,000 cardiac arrests per year in New York City, this five percent increase in poor outcomes, you know equals out to about 1,200 more people, maybe just maybe might have survived in the past when response times were better.

And in closing you know I just basically called and said you can do even better and increase EMS funding to the level actually required to enable them to be staffed and resourced to allow EMS to arrive in a timely manner at all life threatening incidences, especially cardiac arrests. Thank you.

2 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: I think we are -

3 TYLER WEAVER: If you have additional questions,  
4 please let me know.

5 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: No, no, I just want say that  
6 I think that we were all on the same page with  
7 everything that you said but we just have to make it  
8 happen. We keep saying we need all the things that  
9 you were talking about but we've not put them into  
10 effect and I believe under this Commissioner, we will  
11 put them into effect. So, thank you for your  
12 testimony.

13 TYLER WEAVER: Oh you're very welcome and I just  
14 wanted to say I was very encouraged to hear the words  
15 from Commissioner Tucker earlier. It's great to see  
16 that people are verbalizing that they know about the  
17 issue and that they want to solve it. And that's  
18 very encouraging to me as a parent of someone who  
19 lost somebody. Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you so much. Next up  
21 is Christopher Leon Johnson.

22 SERGEANT AT ARMS: You may begin.

23 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: There I go. Yeah,  
24 hello, my name is Christopher. Can you hear me?

25 CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Yes Christopher, I hear you.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah, yeah, hello my name is Christopher Leon Johnson. I'm at a jury house; I'm at an event for the UN CR 639 so I couldn't be in person but I want to make sure that I made this clear to people by this Committee that we need proper e-bike regulations in the city. I'm going to show you right now; I'm in front of a bike lane and it's ridiculous. We need proper e-bike regulation in the City of New York. Look at this, look at this, look at this guys. Look at this. You got a deliverista with no helmet and look at the bike. It's crazy, I'm on 44<sup>th</sup> Street. We need real regulations in the City of New York. We need pass Intro. 606 because it will prevent stuff like this from happening. Look at the e-bike, that's like a time bomb. It needs to stop. We need Intro. 606 at the same time, and the Central Workers Justice Project gets a lot of money from the government from discretionary funding. Why hasn't the emergency- the OEM Commissioner Zach Iscol and the Fire Commissioner, Mr. Robert Tucker had to have a meeting with the [INAUDIBLE 03:17:16]. Why you got to have one? Look at this. This is crazy. Like the City Council needs to really help pass Intro. 606. At the

same time, Worker justice Project need to - look at this. Worker Justice Project needs to crack down. Like look at this. Look at this, this is crazy guys. Like the Workers Justice Projects needs to start cracking down and really start holding their own people accountable for -

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Yeah, Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: I appreciate all that you're showing us; I really do but is there anything specific -

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah, I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: No, no it's okay. Is there anything specific to the fire department or NYCEM that you want to talk about? I mean I appreciate your input.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Yeah, yeah, yeah, okay fine cool. Sorry about that, I'm sorry.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Don't be sorry.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: So, the Fire Department needs to sit down with the Workers Justice project. The OBM needs to sit down -

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Your time has expired.



CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Workers Justice Project and one more thing is keep that funding, don't defund them and please watch Adrienne Adams because she might retaliate against them for backing up -

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Thank you so much Christopher. I appreciate your testimony.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Thank you, thank you. Sorry about that. Thank you, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Those are the only members of the public right now who are here to testify both in person and on Zoom so we will take a break and resume at 2:30 to hear anyone else who had registered for that session. Thank you so much.

RECESS [03:18:48]- [04:13:59]

CHAIRPERSON ARIOLA: Welcome back. We're still part of the public testimony portion of the Committee for Fire and Emergency Management, the Budgetary Hearing and seeing no one has signed in on Zoom or is here in person, I am noting that we are going to end the meeting. If you have any testimony, you can still submit it up to 72 hours. Thank you. [GAVEL]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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



Date April 5, 2025