

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND
ELECTIONS

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APRIL 25, 2018
Start: 10:20 A.M.
Recess: 10:42 A.M.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E:

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Karen Koslowitz, Chair
Speaker Corey Johnson
Rafael Espinal Jr.
Robert Cornegy, Jr.
Margaret Chin
Adrienne E. Adams
Steven Matteo
Rory Lancman
Ritchie J. Torres
Vanessa Gibson

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

Elizabeth Guzman, Committee Counsel

Chuck Davis, Council's Investigative Unit
Director

Andre Johnson-Brown, Council
Investigative Unit

William Martin, Committee Clerk

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(test, test, test, today's a Committee on Rules and Privileges and Elections. Today's date is April 25, 2018. This is recorded by Sakhim Bradley.)

CHAIR KAREN KOSLOWITZ: Call the Rules Committee to order. Good morning and welcome to the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections. My name is Karen Koslowitz and I am the Chair of the Rules Committee. Before we begin I would like to introduce the members of this Committee who are present: Speaker Corey Johnson, Council Member Espinal, Council Member Cornegy, Council Member Chin, Council Member Adams, Council Member Matteo. Uhm before we started I would like to call on the speaker to say a few words.

SPEAKER COREY JOHNSON: Uhm thank you Madam Chair. I am really pleased that we are here today uhm today consider the re-nomination and re-upping of our fantastic City Clerk Michael McSweeney. I think he has done an incredible job during his time as the City Clerk. I know that every single member of this body has interacted with him, not just related to when they were sworn in but whenever anyone has needed something from the City Clerk's Office helping a constituent and ensuring that folks

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2 were being taken care of appropriately. The City
3 Clark and his staff have been unbelievably
4 responsive. We of course, see him at our stated
5 meetings and the work that he does up here as per the
6 City Charter but the work that he does day in and day
7 out uhm that is mandated by the City Charter for the
8 City Clerk's Office is extremely important work and
9 he has done it with professionalism, he has done it
10 with uhm total integrity and he is one of the most
11 ethical great guys that I know so I am very, very
12 pleased that we are going to be voting on this
13 nomination today and I would ask my colleagues to
14 please vote on favor of his re-nomination so that he
15 can continue to swerve as City Clerk for the City of
16 New York. I look forward to casting my vote in favor
17 of that. Thank you very much Madam Chair.

18 CHAIR KAREN KOSLOWITZ: Thank you I'd
19 also like to uhm recognize our committee council,
20 Elizabeth Guzman and I would also like to acknowledge
21 the staff members from the Council's Investigative
22 Unit, Chuck Davis, Director and Andre Johnson-Brown.
23 Today the Rules Committee will consider the re-
24 appointment by the Council of Michael McSweeney as
25 City Clerk and Clerk of the Council. Mr. McSweeney

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2 is a resident of Queens County. If re-appointed Mr.
3 McSweeney will serve a six year term beginning May
4 13, 2018 and expiring May 12, 2024. First I will
5 briefly describe the functions of the City Clerk.
6 The duty of the City Clerk and the Clerk of the
7 Council are set forth in chapter 2, section 48 of the
8 City Charter. Under section 48, the Council is
9 mandated to appoint a clerk who shall serve for a
10 term of six years. The City Clerk may be removed on
11 charges by a 2/3 vote of the Council. Such decision
12 is subject to judicial view. The City Clerk reviews
13 of a salary of \$221,754. One primary function I
14 can't see, one primary function of Clerk to the City
15 Council is to attest to all Laws passed by the
16 Council. The Clerk also attests to all legislation
17 passed by the Council that requires concurrent action
18 by our state Legislature. The Clerk of the Council
19 is also responsible for keeping the transcripts of
20 Council Proceeding. It is the duty of the City Clerk
21 to attest to Leases and Deeds of City Properties,
22 Grant Agreements, Bonds, Tax Notes and additional
23 obligations of the City. The City Clerk must keep
24 and has charge of all the papers and documents of the
25 City including Executive and Administrative Orders of

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2 Mayor. Certificates of Judicial Appointments by the
3 Mayor, odes of office for City Employees, City
4 Marshall, Bonds and Referendum Petitions. I'm not
5 going to continue I just want to say that I've known
6 Michael McSweeney 30 years and have always admired
7 his integrity and the way he handles himself.
8 (Submitted testimony by Michael McSweeney attached).

9 Michael McSweeney

10 Opening Statement

11 Committee on Rules, Privileges and Elections

12 April 25, 2018

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14 Speaker Corey Johnson, Chairperson Koslowitz,
15 Members of the Committee, thank you for the
16 opportunity to appear today as a candidate for
17 reappointment to the position of City Clerk and
18 Clerk for the Council. Service in this role
19 since 2009 has been the highlight of my career
20 and I love my work.

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22 As the Clerk of the Council, I have the privilege
23 of working with you at every stated meeting. I
24 have the honor of reading each ceremonial
25 proclamation into the Council proceedings. I

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call the roll and officially advise Public

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Advocate James that a quorum of the Council is

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present. My office qualifies all candidates for

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Commissioner of Deeds that I bring with me for

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inclusion on the General Order Calendar. After

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each stated meeting has ended, I certify each of

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the Intros that were passed before they are

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presented to the Mayor for consideration. I also

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have the honor of swearing in all elected city

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officials after each municipal election.

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As the City Clerk, I administer the NYC Marrying

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and Lobbying Bureaus. So, as a lawyer, with an

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interest in constitutional law and background in

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government and higher education, my work in the

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City Clerk's Office has put me on the forefront

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of two of the most important constitutional

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issues of our time; marriage equality and

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regulation of lobbying. I believe that my

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stewardship of the office since the first day of

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marriage equality in New York City has

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contributed to the continued rise in the number

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of couples that are traveling here to get

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married. I have played a key role in the

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2 implementation of lobbying reform legislation in
3 2006 and 2013 that has resulted in a lobbying
4 enforcement mechanism that is robust, fair and
5 beyond reproach. Having the opportunity to serve
6 as City Clerk for another term would enable me to
7 continue to implement these reforms and secure
8 the long-term success in my office.

9
10 The first day of marriage equality in New York
11 City on Sunday July 24, 2011 will always be one
12 of my proudest accomplishments. This day
13 precipitated one of the major accomplishments of
14 my current term: New York City issued more
15 marriage licenses than Las Vegas in 2016 and
16 2017. This was one of the original goals and
17 justification for moving the Manhattan Marriage
18 Bureau to its current location back in 2009.
19 Becoming the top marriage destination and
20 reaching the highest number of marriage licenses
21 issued by our office in close to 70 years is no
22 small achievement. Clearly there are many
23 factors that have contributed to these numbers.
24 I am convinced that the focus on using technology
25 to make the customer visit smoother and making

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every day a joyful and happy experience for our couples play essential roles.

Thank you one again for this opportunity and I look forward to discussing my qualifications with you.

KAREN KOSLOWITZ: So with that, I call on a vote for the Committee.

WILLIAM MARTIN, COMMITTEE CLERK: Roll call on Rules, Privileges and Elections to be considered M. Chair Koslowitz?

KAREN KOSLOWITZ: I proudly vote aye.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Chin?

MARGARET CHIN: I proudly vote aye.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Cornegy?

ROBERT CORNEGY: I also proudly vote aye.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Espinal?

RAFAEL ESPINAL: He's okay but I vote aye.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Lancman?

RORY LANCMAN: I couldn't be a Councilman without him. Aye.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Adams?

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ADRIENNE ADAMS: The borough of Queens is proud to call him ours, I emphatically vote aye.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Matteo?

STEVEN MATTEO: Yes.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Speaker Johnson?

COREY JOHNSON: I was remiss in not mentioning that in 2011 when marriage equality became law of the land, one of the people in the City of New York who stepped up who did not get a lot of credit but made sure that marriage licenses were processed immediately for couples and who did it with great enthusiasm and affection and real tender loving care for folks that had spent decades wanting to get married in our great State and City was Michael McSweeney and his staff. It was really beautiful and I was not in elected office but I was down at the City Clerks Office that day in June 2011 and I saw him there, uhm doing marriage, after marriage after marriage with a big smile on his face and so I very, very, very proudly vote aye today.

WILLIAM MARTIN: By a vote of eight in the affirmative, zero in the negative and no extension the item is adopted by the Committee.

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CHAIR KAREN KOSLOWITZ: We are going to hold the vote open for another 15 minutes.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Continuation roll call to Committee on Rules, Council Member Treyger.

MARK TREYGER: I vote aye.

WILLIAM MARTIN: The vote now currently stands at nine in the affirmative. (long pause). Continuation roll call to Committee on Rules. Council Member Gibson?

VANESSA GIBSON: I proudly vote aye. I want to thank Mike McSweeney for being a great City Clerk for us and thank him for always being here for the City Council. Looking forward to working with you, I proudly vote aye.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Final vote Committee on Rules, the items has been adopted by the Committee 10 in the affirmative, zero in the negative and no extensions.

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 May 27, 2018