

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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November 17, 2022
Start: 1:15 p.m.
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HELD AT: Committee Room - City Hall

B E F O R E: Alexa Avilés
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Diana Ayala
Charles Barron
Carmen N. De La Rosa
Darlene Mealy
Chi A. Ossé
Lincoln Restler
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
Pierina Ana Sanchez
Julia Won

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

Aixa Torres
Resident Association President of Alfred E.
Smith Houses

Marquis Jenkins
Residents to Preserve Public Housing

Ann Valdez
Community Voices Heard

Manny Martinez

Denise Allen
NYCHA Resident

Barbara McFadden
CCOP Chair Brooklyn South, Vice Chair for
Citywide Council of President

Ukah Busgith
NYCHA Executive Vice President for Resident
Services, Partnerships and Initiatives

DaVida Rowley-Blackman
Senior Director of Resident Participation and
Civic Engagement

Brian Honan
Senior Vice President for Intergovernmental
Affairs

Simon Kawitzky
Vice President of Portfolio Planning

Marvin Walton
Deputy Chief Operating Officer at NYCHA

Danette Chavis
La Guardia Houses Tenant Association President

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

Karen Blondel
Tenant Association

Beverly MacFarlane
Taft Houses President

Tamika Mapp
State Committeewoman 68th Assembly District

Terry

Rakhil Tilyayeva
Manhattan Legal Services, Tenant's Rights

Carmen Quinones

Dana Elden
St. Mary's Houses Resident Council President

Samantha Guzman
Fordham Law Student

Russell Taylor
Council Committeewoman 69th District

DJL7
Street Activist

Mildred Martinez
Campos Plaza Resident

Crystal Glover
Washington Houses Resident

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Thank you. Good
3 afternoon and welcome to today's hybrid New York City
4 Council hearing for the Committee on Public Housing.
5 To minimize disruptions, please place all electronic
6 devices to vibrate or silent mode. If you'd like to
7 submit testimony you may do so via email at
8 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Once again that is
9 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Thank you for your
10 cooperation. One moment.

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [gavel] This meeting
12 is coming to order. Good afternoon everyone and
13 welcome to this hearing of the Committee on Public
14 Housing. I am Council Member Alexa Avilés, and I
15 chair the Committee on Public Housing. I'd like to
16 thank you all for attending this important hearing,
17 and I would also like to thank you for your patience
18 as this hearing was rescheduled from a previous date.
19 We are joined by my colleagues Council Member Charles
20 Barron, Council Member Carmen De La Rosa, and Council
21 Member Lincoln Restler. So the subject of today's
22 hearing is resident engagement at NYCHA. This is a
23 broad topic, but long overdue. The last time this
24 committee conducted oversight over any element of
25 resident engagement was April 2019 in a hearing on

1 tenant participation activity funds. Federal rules,
2 otherwise known as Section 964, lay out specific
3 requirements regarding tenant participation in
4 housing, and I'd like to begin by reading the purpose
5 statement of that section. The purpose of this part
6 is to recognize the importance of resident
7 involvement in creating a positive living environment
8 and in actively participating in the overall mission
9 of public housing, actively participating. To me,
10 this means having a meaningful voice at the table,
11 having full representation at the table, and having
12 decision-making power at the table. As the Chair of
13 this committee, I often hear NYCHA residents'
14 concerns that this purpose is not met. Residents are
15 not adequately informed about major policy decisions
16 regarding their homes. There are also ongoing
17 concerns about deficiencies in voting processes for
18 choosing who will represent residents in their
19 respective resident associations. I have actually
20 witnessed these problems first-hand. While there may
21 have been some steps forward, we seem to be stuck,
22 and despite NYCHA having piloted more robust
23 partnerships with engagements with community-based
24 organizations, showing actual improved results.
25

1
2 These lessons seem not to stick. In preparation for
3 this hearing, I reviewed some press articles as far
4 back as 2015 and earlier, citing the very same
5 frustrations around resident engagement and the cycle
6 of distrust that this particular problem perpetuates.
7 An organized, well-represented tenant voice is one of
8 NYCHA's greatest assets, and it also seems to be one
9 of its greatest fears. If the authority truly seeks
10 to preserve and improve public housing, it must lean
11 into not only engaging but truly empowering residents
12 through ensuring that they are not just being heard,
13 but they are in decision-making roles. More
14 recently, the process around the public [inaudible]
15 Trust has been [inaudible]. In the summer of 2020
16 when we were at the height of the pandemic, NYCHA
17 blindsided residents by announcing this plan. Early
18 this year, the state enacted legislation to allow the
19 creation of the Trust, and NYCHA has pointed to the
20 fact that the version of the legislation that passes
21 allows for resident engagement in the process. For
22 example, this version supposedly allows tenants to
23 vote, opt-in, to the Trust. NYCHA is currently in
24 the process of adopting rules for this voting
25 procedure, but there are many issues with these

1
2 proposed rules, and I expect to address these
3 concerns today. I look forward to hearing from the
4 NYCHA residents who have joined us this afternoon. I
5 want to thank the incredible, committed, and talented
6 residents who despite little resource and support
7 have jumped into leadership through associations,
8 through roundtables, through surveys, and through
9 just standard community engagement. Over these weeks
10 I have heard many agencies use the word complex as a
11 cover for the hard work that needs to take place.
12 Complex, as a scapegoat to avoid shifting power.
13 Complex, as a way to keep the status quo. I submit to
14 you, there is nothing complex about empowering
15 residents. It is a decision and a commitment. We
16 will take engagement, but what we want is
17 empowerment. There is nobody better situated to help
18 the members of this committee and decision-makers at
19 NYCHA to understand the issues so that we can
20 ultimately work together to improve the living
21 conditions at NYCHA. I would like to thank my staff,
22 Christina Bottego, Edward Cerna [sp?], James
23 Neimeister, along with the Public Housing Committee
24 staff, Audrey Son, Jose Conde, Ricky Chawla, and Dan
25 Kroop, for all the

1 work that they've put into this hearing. In keeping
2 with the tradition of this committee, we will now
3 hear from the first panel of NYCHA residents, who as
4 I mentioned are the best people to frame the issues
5 that we are looking to to discuss today. We are
6 talking about resident engagement. Let's engage the
7 residents first. I will now turn it over to the
8 Committee Counsel to call up the witnesses. Thank
9 you.
10

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
12 now hear from--

13 [applause]

14 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We'll now hear from
15 Aixa Torres, Manuel Martinez [sp?], Marquez Jenkins
16 [sp?], Ann Valdez [sp?], and joining us on Zoom,
17 Denise Allen [sp?], and Barbara McFadden [sp?].
18 Thank you. You may begin when you're ready.

19 AIXA TORRES: Good afternoon. My name is
20 Aixa Torres. I am the Resident Association President
21 of Alfred E. Smith Houses. I am also the Chair of
22 Manhattan South District Council of Presidents. I
23 stand before you resident management. Under the 964
24 regulations, there-- we're supposed to be included
25 from conception, and that's not us-- that's not the

1 case, right? And the issue that we're having with
2 this Preservation is that we were not included from
3 conception, and now we're at this voting thing and
4 we're still not included from conception, and the
5 problem is that NYCHA is asking for 10 percent based
6 on their data, based on our elections, and I venture
7 to say that what needs to happen is that it should be
8 no less-- I think it should be 100 percent, but
9 sometimes we have to compromise, and I would say 66
10 percent, but no further than that. You cannot have--
11 yesterday, we were in a meeting, and so one resident
12 got up. She goes, "I only have like 150 units." That
13 means that 15 people can make the decision for 150
14 families. That's what we're talking about when you
15 look at the real numbers, right? And so it has to be
16 more than that. And in terms of resident engagement,
17 this is no reflection on the staff, right? This is a
18 reflection on the Chairman who doesn't even live
19 here, and I would venture to say that I don't
20 understand how that happened, but the people who are
21 running NYCHA, it's not working. I believe in
22 resident management. I think that when residents--
23 when residents run NYCHA, which it has in the past,
24 NYCHA was better for it because we had to reserve of
25

1
2 like in the billions of dollars, and where is our
3 money? Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you, Ms.
5 Torres.

6 MARQUIS JENKINS: Thank you, Council
7 Members, especially Councilwoman Alexa Avilés, for
8 holding this very important hearing today. You all
9 have a copy of our testimony as well as a copy of our
10 recommendations as it relates to the New York City
11 Housing Authority's draft voting regulations. My name
12 is Marquis Jenkins, and I'm here representing the
13 Residents to Preserve Public Housing, or RPPH. RPPH
14 submits this written testimony to stand with public
15 housing residents citywide who have constantly
16 organized to make their voices heard and exercise
17 decision-making power in their communities and within
18 the Housing Authority. For years, NYCHA has
19 maintained a formal resident engagement department,
20 but despite its mission has repeatedly proven itself
21 to be inadequate in addressing resident concerns and
22 empowering residents towards collective decision-
23 making. Most recently, this status quo of superficial
24 resident engagement has been on display through the
25 ongoing PACT conversion, despite resident opposition,

1 such as in Harlem River Houses among others. The
2 passage of the Public Housing Preservation Trust,
3 despite widespread resident opposition citywide and
4 even formal written opposition from the Housing
5 Authority's officially recognized resident
6 representation body, the Citywide Council of
7 Presidents, and the delayed and unclear
8 communications surrounding potential public health
9 crisis on display at the recent water supply concerns
10 at Jacob Riis Houses. NYCHA's Resident Engagement
11 Department claims that residents are at the "heart of
12 NYCHA," but instead of residents being at the center
13 of the Housing Authority's plan, residents are often
14 the afterthought. Within NYCHA's consistent
15 commitment to streamline and improve such dramatic
16 institutional restructuring in the face of years of
17 vocal disapproval as well as obscure and potential
18 health risks, it is clear that residents should have
19 little confidence in the integrity or effectiveness
20 of NYCHA's current model of resident engagement. I'm
21 going fast forward just to the end of my
22 presentation. Due to the-- due to the consistent
23 patterns of shortcoming in NYCHA's resident
24 engagement model, it is clear that this process is in
25

1
2 UNIDENTIFIED: This on? Oh, good, great.
3 Good afternoon. Good afternoon to the Public Housing
4 Committee of New York City Council and to honorable
5 Council Member Alexa Avilés. Thank you so much for
6 holding this. I would like to start off my part of
7 the testimony with NYCHA's mission where it says to
8 provide quality housing to New Yorkers that is
9 inclusive, that is safe, and that it is sustainable
10 while fostering opportunities for economic mobility.
11 Now, this speaks to what Section 9 public housing is,
12 which is not Section 8, and we continue to see this
13 comparison as if Section 8 and Section 9 are apples
14 to apples, to which they're not. Section 9 invests
15 into the people that live in public housing and to
16 the community, and that investment, that return on
17 investment was to be seen in the rent, but NYCHA has
18 been treating Section 9 public housing like Section 8
19 for the last 30 years which is why it has not been
20 fulfilling its promise, not because it's deficient,
21 but because the obstruction from the public housing
22 agency in New York City and their greed does not
23 allow it to happen. When you look at Section 3 and
24 the multiple billions of dollars of contracts that
25 trigger Section 3, you do not see the result that's

1 intended in regards to training, which there is none,
2 in which I receive from the General Counsel of NYCHA
3 saying that there's no obligation for training, even
4 though that's countering the part 135 and part 75
5 regulations regarding Section 3. When you look at
6 also home ownership programs in which you have 100
7 and-- not you. NYCHA has 130 boarded up FHA homes
8 and they have over 5,000 households that are paying
9 flat rent, and they're not offering those home
10 ownership opportunities to these households. When
11 you look at how NYCHA has been engaging their
12 responsibility into Section 9 for the households, it
13 has not been met, and this has been huge, huge
14 obstruction to the families who are predominantly
15 black and Hispanic who are living in public housing
16 throughout the five boroughs. Let's also pay
17 attention that each-- even though not every public
18 housing development is in a redline community, but
19 every reline community has a public housing
20 development in it, as well as the fact that in 19--
21 in 2021, US-- UCLA has identified New York City as
22 being the most segregated school system in the
23 country. Most of those schools are adjacent from a
24 public housing development. And so now, we fast
25

1 forward to today and the recent occurrences that's
2 happening with the vote that they're now trying to
3 propose and their conversions to private management
4 under project-based Section 8 or for NYCHA to
5 continue its management under Section 8, or what they
6 call a status quo which is to maintain Section 9
7 public housing which they have not allowed for the
8 return in investment to actually flourish into our
9 community. resident management is also a part of
10 those strategies that would allow for the
11 redistribution of federal funds to come into our
12 community and affect the people who it's supposed to
13 affect, which is the public housing resident. We
14 look at how NYCHA's resident engagement and outreach
15 has disadvantaged and is currently dismantling
16 Section 9. We have to consider recent activities
17 that's happened in citywide elections, of which I was
18 a candidate of, in which I ran, and there was a 55/54
19 election count. Now, mind you, I proved to them that
20 they engaged in election ballot stuffing. They did
21 an online registration for online voters to vote, and
22 when you have more votes than you have people who've
23 registered online, then that means that that was
24 ballot stuffing. If you have 60 people who

1 registered and 100 people who voted, that is what
2 election ballot stuffing is. And then they also
3 tried to hold a ballot that is supposed to be void.
4 And I gave these protests, and I also-- evidence
5 precedence in election law for New York State, and
6 what they did was they sent it to HUD when I
7 requested was it a 964 independent arbitration. They
8 sent it to HUD in order to park the protest so that
9 they could push forward this Trust voting policy
10 without anyone being vocal enough to bring attention
11 to what they're doing. And even though in the Trust
12 voting policy, they said they're going to give third-
13 party arbitration, and these types of protests still
14 go, still has to go to NYCHA. And so if they're able
15 to do this now with this kind of protest, doesn't
16 matter how many third-parties we have, they would
17 still be able to put their hands on the scale and
18 continue to abuse our communities, and this has to
19 stop, and I thank you.

21 ANN VALDEZ: Good afternoon. My
22 testimony is going to be slightly different, because
23 mine will be a little more personal, hopefully not
24 depressing. Good afternoon. My name is Ann Valdez.
25 I am a third generation resident of Grayson Houses in

1 which I also sit on the resident board. During the
2 past 20 years, I've also been an active member of
3 Community Voices Heard. First and foremost, I would
4 like to thank the Council for this opportunity to
5 testify here. I have been a life-long resident of
6 NYCHA. I have a clear recollection of when the
7 relationship between management and residents wasn't
8 contentious as it is now. Growing up it was evident
9 that this place I called home felt more like a
10 community. The local patrolling officers knew the
11 people in the neighborhood by their names, which
12 created more of an overall comradery. I moved into
13 my residence in 2005 as a victim of domestic violence
14 and was handed keys to an incomplete apartment. Many
15 things needed to be fixed. Many things needed to be
16 fixed, as my windows, the closet doors, even the lock
17 in my front door. NYCHA personnel stated they were
18 coming to do the repairs. They fixed my front door
19 cylinder and one window with springs to prevent it
20 from slamming. They still managed to neglect a lot
21 of the improvements that needed to be done in my
22 house. Whereas there was supposed to be contractors
23 working on the roofs to prevent leaking, and instead
24 it leaked so bad that it destroyed the apartment
25

1 above me and started to do severe damage of my
2 apartment. When I reported it and put in a ticket in
3 July of 2011, they gave me a date that they were
4 going to come to look at it and repair it in December
5 of 2012. By that time, New York City had already
6 been hit by two hurricanes, an earthquake and a
7 tornado. Nothing got done. The destruction became so
8 bad, and NYCHA wasn't listening, and I also at the
9 time was living under the Department of Social
10 Services, so I had to run over to their programs, and
11 I didn't have time to sit home because when NYCHA
12 said they would come, they didn't come. Alright, so
13 as a result it took-- I'm living there now almost 18
14 years. It took them approximately 17 years and with
15 the help of my State Assemblywoman Doctor Mathylde
16 Frontus and the media to finally get someone to pay
17 attention, and then there was a group that came that
18 was supposed to be put together from the courts with
19 all the complaints that NYCHA residents were making.
20 They were called-- I forgot the name of the group.
21 Anyway, they finally came and it took them two weeks
22 to renovate my apartment. It took NYCHA another
23 three weeks to put in a radiator, to repair a
24 radiator. So five weeks I was out of my home, and by
25

1 that time I had so much mold that was in my apartment
2 I was breathing that I now have to live my life quite
3 often during the year-- every month I spend at least
4 two weeks out of a month on a nebulizer, taking all
5 types of medications. My son who will be 24 tomorrow
6 has only spent, prior to the fixing, had only spent
7 maybe a handful of times in his own bedroom, because
8 I feared for his health. If it hadn't been for my
9 Assemblywoman, I would still be living in those
10 conditions. NYCHA did not listen. Instead, my
11 assistant manager who is now my manager spoke to me
12 like I created the problems, like I wasn't worthy of
13 living there, and even threatened that with those
14 conditions I could be evicted, even though it wasn't
15 my fault. And I plead with you, please understand
16 that these so-called improvements or switching into
17 Preservation Trust is not going to benefit the
18 residents, not in the state that it's going. We need
19 to make sure that the residents have more of a say
20 than as they say the color of their walls. We need
21 to be a part of the planning, and I would appreciate
22 if we could keep it as Section 9, which really
23 represents and looks out for the residents instead of
24 the management. Thank you.
25

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We're also hearing from Denise Allen [sp?] and Barbara McFadden via Zoom.

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: The first panel, I'm sorry, we wanted to ask a question. I'm so sorry. Council Member Barron, go for it.

COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: First of all, your testimony is the most powerful testimony we will hear today, so I'm glad you did make it personal, because all of this is personal. People have to live like that. I grew up in the Lillian Wald Houses on the Lower Eastside for 30 years. My momma was there for 60 years. Jacob Riis was right across the street, and we have little stuff here and there with them, but I know what it means to be neglected like that. So I just wanted to commend you for coming forth and all of you, and to say we have over 500,000 residents, over 500,000 residents. Please don't allow them to manipulate you against each other to take power away from you. So, they gonna [sic] come with all these fancy things on how wonderful PACT/RAD and the Trust is. Don't trust the Trust, because I'm telling you, when it comes to-- in my district where

1 we have RAD and PACT and Linden Houses and Boulevard
2 Houses, they having all kinds of problems, and these
3 superficial fix-ups where they give you new, you
4 know, awnings for your sink or whatever, but a year
5 later-- this is why it should have never been moved
6 from Section 9 to Section 8. And if you are going to
7 move it, move it to the residents. Move it to the
8 residents.
9

10 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: And we should not
12 allow them to tell us that residential management
13 can't happen. We can get lawyers. We can get
14 accountants. We can get people who know construction
15 developers. All that others are getting, we can get.
16 And I've met with developers. They don't know
17 nothing, they just have connections. Anybody could
18 hire a construction worker. Anybody can hire a lawyer
19 or accountant. That ain't no big thing. You ain't
20 gotta [sic] go to Yale to do that. So, I just wanted
21 to come because I do have to get back to East New
22 York. We have several issues we gotta deal with, but
23 I wanted to be here with you today to say don't give
24 up the fight. Don't give into the Trust. Don't give
25 into PAD-- PACT. Don't give into RAD. These are

1
2 destructive forces and politicians in Albany are
3 going to come in and say look what we got for you.
4 The feds didn't do nothing. The state didn't do
5 nothing. The city didn't do it. Look what we got.
6 And they going to offer these things, and then after
7 the first year, if we make it then, all hell's going
8 to break loose. So, I just want to encourage you to
9 fight on. You know we going to be with you. You
10 could not have a better Chair of this committee than
11 the Chair that we have. I really appreciate this
12 sister so much, because it's not easy to be in here
13 and say some of the things that we say. So I just
14 wanted to say that. I can stay around for a little
15 while longer and ask you how close are we of having a
16 citywide-- I know they have an organization already,
17 but where is that at, the citywide residents, you
18 know, leadership coming together, because that's
19 where our power is. Is there anybody--

20 UNIDENTIFIED: I think we could do it.

21 MARQUIS JENKINS: So, I'm definitely
22 going to tip it over to Mr. Mannie Martinez, but I
23 represent the residents to Preserve Public Housing,
24 and we are a citywide group, and in partnership with
25 many other groups we have been fighting the fight,

1
2 and if it were not for our group, this legislation
3 would have been passed in 2018. And I-- we take
4 credit for making sure it is not destructive as when
5 it was written when it was first written. And to
6 Manny who sits on the Citywide Council of Presidents,
7 he was one of the people who drafted the letter on
8 behalf of the officially recognized body. The
9 residents-- the Citywide Council of Presidents to
10 write a letter objecting to this legislation. so we
11 are here and we're still moving, and we'd love to
12 have you come and speak on one of our Sunday meetings
13 to talk to the residents, to uplift them and let them
14 know that we do have strong support standing with
15 Councilwoman Alexa Avilés and the City Council.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: Well, you know,
17 I'd be glad to come and I want to thank the Council
18 Member to say these few words, and say that when we
19 get that-- because when that legislation is passed--
20 the bottom line is you. When I go into my
21 neighborhoods-- but they manipulate the residents so
22 skillfully and put fear in them. You're going to
23 lose your lease. You're going to be kicked out if
24 you don't vote for this and that. So sometimes even
25 the residents are saying, hey, we want it. So my

1 position is that I don't think we should accept any
2 three of these Trusts, RAD and PACT. If you do,
3 then we need to get together to make sure you're not
4 harmed by it. If we can't stop it, then we got to
5 make it work for us. And I think that we cannot go
6 for politicians that are just coming in and saying
7 that this is the greatest thing that ever happened
8 since sliced bread. But we have to make sure that
9 the residents not have engagement, that have power as
10 the Chair said has power. So my thing is say no to
11 all of it, but if you do I'll be there to fight with
12 you to make it right for you.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: I just want to
15 underscore why it's important to have colleagues like
16 Council Member Barron who has your back, because I
17 want to thank you all for sharing your stories and
18 your experience. And thank you for your consistent
19 advocacy and holding us accountable, and making sure
20 that we don't get fleeced with pretty stories, but
21 that the reality is in the room. And so I just
22 wanted to ask you very quickly before we move to the
23 next panel. And if we could-- if we could try to
24 answer as briefly as possible, and maybe we can do
25 each of you. I know you are long-standing residents.

1
2 How many-- what would you-- what grade would you give
3 resident engagement for NYCHA, and what suggestion,
4 one concrete suggestion would you offer?

5 ANN VALDEZ: Okay, this is not a
6 reflection on the staff, but I would definitely give
7 it an F, because you have certain staff members that
8 do resident engagement, true, but it is the people
9 who are on top who are calling the shots, and what
10 needs to happen is we need to be included from
11 conception, not at the end, not show us a PowerPoint.
12 This is what we want to do, how we want to do it,
13 right? The conception pieces, something needs to get
14 done, what are your ideas? Can we think-tank, right?
15 What is it that-- what are the steps that need to
16 happen to make this happen? But when it comes to
17 resident engagement, the-- it's not there. It's not--
18 - the word engagement is not there. It's like a
19 hand-me-down, right? It's like they show us a
20 PowerPoint, then we're supposed to critique it, and
21 it's somebody else's work. It's not ours. And I
22 don't think that people understand that, right?
23 There's some people in resident engagement that I
24 would give an A to, right? But the reality of it is,
25 as a whole when it's being done, it's not-- we're not

1 part of the process from conception, and that is the
2 issue that a lot of people actually don't understand.
3 And I've been-- you know, I've been told by somebody
4 who's not in resident management but who handles,
5 supposed to be, that her biggest problem that we--
6 we're not sophisticated as residents to understand,
7 and that's her biggest issue. Yeah. And so when you
8 have that kind of mentality and it trickles down to
9 the staff, then that becomes an issue. Thank you.
10 And Councilwoman, I want to thank you for being an
11 advocate for the residents of public housing and
12 holding these hearings and respecting what we have to
13 say.
14

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you. Mr.
16 Martinez, what grade would you provide and what
17 concrete solutions would you offer or approaches that
18 could be changed?

19 MANNY MARTINEZ: So, public housing has
20 an exclusionary list that if you commit a crime, you
21 will be excluded from the grounds, public housing
22 grounds. Now, given that resident engagement
23 recently conducted in election fraud, I think they
24 should be excluded from the grounds of NYCHA. They
25 get an F. When any organization or entity or group

1 engages in any kind of illegalities in order for them
2 to get their way, that's an F. I think that what we
3 need citywide from a help-- like it's not something
4 that can happen within NYCHA because NYCHA's
5 workplace culture and mindset has been so tainted for
6 so long that it is almost impossible to change that
7 from within. I think that what we need is a citywide
8 initiative, a nonprofit initiative that's going to
9 provide these resident councils with nonprofit
10 funding, with nonprofit establishment with nonprofit
11 support so that they can become the independent
12 resource and representation for these communities
13 with the most power as possible in collaboration with
14 the City Council. And I think that would be the most
15 effective route to go. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you.

18 AIXA TORRES: Well, I agree with what
19 Manny has said with one thing he left out. Through
20 the nonprofit collaborations, I believe that it
21 should be a nonprofit that trains the council, the
22 Resident Engagement Council on what it is to be a
23 leader and how to represent the residents you're
24 supposed to be representing instead of them sitting
25 around like-- instead of them sitting around waiting,

1
2 waiting to be told from the top of NYCHA down what to
3 say, what not to say, what to tell your resident
4 leaders. No, I believe that it should be a
5 nonprofit, and I have a couple of them in mind, that
6 should be able to teach the resident, the resident
7 engagement how to truly engage the residents and have
8 an open conversation, speak their minds, talk about
9 what's needed, and not let it be told to them so that
10 they have to carry it to the residents without any
11 actual input.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you. You'll
13 have to indulge me just one small bit. By a show of
14 hands, can-- I know you again are long-standing
15 leaders. How many of you have received workshops
16 around resident engagement? And tools? Let the
17 record show--

18 ANN VALDEZ: [interposing] Their idea--
19 wait a minute. Their idea of a workshop is that they
20 send an email to my TA president and she tells me and
21 the rest of our board, that we have to get online for
22 a zoom meeting and basically they're telling us what
23 needs to get done, how it gets done. That's their
24 workshop.

25

1
2 AIXA TORRES: As I-- as I said, you know,
3 that some of the staff would get an A. I-- my
4 experience has been that we've gotten that kind of
5 training in terms of leadership and things like that.
6 So NYCHA does have staff that has the capacity and
7 the capability, but most of the ones who do that,
8 guess what? They're residents in public housing.
9 There's a sense of respect that a lot of times we
10 don't get. And so when I say-- when I say that, I'm
11 saying, you know, once again, that the people who are
12 on the top in NYCHA who are running NYCHA, basically,
13 some of them have never lived in public housing,
14 don't have a clue what it's like to live in public
15 housing. So when you have staff that's in resident--
16 from resident management who have been public housing
17 residents or who still are, there is a sense of
18 ownership and there's a sense of respect that you
19 get. So I have had positive, right, reflects [sic]--
20 I'm not going to say. And that's why I said like
21 some of the staff members, they absolutely get an A,
22 but as a whole, the whole concept of resident
23 management, it is what it is. It's not. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you. Thank
25 you for that, Ms. Torres. It's important to note,

1 right, that there are staff members, I think, that
2 are doing excellent work and trying their best on
3 constraining conditions. Nevertheless, the top line
4 issue here is a culture of a lack of accountability
5 and belief in resident engagement is what it seems.
6 We'll talk more about and get some more specific
7 information from NYCHA. So, I think I'll leave it at
8 there. There's a-- oh, yes.

10 MARQUIS JENKINS: I just want to take the
11 opportunity to piggy-back on what was said. I think
12 it would behoove us to remember that there are
13 residents who actually serve on the NYCHA board, and
14 yet we never hear from them, and that's not because
15 of their effectiveness. That is because of the way
16 the structure is set up. They serve at the will of
17 the Housing Authority and at the will of the Mayor.
18 And in terms of my recommendation for what needs to
19 be done, is we need to have a board of residents who
20 are the majority of the board to really make sure
21 that there's true decision-making and accountability
22 coming from the residents.

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you. Very
24 critical addition. So, I think with that, I think

1
2 we'd like to close and move to the next panel before
3 we go to the Administration. Thank you so much.

4 UNIDENTIFIED: Thank you.

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We'll hear
6 from Denise Allen and Barbara McFadden. Ms. Allen,
7 you may begin when you're ready.

8 : Okay. Hello all. My name is Denise
9 Allen. I have been living in-- I'm a tenant in NYCHA
10 public housing since 2019. I always believe that
11 living in public housing would be a comfort living
12 environment, an easy way to live, but that has not
13 been the case. Since moving in my apartment, I have
14 more complaining-- complex [sic] living in my
15 development. It has got to stop. [inaudible] I am a
16 wheelchair bound-- I am a wheelchair person,
17 [inaudible] that reside on the eighth floor in a
18 development that has [inaudible] frequently out-of-
19 service elevator. [inaudible] at times missing my
20 appointments, especially my medical appointments
21 going out doing [inaudible].

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We'll now
23 hear from Barbara McFadden.

24 DENISE ALLEN: [inaudible]
25

2 BARBARA MCFADDEN: Good afternoon,
3 everyone.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Good afternoon. We
5 hear you.

6 BARBARA MCFADDEN: Hello?

7 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can hear.
8 Ms. McFadden, you may proceed.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yeah, you're muted.
10 Can somebody please--

11 BARBARA MCFADDEN: Hello everyone. Can
12 everyone hear me?

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yes, we can hear
14 you.

15 BARBARA MCFADDEN: Hello?

16 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: We can hear you,
17 please proceed.

18 BARBARA MCFADDEN: Hello?

19 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Yes, we can hear you.

20 BARBARA MCFADDEN: Okay, alright. Good
21 afternoon, everyone. My name is Barbara McFadden. I
22 am the CCOP Chair for the Brooklyn South, and I'm the
23 first Vice Chair for Citywide Council of Presidents.
24 I'm very thrilled to stand before you to inform you
25 how I feel about the new resident engagement

1 participation and civic engagement team. Even though
2 I have been the resident leader for 14 consecutive
3 years at Sheepshead Bay, Nostrand Housing, I had the
4 equal opportunity to work with the old Administration
5 and the new Resident Engagement Civic Engagement
6 Team. I am very pleased with the new team because
7 they are hands-on now. They're very proactive, fair
8 [inaudible] the next 50 or 60 years I may not be
9 here. I'm glad that I have the equal opportunity to
10 work along with NYCHA to bring forth change so that
11 every resident can have a better quality of life.
12 [inaudible] I had a problem with [inaudible]. I
13 reported the-- I reported the issue to my citywide
14 [inaudible] resident engagement [inaudible] because
15 one thing I'm [inaudible] tolerate is inappropriate
16 behavior [sic], because it goes against the
17 [inaudible] conduct, and they did handle it
18 [inaudible] immediate response. I want to give
19 thanks to a few people that I work with on a couple
20 of projects. Her name is Ms. [inaudible], Curtis
21 Williams, Gregory Russ, [inaudible], Erica Desus
22 [sp?], Brian Holden [sic], Arva Turner [sic],
23 Courtney Yoo [sp?], Andrew Kaplan, Mr. Danny Barbara
24 [sic], and last but not least, I want to give all
25

1
2 praises to my wonderful resident leaders throughout
3 the five boroughs, because without them it would not
4 be a Barbara McFadden. One of my big concerns in New
5 York City housing is public safety, mental health and
6 providing resources for our at-risk youth. By
7 implementing healing circles, providing our youth
8 [inaudible] --

9 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Time
10 expired.

11 BARBARA MCFADDEN: [inaudible] once a
12 week, [inaudible] youth stipends, and provide them
13 with job readiness [inaudible] with the New York City
14 new NYCHA Resident Engagement, Civic Engagement Team,
15 and I plan to work with the 61st precinct, because
16 the Captain [inaudible] Committee. I want to see
17 programs for [inaudible] boroughs. I meet once a week
18 with the Captain of the 61st [inaudible]

19 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Ms. McFadden? Ms.
20 McFadden?

21 BARBARA MCFADDEN: [inaudible] I hope to
22 see crime interrupt-- huh?

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: It's really hard to-
24 - it's really hard to hear you because you're
25 breaking up.

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BARBARA MCFADDEN: Oh, wow, okay.

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: You may want to turn off-- turn off your video.

BARBARA MCFADDEN: Okay

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: That might help, but you're on mute.

BARBARA MCFADDEN: [inaudible] Hello?

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: I'm so sorry, Ms. McFadden, the video turning off didn't help. It's just that you're vocal is very choppy. So I want to--

BARBARA MCFADDEN: [interposing] Okay, what about now?

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: We may want to try to revisit another connection, but we heard most of your presentation.

BARBARA MCFADDEN: Okay, can I just say this last part? Hopefully--

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Sure, sure.

BARBARA MCFADDEN: you guys hear it. I hope to see more crime interrupters on the ground at New York City Housing, more police and private security 24 hours. As I said, one of my fortes is

1
2 minimizing crime, because no residents can feel safe
3 in New York City Housing Authority if the crime rate
4 is up. We need to have those crime interrupters on
5 the ground, and I did bring this issue to our mayor,
6 Mayor Eric Adams, and maybe at the next hearing, we
7 can invite him. I yield.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you, Ms.
9 McFadden.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I do have to get
11 back to East New York, but I want to say this and
12 honestly compels me to say, I have not met a person
13 in the Housing Authority, Ms. McFadden, across the
14 City that thinks Greg Russ is doing a good job.

15 [applause]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BARRON: I haven't met
17 one. That's number one. Number two, I really think
18 that he should be fired or resign because of
19 incompetency with such a large access to resources,
20 and lastly, I agree with you about the violence
21 interrupters. We need to have more of them in our
22 neighborhoods, and I think also when we talking about
23 crime, let's not forget to deal with poverty,
24 unemployment, and mental health. You said invite a
25 mayor. This is a mayor who cut the education budget

1
2 by 300 million dollars and has a bloated police
3 budget of 11 billion dollars. So, I don't think that
4 police is the solution to the crime. I think it's
5 poverty, and I have to go, but I thank the Chair for
6 letting me indulge. Thank you very much.

7 [applause]

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much.
9 We will now move to testimony from the
10 Administration.

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: We just like to
12 recognize Council Member Ossé who has joined us.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. I will
14 now administer the oath to the Administration.
15 Please raise your right hand. Do you affirm to tell
16 the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth
17 in your testimony before this committee and to
18 respond honestly to Council Member questions?

19 UNIDENTIFIED: yes.

20 UNIDENTIFIED: Yes.

21 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. You may
22 begin when ready.

23 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Chair
24 Avilés-- Chair Alexa Avilés, member of the Committee
25 on Public Housing, other distinguished guests,

1 distinguished members of the City Council, NYCHA
2 residents, community advocates and members of the
3 public, good afternoon. My name is Ukah Busgith and
4 I'm the Executive Vice President for Resident
5 Services Partnerships and Initiatives. I am pleased
6 to be joined today by DaVida Rowley-Blackman, our
7 Senior Director of Resident Participation and Civic
8 Engagement; Brian Honan, our Senior Vice President
9 for Intergovernmental Affairs; and Simon Kawitzky,
10 Vice President for Portfolio Planning. Thank you for
11 this opportunity to discuss our robust efforts to
12 engage and partner with NYCHA residents as we build
13 stronger communities together. We understand that
14 partnership with our stakeholders is fundamental to
15 improving the quality of life in NYCHA communities.
16 In particular, we know that resident engagement and
17 outreach is key to our success. Our Resident
18 Services, Partnerships, and Initiatives, RSPI,
19 department is solely dedicated to this work. Every
20 day, its more than 250 passionate staff connect NYCHA
21 residents to critical and empowering programs and
22 services while also engaging them on agency and
23 community priorities. RSPI also supports the
24 extensive network of resident associations and
25

1 manages partnerships, programs, and initiatives
2 involving economic opportunity as well as senior--
3 youth, senior, and social services. Beyond RSPI,
4 resident engagement and outreach is woven into the
5 fabric of our work, whether it's communicating about
6 repairs, the new capital preservation programs that
7 will fully rehabilitate and upgrade residents' homes,
8 our latest-- or the latest sustainability measures
9 we're implementing. To keep residents informed, last
10 year alone we published over 460 articles on our
11 websites, drafted dozens of resident emails and
12 letters, released 45 videos, translated over 2,700
13 documents, fulfilled over 400 interpretation
14 requests, and posted over 3,600 items on social
15 media, and regularly distributed robocalls to nearly
16 320,000 phone numbers. This same year, our Customer
17 Contact Center, CCC, handled nearly two million
18 calls. Every time there is a relevant service
19 outage, we post flyers at developments and
20 disseminate robocalls to residents. Our monthly rent
21 inserts provide information by mail to 105,000
22 households and to over 58,000 households online. All
23 of the vital information we disseminate is available
24 in the covered languages of English, Spanish,
25

1 Simplified Chinese, Traditional Chinese, and Russian,
2 and we provide interpretation services as necessary.
3 Oftentimes, we conduct direct outreach to residents
4 on important topics through door-knocking. We meet
5 and speak with resident leaders on a very regular
6 basis, and we offer opportunities for residents to
7 get involved through platforms such as resident
8 associations and the Resident Roundtable. To ensure
9 that RSPI is successful in its work to empower
10 residents and have their voices heard, we recently
11 restructured the department, in line with our overall
12 efforts to transform NYCHA's organization and
13 operations. We also aligned RSPI with our new
14 Neighborhood Model for operations, streamlining the
15 communications involved in supporting residents. RSPI
16 partnership-based service coordination model involves
17 more than 150 community-based partners. Formerly
18 known as Community Engagement & Partnerships, RSPI
19 supports residents, partners, and the Authority
20 through the following sub-departments: our Resident
21 Engagement-- our Resident Participation & Civic
22 Engagement focuses primarily on coordination and
23 partnership with resident associations, but also
24 outreach to all residents on policies and initiatives
25

1 that impact their lives. Our Resident Outreach
2 Services focuses on engagement with residents
3 surrounding NYCHA's preservation, rehabilitation, and
4 modernization programs to educate about the impacts
5 of these programs on specific developments. Our
6 Relocation Services Department helps provide families
7 to temporary hospitality units or hotels to
8 facilitate repairs in the apartments. It reaches out
9 directly to impacted families and develops relocation
10 plans, considering residents' special needs,
11 preferences, and any services needed. Our Resident
12 Economic Empowerment and Sustainability Department,
13 REES, supports residents involved in employment and
14 advancement programs, business development, adult
15 education and training, and financial literacy and
16 asset building. Health Initiatives manages
17 partnerships and leads interagency efforts to
18 conduct-- connect residents to preventive health
19 resources, create healthier indoor environments, and
20 cultivate resident leadership in health. Our Family
21 Partnerships Department connects residents to
22 critical youth and social services program, also
23 including seniors, from external providers and City
24 agencies. The Office of Public Private/Partnerships
25

1
2 builds collaborations with public-- with private,
3 public, and philanthropic sectors to support NYCHA
4 goals of preserving public housing and improving
5 residents' access to community-based services and
6 opportunities. We cannot transform NYCHA without
7 input from residents and other stakeholders. There
8 are several organizations that facilitate partnership
9 and resident engagement, and I'll explain a few of
10 them now. Resident associations, composed of elected
11 members, are a critical avenue for residents to
12 support each other through events and connections to
13 resources. They also enable residents to collaborate
14 with NYCHA staff at every level, ensuring that they
15 are part of the decision-making process at
16 developments and across the Authority. Over the past
17 few years, we have made sure that resident
18 associations have a place to meet, and we implemented
19 a series of election reforms in partnership with the
20 resident associations to increase resident
21 participation. That includes virtual voting, more
22 open voting, and regular civic engagement events. I
23 am pleased to report that over 250-- I'm sorry. I'm
24 pleased to report that 249 resident associations'
25 elections have been held across the city since 2020.

1
2 Currently, a total of 249 development, NYCHA
3 developments, have resident associations. To build
4 strong and productive relationships, property
5 managers are expected to meet monthly with resident
6 association leadership. In fact, our Neighborhood
7 Model facilitates enhanced coordination between
8 resident associations and property management staff.
9 Resident also-- associations also work closely with
10 property managers to review and inform priorities
11 within the local property-based budgets. Our work
12 with resident associations also involve the
13 distribution and management of tenant participation
14 funds. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban
15 Development, HUD, provides tenant participation funds
16 to support the work of resident associations in
17 strengthening and supporting their communities. For
18 instance, for educational classes and workshops,
19 information dissemination and resource fairs,
20 development clean-up days, and resident association
21 office supplies. We implemented several reforms to
22 improve the process for disbursing funds. For
23 example, we updated the written agreement between
24 NYCHA and resident associations on the use of the
25 funds, based on comments from resident leaders and

1
2 advocates; revised the plain language guidebook that
3 explains the funding process-- it's available on our
4 website--; Streamlined the process for spending funds
5 by introducing a commercial card that resident
6 associations can use to approved purchases up to
7 \$5,000; created online tip sheets to help resident
8 associations make the best use of the funds; and
9 Increased transparency by posting online quarterly
10 budget reports that list the funds spent and still
11 available by development. We know the transition to
12 this new system of funding was a difficult adjustment
13 for some associations. Of course, we are open to
14 incorporating additional feedback from residents and
15 other stakeholders on how to improve the tenant
16 participation funds process. Every president of a
17 recognized resident association is a member of the
18 Citywide Council of Presidents, CCOP, which is
19 organized into 10 districts. Resident association
20 presidents elect the Board Committee to represent
21 their district and the CCOP Executive Board. The
22 CCOP works with NYCHA leadership to address quality
23 of life issues at NYCHA developments, advise on
24 operations, and engage with government at all levels
25 to advance the interests of NYCHA residents. Members

1 of the DCOP and CCOP Executive Board automatically
2 become members of the Resident Advisory Board, RAB,
3 which primarily provides recommendations for NYCHA's
4 annual and five-year agency plans. To further our
5 partnerships, last year NYCHA and the CCOP signed a
6 new Memorandum of Agreement that officially
7 recognized the CCOP as the Authority-wide voice for
8 residents and formalizes its role in advising on all
9 areas of NYCHA's portfolio. Specifically, the
10 agreement establishes a framework for NYCHA and CCOP,
11 specifically-- sorry. The agreement establishes a
12 framework for NYCHA and the CCOP to work together to
13 enhance the Authority's operations and management,
14 amplify resident participation, and better address
15 the issues that are most important to residents. The
16 agreement also outlines how NYCHA and the CCOP will
17 share information and communicate as we jointly
18 reimagine NYCHA's future. I would like to
19 acknowledge all the CCOP members, including CCOP
20 Chair Daniel Barber, for their efforts here. I would
21 like to note that while the CCOP has long worked with
22 NYCHA on issues affecting residents, this is the
23 first time NYCHA and the CCOP have had an official
24 agreement since 1993. To further illustrate the
25

1 progress we're making, NYCHA and the CCOP used to
2 meet twice a year. We are now meeting with the CCOP
3 every week. We have begun a new HUD-funded training
4 program for resident leaders and employees on this
5 new agreement, as well as the federal 964
6 regulations, which govern resident participation in
7 all aspects of the Authority's mission and operation.
8 Our goal is to train residents and employees side by
9 side so they learn together and jointly understand
10 the expectations for that partnership that are shared
11 by NYCHA and CCOP executive leadership. Last year,
12 the Resident Roundtable-- launched last year, the
13 Resident Roundtable provides an opportunity for
14 residents to help design the implementation of
15 NYCHA's Transformation Plan. It is more than-- its
16 more than 30 members represent each of the
17 Authority's Neighborhood portfolios as well as
18 Section 8 voucher holders in PACT developments. They
19 provide valuable feedback and recommendations on
20 matters such as lease enforcement, residents' quality
21 of life, safety and security, communication between
22 residents and NYCHA, and other areas identified by
23 residents and staff. We work-- we work intensively
24 to keep residents informed, and solicit their
25

1 feedback on key initiatives that include PACT, the
2 New York City Public Housing Preservation Trust, as
3 well as other-- as our Sandy recovery and our capital
4 project more broadly. Based on the feedback we hear
5 from residents, community members, and other
6 stakeholders, we make ongoing improvements to ensure
7 that resident expertise and input are in the center
8 of the PACT planning process. Resident leaders now
9 participate in selecting the developers, general
10 contractors, property managers, and social service
11 providers who will renovate and maintain their
12 developments. They review proposals, interview
13 development teams, and help us select the partners
14 that are best suited to serve their community. The
15 PACT Resource Team pairs residents with trusted,
16 third-party advisors and consultants to support these
17 efforts. To engage and inform residents about PACT,
18 we host meetings and info sessions that feature live
19 interpretation, and we provide printed materials,
20 videos, and online resources that are available in
21 multiple languages. Residents also have access to a
22 dedicated PACT hotline to ask questions and discuss
23 concerns. Our engagement on the Trust, which was
24 authorized this summer by the State, involves regular
25

1 town halls where residents get to-- get their
2 questions answered. We have also provided a suite of
3 materials explaining how the Trust works, including
4 how it will bring billions of dollars of
5 comprehensive renovations to NYCHA developments while
6 maintaining residents' rights and a public workforce
7 and keeping their properties 100 percent public.
8 Residents will also be part of the process for
9 selecting vendors to perform the rehabilitation work
10 and can serve on committees that check the quality of
11 this work. Residents will be able to choose whether
12 or not to include their developments in the Trust.
13 We recently presented for public comment the draft
14 Trust opt-in voting procedures, which were developed
15 in collaboration with resident leaders and policy
16 advocates. These are just some examples of how we
17 engage with our residents on major policy, capital,
18 or operational initiatives. We are grateful for your
19 support as we engage NYCHA residents and improve
20 their quality of life. We are committed to
21 comprehensive communication with residents, and we
22 strive to incorporate resident voices, ideas, and
23 perspectives in our work. We look forward to renewed
24 partnerships with residents and other stakeholders,
25

1 including members of the Council, and we continue to
2 make progress-- as we continue to make progress
3 together. Thank you. We are happy to answer any
4 questions you may have.
5

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you so much,
7 and we have many, many questions for you. So, I
8 thank you for your patience. Let's just start with
9 kind of the big picture aspects here. What is the
10 overall budget of resident engagement?

11 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Our
12 budget is approximately 50 million dollars, 29
13 million for staff, and 20 for-- 20+ for OTPS
14 expenditures.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, you said 50
16 million-- I'm sorry, [inaudible]

17 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:
18 [interposing] Approximately 50 million.

19 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: 50 million?

20 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: 30 for
21 staffing and 20 for OTPS expenditures.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: 30 for staffing and
23 29 for OTPS.

24 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:
25 Twenty, sorry.

2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: That would equal 50.
3 Thank you. Had some math problems. How many
4 staffers does NYCHA resident engagement employ?

5 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:
6 Currently we have 273 staffer with about 16
7 vacancies.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: 16 vacancies.

9 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes.

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Are these all full-
11 time positions?

12 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: How many are NYCHA
14 residents?

15 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: We
16 have 43 NYCHA residents employed in our Department.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, 43 of the 278.

18 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: 273.

19 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: 273. Do you know
20 how long-- what is the-- how long the NYCHA residents
21 who are employed in resident engagement have been
22 there, like their annual retention? Have they been
23 part of the Agency for a long time?

24 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I
25 don't have that particular detail broken down,

1 Council Member, but we can get that to you. We do
2 have that information.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: What are the roles
5 that they hold within resident engagement? Are they
6 in senior level? What level are residents occupying?

7 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I
8 don't have the breakdown, but we can share that with
9 you. Brian, did you--

10 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN:
11 [interposing] Brian Honan from NYCHA
12 Intergovernmental. I don't have it all broken down,
13 but the gentleman who leads resident engagement,
14 Leroy Williams, grew up in NYCHA, you know, lived in
15 NYCHA up until actually very recently when his
16 development converted to-- well it was a pre-RAD
17 program. He had moved out. But there are many
18 people in NYCHA leadership who-- in resident
19 engagement who are either current or former
20 residents, including you know, past heads of the
21 entire Department, you know, who also led the
22 Department who are either past or current residents.

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Great. I'd love to
24 see what the breakdown is--

2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN:

3 [interposing] Yep. We can get you that.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: in terms of the
5 organizational roles. Can you describe to us how the
6 Department is organized to address the needs of the
7 residents?

8 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: RSPI
9 is organized to service residents in several
10 capacity, and I mentioned some of the Departments
11 under the seven sub-departments so we can relocate
12 residents, connect residents to employment
13 opportunities, provide social services to address
14 hoarding conditions that we were finding in the unit,
15 relocate residents to address mold or lead abatement
16 issues or asbestos, and we connect residents to
17 health initiatives or preventive measures. An
18 example-- one example for our Health Department, our
19 Health Initiative Department is to work on our smoke-
20 free initiative where we educate and bring resources
21 to residents who may desire to cease smoking.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, seven sub-
23 departments. I heard one relocation.

24 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:
25 Relocation, and then we have our Office of Public

1 Private Partnership that may bring resources to our
2 residents whether it's tickets to a particular
3 cultural event or apply for grants and bring
4 additional partners to support the various
5 initiatives at other priorities for NYCHA. Our
6 Resident Engagement Department, of course, work with
7 our network of resident associations and also bring
8 support policies and enhancement in terms of
9 connections to services. And our Resident Outreach
10 Services Department engage residents around PACT/RAD
11 conversions, and that their sole mission is to engage
12 residents on every single aspect of that program in
13 support of our-- with support from our Real Estate
14 Development Team. And I think the Family Partnership,
15 of course, they provide social services and I think I
16 mentioned everyone [inaudible]. So, those seven
17 departments, whether it's providing employment
18 opportunity or social services for residents in
19 supporting their tenancy is our goal.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, in terms-- so,
22 the Resident Engagement is a sub-department within
23 the resident engagement overall. How many people
24 actually work on resident engagement?

1
2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I'll
3 pass to DaVida.

4 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: Hi
5 everyone. DaVida Rowley-Blackman, Senior Director
6 for Resident Participation and Civic Engagement, and
7 a former resident of Seth Low Houses. We, when we're
8 fully staffed, we'll have about 70 on the team.
9 Right now we have approximately 60. So we do have
10 vacancies that we need to fill that are probably the
11 bulk of the overarching department.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Got it. So, 70, and
13 the 70 really are in charge of the resident-- the TA
14 election.

15 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: The
16 Resident Association, the elections, the family days,
17 engaging residents on priorities of the Authority,
18 including the Trust, and any events that are
19 happening throughout the Authority.

20 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And how do you
21 distribute the 70 individuals over 335 developments?

22 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: It
23 really depends on the nature of the engagement. So
24 depending on the engagement, we will prioritize
25 staffing. Staff are dedicated to specific boroughs.

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2 In the case of the resident associations, they have
3 specific set of development RA's that they're charged
4 with working with and assisting with TPA family days
5 and any support that they need.

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Do you think that is
7 a sufficient level of staffing for the charge?

8 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: I think
9 the overall Department-- so, we're engaging residents
10 on particular areas such as RA and events, but when
11 you look at the overall Department and the staffing
12 of 273, I do think that we can make it work. As far
13 as engaging residents, of course, you know, more
14 staff is always great in order to deepen our reach
15 with residents and really address some of the
16 challenges that we've heard today and that we've been
17 hearing, of course, over a period of time.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: But for the resident
19 engagement, in particular, with the 70 that are
20 allocated, do you think that is sufficient amount to
21 efficiently, you know, conduct the work that is being
22 charged?

23 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: I think
24 a higher number of staff would help us to go even
25 further.

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2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: What do you think
3 the number should be?

4 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: I don't
5 have a number in my head of what I think it could be,
6 but happy to think about that question and provide a
7 response.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: I think it's clear
9 that it's insufficient, given the early feedback, and
10 certainly to recognize the work that is happening, I
11 think-- I'm sure many of your colleagues in resident
12 engagement would be welcomed having additional
13 capacity and support, and I think it is okay to say
14 that we need more capacity in the areas that directly
15 touch residents.

16 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: Thank
17 you.

18 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So, I just
19 want to point out that it really should be noted that
20 there is no dedicated federal funding to resident
21 engagement, right? So this is money that comes out
22 of NYCHA's operating funds. Years ago it was
23 something known under the Clinton Administration as
24 drug elimination money. That money was zeroed out in
25 the early 2000s. So, the work that Ukah and DaVida's

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2 team do is tremendous for the amount of staff that
3 they have. I see Resident Engagement staff out almost
4 every single night. You know, they are out on
5 weekends. They are out, you know, way past-- you
6 know, holidays, you know, things like that. They
7 really do not stop. And you know, they are there to
8 support resident associations. They are there to
9 organize residents, and they are to make sure that
10 residents get the information that they have. They
11 are doing, you know, the best that they can do with,
12 you know, money that comes out of our operating
13 budget.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: In terms of just,
15 just to clarify, there were 75 staff positions in the
16 old RE Department when you adopted your 2021 budget.
17 Now there's 273 in the newly restructured department.
18 How many new roles are in the RE that have been added
19 during the year? Or are these staff being reshuffled
20 around with fewer-- no new positions?

21 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Can
22 you clarify the number you referenced, Council
23 Member?

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: The 75 staff
25 positions were from the 2021 budget, and then we saw

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the newly constructed department being 273 which is the staff line items that you noted. So I guess what we'd like to know is-- oh, in the 22, right, the Fiscal 22, the increase was to 273.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:

Instead of 75?

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yeah.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So, I think that number might have referenced the specific resident, the former Resident Engagement Department--

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Oh, maybe that's--

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:

[interposing] and so yeah--

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: the sub-department.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yeah, okay. Thank you. Thank you so much. In Fiscal 22, the Resident Engagement Department saw an increase in contract expenditures from 35,000 dollars in the previous Fiscal Year to 519,000 dollars, an increase of 484,000. Can you explain what accounts for this huge jump?

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Are you speaking specifically about TPA [sic] dollars?

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: No, in terms of contract expenditures. Do we need to follow up?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yeah. Is that-- is that for the door knocking, or?

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: That's a great question.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yeah, that--

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] I'm asking you.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So we,-- I'm sorry. So, yeah, we did during the pandemic for ERAP, we did have a contracted door knock to encourage residents to apply for ERAP. So I'm not sure if you're--

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] So,--

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: referencing that one, but it's--

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] So, we spent 484,000 dollars to door knock for ERAP program that we were excluded from? Because NYCHA residents were not part of the ERAP program.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:

Initially we were applying for ERAP, but--

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Well, everybody applied, but it was clearly that we were last. NYCHA was last on the list if any money were to become available.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: But we still wanted to be-- to ensure that residents who are eligible can apply in case the state decides to fund them. And we also usually have a door-knocking contract for our annual plan in terms of led engagement to ensure residents who have-- our residents six or under complete a survey to let us know whether they have a household member under six.

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Is that contract someone you've been using? I guess, who's holding the contract, and have you been using them for a long period of time.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: And I just want to clarify, you know, we will get back to you if that's the same contract. Our team negotiated and awarded the contract and work with our lead team in our CEO's office.

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2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Can you provide the
3 contract to the Council so that we can see--

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:
5 [interposing] Regarding the door-knocking? Sure.

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Sure. We'd love to
7 know who's door-knocking, because I didn't see
8 anybody door knocking-- Red Hook. In terms of-- does
9 NYCHA as part of its resident engagement model
10 partner with local organizations to conduct resident
11 outreach? I know in your testimony you noted, I want
12 to say 200-- you noted 150 community-based partners.
13 That could be-- that could be anything, right?

14 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Right.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Anyone who--

16 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:
17 [interposing] So, NYCHA, we have formal partnerships
18 and we also have informal partnerships. So, our RE's
19 Department has 80 partners that they work that
20 support residents' employment opportunities and
21 training opportunities or connection to employment
22 programs. Our Family Partnership Department works
23 with all our CBOs on the ground, meaning we have over
24 120-something community centers, over 107 senior
25 centers and daycare centers, and we work with those

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2 organizations to support their outreach to ensure
3 residents are aware of some of the programming they
4 offer. So, yes, we're continuously working with all
5 of our CBO organizations. We have close
6 relationships with their sister-- the agencies that
7 are funding them, and want to ensure that it's
8 providing the best services to our residents, and
9 absolutely, on any given day I may receive 20 to 30
10 phone calls from CBOs or emails requesting support,
11 and we're readily available to provide that.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Great. In terms of--
13 - in terms-- you reported in your testimony, you
14 know, all the published articles on the website. I
15 will say your website does have an enormous amount of
16 information on it, relatively impenetrable. Have you
17 looked at the analytics of your engagement and the
18 efficiency of your engagement? We have, you know,
19 all the requests. You have all the out numbers, but
20 is there any assessment around the analytics of who
21 looks at those articles? How much engagement are you
22 having from residents on all the website stuff?

23 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I know
24 our Communications Department do look at that. I
25 don't know, Brian, if you have more information.

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2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yes, we do
3 keep track of, and we don't-- we can provide the
4 numbers to you. We do keep track of the number of
5 people who follow us on social media [inaudible]
6 opener [sic], the emails that we send in terms of--
7 and also the number of people who use the MyNYCHA app
8 which is getting close to about 100,000 unique users.
9 And so all this digital communication, we do have
10 track of that, and we can definitely give that to
11 you.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay, we'll dig in a
13 little bit later around that particular. NYCHA seems
14 to most frequently employ two tools for resident
15 engagement, flyering [sic] and robocalls. Has NYCHA
16 ever measured the effectiveness of these tools, and
17 what is the cost that it has dedicated to each of
18 these pieces?

19 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So, in
20 terms of-- we do flyer and at one point we conducted
21 a survey where residents told us that they prefer to
22 receive a flyers in terms of communication. We do
23 door knock and provide information to resident on
24 specific initiatives, especially our PACT/RAD
25 program, and--

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2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] So
3 who's responsible for the flyers? Are you talking
4 about individual flyers to a resident or you're
5 talking about putting them up on the building?

6 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: We do
7 a combination of both. So, if--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: What time of day
9 are these door knockings happening? Is it happening
10 usually during the daytime? Because often times
11 residents are at work or do you just slip the flyer
12 under the door?

13 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So, we
14 do all of it.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Okay.

16 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:
17 Sometimes we door knock. We'd once [sic]-- if we're
18 doing a survey, for instance, we'll door knock and
19 ensue that the resident is available to answer
20 questions. Recently, for our application to a HUD
21 grant, we had to survey over 50 percent of residents,
22 and particular development that we're engaging, and
23 those were door knocks, and we had to do weekends if
24 necessary, evening hours or day hours. So we
25 understand we have a large workforce of residents who

1
2 are employed and getting them from the hours of eight
3 to four is not feasible, so we will return.

4 Recently, even at Riis Houses, where we had to do the
5 check distribution, we did the same. We had office
6 hours during the day and evening and even weekends to
7 just get those checks to residents.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, I mean, so have
9 you maintained analytics on the door-knocking and the
10 effectiveness of it?

11 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: We
12 don't have specific analytics on the door knocking,
13 but we do capture our engagement activities across
14 our seven Departments on a monthly basis. But we're
15 not capturing--

16 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] But
17 for the door knocking itself, do you capture
18 engagement activity?

19 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: For
20 that particular contract we do have numbers. The one
21 that we referenced, but in general, we're not keeping
22 those.

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: How much does NYCHA
24 spend on robo-calling?
25

1 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I--
2 Council Member, I don't have that number right now.

3 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Could you--

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:
5 [interposing] But we have--

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: provide us of what--

7 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:
8 [interposing] Yes.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: the annual budget
10 for robocalls are?

11 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: We'll
12 follow up.

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Great, thank you.
14 We'll pass it on to Council Member Ossé.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Thank you, Chair
16 Avilés. Often times, I mean, the-- I've just been
17 listening to the testimony. Whenever we have these
18 advisory boards and we get, you know, our NYCHA
19 residents involved, sometimes they feel like they are
20 speaking up about the issues that they are
21 experiencing, but they're not heard in terms of the
22 solutions that are provided, and I wanted to start
23 off by asking how exactly are residents providing
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2 their input on the Resident Advisory Board and at
3 NYCHA Roundtables?

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Sure.

5 So, the NYCHA Advisory Board comprised of resident
6 associations who are representing the districts. So
7 we have the CCOP organization. There are 10
8 districts across the City. In those district we
9 elected-- we elect officers to serve the-- for
10 example, Manhattan Nor-- has a North and South
11 District. So, those 10-- those 10 districts, they
12 have a combination of maybe six or seven members.
13 Some may have more, some may have less, but those
14 bodies of resident association members comprise of
15 the RAB. And so the RAB group, the Resident Advisory
16 Board, meets to inform NYCHA on their annual plan
17 submissions to HUD.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: And do you have
19 specific examples in terms of how NYCHA has used and
20 implemented the resident's input and recommendation
21 into their work?

22 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So,
23 the annual plan-- and again, we do have a public
24 meeting annually where residents and community and
25 even elected officials could provide comments, and

1 every one of those comments or requests for
2 additional funding are supported even regarding
3 repairs. Our team prepare responses and provide
4 feedback directly to residents.
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: And how often do
7 these roundtables and other resident meetings happen?
8 Did you say every week now?

9 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: The
10 CCOP meetings-- the CCOP meets with NYCHA on a weekly
11 basis, every Thursday during the day at 2:00 at their
12 request and they provide agenda items. Since the
13 RAB, the Advisory Board, supports NYCHA annual plan,
14 there's a schedule of meetings, and we are in
15 discussion with the CCOP and how we can make it more
16 effective, meaning should we provide trainings, do we
17 do a combination of in-person and virtual meetings so
18 they can get more information and provide feedback to
19 our team.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: And do you know if
21 these roundtables are happening at the same frequency
22 across all NYCHA developments?

23 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So,
24 the RAB is a different body of residents who are
25 volunteering to serve on the roundtable, and we have

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2 a representative from every single neighborhood. Each
3 roundtable member or committee of roundtable members
4 may have a particular issue they are addressing or
5 would like more information on. For example, they
6 may want to address safety and security, and they
7 will meet with our safety and security team, conduct
8 safety audits, or speak to community members or
9 residents in particular developments, and come to
10 NYCHA with their feedback and work with us to
11 implement it. And the last [inaudible] last year, I
12 sat through a lot of their presentations, really
13 great recommendations, and we're working right now to
14 address some of those.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: And you said
16 someone from every single neighborhood, not every
17 single NYCHA development, correct?

18 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Right,
19 every neighborhood.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Have you--

21 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:
22 [interposing] Because there's 30 people.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Have you found that
24 to be effective. I know that the problems that, you
25 know, my residents in Albany Houses are not the same

1 that individuals that live in Sumner are having. Of
2 course, there's some commonality between the two, but
3 obviously there can be some issues that are very
4 diverse per NYCHA establishment.

6 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Right.

7 So, this is just one group. I think for engagement
8 around, particularly Sumner and other developments,
9 the resident associations are the ones that will
10 represent that development. The roundtable will look
11 at a neighborhood, the roundtable member and all the
12 developments in that particular neighborhood and try
13 to audit with their needs may be around safety and
14 security and then provide us some feedback. So, I
15 think there are distinct groups, right? We have the
16 roundtable. We have resident associations, RAB
17 advisory boards, and CCOP.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: And onto those
19 resident association meetings, I've been to plenty in
20 my district, and it is rare for me to see NYCHA staff
21 at meetings and if staff shows up, it's someone from
22 the management who shows up. Has any staff that
23 isn't part of the on-site management team, for
24 example, higher ups from the agency, come to our RA
25 meetings?

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2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes,
3 so the RA meetings are the RA meetings. So NYCHA
4 can't just, you know, invite themselves. Resident
5 associations will invite who they would like to
6 present. So for example, they may invite someone from
7 the heating team right before winter, or they may
8 invite the elevator department, or our team, or the
9 Chair, or the CCO, and I've seen that happening
10 across the City. So it's up to the resident
11 associations to invite NYCHA staff to address the
12 specific concerns in their development.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: And usually NYCHA
14 staff--

15 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:
16 [interposing] Will attend.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: attends if they are
18 asked?

19 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes,
20 absolutely.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: I also want to say,
22 every time I head over to an RA meeting, residents
23 will tell me how they have not been heard by NYCHA,
24 nor has anyone been transparent with them, especially
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2 with following up on complaints and tickets. Do you
3 know why that may be the case?

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So, we
5 have Marvin Walton [sp?], our Deputy COO, testifying
6 online. So, I'll ask him to respond to that
7 question.

8 DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:
9 [inaudible]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Do you want me to
11 ask the question again?

12 DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:
13 I'm having a-- yes, please, because I'm having a few
14 technical difficulties.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: So, basically every
16 time I head to an RA meeting, residents will tell me
17 how they have not been heard by NYCHA, nor has anyone
18 been transparent with them about their open tickets,
19 or tickets that they've closed out without any
20 repairs being made. There's a lack of follow up,
21 especially you know, after these meetings, during
22 those meetings, the next RA meetings, and I'm
23 wondering why that is the case and what we can do to
24 fix that.

DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:

okay, great. Thank you for that question. We really appreciate the opportunity to address you. I'm Marvin Walton. I'm the Deputy Chief Operating Officer for NYCHA. We take this matter very seriously, and each and every time we get such complaints, we do proper follow-up and we investigate to make sure that the work that was to be done is done. If it's not, we do have a team that goes back out and follow up with the resident. So we do take it very seriously, each complaint that we receive like this.

COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: And can you elaborate on what that follow-up looks like? Is that door-knocking. Is that robocalls? Is that, I don't know, personal flyering to individuals that have these complaints? What does that look like?

DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:

Absolutely, with our new work order reform process that we have, each of the residents are left with a slip that has a number for their neighborhood planner, and/or their secretary. So we have resources that are available to work directly with the resident. They do not have to call our customer care center, contact center-- they contact their

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2 neighborhood planner and secretary to have any of
3 those matters addressed in reference to their work
4 orders.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Wait, so their
6 neighborhood-- they're supposed to contact their
7 neighborhood secretary to-- for the follow-up? Or
8 the neighborhood secretary calls them?

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Council
10 Member, thank you so much. So, the complaints that
11 you hear are valid because they're true. And for far
12 too long, the burden on getting complaints satisfied
13 has been on the resident to follow up. Work orders
14 were closed without work being properly done or at
15 work being completed. As part of the transformation
16 plan that we put together under the 2019 HUD
17 Agreement, we have come-- and we'll be happy to come
18 to your district to talk about this. It is a program
19 that is not finalized yet, but it is a work in
20 progress. It is called Work Order Reform. Under this
21 plan, we have put together smaller districts within
22 neighborhoods that each have a neighborhood
23 administrator and a neighborhood planner. In the
24 past, when you would call for a complaint-- say you
25 had a hole in the wall, right? And you'd say,

1 [inaudible] calls the customer contact center and
2 says I got a whole in the wall. It needs to be
3 completed. Somebody form NYCHA would come, look, and
4 they would say yep, you have a hole in the wall.
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: Or they won't come.

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Or they
8 wouldn't correct, yes. Or they wouldn't come. Under
9 the new system, it is the burden-- and the onus is
10 not on the resident to get every step of the way that
11 repair completed. Somebody will come. Say you have
12 a hole in the wall. You need a plumber to fix the
13 broken pipe that caused the hole in the wall. You
14 need a plasterer to come after that to make sure that
15 the hole is sealed once the plumber, you know, fixes
16 the issue. And then finally, you need a painter to
17 paint the room to make sure that it looks decent.
18 All of that needs to be worked out with the planner
19 at a time that works for the resident. Just the way
20 I would want it in my home if I was having repairs
21 done in my home. I couldn't come-- I wouldn't tell a
22 contractor to come whenever you feel like, or when a
23 time that works for them. It is a time that works
24 for the resident.
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER OSSÉ: I'm so sorry Chair.
3 When is this plan? First and foremost, when is this
4 plan expected to be finalized?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: It is still
6 a work in progress, and as I said, we will come to
7 your district to explain. We will come to you
8 personally to explain it. We come to your tenant
9 leaders to explain it. Tonight, I'm going to be in
10 your district at Albany Houses. You asked if senior
11 staff go to developments. I go-- I'm at developments
12 at least three times a week. Each of the residents
13 behind me, I've been their developments. In Council
14 Member Avilés' district tonight we'll be in Red Hook
15 West, as well. NYCHA staff are often, you know, at
16 resident association meetings. I've been to every
17 single development in your district's tenants
18 association.

19 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Brian, can you-- can
20 you tell me with specificity of the 335 developments,
21 what percentage is fully operational under this new
22 model?

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So we
24 started in Queens's end and Staten Island and it is
25 not fully-operational. I would not present it to be

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2 that way. It is still a pilot in place, and I think
3 this is something that we heard residents say. It
4 should-- the burden should not be on us to make sure
5 that our repairs are complete. The burden-- number
6 one. It should be a partnership. We hear from day
7 one. We explain to you what the issue is, and we
8 come up with a schedule in order to get the repair
9 completed.

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, the-- so, just--
11 I want to make sure that I'm hearing you correctly.
12 So for the record, this new model, neighborhood
13 model, has not been implemented fully anywhere?

14 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So, we do
15 have neighborhood planners in every single
16 neighborhood throughout the City, and it is in its
17 infancy in other places. It is not-- it is in all
18 five boroughs. We did start in Queens and in Staten
19 Island, but I would not say-- I would not say it is
20 right now fully operational. It is in its infancy.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay, so what
22 developments is it-- is it--

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN:
24 [interposing] Each neighborhood like Red Hook has,
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1
2 you know, a planner, and I'll make sure that you have
3 that person's name.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: No, no, no. I want
5 to know specifically what developments. You said
6 Staten Island and?

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Staten
8 Island, Queens where we first started, but--

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Right.

10 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: every
11 single--

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] What
13 developments is it operational in in Staten Island
14 and in Queens?

15 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Everyone
16 has--

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing]
18 Everyone in Queens and Staten Island--

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN:
20 [interposing] And Staten Island, that's correct.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: is under this plan?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: That's
23 right.

24

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2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay. It might be
3 in Red Hook, but I'll tell you my office fields this
4 consistent very issue every single day.

5 DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:

6 So, if you don't mind, Brian, let me speak to that to
7 give the full clarity. Work order reform is a part
8 of the transformation plan for the neighborhood
9 model. The neighborhood model has rolled out
10 completely across all-- we call them four boroughs,
11 because we combine Queens and Staten Island. They're
12 together as one. So the entire neighborhood model
13 and the work order reform has rolled out. Queens and
14 Staten Island was initiated, was the initial in 2020-
15 - in late 2021, early 2022 and throughout this year
16 each quarter a new borough was introduced to the
17 neighborhood-- to the work order reform process.
18 Manhattan went last. So we are fully operational in
19 all the boroughs, and it's a work in progress,
20 because we're continuing to improve. Throughout this
21 process, the residents are more involved. I stated
22 earlier that residents now have a direct resource to
23 use, and as Brian stated, that is correct. In the
24 past, a lot of the burden has been on the resident,
25 but now we have dedicated resources that can work

1 directly with them, so over time this will continue
2 to improve where you will see repairs being done
3 expeditiously and the work will be sequenced out.
4 And oftentimes, what happens to the work orders when
5 residents in our former process they would put in
6 tickets and then the tickets would close--

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] That
9 is--

10 DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:
11 but behind the scenes-- I'm sorry.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: I-- just-- I think
13 we just need to take a moment of pause. I think
14 there is a clear distinction between-- it is
15 conceptually covering place and it is practically
16 addressing resident concerns. We continue to have a
17 500,000 back order of repairs that have yet to be
18 addressed, so I think we have to choose our words
19 carefully when we tell residents that it is in every
20 borough when their experience is exactly the
21 fundamental opposite. It feels very much like gas
22 lighting. So, I think, you know, I really hear NYCHA
23 is trying to address this issue, and I think there is
24 promise in this model, but telling us that it is
25 operational in all five boroughs when your colleague

1 just said it is in pilot phases in two boroughs and
2 not fully implemented is a very confusing situation.
3 So, I think we need to get our stories straight. We
4 understand that you've adopted a model and it takes
5 time to operationalize it, and we know there are
6 shortages. We have, you know, specific trades that
7 are in particular need like plumbers, but I think we
8 have to, you know, be realistic in how we are
9 painting this picture. I think the desire is to get
10 there, but we are not there. So, I'd like to move--

12 DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:

13 [interposing] Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: because obviously we
15 could have a hearing all day about repairs. And it
16 is--

17 DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:

18 [interposing] Exactly, I agree.

19 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: the most persistent
20 issue that residents face on a daily basis. But I'm
21 going to pull us back to the resident engagement
22 piece, and this is clearly all inter-linked, right?
23 How we engage spans every issue that is confronting
24 NYCHA and its residents. But I want to just get back

25

1
2 to resident management corporations. Can you define
3 resident managed corporation for us?

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Sure. So a
5 resident management corporation could take on many
6 different forms. It could be residents decided they
7 want to manage an entire property. It could be that
8 the residents want to manage a certain aspect of a
9 property. So, say like janitorial, you know, duties.
10 It could be that the residents want to manage a
11 community center. So, it is not just one size. It
12 is dependent on what the residents themselves would
13 like to do and the plan that they put together.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Fantastic. What
15 resources has NYCHA committed to establishing
16 resident managed corporations?

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So under
18 the current HUD rules right now it says that
19 residents may, you know, deal with the Housing
20 Authority in order to form a resident management
21 corporation. To date, there is one tenant
22 association in New York City that we are currently
23 engaged with in order to form a resident management
24 corporation. They have a limited corporation in
25 mind. They would like to manage the janitorial

1 services in their development. We are working very
2 closely with them, including, you know, giving them
3 outside independent help as well in order to make
4 sure that they're successful.

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: That's so
7 interesting because in one of the resident
8 roundtables, 48 percent of the responses had
9 indicated that they would be willing to even help and
10 maintain their own buildings. So, it's interesting
11 that there's one TA that is pursuing that in earnest.
12 So, in terms of-- so are there dedicated resources
13 within the NYCHA budget within resident engagement
14 that is specifically allocated to resident managed
15 corporations.

16 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: so,
17 Council Member, our RES [sic] team is actually
18 working on a training and develop a white paper
19 around resident management corporation and in the
20 process of meeting with internally to determine a
21 work plan to implement those. We understand there's
22 one at the-- one development that wants-- that are a
23 little further ahead, but we did have some interest
24 from some developments in Brooklyn and others and
25 we're working on a training-- on developing training

1
2 for these RMC [sic] and there is some funding
3 requests to support the training to develop RMCs.
4 Again, we'll start small, and we definitely have one
5 that's further along than others, but there are a few
6 others that [inaudible] that they're interested in
7 establishing an RMC.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Is this-- is this
9 specific funding allocated for this purpose?

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: At
11 this-- yes, we have-- there's been a commitment from
12 our Chair to fund this [inaudible]

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And what's the scale
14 and scope of this commitment?

15 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I
16 don't have that dollar, but I'll share that with you.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay. I'd love to
18 understand very specifically what is the amount and
19 the scope of the commitment. Clearly one of the
20 elements of this is increasing resident-- increasing
21 capacity for individuals. In terms of-- excuse me.
22 Let me just-- I just confused there with my
23 questions. But right now as I understand it, Riis
24 [sic] is in the process of developing a training. Is
25

1
2 that the full scope of the work dedicated to resident
3 management cooperation at this point?

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: At
5 this point we developed a paper and we're now trying
6 to identify the type. We identified some of the
7 trainings that are recommended. We want to fund it
8 and create a roll-out plan. So that's where we are in
9 the process.

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Have you received
11 inquiries from residents about resident managed
12 corporations? And so in terms of right now, in terms
13 of the one resident managed corporation that is
14 looking specifically at janitorial services, what's
15 the level of engagement that is happening there? I
16 think you started to explain that, Brian, but if you
17 could color that a little bit more for me.

18 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Sure. In--
19 you can also add to, but the TA President there and
20 the residents in her development who have been
21 supporting this idea meet regularly with-- at the
22 time, it was Daniel Chirad [sp?] who was our COO at
23 the highest level and including Ukah's team. So
24 there are regular meetings. The conversations have
25 been round like what would this-- it has never been

1 done in New York City. In fact, nationwide I believe
2 there's only one resident management corporation in
3 existence right now. And so it is, you know,-- the
4 conversation on would be, you know, who's responsible
5 for what, what does the funding come with, you know,
6 look like, you know, how do you actually put this
7 thing together? So it is in its infancy, but it is
8 at the highest levels of operations, those
9 conversations.
10

11 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: And
12 one of the requirement for HUD is that 51 percent of
13 the eligible residents to vote must support the RMC.
14 So it's just-- actually, it's 50 percent of the
15 residents plus one must support the RMC in order--

16 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] That--
17 that is-- thank you for that, because-- and yet, the
18 Trust is proposing 10 percent. I-- I-- there is a
19 full disconnect with the expectations here. Yeah, I
20 almost have to leave it there. We'll get back to
21 that. In terms of-- you mentioned, I know there was
22 the memorandum of understanding that was newly
23 created for the CCOP, and actually a good number of
24 revisions to the bylaws relatively recent, and an
25

1 election. You noted NYCHA meets with CCOP regularly.
2
3 What does that look like?

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So,
5 CCOP provides agenda items to NYCHA and they-- so
6 whatever topic they want to discuss, they need that
7 information or back-up or a [inaudible] at least
8 seven days in advance to review, and once we have the
9 meeting our team will present, and they provide
10 feedback. So, this, again, CCOP sets the agenda. We
11 may have items that we would like to bring to CCOP.
12 For example, if we're initiating a new program, for
13 example, if we're initiating a new program such as
14 work order reform and we want to present and let them
15 know this is where we are, this is how you can
16 connect to your neighborhood planner. I know Brian
17 talked about this recently. And so they set the
18 agenda. They definitely want to only cover one topic
19 for meetings. You give enough time for feedback and
20 support. And so that's how we schedule those
21 meetings.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Does CCOP have
23 jurisdiction over particular matters within NYCHA?

24 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Again,
25 our goal is to have CCOP at the table, and so

1 anything we're organizing or planning we're there
2 supporting or providing feedback.

3 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So--

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:

5 [interposing] They are-- CCOP is the jurisdictional
6 by body that NYCHA recognize as the voice of
7 residents associations.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: But fully just
9 recommendations? There's no legal binding decision-
10 making that occurs with this body.

11 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So
12 we're governed by 964 regulations. So depending on
13 the topic we may cite that regulation in trying to
14 support whatever CCOP wants us to implement.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And I'm sorry, I
16 don't-- 964 stipulates when you should listen to
17 residents?

18 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: No, it
19 is the regulations that dictate how NYCHA works with
20 resident associations.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Right, my
22 understanding is 964 says residents should be fully
23 engaged.
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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: As a seat at the-- right, to have a seat at the table to provide feedback and make recommendations. Again, I think as Brian stated, we're working closely with CCOP for-- to plan engagement around every--

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Sure.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: aspect of the Housing Authority including budget training to ensure that if they-- in terms of the [inaudible] development. If there are priorities around budget, they have a say in that. So yeah, they--

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Right, but NYCHA's under no obligation to actually listen to anything.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: No, we--

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Or implement. I mean, there is no-- they have no legally binding decision-making authority. They are purely advisory.

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: They're advisory.

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay. I just-- I'm just trying to be clear. And in fact, with all the

1
2 residents engagement bodies, the roundtable, CCOP,
3 the TA's and probably many other iterations of
4 residents that have come together, including
5 potentially even the board which is not a majority
6 residents, I think. How many-- how many residents
7 sit on the NYCHA board?

8 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Three.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Three residents out
10 of how many?

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Three
12 residents on the NYCHA board.

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: so, in no area is
14 there any legal binding authority for NYCHA to
15 actually listen to residents?

16 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So,
17 the residents are part of the NYCHA board. They vote
18 on all--

19 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Sure,
20 but they're not a majority.

21 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: No,
22 they're not.

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And they're
24 appointed by whom?

1
2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: The
3 Mayor.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay. It's not a
5 democratically elected body of residents that are
6 appointed by their fellow residents. It is-- it is
7 an appointed body. So--

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN:
9 [interposing] Council Member, it's no different than
10 any of the other board members, and their vote is the
11 same as any other board member's. so, the resident's
12 vote is the same as the Chairs vote, is the same as
13 anyone else on that board, and they were all
14 appointed by the Mayor.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Sure. That is a
16 standard model, you're absolutely right to point out
17 that is not distinct from any other bodies. It holds
18 the same problems of an appointed body that doesn't
19 reflect a democratically-elected body of people who
20 are supposed to be represented. So, I know that's
21 not-- I know that's not specific to NYCHA. This is
22 the problem of governing we have across the board
23 where other people represent other people instead of
24 allowing them to represent themselves. I think the
25 point to underscore here is that we have an enormous

1 amount of resident engagement and leaders at NYCHA
2 that can cite 964 very clearly and expertly, and yet
3 we have no binding authority anywhere which is just a
4 fundamental problem that I'm trying to underscore and
5 point out here. Can you explain why certain
6 residents' councils-- why certain developments don't
7 have resident councils, and what are the challenges
8 that have been identified there?
9

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So,
11 Council Member, our goal is to establish a resident
12 council in every single development, and we reach out
13 to residents with a flyer during the summer months,
14 even this last summer. We went to every development
15 that doesn't have a council, posted flyers, actually
16 door knocking and deliver under every door
17 encouraging residents to formulate a resident
18 association. Some did and some did not. Some may
19 identify one or two residents that are interested,
20 and we work really hard with them to identify or
21 recruit other residents to can fully form a board.
22 We must have a minimum of five to do that, so having
23 two is not enough. We definitely have to have at
24 least five officers on a resident association board
25 to fully recognize them. And again, we continue to

1 work, and sometimes we'll get a lead, and you know,
2 even from one of our Council Member, this particular
3 wants to formulate a residents association board.
4 We'll reach out to that one and work with that one
5 individual to build up a team.

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Is that work that
7 NYCHA staff conducts solely, or do you do that in
8 partnership with outside entities.

9 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: We do
10 that solely.

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay. Can-- just to
12 switch to TPA funds. How much money did NYCHA receive
13 or actually how much money did the NYCHA TPA funds
14 allocate to resident councils in Fiscal Years 2021
15 and 22?

16 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So,
17 Council Member, in 2022 we allocated 2.2 [inaudible],
18 no 2.2 million.

19 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Million.

20 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:
21 [inaudible] I'll correct that, make sure I get you
22 the right number. Okay, in 2022 we received 3.9
23 million dollars for resident association funds, TPA
24

1 funds in 2021 3.8 million, and that's prorated based
2 on the subsidy.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Apologies, can you
5 repeat that oen more time?

6 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So,
7 2022 we were allocated 3.9 million dollars for
8 resident association with TPA funds.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay.

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: In
11 2021, 3.8.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: 3.8?

13 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay. And then
15 2020?

16 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: That
17 number I don't have.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay, I'd love to
19 get it when you make it available. Did NYCHA receive
20 the full appropriation for each of those years?

21 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: In--
22 actually, in 2022 we received 1.4, 104 percent, and
23 in 2021, 96.74 percent.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: 2020-- I'm sorry.

25 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: 2021--

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2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Can
3 you speak closer to the microphone?

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Sorry.

5 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: It's very hard--

6 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: 2021,
7 96.74 percent.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [inaudible]

9 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: 96.74
10 percent.

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: 96.74 percent in
12 Fiscal Year 2021.

13 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: One,
14 yeah.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: In Fiscal Year 2022--
16 -

17 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:
18 [interposing] It was actually over 100 percent.

19 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Over 100 percent.

20 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: 104.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay, 104 percent.

22 And we'll get the information about 2020.

23 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: What are the
25 stipulations for TPA funds?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:

Stipulations to spend? I'll pass that to DaVida.

SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: Sure.

So, the eligible activities for TPA include consultation and outreach efforts, any activities that inform residents about issues about their households or their living environment, annual membership events, resident council training, resident council elections and organizing, reasonable refreshment and light snack cost, stipends, self-sufficiency and capacity building activities, social support needs, resident management training and training related to the development of resident-owned businesses and technical assistance.

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And how does-- how often does NYCHA assess spending, like, the eligible spending?

SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: There are annual spending plans that each resident association has to submit for review before the allocation can even go to their resident association account, and then as they spend there are also proposals that come with every single request that they have to spend those funds, and those are

1
2 assessed for eligibility. And in the-- in some cases
3 where they go over a certain dollar amount, they are
4 also subject to procurement rules.

5 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And who does that
6 assessment?

7 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: So, we
8 have a TPA unit. We also have our finance team, and
9 again, in the event where it goes over the certain
10 dollar amount, we have the procurement team.

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: How much of the
12 money that was allocated remains unspent at the end
13 of each Fiscal Year?

14 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: Right
15 now we have over 12 million dollars that's unspent.

16 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: 12 million for
17 Fiscal Year 22?

18 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: So,
19 that is total. We could provide the breakdown by
20 Fiscal Year if that's needed for sure.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And so 12 million
22 total. This rolls over year after year?

23 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: It does
24 roll over from year to year.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay. And do you
3 have an assessment of where the 12 million is coming
4 from by development?

5 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: We can
6 provide a breakdown by development. We do have that
7 information.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: That's great. As
9 part of this funding, does NYCHA allocate any dollar
10 amount to capacity building for resident
11 associations?

12 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: so,
13 resident associations can opt to use their funds for
14 that. They're the ones that are coming up with the
15 spending plan and deciding what to spend their
16 dollars on. And so as long as it's eligible we are
17 granting those requests. We certainly have plans to
18 work with resident associations to think more
19 creatively about how to use those funds, and then to
20 provide them with the support to do so.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Does NYCHA provide a
22 record to residents about TPA funds and their use per
23 development?

24 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: At
25 present, other than the quarterly report that is

1 posted online, the specific breakdown by development
2 to each resident is not provided. We do encourage
3 the treasurers on those boards to provide that
4 information during the resident association meetings,
5 but that is not audited in terms of if that is
6 actually happening.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: It's definitely not
9 happening. When a resident council is not authorized
10 by NYCHA, what does NYCHA do with the TPA funds for
11 that development?

12 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: So,
13 those funds still remain in the account because they
14 belong to the specific development and not to the
15 particular folks that are in the office at that time.
16 so when the offices re-establish or the association,
17 rather, is re-established, or in the event of a
18 turnover from one association to another, those funds
19 are still allocated to that development.

20 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And does it just
21 stay in an account in perpetuity for those
22 developments that don't have associations or have
23 never had? What happens to those resources?

24 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: It does
25 stay allocated to those accounts, and as I stated we

1 do have plans to have discussions with the CCOP and
2 the district members as well to think about ways to
3 encourage those developments to establish boards.

4 Many of the boards that are vacant right now are our
5 FHA homes which are spread out throughout the City,
6 so they are not a congruent set of developments in
7 the way that others are. So we are thinking about
8 ways to even get those individuals involved so that
9 the spending can begin.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Got it. And if-- in
12 order to change that allocation or to use those
13 resources, what would be required?

14 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: I think
15 it would involve a conversation at the CCOP level of
16 ways to re-allocate the funds, specifically for FHA
17 homes. It's something we're looking at. In other
18 cases, we do anticipate that those developments will
19 establish board and will be able to utilize their
20 funds.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, CCOP has the
22 authority to decide what to do with TPA funds that
23 are unspent?

24 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: I would
25 not say the authority, per say, but definitely they

1
2 are a partner to us in thinking about solutions
3 across the City when it comes to any and all things
4 that have to do with resident associations.

5 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: But who has the
6 authority? If CCOP said we want a, I don't know, do
7 it for a basketball tournament--

8 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN:
9 [interposing] And I think that's something--

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] and
11 y'all didn't agree,--

12 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN:
13 [interposing] Yeah.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: who has the
15 authority to make the decision around unspent
16 allocated TPA funds?

17 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: Once we
18 have this conversation around what CCOP wants to
19 propose, we will be getting approval from HUD to make
20 those adjustments?

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, HUD has the
22 authority to shift--

23 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN:
24 [interposing] HUD is the provider of those funds, so
25 we would seek that information from HUD.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay, thank you.
3 All I was trying to get at. In terms of-- do
4 resident associations have separate agreements and
5 spending stipulations? Does each resident
6 association have a different set of agreements and
7 stipulations?

8 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: Yes.
9 Each resident association has a spending plan and a
10 spending agreement that goes online each year.

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: It's online?

12 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: Meaning
13 that it gets activated each year. So each year we
14 put a spending agreement in place with the resident
15 association.

16 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: If a resident wanted
17 to find what the spending plan for their development
18 was and doesn't have a good relationship with the TA
19 president, where could they find that information?

20 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: My
21 office can provide that. We will make sure that the
22 contact information for Resident Participation and
23 Civic Engagement is available to everyone in this
24 room.

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Great, thank you.
3 What type of trainings does NYCHA provide to the
4 resident councils?

5 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: So we
6 have a cluster meeting schedule that roles out each
7 year that is currently in negotiation with CCOP, and
8 it covers budgeting, leadership, how to engage
9 residents in the resident association and topics as
10 such. We also will be encouraging residents
11 associations to enroll in HUD's Lead the Way training
12 which covers how to manage finances among other
13 topics, and we're working with a HUD technical
14 assistance provider CBR to also roll out a training
15 for resident associations.

16 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So do you keep track
17 of who has attended your trainings and have you
18 assessed how effective those trainings are at least
19 with the feedback of the residents that engage?

20 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: We do
21 keep track. We did conduct surveys at the end of
22 last year's training, and as I stated, we are in
23 conversation with CCOP about their feedback. They've
24 provided us with some great feedback on things that
25 they would like to see for the coming year, and our

1
2 goal is to honor the request that they provided to
3 us.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: What kind of
5 feedback have they provided?

6 SENIOR DIRECTOR ROWLEY-BLACKMAN: IN some
7 cases, the trainings are helpful, particularly when
8 new boards are being established. In the cases where
9 boards have already been in place for numerous years,
10 there is more customized training that is needed, and
11 that is what we'll be working to understand, how we
12 can best support different resident associations
13 based on their needs and not necessarily have a
14 cookie-cutter approach to the training.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Great. In terms of
16 CCOP-- I can't remember this, so forgive me. There
17 was a development of a code of conduct that was
18 eventually going to be developed. Did that ever get
19 developed?

20 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:
21 Council Member, yes, we did develop a code of conduct
22 that's in the-- the revised by-laws and we're now
23 working with CCOP on how to enforce that code of
24 conduct.

1 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, the enforcement
2
3 mechanism in--

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH:
5 [interposing] Still pending.

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: discussion?

7 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And when do you
9 expect to complete that?

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: We
11 want to prioritize it, but we will have to definitely
12 plan this out with CCOP input.

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Great. We look
14 forward to that. That's been a long-term project.

15 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes.

16 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: In terms of-- as
17 part of the resident engagement infrastructure, we
18 have a few different opportunities for residents to
19 engage as we've discussed. For-- excuse me, I'm
20 going to actually put that aside. I've realized we're
21 running late on time here. So, okay. So what we've
22 heard, and I know you have heard, residents often
23 complain in that management office is rude and
24 dismissive. We also hear that occasional management
25 office staff may also give out the wrong policy

1 information and outdated information. And there are
2 many, many claims of discriminatory and retaliatory
3 behavior on staff. What kind of training are you
4 providing to your employees in customer service?
5

6 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I'll
7 start this response and then I'll pass it on to
8 Marvin Walton. So one of the things that we're
9 piloting and I mention in my testimony is training
10 that a HUD provider-- HUD is funding training for
11 resident associations and property management staff,
12 and NYCHA staff as a whole, to engage in-- to sit
13 side by side and participate. And we did do a pilot,
14 and it was enlightening for property management to
15 really acknowledge that this is a valuable tool and
16 they say the importance of collaborating with
17 residents. So, I think in the future as we roll out
18 this new training where resident associations and
19 property managers are in the same room hearing the
20 same thing, and planning how to work together, it
21 will improve the customer service that they're
22 providing to residents. And I'd like to pass it on
23 to Marvin. I know him and our CO are also planning
24 some trainings. Marvin?
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DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:

Oh, thank you. Thank you for unmuting me. Very good question and another topic that we take extremely serious. Yes, the COO's office is working on this issue. We get-- we get complaints and each complaint that we get, we do investigate, and we make sure the appropriate disciplinary measures are taken. we value our residents and we encourage our employees to provide the quality customer service to them, but there is a plan that's going to be developed that's going to be addressing and retraining our frontline staff to provide better customer service to our residents.

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, what is appropriate disciplinary measure look like?

DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:

Because of these collective bargaining agreements, and most time with the civil service status, everyone is entitled to a fair process and often times it involves suspensions and it could lead up to termination as well as-- and possible demotions as well.

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: How much of your property management team has been disciplined?

1
2 DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON: I
3 do not have that information, but we can definitely
4 provide that to you, Council Member.

5 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: I'd also love to
6 know how many complaints you've received, and if we
7 see any geographic concentration or particular
8 concentrations per development. Could you provide
9 that for us?

10 DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:
11 I'm not sure if we have that information, but we can
12 check, and if we do we'd be happy to share.

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Great, we look
14 forward to receiving it.

15 DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:
16 Okay.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: How is-- How does
18 NYCHA ensure that its property management team has
19 the most updated information? Again, to this point
20 of receiving misinformation, how does NYCHA staff
21 communicate with its colleagues?

22 DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:
23 We have-- the structure we have with-- in each of our
24 neighborhoods, there's a neighborhood administrator,
25 and the administrator is on the ground working daily

1
2 with each of the property managers, and we make sure
3 information is passed across the board. There's a
4 series of trainings that we take. We have our
5 employees to attend. Often times, updating our
6 policies on an ongoing basis and we make sure that
7 staff is properly updated on that information.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So does that mean--
9 so neighborhood administrators, what are the goals
10 and metrics that they are measured by? [inaudible]
11 engage--

12 DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:
13 [interposing] The neighborhood administrators-- one
14 more time, sorry. Can you repeat please?

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: No, that's okay. Oh,
16 sure, sure. I was going to-- what's the metrics that
17 neighborhood administrators are held to? Is there an
18 expectation of monthly trainings? Is there, you
19 know, metrics around customer service and receiving
20 feedback? I'm just trying to better understand what
21 that actually looks like on the ground, or is it to
22 the discretion of the administrator, which could be
23 all kinds of things?

24 DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:
25 Great question, Council Member. Currently, there is

1 no documented matrix for the neighborhood
2 administrators when it comes to training of their
3 front line staff. We do require that they have a
4 presence at the development, because of the
5 neighborhood model we have. They have a smaller
6 geographical area, so they're on the ground on a
7 daily basis visiting properties every week, and they
8 are able to observe the front line staff working
9 specifically in the management office and observing
10 and making sure that they're providing the quality
11 customer service that we-- that our residents
12 deserve.
13

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: How many NYCHA com--
15 how many complaints about staff has NYCHA received in
16 Fiscal Years 20, 21, and 22?

17 DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:
18 Council Member, I'm not sure if NYCHA tracks that
19 information, so I cannot speak to that at this point.

20 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay. I think
21 that's a pertinent piece of feedback that I think the
22 agency should really take seriously. It drives at
23 the heart of, you know, this comment around
24 misinformation, disrespect, and disregard that is
25 very commonly discussed when you talk to residents

1 across developments in New York City. Without
2 tracking that, there's no way to address it properly,
3 so I would suggest the agency look very closely at
4 tracking that and reporting it.
5

6 DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:

7 We would-- we would definitely take that into
8 consideration. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yes, thank you. In
10 terms of-- okay. There's always so many questions,
11 so many questions. Give me one quick second here.
12 So here's another example that happens quite a lot,
13 and I-- for the record, I know Brian Honan is one of
14 the most hard-working NYCHA individuals and takes our
15 calls all day long. But in terms of in a development
16 there's a gas outage, what is NYCHA's protocol to
17 communicate with residents and resident leadership?
18 So how does NYCHA ensure that residents in impacted
19 apartments are given notice? What is the required
20 notice of service interruption?

21 DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:

22 So, first of all, whenever there-- great question.
23 And whenever there is a gas outage at a development,
24 we make sure we communicate primarily with the tenant
25 association president if there's an active tenant

1 association at the development. We also provide
2 periodic-- we try to do it bi-weekly at each of the
3 developments to provide statuses of the gas outages.
4 The gas outage process, it entails replacing most
5 cases of the capital project, replacing the entire
6 gas lines at a development, and it's a long process
7 that could take up to nine months in most cases, and
8 sometimes a little longer because of the external
9 partners that are involved. But throughout the
10 process, there are periodic updates with all of the
11 residents in the buildings that are impacted.

12
13 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And so are these--
14 what is the NYCHA protocol for updating these notices
15 in accordance with Local Law 47? I'm sorry, I can't--
16 -

17 DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:
18 [interposing] Sorry, I [inaudible]

19 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Should I repeat? I
20 can repeat the question.

21 DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:
22 Yes, please.

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: What is NYCHA's
24 protocol for updating these notices in accordance
25

1
2 with Local Law 47, especially with an anticipated
3 date of service restoration?

4 DEPUTY CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER WALTON:

5 I'm sorry, but I do not have a precise answer for
6 that question at this time, but we can definitely get
7 back to you with that information.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay. We look
9 forward to receiving it. Thank you. So, just
10 switching very quickly to-- okay, I think we need to
11 wrap it up. We don't want to keep you here all night
12 long. In terms of the Public Housing Preservation
13 Trust, just to shift very quickly-- oh, okay, here we
14 go. In terms of-- obviously, we are in open comment
15 period around the Trust for the voting process. The
16 law requires two choices on the ballot, but the
17 proposed voting rules say that there are going to be
18 three choices on the ballot: join the Trust, join
19 PACT, or remain in Section 9, which is keeping the
20 status quo. Having the three choices creates a
21 possibility that one of them might win with just 34
22 percent of the vote. Do you believe that a major
23 change to the lives of development's residents should
24 go forward if only approved by such a minority of
25 votes?

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2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So, just
3 like any-- thank you, Council Member. Just like in
4 any election, like you know, election for City
5 Council, election for the Governor, elections of the
6 President, it is the-- it is a winner take all
7 system. So it is a-- you know, the side that's able
8 to garner the most votes, they will rule the day.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, your answer is
10 yes.

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: That's
12 correct.

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Have you considered
14 establishing a minimum percentage of votes such as 40
15 or 50 percent?

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: so, this
17 was-- so we-- the way we put this rule together was a
18 committee made up of 10 resident leaders. Each
19 boroughs was represented in community-based
20 organizations like Community Voices Heard, Legal Aid,
21 Community Service Society an unlimited number of
22 NYCHA staff. This question-- a threshold is required
23 by the law, and this question was probably the most
24 debated question in our meetings. We met-- we've
25 been meeting for two months now. There were many

1 folks who thought the number should be very low, even
2 lower than the 10 percent that's currently proposed,
3 and there were folks who thought, you know, a higher
4 30 or 40 percent number was more reasonable. The
5 issue is here we don't-- we have-- this is the first
6 of its kind in the nation. We do not have a lot of
7 data to support what would be the appropriate number.
8 What we did look at is tenant association elections,
9 and we know there that the average turnout for tenant
10 association elections is about 7.7 percent. In
11 addition, we looked at municipal elections as well,
12 including City Council, Mayor, and we looked at
13 Presidential elections and elections for Governor.
14 The highest elections that we saw were, of course, in
15 Presidential elections. That's true across the
16 board, whether it's for public housing residents or
17 any other residents, but even in those cases, the
18 development with the highest number of turnout was
19 still below 50 percent. So, I think what is most
20 important here is engagement, and making sure that
21 people understand that is happening, why they're
22 going to vote and do everything impossible to make
23 sure that we get the highest turnout possible. What
24 we're doing in these elections is ensuring that
25

1 tenants have many opportunities to vote. They will
2 have 21 days in order to cast their ballot. They can
3 do that in-person, by mail, and online. That type
4 of, you know, voting system does not-- that is all
5 the good government suggested voting systems in place
6 right now. It does not exist, you know, in other
7 types of elections, and you know, it is in our best
8 interest to make sure that we have the highest
9 turnout as possible.

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Can I ask why
12 resident-managed corporations were not an option on
13 the three options?

14 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: There's
15 nothing in the law that would prevent it being as an
16 option, and it could be. In the proposed rules,
17 there is a period of time where the resident
18 association and NYCHA will meet to discuss the
19 election, the options on the ballot, and also you
20 know, some things that the tenant association may
21 tell us about a development, you know, that would be
22 really important for us to know to run a successful
23 election. There is no reason why resident management
24 corporations could not be on the ballot, and that is
25 something-- if that is something that residents say

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2 they wanted to see on the ballot, the law does not
3 prevent that.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Right, but if it's
5 not on it, it's not an option. Can you explain to me
6 the difference in rationality around how we can
7 follow a 50 plus one for resident-managed corporation
8 election and then do a 10 percent threshold? And
9 then compare that with such a low bar of our own
10 democracy which we are really fighting hard to
11 change. How do we rationalize that we are fine to
12 follow 50 percent plus one for resident-managed
13 corporations, but 10 percent for this entity?

14 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Sure, and
15 let me just say, too, the proposal that's out there
16 is just that. It's a proposal. It can change and I
17 encourage everyone in this room, elected officials,
18 residents, and community-based organizations to let
19 us know that that number is too low. Let us know the
20 number should go up, and that is something that, you
21 know, we need to hear before the final rule comes
22 out. I cannot comment on the federal, you know, the
23 federal rule, and you know, the State Legislature,
24 you know, made the law on the Trust that only
25 required a minimum threshold. I think what is

1
2 important here is again to make sure that proper
3 outreach is done, to make sure that people are given
4 a reason to vote and to make sure that we maximize
5 participation, and you know, that is our goal.

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: What do you mean
7 specifically by proper outreach?

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Sure. So,
9 at a minimum, the law requires that residents need to
10 be contacted in four different ways. They need to be
11 contacted by email. They need to be contacted by
12 snail mail. They need to be contacted with notices,
13 you know, in the development and they need to be
14 contacted by phone. So that is a minimum threshold.
15 The proposed voting rules also require a minimum as
16 well. The minimum is at least four meetings have to
17 be held, one on each topic, and so if it the three
18 choices on the ballot are RAD, the Trust, and what it
19 means to, you know, remain in Section 9, all of those
20 things need to be, you know, covered in one specific
21 meeting and then a general meeting, too, on the
22 voting process as well or whatever else residents,
23 you know, need to discuss.

24

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: I'm sorry, Brian,
3 for meeting-- all of New York City or per
4 development?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: No, per
6 development.

7 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay.

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So, yeah,
9 exactly. No, not all the of the-- I'm sorry. This
10 is all on a per development basis, correct. So, and
11 that is a minimum. So we can, you know-- and if you
12 compare that to other programs, especially federal,
13 you know, federal programs it is, you know, way
14 greater engagement than is required under those
15 programs.

16 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, in terms of-- I
17 know you've had a good number of sessions and there
18 will be one tonight at my development. Have you kept
19 track of how many residents have actually attended
20 these sessions to-date? And you-- can you provide
21 the breakdown of attendance for every session?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: We can and
23 we'll be sure to get you that. I've been to-- so far
24 we've done eight sessions just on the voting roll--
25 voting procedure and proposal. I've attended six of

1 language assistance procedure manual only lists three
2 covered non-English languages, Chinese, Russian, and
3 Spanish. Will you commit to translating the ballots
4 and all of the education and outreach materials into
5 at least the 10 designated citywide languages?
6

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So, if--
8 you know, so if you-- I will give you an example of,
9 you know, if you were at the meeting last night and
10 many-- and some of the residents here were at the
11 meeting last night at Rutgers Houses. We definitely
12 did translate in Spanish, two Chinese dialects,
13 Russian as well. And this is where those meetings in
14 advance of an election are really important, because
15 we will, you know, have conversations and also base
16 it on services that we have to make sure that we are
17 covering the languages that are important to that
18 development. For instance, my colleague Simon did a
19 series of meetings in Williamsburg recently, and the
20 residents there told him if you don't have Yiddish,
21 you will not be able to conduct, you know, strong and
22 productive meetings. In other places people will
23 tell you you need French Creole. In Long Island City
24 people will tell you that you need-- you have to make
25 sure that Bangladesh, you know, Bengali, excuse me,

1 is used here. So, yes, we will, you know,
2 especially, you know, where it is identified to us
3 that this is a need.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Will you commit to
6 just making translated ballots and outreach materials
7 available to residents without having them request
8 it? That is a barrier, right? Most people actually
9 don't know they can request it. Now they have to
10 then go through the extra effort of doing so.

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: We
12 definitely will on the covered languages. It is--
13 let me get-- let me get back to you on that, Council
14 Member. I just don't want to commit to something that
15 I have to-- but it is something that we want to make
16 sure-- we definitely want to make sure that everybody
17 who wants to participate in this not matter what
18 language they speak is able to do it, you know,
19 without any burden.

20 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Does NYCHA, in your
21 estimation, actually have the capacity to provide
22 interpretation?

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: We do. And
24 we have-- from our Department of Communications staff
25 we have a contract with different interpretation

1 services, and we are able to regularly provide that,
2 you know, at meetings and in other places where
3 available.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yeah, language
5 accessibility I think firsthand certainly in Red Hook
6 is a serious issue despite repeated attempts
7 accessing interpretation. They have received none.
8 I've witnessed and election process, a process of
9 explaining what the-- all the presentations were done
10 in English. There was not-- no interpret or no
11 translated materials. There was no one live
12 interpreting. It was a Zoom call with hundreds of
13 residents. There was no space for engagement, which
14 I have been on the record with NYCHA about. What
15 improvements have there been made particularly around
16 elections to address language access.

17 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So,
18 Council Member, I'll take that one. Currently, we're
19 in the process of administering 23 elections across
20 the City and at every one of those meetings.
21 Meetings were having in-person interpreters in the
22 languages that Brian referenced, Spanish, simplified
23 Chinese, Chinese, and Russian. If the particular
24 development demographics calls for another one, we
25

1 will have that available. And so we usually have
2 three meetings for elections, a general meeting, a
3 nomination meeting, and then the election itself, and
4 those are usually for four hours. We will have--
5 there's a commitment to have interpreters at every
6 single one of those and that's what we've been doing
7 since we started, or we reorganize the department.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Since you started
10 when?

11 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: The
12 cycle of meetings, the first meeting took place in
13 October. Actually, this week we're doing more
14 conducting nominations meetings, and a month from now
15 we will be hosting the elections.

16 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Great. I'd love to
17 participate in those.

18 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: We can
19 share the list of the 23 developments that are
20 currently in the election cycle.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Great. I think--
22 oh yes. This week, the Administration's November 202
23 a plan instituted PEG of 36 million over the next
24 four years for City Tax Levy contributions to NYCHA
25 for OTPS. Will these cuts beginning with the 7.3

1
2 million reduction for this Fiscal Year impact
3 resident engagement programs?

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: A
5 this-- I haven't herd that that will impact our
6 program now.

7 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: You haven't heard
8 anything yet? What-- do you know what the cuts will
9 impact, or you haven't talked about that quite yet?

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Have
11 not. We can get back to you.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay. Okay, thank
13 you. Thank you so much. Okay. I think I-- I think
14 with that, can we just quickly talk about resident
15 elections. Is there a developed protocol around how
16 resident elections are held that is distributed and
17 available to residents?

18 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So, we
19 do have a-- I think since the last time the team
20 spoke to you or testified, we did develop some Q&A's
21 that are posted online governing resident elections.
22 DaVida Rowley-Blackman is new in her role, but we are
23 in the process of developing written protocols in
24 conducting elections.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So there is no--
3 yeah, protocol around elections.

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: It's
5 not a formal protocol, but we will have one. We're
6 working-- our commitment is to develop one.

7 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: How many elections
8 have been contested?

9 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I don't
10 have that information available right now, Council
11 Member, but we can share that with you.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Okay, I'd love to
13 know what is the protocol to address that
14 contestation.

15 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: sure.
16 So once we conduct an election, the resident-- any
17 resident may have 72 hours to submit a written
18 contestation of the election process. They can send
19 that via email to the residents engagement mailbox or
20 mail it directly as long as it's post-marked a
21 particular date, and we recently revised our
22 nomination form to reflect that. So with the-- if we--
23 - any protest received, we provide background
24 information to our law department for review and
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2 advisement on whether to re-- to conduct another
3 election or accept the results of it.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And how many
5 complaints have you received about elections--
6 election administration at NYCHA?

7 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I
8 don't have that number handy, but we can get to you.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: and when you
10 respond-- I guess-- I guess, walk me through what the
11 response would look like. Who is involved in making
12 those decisions, and are the decisions articulated in
13 responses to residents?

14 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes.
15 So a resident may cite particular issues that they
16 have with a particular-- with that election. I did
17 not have the ballot. It was not translated or folks
18 were electioneering in the polling site itself, or
19 the resident association, the current ward, stayed in
20 the election room or the polling room. And so
21 whatever they articulate we will respond to each
22 complaint and provide those responses to the law
23 department for review to ensure that we're not
24 violating any residents' rights, and they will
25

1
2 provide a ruling. Again, residents could appeal that
3 decision, again, by submitting a rebuttal.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Has an election ever
5 been invalidated?

6 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes,
7 we've had elections invalidated. I don't have that
8 particular number, but yes, we have had to redo
9 elections based on some findings.

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And how recent was
11 that?

12 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I
13 remember-- I don't have the particular date, but I do
14 know a development in Brooklyn recently where the
15 polls were off by one and we had to redo that
16 election.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: What's the threshold
18 for invalidation?

19 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: If
20 there were any ever-- any misconduct or if the-- if
21 we found that the protest was valid, we will have to
22 redo that election. But again, it's determined based
23 on our review by NYCHA's law department.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: The reason why I ask
25 is because I personally witnessed a conflation of all

1
2 these things, lack of translation, electioneering,
3 confusion, ballots that were not actually translated,
4 misinformation being provided by the people on-site
5 around whether or not someone was eligible to vote
6 all in one fell swoop with no-- with complaints that
7 were launched and no actual outcome. It just sailed
8 through with no problem. Everything apparently was
9 perfectly fine. So, I'm just curious around how--
10 what's the level of discretion that is being provided
11 around how one evaluates, whether or not there's
12 shenanigans going on and the residents deserve to get
13 a different process.

14 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: I'm
15 sorry to hear about your experience in that
16 particular election, Council Member. I can only
17 speak going forward. We're ensuring that all
18 protests are received. We respond to each individual
19 complaint, send our responses to our NYCHA law
20 department for a final review, and they will provide
21 a ruling as to whether we need to conduct elections
22 all over again.

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Great.

24 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: But I
25 do know, as I've stated earlier, that we're ensuring

1
2 at least we have interpreters, we have adequate staff
3 on site, and the Q&A's are available for residents
4 to--

5 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Are
6 staff that's deployed to the sessions around
7 elections actually trained around how to facilitate a
8 conversation about what is being proposed to the
9 residents in terms of these different positions, and
10 what is the responsibility of the roles that they are
11 asking-- are they proposing?

12 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: Yes,
13 so every election we-- the staff are trained and we
14 actually have a civic engagement group and staff will
15 take turns leading those elections so that we're
16 clear, and there's a script that's developed so that
17 across the city we are speaking with one voice around
18 elections and conducting elections, and the team will
19 explain all the various roles that residents are
20 running for prior to the nomination process or at the
21 general meeting.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, I have not
23 witnessed such an occurrence. What I have seen is
24 staff come in and put on a PowerPoint presentation
25 and a Zoom call and never once stop when they see

1 half their audience will have no idea what is
2 happening on that Zoom call because they don't speak
3 that language, ever ask if they understood what was
4 being proposed. They never stopped and asked if
5 there were questions around what is happening and
6 what the information that is being proposed. When I
7 ask staff about that, what I was told was, "we were
8 just told to put on the Zoom," which is fine and
9 maybe that was what they were just told to do. There
10 was no engagement with the residents around what in
11 fact was the purpose and the importance of what was
12 being done. The people on the Zoom had no
13 opportunity to ask calls-- to ask questions, forgive
14 me. So, I'm not sure where all this engagement is
15 happening. I have not witnessed it. And I look
16 forward to improving, and in fact, I spoke to the
17 Chair-- I spoke to Chair Russ about it and my
18 concerns, and particularly around if NYCHA didn't
19 have the capacity to do that, that they could partner
20 with organizations, in fact, that understood
21 community engagement and what it was to-- what it's
22 like to have a dialogue in a respectful manner with
23 people, and that could be something maybe election
24 administration is not something NYCHA should be
25

1 doing. So, the Chair's response was, "Oh, yeah,
2 maybe we should be partnering with local
3 organizations around facilitations. So I guess my--
4 the long/short of the story is that residents didn't--
5 - the staff did not have the appropriate training to
6 even facilitate a dialogue. They didn't even
7 introduce themselves. They didn't have people engage
8 at all with the materials, our truly lost opportunity
9 of frustration because much of the people just walked
10 out and no idea what was discussed at that meeting.

12 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT BUSGITH: So,
13 Council Member, DaVida and I, we're committed to
14 reforming that entire process. I have to concur with
15 you, I witnessed-- new in my role, I had witnessed
16 what you-- some of what you were stating and we're
17 already on the process of reforming that. Yes, you
18 need to introduce yourself, communicate the
19 intentions of the elections and be available to or
20 see where folks may have confusion and address that.
21 But we are working to retrain the team and to ensure
22 that we're speaking with one voice when it comes to
23 elections across the City.

24 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you. I think--
25 I think with that we can turn it over to public

1 comment. Thank you for your patience, for your
2 answers. We look forward to, obviously, all the
3 responses of the questions you were not able to
4 answer today. You know, this was not-- I just have
5 to underscore, this was not meant to be certainly a
6 session on bashing NYCHA staff. We recognize that
7 there are many staff who are doing great jobs. There
8 are also many staff who are not, and you know, I
9 think-- I understand the challenges that we're all
10 facing, but I do want to thank those staff who show
11 up, love, and do the work above and beyond for the
12 residents under very difficult conditions. You know,
13 what do they say, teacher-- classrooms are teacher's
14 learning environments, workplace environments, and
15 this is very much the case here. But we do see a
16 culture that is truly problematic, and I think what
17 we've heard from the residents over and over again is
18 we have a long way to go and communication is
19 critical, honest communication, not the we're going
20 to do this over here in 10 years, but to just be
21 honest in acknowledging the missteps and where we
22 currently are with clarity. And so, you know, we
23 look-- we look forward to continuously-- I'd like to
24 see residents in decision-making roles, not in
25

1
2 advisory roles where NYCHA gets to pick and choose
3 when they want to use residents, because that is
4 certainly what seems to be occurring in many cases.
5 So, I thank you for your work, and I think with that
6 we're going to move to public testimony.

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Thank you so
8 much, Council Member. And can I-- speaking of
9 honesty, can I correct something that I said earlier
10 just for the record? So, on work order reform, you
11 know, I had said that the work order reform rolls out
12 in Queens and Staten Island at first in 2021. It did
13 start as a pilot there. We did learn a lot there and
14 now each of the boroughs has a planner and are using,
15 you know, the tools of worker order reform in now all
16 five boroughs. I also said it's in its infancy, you
17 know, and it is very early in the program so it's too
18 soon to judge it. But I think, you know, they are
19 using the tools from Staten Island and Queens in all
20 five boroughs in order to make sure that customer
21 service is improved. This is something that I would
22 like to make sure that we brief this committee on and
23 the members, too, to make sure that we get your
24 feedback on this and make sure that it is rolled out
25 correctly. It is something that staff has. Also,

1
2 I've met with the CCOP now on several times, too, to
3 get their feedback on to make sure that the program
4 is-- most importantly works for the resident as well.

5 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: We look forward to
6 receiving further information. Thank you for the
7 correction. I think it is still very much hard to
8 hear that it is in all five boroughs. Residents will
9 tell you it is not. So, I think more to come on
10 that, specifically.

11 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much.
12 We will now move to testimony from members of the
13 public. We thank you for your patience. We will
14 take testimony from individuals who are joining via
15 Zoom and those who filled out a witness slip to
16 testify in-person. Because there are a number of
17 registrants, unfortunately, we do have to set a timer
18 to two minutes per registrant. So, please do try to
19 keep your testimony within that time. First we will
20 hear from Danette Chavis [sp?] and Karen Blondel who
21 are joining via Zoom. Please listen for your name to
22 be called and accept the prompt to unmute.
23 Unfortunately, you are not able to unmute yourself,
24 so please accept the prompt when you receive it. We
25 will also hear from Beverly MacFarlane, Tamika Mapp,

1 Terry Manuel Compizano [sp?], and Rakhil Tilyayeva,
2 who are here in-person. Ms. Chavis, whenever you're
3 ready you may begin.

4 DANETTE CHAVIS: Hi, can you hear me?

5 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes.

6 DANETTE CHAVIS: Hello? Good evening
7 everyone. I'm sorry the two minutes is only be
8 allotted on such a huge conversation. But my name is
9 Danette Chavis and I'm the TA President of La
10 Guardia, and I have the following questions and
11 concerns which I believe should be brought to the
12 table in regards to the manner in which resident
13 engagement conveys information to tenant and tenant
14 leaders and how NYCHA holds them accountable for
15 doing so. At the top, first of all, there was zero
16 communication given regarding of the Preservation
17 Trust. Tenant leaders and housing advocates had to
18 call in emergency rally at City Hall the day before
19 its passage, while the Mayor, fully informed and in
20 support of its passage held his own rally and press
21 conference to champion its passage. The question is,
22 what is the level of transparency when moving forward
23 in an action that has not been sufficiently conveyed
24 to tenant and the option of making an informed
25

1
2 decision because of it. The HUD regulations that
3 require NYCHA to meet and inform and tenants of
4 actions being taken regarding their housing have been
5 violated. They neither gave sufficient notice on the
6 intent to move forward, nor met with any of the
7 tenant leaders, and because of the swiftness in which
8 they move forward, whatever good intent existed has
9 been sabotaged by their own failure to be transparent
10 in the intentions to move forward. In addition, the
11 content of the legislation passed remains uncompleted
12 with issues that need to be worked out and addressed
13 regarding voting. So how can this be considered
14 favorable in the eyes of any resident who now must be
15 walked through decisions made concerning them when
16 they ought to have been present as those decisions
17 were being made. In regards to resident engagement,
18 those within resident engagement have been given the
19 responsibility of training and advising resident
20 association leaders--

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank you
22 for your testimony. Thank you.

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Ms. Blondel? Karen,
24 if you could please accept the prompt to unmute, and
25 we'll take your testimony.

1
2 KAREN BLONDEL: Okay, good afternoon.
3 Thank you all. Thank you, Council Member Avilés.
4 The one thing I do say is that we never stay on
5 agenda. I thought the agenda was about resident
6 engagement, but it was started off by a panel that
7 talked about the Preservation Trust. And just for
8 the record, you can tell Mr. Barron, I am another
9 person who likes Greg Russ. I don't-- I don't-- I
10 don't discriminate against a person based off they're
11 from New York, white, black, because that gets public
12 housing residents nowhere when everybody's classing
13 us anyway. So let me get to my point. To Ms. Ukah,
14 when you guys did the revamp of the TPA funds, that
15 was prior to the elections that took place in the
16 last year and a half where we have over 100 new
17 resident leaders including myself, and I still find
18 that it has been difficult to manage smart data and
19 to use the commercial card, and I think that we
20 should revisit that again. I also think that some of
21 the people at Resident Engagement think that the
22 residents are electing them instead of the people who
23 they are electing, and that is very un-democratic to
24 be vindica-- treated vindictively and retaliatory
25 just because you are selected as the leader and maybe

1 they were comfortable with the people who are already
2 in. As far as CCOP and district council, I don't see
3 the synchronicity between the local resident
4 association and how that ties into DCOP. We are
5 doing much better in Brooklyn South thanks to the
6 fact that we have a new district leader, Ms. Barbara
7 McFadden, but that is not standard across the board.
8 I think that resident engagement in New York City is
9 too big to be done in the manner that it is being
10 done, and we should start on the local level--

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank
13 you. Your time has expired.

14 KAREN BLONDEL: district level-- excuse
15 me. I waited four hours to speak, so give me another
16 minute, please. Again, we have to change the way
17 resident engagement is working because this is not a
18 rural or an urban area. This is a very dense city
19 area, and it is too much to have all of this under
20 one council, because we're meeting. We're not seeing
21 them. We're not getting the postings, and it's not
22 going fairly. So I will stop my comment right here,
23 but I have a lot more to say, and we shouldn't have
24 these meetings once every five years. If we're going
25 to change this, we need this on the calendar at least

1
2 quarterly. Thank you for your time. Have a good
3 Thanksgiving.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Ms. Blondel, don't
5 go. I want to ask you some follow-up questions. I
6 think you brought up some really critical points I'd
7 like you to expand on for the record.

8 KAREN BLONDEL: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Can you tell us some
10 more about the revamps around your experience with
11 the TPA funds and what you would like to see
12 specifically?

13 KAREN BLONDEL: Yeah, so you know, we
14 came in new this year or last year when it should
15 have took two weeks to turn over everything to us.
16 We got nothing turned over. We had to start from
17 scratch. We had to start from lead abatement in the
18 unit where the tenants were meeting for year, and
19 from there buying equipment and stuff like that. I
20 remember the first January, they gave us the current
21 budget, but we had another reserve budget that we
22 couldn't access until June. And then with that being
23 said, there were asking you to put in a whole year's
24 annual budget, but then when you try to put it based
25 off of the current and the reserve, it got very

1
2 nasty, to the point where I had to ask for my
3 resident engagement personnel to be removed from Red
4 Hook, because I had to keep telling her these
5 residents did not elect you, they elected me. And
6 with that being said, she should be working with me
7 and not the other way around. I felt like they were
8 very top heavy with how they wanted you to deal with
9 the Police Department, the PSA, the manager and
10 elected officials. And I'm sorry, I say that Alexa,
11 but it's all true.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yeah, yeah.

13 KAREN BLONDEL: I am here for the
14 residents, that's who I'm here for. Police
15 Department has its own meetings. Elected officials
16 have their meetings, and yes, there is synchronicity,
17 but my mission is to elevate the voices of the
18 residents in Red Hook West.

19 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yes, and you have
20 been doing an incredible job.

21 KAREN BLONDEL: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: In terms of-- what
23 was the recourse when you started to experience the
24 friction with resident engagement, what steps did you
25 have to take in order for NYCHA--

1
2 KAREN BLONDEL: [interposing] Well, I
3 will say that there has been a big transformational
4 push and change at New York City Housing Authority.
5 Two years ago I would have come on here and try to
6 rip their jugular out. I would have said that all of
7 them up until CCOP need to be gone, but I have seen
8 significant changes that are being implemented. No,
9 they have not turned this ship around. But it is
10 starting to turn. And so with that being said, I'm
11 trying to work not only from the outside as a
12 resident leader, but from the inside to understand
13 the mechanisms and how NYCHA work so that we can have
14 a future here in New York City. Because right now we
15 have three choices on the table. We have RAD/PACT.
16 We have the Preservation Trust, and we have status
17 quo. Those are the choices. Now, as for as the
18 voting I have also worked on that working group,
19 Council Member, and yes, there were different voices,
20 some saying 10 percent was too high, some saying it
21 was too low, but we are presenting it to the
22 communities and taking back their comments, and we're
23 going to keep on, and I'm going to hold everybody's
24 feet to the fire, residents, New York City Housing
25 Authority, elected officials, other resident leaders,

1 because it's going to take all of us. All hands on
2 deck is what's needed--

3
4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing]

5 Absolutely.

6 KAREN BLONDEL: to turn New York City
7 Housing Authority around.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: I hear you. One
9 last question. You mentioned resident engagement was
10 top heavy. Can you talk to us a little bit more about
11 what that means explicitly in your experience?

12 KAREN BLONDEL: So, I'll speak from my
13 experience. I am a black American and one of the
14 things we fought for in this country is the right to
15 vote, and so when I looked at the way voting was
16 going here in New York City Housing Authority, I
17 reached out and I spoke to elected and to our
18 regional administrator to ask her how come people
19 have to pay for a membership in order to vote? And
20 how come-- because all of that reminds me of the
21 times when blacks had to go and actually recite the
22 ABC's in order to be able to vote. So I feel like
23 democracy is not in effect in regards to resident
24 engagement. I feel like, yes, we are starting to
25 loosen this bill pin [sic] up a bit. We have 100 new

1
2 leaders across the City, but we need a chance to
3 synchronize amongst ourselves on a local level, and
4 these districts, the way resident engagement has it
5 cut up, we should be connected to Wyckoff and Gowanus
6 who are geographically close to Red Hook. No, they
7 got us connected to Coney Island, and I don't care
8 because I was born in Coney Island. But what is the--
9 - what's the sense behind this madness. Sometime it
10 feels like they don't want us to engage each other,
11 but we need to engage each other, and I think a lot
12 of people are scared because they look at New York
13 City Housing Authority residents, that if we get it
14 right we could become a political power.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Without question.
16 Without question, NYCHA residents could shut it down.

17 KAREN BLONDEL: Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you. Thank
19 you so much--

20 KAREN BLONDEL: [interposing] Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: for your experience
22 and your testimony.

23 KAREN BLONDEL: Thank you.

24 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much.

25 We will now hear from Beverly MacFarlane, Tamika

1 Mapp, Terry Emanuel Companzano [sp?], and Rakhil
2 Tilyayeva.
3

4 BEVERLY MACFARLANE: Okay. Good
5 afternoon and thank you Councilwoman, that you gave
6 us this opportunity. Today when we speak about
7 resident engagement, there was no-- there haven't
8 been adequate engagement. They have had very little
9 engagement, let my residents. I'm from Taft Houses.
10 I'm the President of Senator Robert A. Taft Houses in
11 East Harlem, and last night was my monthly meeting,
12 and I had 70 members at my monthly meeting last
13 night, and not one of them heard about the Trust.
14 Not one of them knew about RAD and PACT, and no one
15 really did not know that we was in Section 9. So
16 there has been no resident engagement in terms of
17 educating our residents on what is coming and the
18 negative impact that would-- for our community. one
19 thing that I-- I'm not understanding why this
20 legislation was passed, because NYCHA has an active
21 federal lawsuit Consent Decree right now in place
22 from lead and mold, and they have not expedited that.
23 They have not fulfilled that obligation. So why did
24 the state and city step in and do a leg-- pass this
25 legislation that they-- that would affect, that would

1 affect our residents, our homes. And not only that,
2 why do they have to use Section 18, which is
3 abolishing-- the deposition of our homes? So they
4 can exercise that if they come into these apartments
5 and into our homes and see they deem-- they have to
6 deem it inhabitable in order to get these vouchers,
7 these TPA vouchers. So once they-- they are deeming
8 our home inhabitable, they can exercise the right to
9 abolish the building if they-- if they choose to
10 because that's in the language. It's in the language
11 of the legislation. so we want-- I want to be very--
12 put it on record, that why are they using Section 18,
13 which for the TPV vouchers, Tenant Prevention
14 Vouchers, to tell-- for HUD to give them these
15 vouchers to make sure that-- I'm sorry, because I'm
16 getting-- I'm very passionate about what's going on,
17 and I want to say my home, and when I'm reading the
18 language with thee TPV vouchers. It's the same thing
19 that happened in Cabrini [sp?] Green in Chicago can
20 happen to us in New York. So we have to be very
21 careful, and I just don't understand why this
22 legislation was passed, because they have an active
23 dissent decree under the Federal Government. That's
24 why we have a federal monitor. Thank you.
25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you. And--
3 thank you. And I just-- I don't need to remind you
4 or anyone of this. This is a state authority where
5 the city government has very little jurisdiction
6 over. And so-- and while it feels like
7 jurisdictional confusion, because it's ful-- It's
8 almost majorly funded by the Federal Government and
9 under federal regulation. I would implore you that
10 it is a state authority and we need to get our state
11 legislators fully on board to follow the residents
12 and their needs.

13 BEVERLY MACFARLANE: And we really, but
14 the state legislators, they should-- the state
15 legislation-- legislators should understand what's
16 going on in turn and the negative impact that this
17 Section 8 TPV voucher, because it's not traditional
18 Section 8. It's TPV that stays in the home and it
19 stays in the apartment. So, it's not some
20 traditional Section 8 that you can take with you. It
21 will only design to-- for that apartment. So, our
22 legislation-- legislators need to know the negative
23 impact because NYCHA's only giving them the, "Oh,
24 they going to get a new kitchen and bathroom." They

25

1 can have that. I have a new kitchen and bathroom. I
2 worked all my life.

3
4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Tamika Mapp?

5 TAMIKA MAPP: Hi, I'm Tamika Map, the
6 State Committeewoman for the 68th Assembly District.
7 So I'm here to read some comments from Princess,
8 which is a NYCHA tenant resident. She said: "We the
9 residents are glad to see NYCHA will be required to
10 engage a third-party vote administrator for all
11 elections. Our residents, 18 of age and older with
12 permission from NYCHA to reside in apartment can
13 vote, but the voting process must be meaningful
14 [inaudible] requirement. The draft regulations only
15 require 10 percent of households at the development
16 to cast a vote for the results to consider valid.
17 This is much low for the key decision. It is
18 irrelevant that the turnout for the tenant leadership
19 elections is below eight percent. NYCHA explains
20 that the low threshold is appropriate because
21 turnout's typically low is irrelevant or demands that
22 the quorum [sic] need to be raised 66 percent of all
23 eligible voters. The draft regulations are missing
24 critical support for resident decision-making. Prior
25 to notice, residents must be provided [sic] access

1 with an independent tenant advisor to guide outreach
2 strategy and assist in evaluation. NYCHA must also
3 provide an independent physical needs assessment of
4 their campuses as part of the required outreach
5 material. NYCHA's own assessment is not enough.
6 These materials must also describe potential impacts
7 on staffing of each of options presented. The
8 mandated outreach materials must also disclose how
9 much financing backed with the property of the Trust
10 would give for NYCHA and be used for the Preservation
11 Trust option. NYCHA needs to be more transparent and
12 make truthful statements during the proposed rules in
13 the Trust PowerPoint meetings that will govern how
14 residents will vote on the future of the
15 developments. There's been widespread manipulative
16 messages and convey of disinformation strategies by
17 NYCHA staff members at the Trust meetings repeatedly
18 to influence the residents on whether or not we
19 should be part of the Trust, RAD/PACT, or remain
20 Section 9 public housing. NYCHA wasn't all
21 forthcoming on borough [sic] protections of the 964
22 regulations, including statements that the Trust is
23 still considered public housing, succession rights
24 protection, trust relocation process." And one of
25

1 the-- just going to address the very important. It
2 is, "Resident social leaders and districtwide council
3 should be able to use TPA funds to educate their
4 residents on a four-week trust voting process and
5 legislation that was recently passed. The 964
6 regulations [inaudible] opportunities under the TPA
7 eligibility activities. And thank you so much for
8 your time."

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you so much
11 for your testimony, and I feel like I should have
12 explicitly asked that question. TPA funds can't be
13 used for outreach around the voter procedures? Yes,
14 okay. Okay, thank you.

15 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. Terry?

16 TERRY CAMPIZANO: Hi, my name is Terry
17 and I'm the TA President of Meltzer Tower, a senior
18 building, and it's kind of like NYCHA has really let
19 us down very bad. We have the doors constantly
20 broken by squatters in the building, people moving
21 in, sleeping in the hallways, defecating. The rent-
22 a-guards that are there and the ones that have, you
23 know, very little training, they don't ask the people
24 that are coming in for their names or anything. So
25 we have junkies in the back lot. We have

1
2 prostitution. Like I said, NYCHA security is non-
3 existent. We have cameras in the basement with
4 nobody to monitor them. I wear the NYCHA badge. I
5 have the NYCHA emblem with pride. Not even in
6 Queensbridge were we going through such conditions as
7 this that we're dealing with now. So basically, we
8 been just handed-- you know, we've accepted the--
9 basically set that the RAD/PACT thing, because at
10 least we have promises of an improvement in our
11 conditions, because we can't do anything. You know,
12 we just don't have the funds or they're telling us we
13 don't have the funds. There's so much that has to be
14 done. This is a senior building, and they're putting
15 us at risk. It's just unbelievable. Last night at
16 11:45, somebody walks in there with a big yellow
17 suitcase and then had the nerve to say, "Oh, I guess
18 I'm the youngest one here." And you know, the guards
19 asked them nothing. So this is the conditions that
20 we're living in so our promise is with RAD and PACT.
21 That's what we have available right now.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: In the process of
23 conversion?

24 TERRY CAMPIZANO: We're at the beginning
25 process. We haven't really seen like the-- what do

1
2 you call it? No, we're starting out. We're in the
3 very beginning process of it. You know, we're
4 looking at buildings. We're looking at developers
5 and we're going to work, but you know, we're
6 basically-- there's nothing else for us to do there.
7 I mean with NYCHA, they've just torn us apart.

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And are you working
9 with a specific organization, or--

10 TERRY CAMPIZANO: [interposing] I think--

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Who's
12 walking you through this process? If you could
13 explain what the engagement--

14 TERRY CAMPIZANO: [interposing] We're
15 workin-- we're going to be working with Vantage.
16 They're a consultant agency, but the whole, you know,
17 the whole thing, the whole process is that NYCHA
18 can't do anything for us. I mean, we have doors that
19 are constantly being broken. They're the electronic
20 doors with the magnets. We can't do anything until
21 they straighten out the problems within the building,
22 and that's the squatters that are there. This is a
23 senior building. We have like 20 apartments vacant,
24 and I don't even want to know how many of the
25 squatters are in the building.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Can you for the
3 record tell us what development you're in?

4 TERRY CAMPIZANO: The what?

5 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: What development are
6 you in?

7 TERRY CAMPIZANO: Oh, Meltzer, Meltzer
8 Tower. It's a senior residence in the Lower East
9 Side.

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: We'll follow up with
11 you offline.

12 TERRY CAMPIZANO: Okay.

13 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you so much
14 for your testimony.

15 TERRY CAMPIZANO: Thank you. No, they're
16 not. Preventive maintenance or whatever. Okay, and
17 the Police Department is like kind of scattered.
18 They're probably on the subways right now. It's
19 true.

20 RAKHIL TIYAYEVA: Rakhil Tiyayeva. I'm a
21 Staff Attorney at the Tenant's Rights Coalition at
22 Manhattan Legal Services. We provide free legal
23 services to low-income New Yorkers, and I
24 specifically represent NYCHA tenants in Housing Court
25 Cases to resolve repair and rent arear issues.

1
2 apprise tenants undergoing RAD conversions about the
3 new ways that they can obtain repairs. Specifically,
4 NYCHA tenants in the RAD program can now request HPD
5 inspections by calling 311 like private tenants,
6 instead of waiting for a court order like other
7 public housing tenants. It's important that they
8 know this, because these are part of their rights.
9 And then finally, NYCHA fails to provide written
10 notifications to tenants in languages other than
11 English. One of my Spanish-speaking clients reports
12 that at least three other tenants in her building
13 only speak Spanish as well. She was never given any
14 notice in Spanish. I hope that this testimony will
15 be one that the City Council can take into
16 consideration when making their policies. Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you so much.

18 Thank you for your testimony. We'll follow up.

19 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We'll now
20 hear from Carmen Quinones, Dana Elden, Samantha
21 Guzman, and again, please accept the unmute prompt
22 when you receive it on Zoom, and we will also hear
23 from Russell Taylor [sp?], Christina Chase [sp?] who
24 I believe are present.

25 CARMEN QUINONES: Do you hear me?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, we can hear you.

CARMEN QUINONES: First I want to thank everybody for taking the time, you know, to really come here and talk about what's really going on. I think it's just so sad that we're in 2022 and we're still doing the same thing and talking about the same thing. And I think that what we need to really look at is elected officials, we really-- they really need to really get on their job because, you know, there's so many elected officials that are with this RAD/PACT blueprint and stuff like that. And this is just really killing public housing. We're on the verge of literally, literally privatizing all of public housing and demolishing it at the same time. And people are being put out like it's going out of style. This is nothing new. It's been going on for years. It has just been packaged differently. When we talk about the 964 regs, I hope everybody does get savvy with it. We are trying to-- I'm trying to my best. I have been trying to get resident management corporation, and that is that the residents get to do are the ones that can deliver their own services looking at residents managing their own developments. I think we've been doing it for so long that nobody

1 does it better than the residents. Resident
2 engagement, we need to really, really look at that
3 inside out. There's been problems with resident
4 management for years, and what happens is is they
5 move them around, and nothing really gets solved,
6 right? It's just like they say they got rid of Russ.
7 Russ is still here. Greg Russ is still here.
8 There's nothing wrong with Greg Russ. I like Greg
9 Russ. I can work with Greg Russ. At least he
10 doesn't lie to me--

12 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing]
13 [inaudible] your testimony. Your time has expired.

14 CARMEN QUINONES: he tells me [inaudible]
15 And so we really need to really be looking at
16 resident management corporation. Please look it up.
17 We are entitled to do that. And again, we need to
18 make sure that-- that you know, that the New York
19 City Housing Authority isn't also trying to run that.
20 So there are different things we need to do.
21 Residents, presidents need to stick together, back
22 each other up. If one president is having a problem,
23 then we all need to show up, because that's the only
24 way we're going to get this done. Nothing is going to
25 get done if we keep being separated, and that is what

1
2 New York City housing has done and continues to do,
3 is separate, separate, separate. But also, our
4 council people and our state people and our congress
5 people, they need to really look at what's happening
6 when it comes to PACT, RAD and the Blueprint. And
7 again we still need to fix a lot of things on that
8 Preservation Trust. There's thing that we need to
9 do. First of all, we were never engaged in any of
10 these process, and you're talking about our lives,
11 you're talking about my grandchildren, you're talking
12 about my great grandchildren. That's a problem.
13 That is a problem in itself when you are making
14 decisions for me and mine. When I stick my neck out,
15 every day, every day as a President it's a non-- I
16 tell you this job is a thankless job, but we do it
17 because we care, and that's the real reason we do it.
18 It's not because we have to, because we don't have
19 to. This actually has become abusive to the
20 presidents. But again--

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Ms.
22 Quinones?

23 CARMEN QUINONES: I just want to say, I
24 hope that this council-- and I want to thank this-- I
25 want to thank you for holding this councilwoman.

1
2 I've been watching you for a long time and you look
3 like you are really on our side, and I appreciate
4 you. I really do, but there's a lot of our elected
5 officials that are selling us down the drain, and
6 that's the biggest problem we have.

7 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Ms. Quinones, thank
8 you--

9 CARMEN QUINONES: And with that, I yield.

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you so much.
11 Next resident?

12 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Dana Elden [sp?]
13 followed by Samantha Guzman [sp?].

14 DANA ELDEN: Good afternoon. Thank you,
15 Council Member Avilés and those in attendance. My
16 name is Dana Elden. I'm from Saint Mary's Park
17 Houses. I'm the Resident Council President there.
18 As a resident I'm thankful for the efforts of my
19 Resident Engagement representative, Mrs. Williams,
20 who has in the past been attentive to myself and my
21 board, also taking time to clarify instructions for
22 me to follow. However, in the recent year, there is
23 little to no contact with my representative due to
24 the fact that she has gotten another district to
25 manage. However, there is no little-- there's little

1 to no response to [inaudible] and how to approach 501
2 3C nonprofit status or resident management.

3 Secondly, regarding the voting process, the
4 misinformation that is being shared with residents is
5 not acceptable. I've been told of the 964

6 regulations have been adopted by the Trust. The 964
7 is singly designed to Section 9, and the fact that it
8 is written into the Trust law, doesn't that satisfy

9 me, and they have not acknowledged or respected the

10 964 rules and regulations form the beginning of the

11 Blueprint which was 2020. The issue of voting with

12 an acceptable six percent is criminal. There should

13 be at least 66 percent of the development that is

14 voting. Residents should be educated on the

15 realities of their choice of Section 9 versus Section

16 8, participating in Section 8, the Trust and Resident

17 Management, RAD and PACT. This is not happening.

18 The voting should be monitored and handled by

19 independent third party. The results should be made

20 available public-- to the public no later than 72

21 hours after any development has a voting process done

22 at a development. Also, the marketing of new

23 kitchens and bathrooms is also unacceptable. In many

24 cases, with RAD developments--
25

1
2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Thank
3 you. Your time has expired.

4 DANA ELDEN: Could I finish, please?
5 There are resident councils at those developments
6 that cosmetic changes are just that. There is little
7 to no work done on the infrastructure such as
8 electrical lines, plumbing, roofing, etcetera.
9 Coming from a development that is 100 percent of its
10 residency on a financial scale that was considered
11 middle class, we lived in an environment that was
12 well respected and secure. Since the mid-1980s we he
13 welcomed total of 128 section 8 residents. This
14 development is 1,007 strong. This is a Section 9
15 development. To convert everyone would be an
16 injustice to the many working and retired
17 professional. They would also increase their rents
18 due to the fact that many our residents-- in fact,
19 one-third, that's 343 have Social Security and
20 pensions. This would ruin them. So thank you very
21 much.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you so much,
23 Ms. Elden.

24

25

1
2 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you. We will
3 now hear from Samantha Guzman followed by Russel
4 Taylor and Christina Chase [sp?].

5 SAMANTHA GUZMAN: Good afternoon. I'm a
6 third-year law student at Fordham Law, and I've been
7 working with a group of students and faculty in
8 conducting research on public housing issues in New
9 York City, including the new Preservation Trust. My
10 colleagues and I wanted to use this opportunity to
11 express our concerns with the Trust's lack of
12 resident involvement and give our recommendations to
13 empower residents within the context of the Trust.
14 First, residents through their resident councils or
15 tenant associations need to be full decision-making
16 participants at all stages of redevelopment,
17 including in the development plan and scope of work,
18 the selection of builders, architects and other
19 vendors, and in the oversight and monitoring of their
20 work. Residents through their councils or tenant
21 associations must be made legal parties to key
22 agreements in order to accomplish this. Second,
23 residents need genuine opportunities to form RMCs to
24 take on many aspects of operating their developments.
25 This approach has been highly successful in other

1 instances where RMCs have proven more accountable and
2 effective, have provided decent jobs to many
3 residents and have given them some control over their
4 living conditions. We recommend the creation of a
5 NYCHA department responsible for leading the
6 formation and operation of RMCs and to work in
7 contracting with them. NYCHA needs to provide
8 dedicated financial support for the establishment of
9 RMCs and continue-- and commit to a streamlined
10 process for direct funding to those RMCs. To use
11 these opportunities effectively, thirdly, residents
12 and their resident councils and tenant associations
13 need access to experts who can help them
14 realistically assess options and learn the skills and
15 develop the practical capacity for managing their
16 projects successfully. Fourth and finally, to
17 guarantee their rights to participation, resident
18 management and involvement along with other rights
19 set out in the Act, the residents and the resident
20 councils and tenant associations need access to an
21 independent auditor or monitor, and finally, to be
22 full legal parties to all agreements with the power
23 to take legal action to enforce them if need be. We
24 hope our research and recommendations will be taken
25

1
2 into consideration to assist in empowering residents
3 with regards to the Trust and strengthening resident
4 participation across the City. Thank you for your
5 time.

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you so much
7 for that testimony.

8 COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Yes, can you just
9 turn on the microphone?

10 : Thank you very much, Council woman
11 Alexa Avilés. My name is Russell Taylor. I live at
12 830 [inaudible] Avenue, NYCHA resident, and I'm also
13 a recently elected Council Committee in the 69th
14 Assembly District. As an activist, community
15 engagement outreach specialist in 2007 I participated
16 in supervised street outreach by tabling [sic] and
17 our banners and handouts and going door to door,
18 phone banking, attending Zoom meetings, and having
19 informative, meaningful conversation with NYCHA
20 residents and diverse community members supporting
21 Section 9 public housing. We charge that the
22 government through HUD, New York State legislative
23 bodies, Governor and New York City Mayor are
24 practicing social engineering and capital racism
25 under the pretense of betterment for public housing

1 residents as was done throughout the 40s and 50s
2 where white people living in public housing were
3 guaranteed home loans through the FHA to move to
4 rural suburban areas and purposely excluded people of
5 color from the same opportunity residing in public
6 housing. Separate is not equal. I stand against the
7 project-based vouchers. They do not protect the
8 tenants but actually protect NYCHA Department and
9 give NYCHA more money to mismanage. Ignorance is not
10 bliss, only for insatiable predators looking to
11 devour us. two out of 10 people living in NYCHA that
12 I've canvased are not aware that they are even
13 Section 9 low, moderate income public housing, or
14 residents of public housing or aware of this 964
15 legislation. Empowerment and promises to the
16 residents meaningful involvement in management and
17 operations of their development forming resident
18 management corporations of their own, let alone
19 continue to be used as mindless and cash cows. In my
20 development, 830 Amsterdam Avenue, eight meetings
21 since December have been missed. There's no way that
22 my people in my building are going to make an
23 informed decision. Whose responsibility to-- since
24 the resident council's malfeasance. It's Residents
25

1 Engagement's job to come out and see how they're
2 doing which they're not doing. So I had a garden
3 destroyed in NYCHA. Do you know the problem I had to
4 go through to-- one resident engagement in Queens?
5 One resident engagement here and they're not
6 responding back at all for several months, whatever,
7 and even I who is the legal gardener could even get
8 my garden agreement form my management or form NYCHA
9 records department, and I'm looking forward to taking
10 them to court very soon. That's how bad it is with
11 these people, and yes, I did speak to Brian Honan
12 also who's also in attendance, and they just have no
13 regard for our rights. And you know,
14 superintendents, they know what's going to happen
15 before it happened, and why did they put me in place
16 as the NYCHA resident in that place in which we're
17 getting the heating and cooling system, and they had
18 to destroy my garden. So, I'm just saying, we need
19 more oversight with resident council, so that's why I
20 am supporting [inaudible] reintroduction of 9414
21 giving residents-- I mean, giving City Council more
22 oversight. And I do understand that the jurisdiction
23 there, because the location, you know, it's a state
24
25

1
2 entity, NYCHA is. So, I'm going to stop it there,
3 but thank you very much. I yield the floor.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you. Thank
5 you.

6 CHRISTINA CHASE: Hey, I'm Christina
7 Chase. I'm the Second Vice President over at
8 Ravenswood Houses. NYCHA has not made any initiative
9 to meaningfully engage western Queens, including my
10 development. There was one in-person town hall
11 nearby at Queensbridge Houses, but it was cancelled
12 last minute. I'm a board member and there has not
13 been any direct outreach to our members. Virtual
14 town halls, which include only a handful of
15 residents, have been more about exploiting NYCHA's
16 plan rather than gathering important information or
17 incorporation. Presentations and circulating
18 literature continuously frame Section 9 public
19 housing as status quo which is deceptive and fosters
20 the belief that the Trust or PACT are better options,
21 which is not true. The Trust completely transforms
22 the finance and government structures further away
23 from the people who call NYCHA home and into the
24 hands of banks and undefined stakeholders while PACT
25 privatizes our homes via private management. I'm

1 astounded that the Trust has even got this far,
2 considering the years of resident descent. I implore
3 you to watch or listen to the public hearings
4 archived on NYCHA's site. Majority of residents have
5 said no to the Blueprint, no to RAD and PACT and no
6 to the Trust. However, NYCHA continues to move
7 forward with their agenda of establishing a real
8 estate portfolio that can bring profit for private
9 actors and money as well as power further away from
10 residents. I moved into NYCHA when I was six years
11 old, and because of NYCHA I'm still-- I'm still here
12 in New York City. Because of the housing security I
13 experienced I've been able to pursue my education to
14 the highest levels and give back to my city. And I
15 stand before you a few weeks shy of my 33rd birthday,
16 and I'm about to give birth to my first child, and
17 hope to-- and I hope to raise my son in the same
18 community that raised me, that protected me, that
19 loved me. We need to protect NYCHA so our families
20 are not displaced. We need your help as public
21 official. We need you to stop NYCHA from moving
22 forward with policies that will harm us under the
23 guise of helping us. We need you to redefine what is
24 accountability is by exemplifying it and standing by
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our side. Please utilize our voices and expertise as residents to stop NYCHA from violating our rights and gambling with our homes. Thank you.

[applause]

CHAIRPERSON AVILES: Thank you. Thank you.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thank you very much. We will now hear from Mildred Martinez, Albert Negrone [sp?], DJL7, and Crystal Glover.

DJL7: Oh me? Hey, what's up? Nice to meet y'all. I'm DJL7, New York City's number one street activist. Nice to meet you. Now, I've been an activist for over 30 years, and I was activist during the Obama era when the RAD/PACT was first instituted, and there's a reason why resident management councils are in the 964 regs, because activists like me fought for that. It was a promise that was supposed to be made to give agency to people that were actually poor. Now the fact of the matter is that today there was a document that was presented. I don't know who this Buk-- Ukah Busgith person is, but this document is the probes. It is dishonest, and you pointed out a lot of issues with it, and you did a great job on that.

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2 CHAIRPERSON AVILES: DJ, can you move
3 closer to the mic.

4 DJL7: Yeah, putting letters on doors.
5 What about results? In school results matter. In
6 politics results don't matter, unfortunately, it's
7 just about connections. I dare you to run a survey
8 right now to find out how people in public housing,
9 how much they actually know about these issues. now,
10 the fact of the matter is let's look at the real
11 estate industry's number one corrupting [sic] factor
12 of New York City politics, right? The fact of the
13 matter is that we look at the-- what's it the real
14 estate agencies. They have HGL [sic] TV. They have
15 a whole entire channel devoted towards pushing their
16 needs. They have such commercial impact. How can
17 small organizers like us compete? In fact, the fact
18 while all these guys back here are pulling a salary
19 today and getting paid, right? Yeah, let me tell you
20 what I did. First of all, right, I did probably more
21 tabling family days, [inaudible] than the rest of say
22 Section 9 combined because I would-- I'm super
23 passionate about this issue. Another thing we could
24 do is we could hang signs off the building. They
25 have buildings that are by the East Side highway by--

1
2 you know with the huge real estate we can hang signs
3 of the building and let residents know, right? Yeah,
4 we can all do-- by the way, also-- I have worked on
5 program called [inaudible] for 22. I had over 30
6 candidates across the nation breaking ranks with
7 party leadership and we had a managed agreement from
8 candidates to support public housing. However,
9 right, and I know Greg Russ gets my emails and
10 that's-- there's proof of that and I have-- I can
11 show you on my phone the read receipts. The fact of
12 the matter is that my work on his matter has been
13 suppressed and aristocracy of activist media and
14 party [inaudible] should work to maintain the status
15 quo. In fact, you know, let's talk about some of
16 what's happened at these-- at these workshops. The
17 fact of the matter is that how are residents getting
18 value out of these workshops? They're-- you get his
19 boring ass presentation with nothing. In fact, what
20 they really need is to have when they're buying like
21 kitchen appliances from God knows who, right, or
22 they're getting these services, right, like lead
23 paint inspection, right? The residents should know
24 what to look for or, you know, have some say in terms
25 of-- they're changing the windows out instead of--

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2 and they buy these windows on discount and then
3 instead of actually fixing the mold which goes for
4 years unaddressed, right. They're just taking care
5 of what benefits themselves. The fact of the matter
6 is that management companies cannot be trusted and
7 let's look at the facts. Riseborough [sic]
8 Management who is paid off by the Democratic Party
9 leadership and also we take a look at [inaudible]
10 Chino [sic] whose work in terms of addressing his
11 building. Management companies have swept in and
12 then they put a lot of-- they took the building and
13 they started getting a lot of loans on it, right?
14 And then finally went to the residents who are living
15 there and they have to now pay off the mismanagement
16 that was done by the resident company who's trying to
17 be NYCHA who has been ranked number one in terms of
18 the worst landlord in the City for a long ass time,
19 right? These people cannot be trusted. And once
20 again, right, if they're going to work with people,
21 why don't they get people like Marquis, the residents
22 involved, right, yeah, with the decision-making
23 instead of paying themselves. They should be
24 incorporating us into the decision-making. That's
25 absolutely not happening. So, once again, thank you

1
2 very much. I rep my block. We're trying to work to
3 get people in public housing to actually run for
4 office because if you will not help us, we will do
5 the job ourselves. Thank you so much.

6 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you.

7 DJL7: I like you a lot. You're pretty
8 cool. Thank you. Thank you, yeah.

9 MILDRED MARTINEZ: How you doing? My
10 name is Mildred Martinez and I'm from Campos Plaza.
11 I have a list of things, a lot of the things that
12 have been said, I'm not going to repeat it, and I'm
13 in favor of everything that was said, except for the
14 NYCHA section, okay? Because of the fact that I have
15 been black listed. They don't talk about black list.
16 They don't talk about if you're too aggressive, and
17 not aggressive in a negative way but too assertive of
18 what they're doing and questioning everything, they
19 block you. And then when they rushed in the RAD on
20 2014, they were promised wooden floors, parquet
21 floors, beautiful counters, cabinets, state of the
22 art appliances, right, a beautiful bathroom for
23 90,000 per apartment, right? Try going over there.
24 They couldn't even send Campos Plaza II across two
25 buildings to go see the beautiful supplies and

1
2 equipment's that they put in there, right? Because
3 they didn't. And then Bill de Blasio got the nerve
4 to say, "Oh, I apologize. Something went wrong."
5 Okay, so let's be accountable for the 90,000 times
6 250 that comes out to 22 million dollars. Who's
7 still with that money, okay? I put in a request for
8 the federal-- the Freedom of Information. They don't
9 have not one document on Campos Plaza I. Where did
10 all that money go to? That's one. Okay? And then
11 when I started complaining about everything that was
12 being put in public with the pictures, just videos,
13 just this, just that, but you can't ask any
14 questions. The majority of the people that were
15 fooled into signing their petition because NYCHA
16 residents and NYCHA has to come aboard as a team, and
17 we're not a team, okay? I can show you the videos.
18 They have rushed in now, 2021, into Campos Plaza to
19 rip [sic] off Campos Plaza II to because they're
20 running out of time, afraid for all the process [sic]
21 that are coming into play, right? And now they're
22 asking for 145,000 dollar apartments. But before I
23 go to that, I did my own research in 2014 at the same
24 time that Campos Plaza was being renovated, I did the
25 same-- I looked into the research of Stuyvesant that

1 is just across the street. They paid for a total
2 renovation 40,000 dollars per apartment. Now, you
3 tell me, what did they do in Campos Plaza I when
4 Campos Plaza is prime real estate? It is the last
5 one of the last of the Mohicans that have been made.
6 So, why would they pay them so much money and the
7 only thing that they actually delivered for 205 was
8 the internal-- the central air. They didn't tell
9 them that your bill was going to get up higher. They
10 didn't tell them all the changes that they were going
11 to go through. They didn't tell them how many people
12 were going to be evicted. They didn't say anything
13 about the parking spaces that have been taken over
14 and being given to the private sector, okay? They
15 come in and out. We have a gate, which I have
16 pictures if you want to see. I'm constantly closing
17 the gate because it's supposed to be protecting the
18 rights of-- the livelihood of these young kids that
19 play in front of our building. They leave it open.
20 People think that they can just zoom right through.
21 But that's another story, right? In regards to the
22 black listing, good-- rather the RAD, okay? They
23 can't stand me because I intervene in 2014. I'm
24 doing it again in 2021 when New York City Housing

1 Authority Campos Plaza II. They are selling them the
2 bridge, okay? And they have misinformed everybody.
3 Everybody think they're going to buy their apartment.
4 When I was taking a survey to see how many people
5 would be willing to get their families together and
6 purchase their apartment, or go into the management
7 incorporation, they don't want you to know anything
8 about it, okay? And that's the sad part, because of
9 the fact that they misinform. I call the Russell--
10 Greg Russell and I send him a letter. I even put an
11 investigation on them as well. I put it through the
12 Inspector General. How do I get an answer for that?
13 I know that they're sugar coating [sic] it and
14 probably through it out, okay, but that's another
15 story to that. When I went to the meeting they
16 rushed in and I-- September-- September, exactly,
17 September the 16th, 2021, they started the meeting,
18 and we were like, okay. So then I'm trying to get
19 some questions out. Oh, no, no, no. [inaudible]
20 They'll get a group of people to start yelling and
21 screaming. They have-- I had a group of people that
22 were in favor of what I was doing. They don't even
23 go to the meetings because they're intimidated at the
24 way they were acting with me, and I'm assertive
25

1
2 enough to stand up and be counted. They said, "No,
3 Mildred, I don't want to get involved with that. I
4 see how they try to block you." They're not strong
5 enough to stand up and fight, okay? But the sad part
6 to all this, in the meetings, public meetings, you
7 can't speak because they only want you to see what's
8 on the-- that mid-- rather, the television, right?
9 And then on the website, rather, on the Zoom, they
10 clock you off. And I'm like, I want to speak, and
11 I'm sending them a message. They clock you off. So
12 how exactly is it that they're being engaging with
13 the residents? They're not. It's a nice pull wool
14 over everybody's head. All the residents are afraid
15 to speak up, and then when you're too vocal, they
16 blacklist you. They took me to court on 2018, okay,
17 because I said I was the President for 15 years in
18 Campos Plaza, and the majority of the things that I
19 did was out-of-pocket, because they-- all the monies
20 are not there. Oh, we have to get back to you. Oh,
21 this and that and that. I didn't have time to wait.
22 So I took it out of my pocket. Eventually, when it
23 comes I'll get it back. Never got it back. That's
24 one. So what happened to that budget, and how did
25

1
2 they turn it over? And then another thing, when it
3 came down to-- and I'm sorry--

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] That's-

5 -

6 MILDRED MARTINEZ: [interposing] this is
7 very important for you to put it down. The grade
8 that they should get is FF---, and the resident
9 engagement is controlling the tenants association in
10 Campos Plaza that did not know which way to go, and I
11 kept sending her information so she can read and get
12 herself in support. They don't want her to be. So
13 she goes along with the program. Not everybody's in
14 favor of selling out Campos Plaza, and I'm sorry,
15 when you said, we can't do anything about it, I was
16 really sorry to hear that.

17 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yeah.

18 MILDRED MARTINEZ: Because I want to stop
19 the RAD right now in Campos Plaza, and not only that,
20 I would like for you to put an investigation on them,
21 because somebody's getting paid behind closed doors,
22 and it isn't the residents of Campos Plaza. Okay?

23 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you. So, Ms.
24 Martinez, thank you for your passion, and I didn't

25

1 want to cut you off from giving your experience.

2 Nevertheless--

3 MILDRED MARTINEZ: [interposing] Let me
4 tell you that I won the case.

5 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Hold on, let me tell
6 you one thing. At no point do I ever want to convey
7 that the residents cannot make changes. There is
8 nothing set in stone, and I believe in resident
9 power. I believe in people power.

10 MILDRED MARTINEZ: I convinced the--

11 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] So, if
12 I conveyed that--

13 MILDRED MARTINEZ: [interposing] whole
14 entire building.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: at any the point,
16 that is not-- that is not the message I am ever
17 wanting to convey. I do believe in people power and
18 the ability to transform even in the most difficult
19 circumstances.

20 MILDRED MARTINEZ: They need to be
21 investigated.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: so, I will follow up
23 with you offline and I appreciate your patience--
24

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2 MILDRED MARTINEZ: [interposing] Thank
3 you.

4 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: And you being here
5 all this time. I know this is a-- this is a burden
6 for working-class people to sit here all day to wait
7 for their moment. So I appreciate all that you
8 offered.

9 MILDRED MARTINEZ: And I want to say thank
10 you to you and Bardon [sic] on-- what's his name?
11 I'm sorry, Barron. He expressed himself so well, and
12 I feel so-- I'm so glad that I waited to the very
13 end, because I feel it in my bones that it's going to
14 work with you two guys. Working as a team, it's
15 going to happen, okay? Because they're not going to
16 be able to sugarcoat and get their way because
17 they're working for New York City Housing Authority.
18 There used to be the lines of communication working
19 alongside of the residents and the-- but when I took
20 the head of New York City Housing Authority,
21 resident-- no, the resident-- she was before the
22 resident engagement. They used to be called--
23 community operations. I pulled up the Director of
24 Community Operations, because it turned out that she
25 was in favor of Sheldon Silver [sic]. She was the

1
2 cousin of Sheldon Silver. He-- Sheldon Silver asked
3 Giuliani for a favor and he needed his cousin to get
4 a top notch job for 125,000, and she got more than
5 200,000. To only find out, when I put my name on the
6 community room, I said I don't want a new floor
7 because we have parquet, so we could sand it down
8 shellac it, and we have a new floor. Do you know
9 that she wanted 49,000 dollars [inaudible]? And it
10 turned out that her family was the owner of the
11 floor--

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Ms.
13 Martinez, I [speaking Spanish].

14 MILDRED MARTINEZ: Okay, I'm sorry.

15 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: I have to--

16 MILDRED MARTINEZ: [interposing] I can go
17 on and on. I know.

18 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: We will follow up
19 offline.

20 MILDRED MARTINEZ: Yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you. And to
22 the last speaker of today's hearing, thank you for
23 your patience.

24 MILDRED MARTINEZ: Thank you.

25

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2 CRYSTAL GLOVER: Am I pronouncing your
3 name right, Avilés? Thank you for allowing me to
4 speak. It's very personal what I'm getting ready to
5 say. I called-- good day. I called Resident
6 Engagement directly, Gina Watkins, in October 2021. I
7 wanted to serve on my Washington Houses Resident
8 Council. I was the president back in 2012, so I knew
9 the value of an association. Gina Watkins said to
10 the board that was at that-- the board that was there
11 from 2016 to 2019. She told them to carry on in
12 their position because with COVID-19 it pushed a lot
13 of stuff back. If they wanted to stay in position,
14 fine. Ms. Watkins also said that HUD was waiving the
15 bylaws and that elections had to take place as soon
16 as possible for residents 18 and older to vote. So,
17 on November 29th, 2021, elections took place at
18 Washington Houses. Not one tenant came out to vote.
19 The po-- everybody including me got in unopposed.
20 Resident Engagement hadn't gotten back to me in
21 December of-- December 2021. So I called-- December,
22 the day 21. So I called them. By January the
23 buildings were posted saying who the new board was.
24 As a financial secretary, I asked the president-- I
25 sent emails, I text,-- that's one point I forgot to

1
2 bring up. Unfortunately, Washington-- unfortunately,
3 some of Washington Houses board members and myself
4 have missed understandings from the past that have
5 not been resolved, have not been resolved. So when I
6 became the financial secretary, I was concerned about
7 like Juneteenth programs and youth programs. I was
8 concerned. As financial secretary I wanted to see
9 receipts. I wanted to see information because for
10 instances, for the Juneteenth program as a board
11 member I wasn't even included in the planning. Okay?
12 The president-- I'm not going to say no names out of
13 respect. They all planning all these programs, and
14 I'm on board as of January 1st, 2022, I became
15 financial secretary, so I had a right to that
16 information and I asked for it. I felt like I was
17 being excluded from the board, because I would send
18 the president text/emails. I said all that already.
19 Resident Engagement-- okay, I called Resident
20 Engagement. I got Genil Hudson [sp?], I got Ukah
21 Basquez [sic]. She said to Watkins, "How can I
22 help?" I told her my situation. She said she would
23 send a letter to Washington Houses president asking
24 for any correspondence she made to reach out to me.
25 She gave her 30 days. The 30 days passed. I kept

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2 emailing Resident Engagement. Erica DeJesus [sp?]
3 who Ms. Watkins put to assist me, was supposed to
4 follow up with me. She didn't. Next thing I know, a
5 very disturbing list of accusations were made on me
6 from Washington Houses Resident Association President
7 that were lies. Washington Houses board proceeded to
8 have a meeting to have me removed from office. What
9 I am trying to-- what am I trying to prove? Resident
10 Engagement left me high and dry. Instead of
11 following through, they gave existing board members
12 time to work up their trumped accusations which are
13 filthy and disgusting lies that they didn't prove.
14 They couldn't prove any of it, and at the removal
15 meeting-- at the removal meeting for the tenants,
16 Resident Engagement and the CCOP Presidents were
17 present. At that meeting, instead of bringing up the
18 filth that they claimed I did like exposing my body
19 to her daughter-- the President said this. I pulled
20 a knife on her. Why you didn't call the cops if I
21 pulled a knife on you? All of this filth was being
22 said about me because the board did not want me to
23 see, because of past situation we had when I was
24 president. I'm bringing it home, give me a minute.
25 Okay, so what did they do? They can't prove that I

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2 pulled a knife. They can't prove that I showed my
3 body because it didn't happen, so they brought up an
4 issue with a neighbor that I had that live on top of
5 me. He's dropping cinder blocks on my head and
6 constantly dropping stuff on my head. I put in
7 tickets. I contacted manager. I told my housing
8 assistant. Mind you, this tenant used to give me
9 money to go to Pathmark [sic] to buy his son birthday
10 cake. That's how long ago it was, because Pathmark
11 been closed forever.

12 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Are you bringing it
13 home, finally?

14 CRYSTAL GLOVER: Okay, I'm bringing it
15 home.

16 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Final sentence?
17 Final sentence?

18 CRYSTAL GLOVER: And what did the
19 Washington Houses Resident Council do? By spying on
20 me, they put that information. They took the paper
21 that I left on the guy's door telling him to stop
22 dropping heavy objects on my head. Okay. I'm
23 bringing it home. January--

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2 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Last
3 seconds. And I would love to receive your testimony
4 after.

5 CRYSTAL GLOVER: The thing about it is, I
6 had every right-- I had every right as a resident to
7 be on that board. If Resident Engagement really
8 wanted to help, they could have fought for me. Gina
9 Watkins from Resident Engagement said that if we
10 couldn't get along as a board, there'll have to be
11 another election. Resident Engagement Council
12 President are really-- resident [inaudible]--
13 resident engagement and the District Council of
14 Presidents don't have a clue of what's going on with
15 the residents. They only cater to the presidents.
16 They only cater to the boards, and if you have a
17 board that's not doing-- that's not efficient with
18 bringing information-- I'm not insinuating that
19 that's what my president is doing, but if you have a
20 president like that, if you have a board like that,
21 lots of information is not given back to the
22 residents. Resident Engagement-- there is so much
23 more that I would like to say. This was personal for
24 me, because I served Washington Houses from 2011 to
25 2015, and we got along good, Corey, Claudia and all

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2 of us got along good, but because somebody gave me
3 some clothes-- he gave me the clothes, and one thing
4 leading to another, it blew everything out.
5 Everything started getting stupid and getting messed
6 up.

7 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: So, Ms.--

8 CRYSTAL GLOVER: [interposing] So, on
9 that note--

10 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Thank
11 you.

12 CRYSTAL GLOVER: Resident Engagement
13 really don't know what they doing, and even worse,
14 the Council of Presidents, because there's no way--
15 if I was still President, there's no way that there'd
16 be rats. [inaudible] be all in the same building. I
17 can guarantee you. That monstrosity that our
18 superintendent built outside our building was because
19 I met with him.

20 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Yeah.

21 CRYSTAL GLOVER: I had meetings with him.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Ms. Glover?

23 CRYSTAL GLOVER: I sat back there for how
24 many hours? Give me one more minute.

1 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Ms. Glover, we have
2
3 an event.

4 CRYSTAL GLOVER: I sat with that
5 superintendent and he built that thing because of me
6 meeting with him. I had buildings-- meetings in my
7 building--

8 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: [interposing] Glover?

9 CRYSTAL GLOVER: that they didn't want me
10 to have. I'm talking about the President,
11 [inaudible]. They didn't want me to have those
12 meetings, but I had to have them because they weren't
13 doing anything.

14 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you, Ms.
15 Glover.

16 CRYSTAL GLOVER: and because of that, I'm
17 black listed, but you know what, I don't' care if I
18 ever get back on the tenant association, because
19 guess what? I'm a tenant, I will always be involved.

20 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Right. Thank you.

21 CRYSTAL GLOVER: God bless you.

22 CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: Thank you. And with
23 that, the meeting--

24 CRYSTAL GLOVER: [interposing] Thank you
25 so much for letting me speak.

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

CHAIRPERSON AVILÉS: The meeting is
adjourned.

[gavel]

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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 November 30, 2022