

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE JOINTLY WITH

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE JOINTLY WITH
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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May 7, 2024
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HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS - CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Justin L. Brannan, Co-Chairperson
Chris Banks, Co-Chairperson

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A P P E A R A N C E S

Lisa Bova-Hiatt, Chief Executive Officer at New York City Housing Authority

Eva Trimble, Chief Operating Officer at New York City Housing Authority

Annika Lescott-Martinez, Executive Vice President of Finance and Chief Financial Officer at New York City Housing Authority

Shaan Mavani, Chief Asset and Capital Management Officer at New York City Housing Authority

Jonathan Gouveia, Executive Vice President for Real Estate Development at New York City Housing Authority

Brian Honan, Vice President of Intergovernmental Relations at New York City Housing Authority

Gwen McGowan-French

Vira Faturova

Terry Campuzano

Metin N. Sarci, public housing specialist

Kristie Ortiz, Director of the Preserving Affordable Housing Program at Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A

Lawrence Somerville

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

Essie Duggan

Aixa Torres, President of Alfred E. Smith Houses
and Manhattan South District Council of
Presidents Chair

Joel Kupferman, Executive Director and
Environmental Justice Lawyer at Environmental
Justice Initiative

Zulay Velásquez

Renee Keitt, Save Section 9

Diane Johnson

Albert Negrón, Tenant Association President at
Vladeck Houses

Mbacke Thiam, Housing and Health Community
Organizer at Center for the Independent of the
Disabled in New York

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2

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Mic check, mic check.

3

This is a mic check on the Committee on Public

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Housing and Finance in the Chambers. Today's date is

5

May 7, 2024, recorded by Walter Lewis.

6

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Good morning and

7

welcome to the Executive Budget Hearing of the

8

Committee on Finance jointly with Public Housing.

9

At this time, I need everybody to please

10

silence your cell phones.

11

If you wish to testify, please go up to

12

the Sergeant-at-Arms' desk to fill out a testimony

13

slip, even if you're already registered online.

14

At this time and going forward, no one is

15

to approach the dais. I repeat, no one is to approach

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the dais.

17

Thank you for your cooperation.

18

Chairs, we are ready to begin.

19

CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you,

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Sergeant. [GAVEL] Okay, good morning and welcome to

21

the second day of the FY25 Executive Budget Hearings.

22

I'm Council Member Justin Brannon. I Chair the

23

Committee on Finance.

24

Today's hearing is on the New York City

25

Housing Authority, and I'm pleased to be joined by my

Colleague and friend, Council Member Chris Banks,
Chair of the Committee on Public Housing.

We've been joined this morning by Council
Members Hanks, Marte, Brooks-Powers, and Hanif.

Welcome to NYCHA CEO Lisa Bova-Hiatt and your team.

Thank you all for joining us today to answer our
questions.

On April 24, 2024, the Administration
released the Executive Financial Plan for FY24 to 28
with a proposed FY25 budget of 111.6 billion dollars.
While NYCHA's budget is not part of the City budget,
the City does provide supplemental funding to the
authority. NYCHA's proposed supplement in the FY25
Executive Plan is 274.8 million dollars, which is an
increase of 58.3 million from the 216.5 million
originally allocated in the FY25 Preliminary Plan.
This increase is mostly due to additional community
development block grant disaster recovery funds
related to Hurricane Ida rebuilding as well as
resiliency projects and City-funded salary
adjustments for NYCHA staff. In the Council's
response to the Mayor's Preliminary Budget, we called
for 584 million dollars in capital funds for NYCHA to
fill repair requests that have been denied, support

1
2 the Vacancy Unit Readiness Program, and bring on
3 staff to restart delayed community and other
4 discretionary projects. I am troubled and concerned
5 to see that not only does the Executive Plan not
6 include 1 dollar of what the Council called for, but
7 cuts nearly 7 million dollars' worth of security
8 guards at 55 NYCHA buildings for seniors, one of them
9 in my District. My questions today will largely focus
10 on these unfunded capital needs, the elimination of
11 unarmed security guards and other staffing attrition,
12 the readiness of the vacancy units, rental arrears,
13 and disaster response funding.

14 The plain truth is we're still in a
15 housing crisis. The State has taken steps recently,
16 but our public housing stock remains the biggest
17 advantage we have in seeing New Yorkers keep a roof
18 over their head and to build a stable life. It's
19 vital to make sure NYCHA tenants and their homes get
20 the attention they deserve, and I think you'd agree
21 so I look forward to hearing from the CEO and her
22 team and the questions from my Colleagues today.

23 I'm now going to turn it over to my Co-
24 Chair for this hearing, our Council's Chair of the
25

Public Housing Committee, Council Member Chris Banks,
for his opening statement.

CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, Chair
Brannan, and welcome once again everyone to attending
today's hearing on Fiscal Year 2025 Executive Budget
for NYCHA. I am Council Member Chris Banks, the Chair
of the Public Housing Committee, and I want to also
again thank the NYCHA Authority CEO Bova and staff
for coming.

NYCHA has operated the largest public
housing program in the nation for over 75 years.
Providing affordable housing to over half a million
working class and low-income New Yorkers throughout
the Section 9 public housing and Section 8 voucher
programs, NYCHA is a precious and critical resource
in an increasingly unaffordable city. However, it has
78 billion in capital needs resulting from decades of
underinvestment. These needs simply do not have the
required funding in NYCHA's Five-Year Capital Plan,
which totals only 8.21 billion. Unfortunately, the
Administration did not add a dime in funding to NYCHA
in the Executive Capital Commitment Plan. The
Council's Preliminary Budget response made very clear
how the City would spend another half a billion

1 dollars annually to approve NYCHA's apartments and
2 turn them over faster for new tenants. For example,
3 the Council called for an additional 45 million to
4 expedite the rehabilitation of vacant apartments
5 throughout NYCHA's struggling Vacant Unit Readiness
6 Program. However, no funding was added. Since 2021,
7 the number of vacant NYCHA apartments has exploded
8 tenfold to nearly 5,000. However, the Administration
9 has pushed successively rounds of PEGs on the
10 program. The Committee looks forward to understanding
11 NYCHA's capital priorities in this environment of a
12 new capital support for the City. We also wish to
13 learn about any changes to capital priorities or
14 timelines now that we are five months into NYCHA's
15 Fiscal Year. Part of this discussion will include
16 30.7 million added in Fiscal Year 2025 for federally
17 funded disaster recovery projects resulting from
18 Hurricane Ida. Although only a fraction of NYCHA's
19 developments will receive the improvements, they
20 represent a meaningful investment at improving some
21 elevators and flood water management infrastructure.
22 I hope to also hear updates about the public-private
23 partnership alternatives to Section 9, which are
24 RAD/PACT and the Preservation Trusts. These
25

1 strategies are key to NYCHA's long-term approach to
2 making capital repairs, and it is noteworthy that the
3 PACT capital funding ends in Fiscal Year 2026 in the
4 executive budget, and we look forward to also
5 understanding if the City's target of 62,000
6 apartments can really be converted to the PACT by
7 then. Regardless of the program NYCHA tenants are
8 served by, they all deserve quality maintenance work
9 and a clean and safe place to live. NYCHA's 2024
10 operating budget totals 5 billion and runs an
11 anticipated 35 million deficit. The deficit is
12 expected to grow to 64 million in 2026 and, in part
13 due to the ongoing rental arrear crisis, while most
14 State ERAP funding has now been applied to tenant
15 balances, there is still around 448 million in
16 arrears, up from the 125 million in 2019. To close
17 its budget gap, NYCHA has announced new cuts, and I'm
18 most alarmed by the wholesale cancellation of the
19 unarmed security guards at the 55 senior developments
20 across the city, which is set to take effect on July
21 1st. The annual cost of this key safety program is
22 6.8 million, a drop in the bucket amidst NYCHA's 5
23 billion operating budget. With so many other places
24 to cut from revenues and savings, the change is a
25

1 non-starter for me. No doubt my Committee colleagues
2 will also share their views today as we work to
3 restore this program and defend public housing's
4 tenants.
5

6 Finally, I would like to thank the Public
7 Housing Committee staff who have helped to prepare
8 this hearing, Dan, Connor, Jose, my Chief-of-Staff,
9 Michael Lambert, and the District Office Staff.

10 With that, I will now pass it back to
11 Chair Brannan.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Chair
13 Banks.

14 Before we get started, I also want to
15 take a quick moment to thank the entire Council
16 Finance Division staff who works very, very hard this
17 time of year behind the scenes to prepare for these
18 hearings. Today, especially to Jack Storey and Dan
19 Kroop, my Committee Counsel, Mike Twomey, my Senior
20 Advisor, John Yedden (phonetic), and all the Finance
21 Analysts back at Mission Control who make this all
22 possible.

23 As a reminder, for this year's Executive
24 Budget Joint Hearings, we'll take public testimony on
25 an agency's executive budget that same day after the

1
2 agency witnesses have finished instead of holding one
3 day for all public testimony as we've done in the
4 past so, if you're here today and you wish to speak
5 on the NYCHA executive budget after the NYCHA panel,
6 please fill out a witness slip with the Sergeant-at-
7 Arms.

8 I'll now turn it over to my Committee
9 Counsel, Mike Twomey, to swear in the witnesses.

10 I will also acknowledge we've been joined
11 by Council Members Ossé, Ayala, Avilés, Louis, and
12 Carr.

13 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Good morning.
14 Raise your right hands, please.

15 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the
16 whole truth, and nothing but the truth before this
17 Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member
18 questions. Lisa Bova-Hyatt.

19 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: I do.

20 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Eva Trimble.

21 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I do.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Annika Lescott-
23 Martinez.

24 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
25 I do.

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COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Shaan Mavani.

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Thank you, you
may begin.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: Thank
you. Chairs Chris Banks and Justin Brannan, Members
of the Committees on Public Housing and Finance,
other distinguished Members of the City Council,
NYCHA residents, community advocates, and members of
the public, good morning. I am Lisa Bova-Hiatt,
NYCHA's Chief Executive Officer. I am pleased to be
joined by Chief Operating Officer Eva Trimble,
Executive Vice President of Finance and Chief
Financial Officer Annika Lescott-Martinez, Chief
Asset and Capital Management Officer Shaan Mavani,
and other members of NYCHA's team.

NYCHA's adopted budget was approved by
its Board of Directors in December. Thank you for
this opportunity to provide updates on NYCHA's fiscal
outlook for 2024 as well as our work to transform our
organization and improve residents' quality of life.

Making the best use of the limited
funding available to improve living conditions for
NYCHA residents is at the forefront of our mission.

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2 As we discussed with the Council in March during the
3 Preliminary Budget hearing, we are grappling with
4 significant rent arrears, which have made NYCHA's
5 fiscal predicament more dire. Rent payments are one-
6 third of NYCHA's operating budget, funding that is
7 vital to the efforts to repair and maintain NYCHA
8 developments. This is an especially critical
9 situation, considering that our aging buildings have
10 nearly 80 billion dollars in major capital needs, the
11 result of decades of federal disinvestment. However,
12 thanks to the commitment of partners like Mayor
13 Adams, Governor Hochul, and the State Legislature to
14 the well-being of public housing residents and the
15 future of this agency, NYCHA has received 147 million
16 dollars in ERAP funding to date. We have applied 145
17 million to residents' accounts and will continue to
18 credit residents' accounts as funds are received.
19 Thanks in part to the ERAP funding, rent arrears have
20 decreased since last year and are stabilizing.
21 Additionally, the State budget has recently
22 appropriated 140 million dollars to NYCHA for capital
23 projects. We will engage with state stakeholders to
24 program these funds in the coming months. And we were
25 allocated 379 million dollars in expense funds and

1
2 1.4 billion dollars in capital funds, including
3 funding for our PACT program from the City this year,
4 City Fiscal Year 2025, through the Executive Plan. We
5 are incredibly grateful for this support, which will
6 go a long way in stabilizing the Authority's finances
7 and enabling the repairs that residents deserve.

8 In terms of federal funding, based on
9 preliminary information, we expect that we will
10 receive about 4.961 billion dollars in operating
11 revenues. To help close our 35-million-dollar
12 operating deficit for 2024, we will continue to
13 closely monitor our spending and revenues and
14 implement cost-saving measures as necessary. We
15 received a 754-million-dollar federal capital grant
16 in 2023, 43 million dollars more than in 2022, and
17 are still awaiting notification of our 2024 grant. We
18 appreciate the efforts of New York's Congressional
19 delegation to raise awareness about the imperative to
20 provide funding for public housing.

21 NYCHA's Section 8 program is sufficiently
22 funded. We expect to receive about 1.89 billion
23 dollars for Section 8 vouchers and the associated
24 administrative fees this year. NYCHA is receiving the
25 previous year's expenses plus a Section 8

1
2 administrative fee that is estimated to be prorated
3 by 90 percent. Our outlook regarding expenses has not
4 changed. We continue to make strategic investments
5 with the limited funding available to address the
6 mandates of the HUD agreement and improve living
7 conditions for residents.

8 I must stress that NYCHA's finances are
9 still precarious. We are only collecting about 71
10 percent of the rent owed and rental arrears currently
11 stand at 448 million dollars, a 344-million-dollar
12 increase from 2019 and well beyond the ERAP funding
13 that NYCHA residents will receive. For these reasons,
14 we continue to advocate for additional federal and
15 state funding beyond ERAP to help address the
16 shortfalls in our operating budget. Given the
17 widening gap between operating expenses and revenues,
18 NYCHA is implementing various cost-cutting measures
19 to reduce expenses, such as decreasing property staff
20 through attrition as developments convert through
21 PACT, reducing central office expenses while
22 reallocating the funding to essential services and
23 prioritizing property management funding, and
24 implementing overtime control measures.

Capital funding also remains insufficient, and we continue to advocate for additional capital funding from the federal and state government. While the capital funding we receive is a fraction of the investments, repairs, and upgrades our buildings need, we are making a difference for residents with the funding we do receive. Last year, we expended over 1.1 billion dollars on capital projects, completed construction for 100 projects, and also initiated over 100 projects. More than 600 capital projects are currently underway across the city, and we are targeting 1.5 billion dollars in expenditure and completion of 150 projects this year. Five city Council-funded projects that we had to pause last year due to staffing constraints have been restarted, and we plan to restart the remainder of the paused projects beginning in July and over the following 12 months.

During our conversation with the Council at the Preliminary Budget hearing, we discussed a range of efforts underway to become a better landlord for residents and strengthen this vital institution so that it can continue providing affordable housing to future generations of New Yorkers. These efforts

1
2 include housing preservation initiatives such as
3 PACT, the Public Housing Preservation Trust, and
4 Comprehensive Modernization, which will bring
5 revitalized homes and improved building services from
6 elevators to heating to residents.

7 We are also focused on improving the way
8 we operate, bringing faster and more efficient
9 repairs through transformation plan initiatives such
10 as work order reform and the neighborhood model. We
11 are making progress with these initiatives, and we
12 are happy to answer any questions about our work that
13 you may have.

14 Thank you, as always, for your
15 partnership in our shared mission of service to NYCHA
16 residents. Thank you.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. We've
18 also been joined by Council Members Williams,
19 Stevens, Bottcher, Sanchez, and Moya on Zoom.

20 The first line of your testimony is
21 troubling just because it doesn't raise eyebrows.
22 Making the best use of the limited funding available
23 to improve living conditions for NYCHA residents. Can
24 you just sort of, as we get started, outline for us
25

1
2 how NYCHA sees the federal disinvestment over the
3 years, or at least since you've been in charge?

4 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

5 Thank you very much for that question, Council
6 Member. Over the last 10 years, we've been
7 underfunded by 480 million dollars in the public
8 housing program and 200 million dollars in the
9 Section 8 program.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Wait, so over the
11 last 10 years, so 10 years ago, you were getting 480
12 million more than you're getting now from the federal
13 government.

14 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

15 No.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What did you...

17 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

18 The 480 million is additional funding that we should
19 have received over 10 years that we did not receive.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Right, okay.

21 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

22 And it's important to note that 10 years ago, it was
23 to the tune of 100-plus million dollars a year and,
24 as time has gone on, they've started to catch up.

1
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: As time goes on,
3 you're what?

4 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
5 They've started to catch up in terms of providing.

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So 10 years ago,
7 you were averaging about 100 million dollars a year
8 from the federal government?

9 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
10 The shortfall.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: I don't know
12 where we're...

13 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
14 The shortfall was 100 million dollars.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, and where
16 are you at now?

17 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
18 The shortfall in 2023 is actually 97 million dollars,
19 and in 2024 it's 113 million in operating subsidy
20 alone.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, so when
22 compiling its 2024 budget, NYCHA reviewed 270 million
23 dollars in pillar area funding requests. It approved
24 176 million and denied 94 million, citing a lack of
25 funding. The denied requests included projects to

1 address heating, elevators, environmental hazards,
2 pest and waste management. Could you tell us, did
3 NYCHA go back to the Administration and request this
4 pillar area funding?
5

6 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

7 We continue to work with our City partners to provide
8 additional funding for our residents. The City
9 already provides, in 2024 alone, 1.9 billion dollars
10 across operating and capital sources and, of that
11 amount, there's a significant amount there for the
12 HUD pillar areas through the City capital funding.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: OMB has made

14 major investments in schools and jails as part of
15 this capital plan. Were you told the City had no
16 additional debt capacity to support public housing in
17 this plan?

18 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

19 We were not told that by anyone.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What were you

21 told?

22 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

23 We did not have a conversation with the City about
24 their debt capacity.
25

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2 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: You didn't have a
3 conversation with the City about the debt capacity as
4 it relates to more funding for capital?

5 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
6 I had no conversation with the City about debt
7 capacity.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: But the
9 Administration never said your capital might be in
10 danger because of our debt limit?

11 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
12 The City works with us on our City capital funding.
13 There was funding that needed to be reallocated, and
14 we did that. We also work with them to stretch our
15 City capital funding depending on our project
16 timelines. We did not have any specific conversation
17 about the City debt limit with anyone.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, the FY25
19 State-enacted budget includes 140 million dollars in
20 new capital funds. Can you detail for us some of the
21 types of capital projects that that money will fund?

22 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Thank you,
23 Chair Brannan. So that funding was announced a few
24 weeks back. We're in the process of engaging state
25 stakeholders to determine the best use of that

1
2 funding moving forward. In 2023, State allocations
3 were used for things like envelope improvements, so
4 façade repairs of our brickwork, heating systems, and
5 in previous State allocations have been heavily
6 focused on the HUD pillar areas, our heating systems
7 and our elevators, but the State processes after the
8 appropriation is made, there's a number of steps we
9 go through to engage with the Legislature and other
10 state agencies to determine how that funding can be
11 utilized in terms of the types of capital
12 improvements and the locations of those.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: You think you'd
14 have an idea of what that'll go towards?

15 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI:
16 Traditionally, that process is quite lengthy. We, in
17 previous couple of years, have been able to really
18 work with the State to move that very quickly. I
19 would guess by the end of the year, we'd have clarity
20 and ideally move towards what's called a grant
21 disbursement agreement when that money actually
22 becomes available to us.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: I'll talk about
24 the elimination of the unarmed security guards. NYCHA
25 has announced that it is canceling its unarmed

1 security guard service at 55 senior developments
2 across the city on June 30th, which will be the end
3 of FY24. Total expense budget for this is 5 billion
4 dollars. The annual cost for security at the 55
5 senior developments is just 6.8 million dollars. Why
6 is NYCHA proposing this as a cut rather than making
7 deeper reductions to its central office staff or to
8 overtime?
9

10 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank
11 you, Council Member. I want to start by saying we
12 recognize that there is no good budget cut out there.
13 We've had to face a series of trade-offs as part of
14 this budget process. As our CFO had mentioned, the
15 budget that was adopted by our Board of Directors in
16 December included a 35-million-dollar deficit so all
17 of these cuts that we had to make were just to get to
18 that 35-million-dollar deficit number. The
19 approximately 7 million for the unarmed security
20 guards program is across 55 buildings, 55 senior
21 buildings and, again, there's no good trade-offs. We
22 have also made other cuts within our central office.
23 We've made changes to our program operations in order
24 to retain as much staffing and services to our
25

1 residents as possible, and this was just one among a
2 series of cuts that we've had to make.

3
4 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Did NYCHA request
5 that the Administration baseline the cost of the
6 security guards as a new need to prevent that cut?

7 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
8 No.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Why not?

10 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
11 We worked with the City on various proposals
12 regarding our funding and, as Eva mentioned, we did
13 the best that we could with the funding that we had,
14 both from our federal, city, and state partners.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What were some of
16 the things that you decided to keep instead of cut?

17 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
18 Well, first and foremost, we kept services related to
19 maintaining and operating our aging buildings. It's
20 important to note that year over year, the NYCHA
21 budget is actually increasing by 300 million dollars
22 because there are various non-discretionary costs
23 that we cannot cut. For example, our utilities
24 increased from 600 to 643 million dollars. That's an
25 additional 40 million dollars on utility costs across

1 the entire portfolio that we don't have discretion
2 over and must provide so that's just one example. We
3 also have various HUD-required insurance programs and
4 other basic requirements and core requirements as a
5 landlord that we had to keep.
6

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Wouldn't security
8 be one of those core requirements as a landlord?

9 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: Right
10 now, we are laser-focused on our requirements
11 providing heat, hot water, elevators, everything
12 that's required of us by the HUD agreement. Security
13 is not one of them.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. I know
15 better than anybody that the peanuts add up after a
16 while, but 6.8 million dollars for security at senior
17 developments in NYCHA seems like something that
18 should have been prioritized, seems like something
19 we're going to have to fight over that we could be
20 spending time fighting over other things.

21 The one thing that concerns me is that
22 unlike 2023, the 2024 budget makes no withdrawal from
23 NYCHA's reserves. Why can't NYCHA bank on similarly
24 improved finances by year's end or just make a
25

1 withdrawal from the reserves to keep those security
2 guards?
3

4 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

5 That's a really good question. So it's important to
6 note that in 2023, we did pass a budget with a 65-
7 million-dollar withdrawal from our reserve. We
8 received 100 million dollars from the State ERAP
9 program, and that was a watershed moment for us so,
10 when the 2023 budget was passed, at that time, the
11 State had not yet changed their prioritization of
12 NYCHA residents, and we had no idea that we were
13 going to receive that funding but, as a matter of
14 practice, we have to learn how to operate on the
15 revenue that we bring in. It's not financially
16 prudent to use our operating reserves every year to
17 do what we know to be a planned expense so, as you
18 mentioned, it is really difficult. There is no cut
19 alone that brings us to balance, but together they do
20 start to add up, and the 2023 budget is already in a
21 35-million-dollar deficit so we have to find before
22 year end, 35 million just to end on balance, and that
23 is our first priority, and we're going to closely
24 monitor our budget and our revenues in order to get
25 there. We also may have unplanned emergencies that we

1 also need to contend with, and so we have to be very
2 careful about the use of our reserves.

3
4 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yeah, it just
5 seems penny-wise pound-foolish, 6.8 million dollars
6 for something like security guards at 55 senior
7 developments. I don't see how that doesn't end up
8 back in the budget at the end. The budget dance is a
9 waste of time for everybody, especially New Yorkers.
10 I just don't understand that cut at all.

11 The Council's Preliminary Budget response
12 called for 584 million dollars for NYCHA capital
13 projects and staffing to align with the Mayor's 2021
14 commitment to fund NYCHA including PACT at 1.5
15 billion dollars a year. Unfortunately, the Executive
16 Capital Plan included no new resources for NYCHA. Can
17 you describe some of the projects that are in the
18 NYCHA capital pipeline?

19 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Sure. Thank
20 you, Council Member. Our current active portfolio, as
21 Lisa mentioned, is above 600 projects, actually
22 closer to 650. More than half of those projects are
23 in construction and more than half of that budget
24 amount. It's about 6 billion dollars of active budget
25 that we're currently implementing. The major areas

1 where we have projects are, as mentioned, the HUD
2 pillars, so heating systems, elevators, waste
3 management, roofs and façades, but also energy
4 efficiency. We do make significant capital
5 investments in safety and security as well, green
6 infrastructure, community centers and grounds. Our
7 future pipeline in terms of planned investments in
8 the next few years based on City commitments and
9 anticipated federal funding is similarly focused on
10 heating, waste management, safety and security,
11 community center and grounds and resiliency
12 investments, as you mentioned earlier, from Ida-
13 related funding and other resources.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Could you tell us
16 how many discretionary projects for things, you know,
17 we talk about heat and hot water like it's some great
18 amenity. How many discretionary projects like
19 playgrounds, community centers, security cameras have
20 been delayed in the past year?

21 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Sure, it may
22 be helpful just to understand the discretionary
23 portion of our portfolio and then jump into your
24 question. So amongst those 650 active projects we
25 have today, about 250 of them have some form of City

1
2 funding, whether that's a Mayoral allocation or it is
3 discretionary funding from Council Members or Borough
4 Presidents or other sources. Those 250 projects with
5 City funding have a budget upwards of a billion
6 dollars. Within that, we have 110 discretionary
7 funded projects with a budget of about 75 million
8 dollars and, within those 110, 35 are what you
9 referred to as delayed or projects that we put on
10 pause since March of 2023 or later during the year
11 with a budget of about 35 million dollars.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: The Executive
13 Budget includes 30.7 million dollars in federal
14 disaster recovery funds from Hurricane Ida.
15 Reflecting back on the lag in receiving funds for
16 these kinds of things, Hurricane Sandy was 12 years
17 ago and deeply impacted many NYCHA communities,
18 especially my own in Coney Island. We're still
19 grappling with that. Can you share how many of the
20 Hurricane Sandy projects are still ongoing and how
21 many have been completed citywide?

22 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Sure, so the
23 Sandy program was focused on investing in restoration
24 and resiliency at 35 NYCHA developments. The Sandy
25 projects at 25 of those developments, all major

1
2 construction and items are completed, so that means
3 we have a remaining 10 developments where work is
4 ongoing. The work at those sites is anywhere between
5 70 percent and 99 percent complete in terms of
6 construction activities.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Where are those
8 10 developments?

9 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: I can give
10 you a full list of those. Just give me a moment.
11 Sandy work is still active at Baruch Houses, at
12 Hammel Houses, at Red Hook East and West, three Coney
13 Island developments so O'Dwyer, Surfside, and Coney
14 Island Site 8, Carey Gardens, Metro North, and Haber
15 Houses.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. A lot of
17 Coney Island.

18 Let's talk about the NYCHA Vacancy
19 Readiness Program. NYCHA had previously shared it
20 wants to target 3,000 units for renovation annually.
21 Where are you in terms of that target year to date in
22 FY24?

23 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank
24 you, Council Member. I'm happy to report that so far
25

1
2 in this Fiscal Year, we've had just over 2,600 move-
3 ins through the Vacant Readiness Program.

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: How does that
5 match up to years past?

6 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: This
7 year, we've increased our production as we've spoken
8 about in these hearings. We've had 40 percent more
9 move-ins this year over last year.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: What's the
11 average cost of apartment renovation currently?

12 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: On
13 average, it's costing us about 45,000 dollars a unit.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, I just have
15 a few more then I want to give it over to my Chair
16 and my Colleagues.

17 The rental arrears and evictions, tenant
18 rent arrears, I think you noted, still total about
19 450 million despite the application of 140 million in
20 state ERAP funds. Although ERAP has helped manage the
21 crisis, arrears remain well above 2019 level of 125
22 million. How much is left to be applied from the
23 state ERAP?

24 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
25 2 million dollars.

1
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And, say again, I
3 think you may have said in your testimony, but what
4 is NYCHA's anticipated rental arrears for the end of
5 FY24?

6 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
7 We don't make projections about arrears. We would
8 like for our arrears to be zero.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: So would I, but
10 that's not reality. We don't have a projection of
11 what that would look like?

12 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
13 We do not project arrears.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, there's an
15 article in Politico this morning from Maya Kaufman
16 about the Riis Houses. It's home to about 4,000 New
17 Yorkers in the East Village. After waking up each
18 morning with swollen eyes and hair falling out in
19 clumps, NYCHA resident Shalitha Hill landed in the
20 emergency room with suspected arsenic poisoning back
21 in March. A urine sample showed arsenic levels of 117
22 micrograms per liter, which is more than double the
23 threshold triggering a report to the State. Ms. Hill
24 was treated in an emergency room for "symptoms
25 concerning for arsenic toxicity" according to medical

1 records that were shared with the publication. Ms.
2 Hill is not alone. Several neighbors in the Riis
3 Houses share her concern and they feel that tap water
4 is to blame. I understand that the Administration is
5 still awaiting the findings of the DOI probe into
6 another water contamination scare at Riis in 2022,
7 where tests were positive for unsafe levels of
8 arsenic. I think at the time NYCHA contended it was a
9 false positive based on a lab error and that
10 retesting found little to no trace of arsenic so will
11 NYCHA or has NYCHA agreed to retest the water at Riis
12 Houses to ensure that there's no arsenic in the
13 water?
14

15 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: Thank
16 you for that question. NYCHA has tested over 500
17 water samples from Riis Houses for arsenic and other
18 parameters. There is not and was never any arsenic in
19 the water supply there. All samples met the water
20 quality standards for arsenic and conclusively show
21 that there is no water quality concern in the
22 drinking water at Riis Houses. We understand that DEP
23 tested the water as late as April of 2024 and both
24 showed a non-detect for arsenic.
25

1
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Residents that
3 say they're still getting sick, have we tested their
4 apartments specifically?

5 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT:
6 There's no need to test their apartments. Their water
7 comes directly from the water supply. There is no
8 water tank. It comes directly from the main.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And is there any
10 other way that these symptoms could be explained?

11 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: I am
12 not a doctor. I don't know if you've had your hearing
13 with DOHMH. I'm sure that they can provide more
14 information regarding this, but I do understand that
15 arsenic is a naturally occurring element that can be
16 achieved from either smoking or fish or other items,
17 but that's really a question for DOHMH.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, I'm going
19 to hand it over to Chair Banks.

20 Quickly, we've been joined by Council
21 Members Mealy and Hudson. Thank you all very much.

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, Chair
23 Brannan.

24 Before I start my line of questioning, I
25 just want to recognize the seniors from the Vandalia

1 Senior Center. I also want to recognize the seniors
2 from Carter G. Woodson. Good to see you. I believe, I
3 don't know if any seniors came from Mount Arrow, but
4 that's from my neighboring Colleague, Darlene Mealy's
5 District from Mount Arrow. Thank you for coming out.
6

7 Thank you again, CEO Bova, for coming
8 today. I just want to get straight to it. The
9 elimination of the unarmed security guard program.
10 Obviously, this is something that is disheartening,
11 disappointing, and to me, again, to agree with my
12 Colleague, it makes no sense. If security on NYCHA
13 campuses has been a shared responsibility for a
14 decade, what's the change?

15 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank
16 you, Council Member. Again, the security guard
17 program right now provides, for the most part, one
18 eight-hour shift of an unarmed security guard. All
19 but six developments and buildings already have CCTV
20 cameras and, in addition, we've notified each of the
21 relevant precincts or PSAs of our programmatic
22 change. We're working closely with them to make sure
23 there's additional patrols and, even though NYCHA is
24 eliminating this program, we've done a lot through
25 our Office of Safety and Security and our partnership

1 with NYPD to expand safety and security programs for
2 all of our residents in all of our buildings, over
3 2,000 buildings across NYCHA's portfolio. This
4 includes having patrols with DHS and NYPD together to
5 patrol in our buildings for homeless folks that may
6 be in the buildings and offering them services. We
7 are now doing a comprehensive development and safety
8 and security assessment of every building along with
9 resident associations, walking the buildings,
10 identifying risks and security hazards, and coming up
11 with plans to address them, and we've been working
12 closely with NYPD to remove illegal micro-mobility
13 devices so we're working closely with NYPD on all
14 aspects of safety and security across our entire
15 portfolio.
16

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Would you agree
18 that cameras are not enough to secure our seniors?

19 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I am not
20 a safety and security expert.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I'm not asking you...

22 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I defer
23 to NYPD on comprehensive security measures, but CCTV
24 is an important tool in that safety toolbox. We work
25 closely with NYPD to provide them video and camera

1
2 footage as needed. We've been able to use that to
3 apprehend perpetrators in our buildings so it is a
4 very important tool for us.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, I believe it
6 was about five years ago or so at Carter G. Woodson,
7 we had close to four to five seniors who were
8 murdered, and I believe there were no cameras at that
9 time and there's been issues, I know, at Vandalia
10 Houses for the last five years. They haven't even had
11 a security guard or security or boots on the ground
12 at that particular development so I want to know,
13 with Vandalia particularly, where has that money been
14 going? Because it was news brought to me at a town
15 hall meeting that I held yesterday that they haven't
16 had security, physical security, at the development
17 for the last five years so I want to know where has
18 that money been going?

19 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I'm not
20 familiar with an issue with our guard at Vandalia.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: There's no guard
22 at...

23 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I will
24 look into that situation. We do checks on our guards
25

1 to make sure they're showing up so I will look into
2 that situation and get back to you.

3
4 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, as part of
5 the City's focus on public safety, shouldn't senior
6 buildings be a priority?

7 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: As I
8 said, we work closely with NYPD on all of our
9 buildings. The various resources that we've been able
10 to provide are available to bring, including DHS, in
11 order to do walk downs of the buildings and provide
12 services, the NYPD for removing micro-mobility
13 devices, and we are working with resident
14 associations in order to do our own comprehensive
15 development, safety and security checks.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Would you agree
17 that having boots on the ground as a security guard
18 is the first line of defense?

19 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: NYPD is
20 definitely the first line of defense for criminal
21 activity. I don't deny that this is an important
22 program and, as I mentioned before to Chair Brannan's
23 question, there is no good budget cut that we've been
24 happy about having to make, but we've had to make
25 difficult choices in this budget to get to our 35-

1 million-dollar deficit and, unfortunately, this was
2 one of the areas where we felt through our
3 partnerships with NYPD and other activities that...

4
5 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And you have
6 discussed this with OMB?

7 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes,
8 they're aware of this change.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Do you know
10 how much money other agencies are spending annually
11 on NYCHA, such as the FDNY, NYPD, DOT?

12 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
13 We do not know, and I think that question is best
14 posed to the City or those agencies directly.

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Are any
16 developments going to lose any hours of security
17 guard coverage when the 1.5 million new need for the
18 coming Fiscal Year?

19 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
20 I'm sorry, can you repeat the question?

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I said are any
22 developments going to lose any hours of security
23 guard coverage even with the 1.5 million new need for
24 the current Fiscal Year?

1
2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: So the
3 1.5 million that was provided by OMB to help support,
4 to keep these guards on actually through July 1st, so
5 as I mentioned, OMB is aware of this proposed change
6 in our budget and they did provide us 1.5 million
7 dollars to keep the guards on from January through
8 the end of June while we continue to look at other
9 options, see how the budget played out, and so that
10 money essentially will have already been spent by the
11 end of June, and that is why July 1st is our cutoff
12 date for the guards.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Would you agree
14 that 6.7 or 6.8 million dollars is a minuscule amount
15 of monies compared to the entire City budget?

16 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
17 We think that every dollar is significant and, as Eva
18 mentioned, there's no good way to close a budget and
19 so we've just done the best that we could, but every
20 dollar is significant.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Once again, are you
22 prioritizing seniors or the 55 senior developments
23 when it comes to providing security?

24 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
25 As Eva mentioned, we have worked with our various

1
2 partners at NYPD. We have worked on getting CCTV
3 cameras, and so we really have worked to get other
4 items in our toolkit up and running, and we have done
5 that across our entire portfolio so security and
6 safety is a priority for us across our entire
7 portfolio.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: There are about six
9 developments that currently have no cameras in the 55
10 developments throughout the entire city. If you
11 completely now cut the security guards that they do
12 have, would you agree that now those six developments
13 will have no security apparatus to protect them?

14 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: While
15 they do not have cameras or guards, they still have
16 support from NYPD and our partnerships with NYPD and
17 the PSAs...

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: It's not enough.

19 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: In order
20 to provide safety and security.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: It's not enough.
22 We've seen issues with response times, and we know
23 that the senior walking into a building and a
24 security guard standing at the door, standing in that
25

1 area can be a deterrent so I fundamentally disagree
2 with that totally shifting everything to NYPD.

3
4 In previous financial plans, the
5 Administration shifted funding from the Vacant Unit
6 Readiness Program from the expenses to capital budget
7 to generate savings. Why not swap additional Vacant
8 Unit Readiness funding to create capacity in the
9 expense budget for the security guards?

10 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

11 We do not make those decisions regarding the swaps.
12 We are told that we have to shift expense to capital.
13 We work with OMB on a list of projects, but we are
14 not the ones making a decision in the City budget
15 about swapping from expense to capital.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Are you

17 certain that there will not be underspending in the
18 Vacant Unit Readiness funding line that could be used
19 to fund these guards or the guards?

20 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

21 We do our best to spend all the funding that is given
22 to us in any given year. As Eva mentioned, we have
23 increased our production. We do now have a CP for our
24 City capital for the Vacant Unit Readiness Program as
25 well as an approved RTP for the expense funding so we

1
2 are going to try our best to spend down all the
3 funding.

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: All right. I'm
5 frustrated that the priority is not given to our
6 seniors and, when folks draft a budget, it shows
7 their intent, it shows the clarity of how they
8 prioritize things and, obviously, it's shown that
9 this Administration is not prioritizing our seniors.
10 6.7 million, it should be a foregone thought to make
11 sure that our seniors are protected and that layer
12 security is there, and this is a slap in the face of
13 folks who have paved the way for us and who deserve
14 to be prioritized. They're in their golden years and
15 we have to fight for 6.7 million dollars. It's
16 disappointing, it's troubling, and obviously it's
17 frustrating.

18 I want to move on to the RAD/PACT. NYCHA
19 states that it is on track to include 62,000
20 apartments in the PACT program, which aims to bring
21 comprehensive apartment repairs and building upgrades
22 to more than 140,000 residents. NYCHA's website says
23 over 20,000 homes have received repairs or are in
24 progress. How many NYCHA buildings are scheduled to
25

1
2 be converted into the PACT in Fiscal Year 2024, 2025,
3 and 2026?

4 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Do you affirm
5 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
6 the truth before this Committee and to respond
7 honestly to Council Member questions?

8 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: Yes, I
9 do.

10 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Thank you.
11 Please state your name.

12 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA:
13 Jonathan Gouveia, Executive Vice President of Real
14 Estate Development.

15 We have converted just under 21,000 units
16 as of the end of last Calendar Year, and we've got
17 another 17,000 units that are in our pre-development
18 stage, so we have selected development teams. Those
19 teams are developing their scopes of work, and we're
20 moving towards the conversions. So we're going to
21 continue to work with our PACT partners, OMB and
22 others, to schedule each of those closings through
23 the balance of 2024, 2025, and 2026, as you noted.

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Could any
25 development or closing fees as the private developer

comes in to manage help offset NYCHA's deficit, the closing fees?

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

They may, and that has happened in the past. The issue is that those things are hard to predict so we don't know our fee schedule until the deal is actually closed and, once we have that fee schedule, then we do include it in our budget as an other revenue item.

CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, NYCHA has previously said it recognizes revenue conservatively. What is NYCHA's track record on under- or over-budgeting the PACT-related development fees?

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

We're pretty on target because, again, we wait until we receive the closing documents in order to put them into the budget. They really do differ from deal to deal, whether you get it as soon as the deal is closed or you can get it over time so over five years or three years so we wait until we have those deal documents signed and the deal is completed, and then we include them into the budget.

CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So currently are there any examples where a conversion has taken place

1
2 or the closing has taken place and the fee has taken
3 longer than a year or two? Can you name specific
4 examples?

5 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
6 I cannot name specific examples, but there are deals
7 where fees are earned over time, and there are deals
8 where you might receive fees upfront so, yes, there
9 are examples of both.

10 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Where it has
11 delayed, it's been over a year?

12 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
13 I would not say it's delayed. It's in the deal
14 document that you will earn the developer fee as soon
15 as you close the deal, and then over time, you might
16 receive fees upon cash flow of the building or what
17 have you so those are very clearly spelled out in
18 every single deal, and then they're put into the
19 budget based on the year in which they're expected.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: All right. The
21 Executive Capital Commitment Plan only includes
22 capital funds for PACT through Fiscal Year 2026. Is
23 it realistic to think that all the 62,000 apartments
24 will have renovations completed by Fiscal Year 2026?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: To clarify, our commitment was actually to convert 62,000 by 2028 so not necessarily have the construction complete by 2028 so we are working towards making sure that we can achieve that goal of converting all 62,000 by the end of 2028, and, as I mentioned earlier, we're continuing to work with all our partners to make sure that we're getting the best scopes for the best price and working with OMB to make sure that we can be supported along the way.

CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So when does NYCHA intend to reach its goal of the 62,000 apartments in the PACT?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: By 2028.

CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay, and is there enough capital funding to support these conversions of the 62,000 apartments?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: As I said, we are continuing to work with our PACT partners to scope out each of the projects to make sure that there's sufficient funding for each of the deals, and we're continuing to work with OMB over

1
2 time to make sure that by 2028 we can get these deals
3 closed.

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I have just a few
5 more questions, and I'm going to pass it back to the
6 Chair.

7 When it comes to staffing and attrition,
8 part of NYCHA's deficit-closing strategy includes
9 reducing staff through attrition. The budget reflects
10 12,108 positions in 2024, decreasing to 11,292
11 positions in 2027, which is a 6.7 percent decrease.

12 There are currently 11,401 active staff at NYCHA. Can
13 you provide an update on if any staff outside of the
14 PACT developments have been attritted so far as part
15 of the savings plan?

16 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
17 Our attrition rate three-year average is 14 percent
18 so we do attrit a large number of staff over time,
19 and we will use attrition as one of the strategies,
20 the main strategy to get us to our budget amount.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What percentage of
22 the redeployed NYCHA staff stay in the same borough
23 where they previously worked?

24 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank
25 you, Council Member. Leading up to a projected

1 closing and transfer of a development in the PACT
2 program, we work closely with our HR department to
3 see how many staff need to be transferred, and we
4 look at current vacancies both near that site as well
5 as in the overall borough. We also work to minimize
6 travel hardships and ensure that staff have a pick of
7 where they want to go so we work closely with each
8 staff member to reassign them to existing vacancies
9 as close as possible to their current location.
10

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, in the 2025
12 plan, it's set to remove 632 positions, a 5.2 percent
13 decrease from 2024. What is the anticipated savings?

14 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
15 Sure, happy to take that question. The variance from
16 2024 to 2025, as you mentioned, is 632 positions but,
17 if you notice, on a net basis, salary and fringe year
18 over year actually increased by 17 million dollars.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: All right. Well,
20 does NYCHA anticipate a turnover to slow or
21 recruitment to improve given the new collective
22 bargaining agreements funded with the 185.8 million
23 across the plan?

24 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
25 Yeah, I mean we've had collective bargaining

1
2 agreements in our history pretty traditionally, and
3 yet and still our attrition rate stays around, for
4 the three-year average is 14 percent, it can be still
5 upwards of 10 percent, so we don't think that
6 collective bargaining alone is a major factor that is
7 going to completely change our attrition rate at the
8 agency.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Is there any
10 attrition plan for the central office roles?

11 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
12 Yes.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Is Resident
14 Engagement going to see fewer staff?

15 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
16 In our adopted budget, Resident Engagement headcount
17 is 200 staff. I do not have the 2025 number with me,
18 so sorry about that.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: If you can get that
20 to us, please.

21 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
22 Yes.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The Department of
24 Investigations recommended that NYCHA institute a
25 centralized contract oversight unit to correct its

1
2 micro-purchasing procurement process. NYCHA accepted
3 these recommendations. Has this unit estimated to
4 cost 6.1 million now been incorporated within the
5 2024 operating budget?

6 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

7 Yes, it has.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And how many new
9 staff will be required and how else will the money be
10 spent?

11 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

12 Sure, so the 6.1 million includes two main things.
13 The first is 37 staff, 29 in operations and eight in
14 procurement, and it also includes a 344,000-dollar
15 vendor integrity review contract as required.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How long is it
17 going to take to launch this?

18 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

19 We are already in progress. We have the postings up
20 for those positions and we are hiring expeditiously.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Who will fund the
22 unit ultimately? For example, would it be done by HUD
23 or will it be the City?
24
25

1
2 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
3 No specific funder. We've added it to our budget and
4 we will fund it as we go.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, Mr.
6 Chair. Turn it back over to you.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Chair.
8 We've also been joined by Council Member
9 Salamanca and Powers.

10 We're going to start with questions from
11 Brooks-Powers followed by Ayala.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you.
13 I have quite a number of questions for you, Chair.

14 We've been waiting to see you in
15 Rockaway. I know the last time we saw each other was
16 at the ribbon cutting for the Redfern Houses Park,
17 and we were looking forward to the tour that you had
18 committed to doing. We hope that you'll be able to
19 make it there.

20 A few things. One, vacancy. In the NYCHA
21 developments in Rockaway in particular, we're seeing
22 a significant number of vacant apartments that have
23 now been overtaken by squatters and drug dealers,
24 creating great safety concerns for my residents in
25 the NYCHA developments. I'd like to know what steps

1
2 NYCHA has taken to address this. Also wanting to
3 understand, globally speaking for NYCHA, what is the
4 number that you've identified in terms of squatters
5 in these vacant apartments? Has NYCHA had to take any
6 of them to court to properly evict them, and what
7 does that dollar tag look like? Also, a number of our
8 entrance front doors are broken, and I'd like to know
9 how does NYCHA track the number of doors that are
10 broken and what the average length of time it takes
11 for the repairs and does this budget account for
12 being able to repair all of the doors that are
13 currently broken?

14 Also, I represent a coastal community. A
15 lot of our developments were impacted by Superstorm
16 Sandy. Want to know are any heating and cooling
17 systems planned for updates? The last time we had a
18 tour by a NYCHA Chair was with Chair Russ and, at
19 that time, we were told that our cooling systems were
20 old and so wanting to know has NYCHA begun to take
21 any steps to address that? In the winter time in
22 particular, we see a lot of complaints in terms of
23 not having hot water or heat in a number of our
24 developments.

25

1
2 Also, funding was received to repair two
3 Oceanside Playgrounds on Beach Channel Drive at Beach
4 56th Street and Beach 54th Street. I'd like to know
5 who the contractor is working on that project. I'd
6 like to know has that contractor been paid in full to
7 date, and I'd like to also know why has this project
8 exceeded the projected date of completion?

9 Then finally, emergency transfers. We
10 have been seeing a significant delay in emergency
11 transfers for folks who have endured some level of
12 violence and wanted to understand what the average
13 timeline is for moving someone with an emergency
14 transfer and how NYCHA is working to move this along.

15 I'll close with my questions by extending
16 once again an invitation for you to visit our NYCHA
17 developments in the 31st Council District because my
18 residents are eager to meet you in person. Thank you.

19 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: Thank
20 you so much, Council Member. I'm happy to have Brian
21 Honan and Emma coordinate with your office. It was
22 great seeing you at that ribbon cutting and I'm happy
23 to come out there again.

24 I think what we'll do is maybe we'll
25 start from left to right and I'll turn it over to my

1
2 colleague, Shaan, to talk about the Sandy projects
3 and the playgrounds.

4 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Thanks so
5 much. One of your questions was around heating and
6 cooling and resiliency investments. We put out our
7 capital plan and specific projects planned at each
8 site publicly. We have a live part of our website
9 called the Capital Projects and Needs Tracker where
10 any member of the public, a resident, or other
11 Council Members and your Staff can go and look and
12 see what projects are planned for each site for the
13 next two years including heating, cooling, and other
14 projects. I don't have the full plan for the next
15 five years right in front of me, but we can follow up
16 and provide you if there are any allocations that we
17 already have made for future funding to go to heating
18 or cooling investments.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: In the
20 current two-year one, are any located in Rockaway?

21 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: I don't have
22 that capital plan in front of me, but we can
23 definitely follow up with that.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: It would be
25 great to know before the hearing is out.

1
2 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Okay, we'll
3 try to get that information if we can or along with
4 the other followup from the hearing provide that to
5 you.

6 In terms of the specific playground
7 issues, we've had challenges around performance of
8 the contractor, material installation delays. The
9 material is being installed.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Who is the
11 contractor?

12 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: I'm just
13 trying to get that name for you off of our tracker,
14 but we do anticipate the work completing this month
15 and the fence being taken off in May and becoming
16 publicly accessible and usable again. If there have
17 been performance issues with the contractor that
18 contractually allows us to recoup funding or make a
19 claim, we pursue that whenever that's the case.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Has that
21 contractor been paid in full?

22 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Not yet, no.
23 The contractor would not be paid in full until the
24 work is fully completed, accepted by my staff as well
25 as by the property. We also take resident leaders

1
2 (INAUDIBLE) process typically nowadays for completed
3 work to make sure everybody's comfortable with the
4 quality of the work and the output. Only after all of
5 that and the area becomes accessible for use again,
6 then we go through a process with contractors that's
7 called a closeout process which is a three- to six-
8 month process where we make a final payment based on
9 everything that's happened, any type of changes, any
10 type of performance issues so those final payments to
11 that contractor wouldn't happen until late this year.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: It would be
13 great to expedite that because we're in year two and
14 we keep on getting these end dates that haven't come
15 to fruition yet, and I'd still like the contractor's
16 name.

17 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Yeah, we'll
18 get all that information to you.

19 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank
20 you. Council Member, you had asked about, I'll start
21 with the broken doors, and I will, after this, our
22 team will follow up separately with you to get the
23 specific building addresses so that I can
24 specifically address those conditions but, in
25 general, our process is that our caretakers walk down

1 their buildings every day and they're supposed to
2 report any broken doors to management in order for
3 followup. For broken doors, we try as best as
4 possible to make any repairs in-house, but very often
5 we do have to rely on vendors to come in because
6 there's specialized equipment and materials involved.
7 Our vendor process, we have a couple of different
8 vendors on board that work on doors, but depending
9 on, we have many different types of doors throughout
10 NYCHA and, depending on the door, it may require
11 different materials and followup from the vendors as
12 well, and so we have to work, it's really a case-by-
13 case process to actually address each and every door,
14 but that is something that we have been hyper-focused
15 on over the last year or so and, as I said, our
16 caretakers are required to report all broken doors
17 every single day as part of their walk downs. We've
18 instituted a new program for our caretakers called
19 Muster Mornings, where we've required that they fill
20 out checklists and report that back to property
21 management and so this is part of our overall focus
22 on the conditions in every single building.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: That's
25 great because we know where they are, but my concern

1 is about getting them actually repaired. Is this
2 budget going to help to address and make sure that
3 these doors are being repaired?
4

5 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Our
6 contracts right now are funded to make these repairs
7 so it's just about getting materials and making sure
8 that the repairs get done so that's why I will follow
9 up and get back to you on exactly where each of your
10 doors and your developments are in that process.

11 Regarding squatters, I agree, this is
12 definitely an issue we've been hearing more about as
13 well. I don't have a single reporting tool where
14 every squatter is so I can't tell you how many
15 squatters we have right now across our portfolio.
16 However, we've instituted a new protocol in
17 partnership with both our Law Department and NYPD.
18 Our property managers are reporting any assumed or
19 possible squatting situations to our Law Department,
20 and we're working with NYPD to research the
21 situation. Sometimes people think it's squatters,
22 it's maybe a remaining family member that we're still
23 working on so we really want to be careful as we
24 research the family and the household before we take
25 action, but we are working with NYPD and then, if

1
2 necessary, through the eviction process to remove
3 squatters from our buildings.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: And is
5 there a dollar amount to when you have to do this and
6 has NYCHA had to do this?

7 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We don't
8 have a specific dollar amount just for this. It's
9 part of our regular tenancy management work.

10 Then you asked about emergency transfers.
11 I don't have the average wait time right now for
12 emergency transfers, but I can tell you we have over
13 2,800 prospective tenants on our emergency transfer
14 list right now.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Will you be
16 able to get that for us?

17 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes, we
18 can follow up with you on that.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Thank you,
20 Chairs. The last thing I'll say is it would be great
21 if we would be able to see an increase in hiring for
22 staff with NYCHA also in terms of keeping the
23 grounds. I have relatively higher NYCHA developments
24 and to have one person responsible for two of those
25 buildings, it makes it extremely difficult and unfair

1 to them to properly take care of the grounds in the
2 way they would like to, and so seeing more staffing
3 would, I think, help to address the cleanliness of
4 the developments, and that also can be a deterrent in
5 what we see in the hallways and what have you, and
6 the stairwells in the buildings as well.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Now we have
9 questions from Ayala followed by Marte.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Thank you, Chair
11 Brannan, and I wanted to start off by saying that I
12 heard a lot about the NYPD being used as a means to
13 deter specific activities at NYCHA, and I want to
14 just remind NYCHA that the NYPD is not NYCHA's
15 private security and I've had this conversation and
16 said this many of times at hearings in the past. In
17 any other housing situation, it is a landlord's
18 responsibility to address their residents directly,
19 and I am very cautious when it comes to including the
20 NYPD in activities that are the landlord's
21 responsibility to address so I would like to know,
22 since they're so heavily involved in the day-to-day
23 policing of our public housing developments, how much
24 of the budget goes towards the NYPD for this extra
25 layer of security?

1
2 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
3 NYCHA does not pay the NYPD.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: So they do it for
5 free?

6 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
7 They do it as part of their policing of the city and
8 in partnership with us.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: All right. Could
10 you explain, what would you consider an NYPD-worthy
11 call?

12 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I would
13 not opine on a worthy call. It's up to a resident to
14 determine their safety and security and take whatever
15 action they need to feel safe.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I mean, but you
17 mentioned several times in your testimony that you
18 work hand-in-hand with the NYPD. What exactly is it
19 that you're working hand-in-hand with the NYPD on?

20 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We
21 coordinate with NYPD on a couple of different policy
22 initiatives and program initiatives so, as I
23 mentioned, we have coordinated inspections with the
24 Department of Homeless Services in order to look for
25 homeless individuals in our buildings. We do cellar-

1
2 to-roof inspections. Hopefully, if we find someone,
3 we offer them services through DHS. We work closely
4 with them, as I mentioned, on camera footage. We're
5 also just closely coordinating regularly with PSA and
6 precincts on activity going on. If there are special
7 concerns at a building, we'll make sure that it's
8 flagged so they'll do extra patrols, just letting
9 them know what's going on in our buildings generally.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I just want to make
11 sure that NYCHA is not calling the cops on kids that
12 are hanging out in the lobby because I consider that
13 something that is the responsibility of the landlord
14 to address. It is not a policing matter, and I want
15 to remind you of the dangers of over-policing black
16 and brown communities and the history behind that so
17 I would hope that our public housing infrastructure
18 is not complicit in those calls.

19 Can you tell us how long you anticipate
20 the capital projects that were put on pause to remain
21 that way, and can you tell us what the main cause for
22 the pause was? Is it a staffing issue, the number of
23 capital projects, funding, or is it just a personnel
24 issue?

1
2 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Thank you,
3 Council Member Ayala. The pause that we started last
4 March is impacting 35 City-funded projects currently.
5 We had to do the pause because a combination of the
6 factors you mentioned, which are all related,
7 inability to staff the large number of projects in
8 our portfolio, which obviously relates to staffing
9 budget and funding as well, and overall capacity. Our
10 portfolio has grown significantly over the last five
11 years and was at the largest number of projects
12 historically ever at over 800 in late '22, early '23,
13 and so pausing a number of projects was required to
14 manage expectations with stakeholders about what we
15 could deliver on what timeline and to ensure that the
16 quality of work and safety and other components of
17 each project we manage was up to par where we want it
18 to be. Five of the projects that were paused last
19 year have already been restarted for various reasons
20 because of timing of construction or things like
21 that. The remaining 35, we are developing a plan to
22 restart from this July through next July of '25, and
23 we plan to restart all of the projects in sequence in
24 that period, working with stakeholders but also other
25 considerations around access in the campus, where the

1 work is happening, sequencing with other construction
2 work happening at the property, where the project is
3 in terms of design work or procurement work that's
4 required once we pick it back up, staffing of the
5 teams, etc., and so we have been and will engage with
6 residents, leaders and other stakeholders in
7 developing out that restart plan.

8
9 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Can you remind me
10 what the number of projected projects is to date?

11 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Sorry?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: What is the number
13 of projects that NYCHA has in totality, capital
14 projects?

15 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Currently we
16 have active just under 650 projects.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: 650, so how were
18 the 35 selected?

19 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: The 35 were
20 selected last year, first based on, we cannot pause
21 projects that are in construction already given we
22 already have a contractor, we have a legal contract,
23 so that kind of reduced those projects. We then had
24 to prioritize all of our HUD agreement pillars,
25 compliance areas, anything impacting life or health

1 safety directly, including safety and security type
2 of projects. All of those projects we chose to
3 continue, and that really left a small subset of
4 projects what you see as paused today, which is
5 largely where we receive discretionary funding for
6 playgrounds, community centers, and other grounds
7 type of work.
8

9 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Okay. I'm happy to
10 hear that at least there's a conversation to
11 reconvene at some point because many of these
12 projects had already begun the planning process and
13 it left the resident leadership kind of up in the air
14 because they had already started imagining the spaces
15 and planning with NYCHA so I appreciate that.

16 Can you tell us how much of NYCHA's
17 capital budget is intended to cover the cost of
18 desperately needed kitchen appliances and new
19 cabinets?

20 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Kitchen
21 appliances and cabinets are typically not capital
22 expenditure and are not capital eligible under most
23 capital funding sources.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: So they're part of
25 the expense budget?

1
2 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: When we're
3 doing a one-off cabinet replacement or a kitchen
4 appliance or as part of a turnover, traditionally
5 they've been funded out of the expense side. If we're
6 doing a full rehabilitation of a whole building and
7 redoing everything, including all the apartments,
8 then those components would typically be part of the
9 capital budget.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: So how much of the
11 capital how much of the expense budget has been set
12 aside for this?

13 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
14 Sure, so there's around 20 million dollars for
15 carpentry and that includes the kitchen cabinets,
16 which we order in bulk.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: And the appliances?

18 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
19 I do not have the appliances budget offhand.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Okay, can somebody
21 get that to us?

22 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
23 Yes, we can.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I appreciate it,
25 thank you.

1
2 Do you know how much of the budget is set
3 aside for renovating the vacant units and how many
4 units are you anticipating will be renovated this
5 year?

6 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank
7 you. The City has provided in this Fiscal Year, we've
8 already received approval for 23.5 million in expense
9 budget, of which we've already billed 8.3 million of
10 that. In addition, we've received a CP for 54 million
11 in City capital. Those are just part of the sources
12 that have been made available this Fiscal Year, but
13 we've gotten those approvals and we're starting to
14 spend those down, and those support all of our vacant
15 unit production. Everything we do now is, all of our
16 vacant unit production is supported in some way by
17 the City funding, which we're very grateful for, and
18 we've done so far just over 2,600 units this Fiscal
19 Year towards our goal of 3,000.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: 3,000, okay, okay.
21 Can you tell us how much the Administration allocated
22 in this year's budget for NYCHA overall and what
23 will, and has NYCHA leadership made an ask for
24 additional operating dollars of the City?

1
2 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
3 Sure, so the City budget in Fiscal Year 2024 is 1.9
4 billion across capital and expense, and in Fiscal
5 Year 2025, it's 1.6 billion dollars, and we
6 continuously work with our City partners to request
7 additional funding as needed and work on priorities.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Final question.
9 Could you tell us what NYCHA's policy is on
10 addressing emergency repairs at developments that are
11 set through transition to PACT and RAD, and is the
12 elimination of the security guards at senior
13 buildings a part of that?

14 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
15 Sure, so I can start with the first one, which is as
16 a property is set to go to PACT, it is still a NYCHA
17 property, and so we still address those emergency
18 needs as they arise. We do not transfer ownership
19 partially and responsibility until there's an actual
20 deal in place so if an emergency arises and a
21 property is set to be converted, it is still a NYCHA
22 property and very much still our responsibility.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I would love it if
24 somebody could get back to me with an explanation on
25 what happened at 335 East 111th Street because that

1 was a building that was transitioned to PACT, and
2 while we were in the midst of the pandemic, they had
3 water damage in the mailboxes and folks were not able
4 to get access to their mail because the mailboxes
5 were damaged for so long that the post office was
6 then sending mail back during the pandemic, which I
7 found really just horrible because people were
8 depending on letters from HRA, from other safety net
9 programs, and I was told repeatedly that we were
10 waiting on a vendor, waiting on a vendor, waiting on
11 a vendor, waiting on a vendor, and the vendor did not
12 come until such time as the transition happened and
13 the new landlord then, new management, then purchased
14 a new mailbox system, and so what you're saying is
15 really just not consistent with what I'm seeing so I
16 would love to kind of to better understand that
17 before I cast any level of judgment, but I will say
18 that this is something that has repeatedly been
19 brought up to my office. I represent the largest
20 public housing stock and I hear it a lot. People that
21 have no ceilings in their bathrooms, and we're
22 looking for somebody, we're looking for somebody, and
23 it seems like a stalling tactic until the new
24 management takes over so that is really concerning,
25

1 and then finally, I would just add my two cents on
2 the security issue situation. I find it really
3 dangerous to, it doesn't seem like a large amount of
4 money. I think that it's something that we could
5 identify somewhere else in the budget. I was a
6 pretend resident association president for two years
7 of Corsi Houses because of the number of folks that
8 were living in the staircases, that were doing push-
9 in robberies at the development, and I remember in
10 one incident, having the PSA captain present at one
11 of those meetings and he says, this is the safest
12 building, we don't get any calls from this building,
13 and the reason they weren't getting calls was because
14 the seniors were so afraid that somebody would find
15 out that they had made that call and that would put
16 themselves in a further dangerous situation that they
17 didn't pick up the phone, and so I've always felt
18 that NYCHA did a disservice by building these
19 facilities, buildings where you have the most
20 vulnerable population and then there are no social
21 services, there is no real adequate security, and now
22 to eliminate the little bit that we do have is really
23 detrimental so it seems like a small thing. The
24 security cameras at that same development, at Corsi,
25

1 we funded the layered access system there, and I'll
2 tell you that it's also not been what I was told and
3 told that it would be so we have had many issues with
4 that as well, and I really hope that this is an area
5 where you would reconsider. Thank you.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, questions
8 from Council Member Marte followed by Salamanca.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Thank you, Chair,
10 and I want to add on to that point. This budget dance
11 of 6.8 million dollars for security puts people's
12 lives in danger and brings a lot of fear and mental
13 insecurity to these seniors who are the most
14 vulnerable, and it's ridiculous that, as elected
15 officials, we get this information from our TA
16 presidents. NYCHA should have told us immediately if
17 this was going to even be part of the budget table,
18 right, and so it's concerning that I have residents
19 in LaGuardia addition texting me photos of a homeless
20 man living in their lobby for two days after they
21 called PSA 4 when that has never happened before
22 because they used to have security, and so this is
23 the stress that we're putting on our most vulnerable
24 when we should be trying to give them the best care
25 possible so just wanted to add that and really stress

1 the point that it's almost ridiculous that we have
2 gotten to this point where we're putting seniors pit
3 against everything else, pit against vacancies, pit
4 against staffing. Like we should do the very least to
5 protect them, especially when it's just crumbs out of
6 a 5-billion-dollar budget.
7

8 My question is about the 5,000 vacancies
9 that Gothamist reported in March. In your testimony,
10 you said that you're currently working at 2,600 of
11 those vacancies and your goal is to get to 3,000.
12 When do you think you will achieve that goal this
13 year?

14 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank
15 you, Council Member. We set the goal of 3,000 for
16 this Fiscal Year. I think we hope to meet that by the
17 end of the Fiscal Year as projected. We're doing just
18 over 400 units a month right now in our production.
19 However, the reason the overall number is not going
20 down as much as we would like is because almost 60
21 percent of those move-ins are associated with
22 transfers and not new admissions so for every move-in
23 that we have, another unit becomes vacant, so our
24 baseline is still staying fairly steady right now.
25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: So do you think in
3 the next two years, it will stay in that consistent
4 level of around 5,000 vacancies because of these
5 transfer and not move-ins, and what's the plan to do
6 more recruitment from homeless shelters compared to
7 just transfers?

8 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I can't
9 project on what the future vacancy will be. Our
10 process for making selections is dictated by long-
11 standing court protocols and precedents, and so our
12 Tenant Selection Program chooses the next tenant.
13 Sometimes it's a transfer depending on the apartment.
14 Sometimes it's a new admission.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: How many of these
16 vacancies are going to be offloaded through PACT and
17 RAD and other privatization avenues that NYCHA has
18 taken?

19 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I can't
20 say exactly. However, in lead-up to a PACT or other
21 type of conversion and transfer, we do start taking
22 units off the rent roll into a temporary off the rent
23 roll category in order to hold them for the
24 conversion in order to facilitate relocations during
25 the construction of the PACT project so right now,

1
2 it's possible some of the vacancies in our pipeline
3 are associated with future PACT conversions, but
4 right now it's hard to say.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Okay. My last
6 question, just to confirm this and getting it on the
7 record, so no capital project that has been funded is
8 off limits, right, will be started or there'll be
9 ongoing work this Fiscal Year?

10 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Just to
11 correct that, what we said is that currently we have
12 35 City-funded projects paused that were paused last
13 March or within a few months of that afterwards. We
14 have an active portfolio of 650 projects. Those 35
15 projects, we're developing a plan to restart between
16 July of this year and July of next year so basically
17 in Fiscal '25, we will restart all of those projects.
18 If we continue to receive new funding, which we're
19 always looking for, we have to manage that to our
20 capacity so it's possible in the future, we have more
21 projects than we can manage but, right now, from what
22 we know of city, federal and other funding coming in,
23 we have that plan to restart all of those projects by
24 the end of Fiscal '25.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER MARTE: Thank you.

1
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Questions from
3 Salamanca.

4 We also been joined by Council Member
5 Brewer.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Thank you, Mr.
7 Chair. Good morning.

8 I want to follow up on my questioning
9 from the last hearing that we had here with NYCHA on
10 sidewalks, and I want to bring it up again. For a
11 private homeowner, a business or a building owner,
12 when their sidewalks are damaged, the Department of
13 Transportation comes in, gives you a warning, gives
14 you time to correct the situation and, if that
15 private owner chooses not to fix the issue or resolve
16 the issue, they come in, they do the work, they give
17 you a summons, and then they give you a bill. My
18 question is, is NYCHA responsible for the sidewalks?

19 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: My
20 understanding, and we'll fully clarify this with our
21 legal team offline, when we've run into this in the
22 context of capital projects, typically NYCHA is not
23 responsible once it's on the sidewalk and off of our
24 property line, but it may vary based on certain
25 circumstances.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: So you do not
3 consider the sidewalks part of your property line?

4 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: Thank
5 you for that question. Sidewalks are very, very
6 technical. Most of the NYCHA campuses were acquired
7 by the City of New York by eminent domain and then
8 transferred to NYCHA as a state entity. The City may
9 have retained the sidewalks outside so each
10 development is probably different. If there is a
11 specific development that you're interested, so
12 within the campus, it would be our responsibility,
13 but I believe outside of the campus, it would not be
14 but, if there's a specific development that you have
15 a question about, we can certainly, it would have to
16 be done through a title search, and we could work
17 with the New York City Law Department or a private
18 company, but sidewalks and streets are very, very
19 hyper-technical when it comes to Title II and
20 responsibility for.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: During the
22 winter months, in front of my home, if I do not clean
23 the snow or clean the garbage, I get a summons,
24 right? Isn't that the case with NYCHA? Aren't you
25 responsible also for cleaning the snow in front of

1
2 your sidewalk, of your buildings? The reason that I'm
3 getting at this question is in Forest Houses for
4 years, we saw that there were big potholes on these
5 sidewalks and, in our last hearing, I brought up the
6 issue, and what NYCHA's representative, what they
7 said was that they're not responsible for their
8 sidewalks, that's the Department of Transportation's
9 responsibility. Well, I reached out to the Department
10 of Transportation, and there seems to be some type of
11 agreement that you have where if there is damage to
12 the sidewalk, NYCHA is responsible for notifying the
13 Department of Transportation, and they will come,
14 they will fix it, and it looks like DOT knew that I
15 was coming to this hearing because as I was walking
16 in, they text me some of the patchwork that they did
17 in Forest Houses, and so my question in terms of
18 sidewalks here, if that's the case, as you are
19 transitioning with some of your RAD and PACT
20 programs, are they going to be held to that same
21 standard as NYCHA when it comes to fixing their
22 sidewalks or is the Department of Transportation
23 going to come in and give them a violation if their
24 sidewalk is damaged or will it be the Department of

1
2 Transportation's responsibility since that is the
3 agreement that they have with NYCHA?

4 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: Thank
5 you for that question. I'm actually not aware of an
6 agreement that we have with the Department of
7 Transportation. With respect to what they will do
8 with a PACT partner, I think is a question for the
9 Department of Transportation.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I just feel
11 that if you are, it's still your property and you're
12 handing over, you know, you're bringing in RAD and
13 PACT to be responsible for the maintenance of these
14 buildings, that they too should be given the same
15 liberty in terms of how you are, in terms of fixing
16 sidewalks, and in terms of the summonses and
17 violations that they give.

18 Since NYCHA subcontracts, because that's
19 what it is, you're subcontracting the Department of
20 Transportation to fix your sidewalks, how much does
21 NYCHA spend a year paying the Department of
22 Transportation to actually fix your sidewalks?

23 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Do you affirm
24 to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but
25

1
2 the truth before this Committee, and to respond
3 honestly to Council Member questions?

4 VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yes, I do.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, please
6 state your name.

7 VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Thank you. My name
8 is Brian Honan.

9 I don't have the total dollar amount, but
10 in the beginning of the year, we do submit a list of
11 the worst sidewalks within our portfolio. Forest
12 Houses was not but, after it was brought to my
13 attention by you, Council Member, we did have several
14 conversations with them. They did send out
15 inspectors, and it appears that they've done some
16 work so we are appreciative of that from Department
17 of Transportation. This is something that has always
18 been in place. Department of Transportation has
19 always been responsible for sidewalks. It is
20 something that as long as NYCHA's been an Authority,
21 I have no other way, no one I know, and I've been
22 there with the Authority almost 20 years, nobody I
23 know within the Authority knows of another way. Over
24 the last few years, funding has increased in this
25 area, I will say, which is good. We used to get

1 maybe, I don't know, like one or two million dollars
2 a year, which would be eaten up within the first
3 month of the year, and now I think it's closer to
4 (INAUDIBLE) the money within DOT's budget. I don't
5 know the exact dollar amount, but there is a
6 coordination between NYCHA and DOT on the worst
7 sidewalks.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: I'm going to
10 end with this sidewalk conversation here. It's just
11 frustrating to know that these sidewalks that are
12 damaged are right in front of these development's
13 management offices so your supervisor is stepping
14 over the holes that are on the sidewalk on a daily
15 basis. The supervisor's supervisor is stepping over
16 these damaged sidewalks, and it seems as if I bring
17 it up and I'm told, oh, you know, it's DOT's
18 responsibility, and it's unfortunate that I had to
19 call Monica Morales and PIX11 News to get this
20 address when I am here asking you to address this
21 issue.

22 VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Council Member, I
23 will say, even before the story of Monica Morales had
24 been brought up, we were in conversations with DOT
25 about this and they were well aware of it, and I

1 would say they were very, very responsive and
2 promised to send out inspectors and they did.

3
4 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Well, I hope
5 you hold that manager responsible who's actually
6 physically sitting in that office every day, stepping
7 over that broken sidewalk on a daily basis and just
8 totally ignored it.

9 My final question is, I want to know
10 about vacant units. How many vacant units are offline
11 at the moment?

12 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank
13 you, Council Member. Right now, we have just over
14 5,000 vacant units available. That's what we're
15 working on for turning over. But when you say
16 offline, we do have an additional almost 2,000 vacant
17 apartments that we call temporarily off the rent role
18 that we're holding off the rent role either in
19 anticipation of a modernization effort or there are
20 other situations going on with those apartments.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Just for my own
22 knowledge, what's the average cost when a tenant
23 moves out and the unit becomes vacant and NYCHA comes
24 in to paint, lead abatement, fixing of the cabinets,
25 the floors, what's the average cost per unit?

1
2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Our
3 average cost all in, including the environmental work
4 that needs to get done, all of the repairs that need
5 to get done is about 45,000 a unit.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER SALAMANCA: Wow, okay.
7 Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: We've been joined
9 by Council Member Salaam.

10 Now, we have questions from Council
11 Members Hanif followed by Louis.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you so much,
13 Chairs, and thank you for joining us.

14 As of this year, I now proudly represent
15 three NYCHA campuses, Gowanus Houses, Wyckoff
16 Gardens, and Warren Street Houses. It's the first
17 time that Council District 39 is now home to public
18 housing campuses and having started my career as a
19 public housing tenant organizer, it's critically
20 important to me that the developments in my District
21 and, of course, across the city, are fully and
22 equitably funded. Both Gowanus Houses and Wyckoff
23 Houses are a part of the City's Comprehensive
24 Modernization Program in addition to St. Nicholas in
25 Manhattan and Todt Hill in Staten Island. Can you

1 confirm the total funding allocated to these
2 comprehensive modernization projects? I have a set of
3 questions so if you could just pay attention. Is the
4 City planning to expand the number of projects that
5 are participating in Comp Mod, and at what rate, and
6 what funding sources are being leveraged for the
7 existing Comp Mod programs, and how about future
8 ones? I'll let you respond to that before I move into
9 some of the other questions about Comp Mod
10 specifically.

12 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Thank you,
13 Council Member Hanif. The Comp Mod program is a NYCHA
14 program utilizing City funding as well as other
15 sources, to do large-scale renovations at several
16 properties, as you noted, through use of capital
17 grant funds. The projects you mentioned at St.
18 Nicholas, Todt Hill, and then Gowanus and Wyckoff in
19 your District are currently the only four sites that
20 are funded and (INAUDIBLE)

21 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: What's the total
22 for them?

23 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: For Gowanus
24 Houses and Wyckoff Gardens, the funding largely has
25 come in through the Gowanus Rezoning Program, and so

1 212 million dollars was allocated through that, and
2 NYCHA has added a certain amount of federal funding
3 to be able to optimize the scopes, working with
4 stakeholders at those sites and so (INAUDIBLE)

5
6 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And then what about
7 for St. Nicholas and Todt Hill?

8 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Yeah, for St.
9 Nicholas and Todt Hill, the initial funding came from
10 what's called the City Capital Action Plan, where the
11 City allocated 2.2 billion to NYCHA as part of the
12 HUD agreement or pursuant to that agreement. Out of
13 that, 678 million dollars is allocated for St.
14 Nicholas and Todt Hill and, then again, we've looked
15 for other funding sources, federal funding sources,
16 either our own HUD funding or grant funding to
17 supplement that to be able to do an integrated scope
18 at both of those developments.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Is there an effort
20 to expand the number of projects participating in
21 Comp Mod?

22 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Currently we
23 don't have a specific plan to expand in the sense of
24 a funding source to do that at scale. These are large
25 projects as we've just discussed. Where we receive

1 sufficient funding at a property to do something like
2 an 80 percent or 90 percent renovation through
3 capital funding, then we would put it into the same
4 program in the sense of the type of project, the
5 delivery of the project is very similar and,
6 therefore we'd house it underneath our comprehensive
7 modernization team.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Got it. So as of
10 right now, Chairs, I just have a few more questions
11 if you'd allow me. So as of right now, outside of the
12 four, there is no plan as of, let's say today for
13 additional funding to Comp Mod or this extensive,
14 hefty renovations. Okay, moving on.

15 There was a devastating fire at the
16 Gowanus Houses in recent months, and I know fire
17 safety, particularly across our aging public housing
18 stock is a critical issue. How much funding is NYCHA
19 dedicating in the coming Fiscal Year to fire safety
20 training across NYCHA campuses and how is this
21 distributed across the city and campuses?

22 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank
23 you so much for that question. We agree fire safety
24 is critically important. I don't have the specific
25 budget numbers on that program with us today, but

1 we'll definitely follow up and get that back to you.
2 I will say that NYCHA is investing in our fire safety
3 program. We've hired a new Fire Safety Director
4 recently that's reconstituting the entire department
5 and really refocusing our efforts. We have a strong
6 relationship with FDNY. We have been doing training
7 events and educational awareness events. We hosted
8 the first ever fire safety training event with all of
9 our resident leaders just recently.
10

11 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: As of this year.

12 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Everything you're
14 describing is 2024.

15 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yeah,
16 just within this year.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: But right now you
18 don't have any data on just the allocations that went
19 towards...

20 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I'm
21 sorry. We didn't bring that specific number with us
22 today, but we will definitely share it with you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: OK, great. Going
24 into the sitting vacant apartments, as my Colleagues
25 lifted up, the Council's budget response requested 45

1 million for the Vacant Unit Readiness Program. The
2 Executive Plan does not include any of that funding.
3 Could you just go into again why NYCHA is not
4 planning to fund this program and what is NYCHA's
5 target vacancy rate for the next two years?
6

7 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

8 Great. Thank you very much, Council Member, for that
9 question. We have 226 million dollars for the Vacant
10 Unit Readiness Program over five years from Fiscal
11 Year 2024 to 2028. In Fiscal Year 2024 alone, there's
12 73 million dollars that we're working through
13 spending down across capital and expense, and our
14 target is 3,000 units.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Got it. What
16 changes in procedures is NYCHA making to ensure that
17 it can efficiently rehab apartments to lower the
18 vacancy rate to its goal or lower?

19 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank
20 you, Council Member. We've been working within
21 Operations to improve our productivity. As I
22 mentioned, we've done 40 percent more move-ins this
23 year than last. We're looking at just over 400
24 apartments a month that we're doing for turnovers.
25 We've increased our efficiency.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Could you just
3 describe what increasing efficiency means?

4 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Sure,
5 yes, we've increased our ability to procure cabinets
6 and access to materials to make that more readily
7 accessible as well as how we've planned it so that we
8 know which vacancies we're working on.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: And was that like
10 the brunt of the issue, being able to obtain..

11 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: No, we
12 were working through a backlog as we waited for our
13 environmental, you know, the State's back a little
14 bit now, but we we did change gears with the new City
15 law for lead so we had to scale up to be able to test
16 and abate at the new lead 0.5 micrograms rule and,
17 once we were doing that, we were also doing all
18 asbestos testing and abatement so we're very proud of
19 the fact that all of our turnovers are lead free and
20 asbestos safe for the next family and then, once we
21 get through the environmental work, we have
22 significant repairs that are needed in the apartment
23 that require multiple trades. In some cases, we use
24 vendors and, as we mentioned, that requires typically
25 new cabinets, new fixtures, all new paintings,

1
2 sometimes plastering so we've worked to allocate all
3 of our resources in order to improve that turnaround
4 process.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER HANIF: Thank you. I know
6 my Colleagues would agree that we really need to be
7 as efficient as possible to ensure that there is no
8 vacancy and thousands of New Yorkers still remain on
9 a waitlist or unhoused, and we urge you to do even
10 better.

11 Thank you so much. Thanks, Chairs.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Now we have
13 questions from Council Member Louis followed by
14 Avilés.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you, Chairs.
16 Good morning. Thank you for being here today.

17 I have a few questions on capital
18 projects, vacancies, and corruption. The first one is
19 in response to the Preliminary Budget. The Council
20 called for 5 million to support staffing for issues
21 with capital project completion in the FY25 Executive
22 Budget. There was no additional funding allocated.
23 One particularly egregious case of neglect on capital
24 projects occurred at Glenwood Houses in my District,
25 where the City Council funded the reconstruction of

1 the community center's restroom for improvements to
2 include 88 accessibility of 650,000 thousand dollars
3 in 2022. Construction halted after multiple years of
4 nothing happening, and NYCHA failed to provide
5 recourse and information to my office and residents
6 throughout the process so you could imagine how
7 minors, little boys and little girls use the
8 bathroom. Additionally, I have another project that
9 was funded through participatory budging for an
10 awning of 135,000, and we have been told that,
11 although the funding is there, NYCHA has no plans to
12 actually complete the project and no timeframe was
13 ever provided to us so the questions on that, how
14 does NYCHA plan to address the extreme delays and
15 lack of prioritization of funded capital projects by
16 the City for repairs, and how much of the 4.9 billion
17 in operational revenue that you mentioned in your
18 testimony is NYCHA advocating to address capital
19 support staff, and is the Administration prepared to
20 address these issues with increased personnel?

22 My next question is on vacancy. There are
23 several operational issues affecting NYCHA buildings
24 in my District and citywide. I've had numerous cases
25 regarding the administration of a Section 8 vouchers

1 and movements that have been delayed to inspections.
2
3 I had a case in my District where a domestic violence
4 survivor was waiting for over a year to move into
5 Glenwood Houses in my District due to lead inspection
6 with no recourse or support from onsite management
7 and customer contact support. How does NYCHA plan to
8 address the inordinate delays that tenants face when
9 moving into units with their vouchers with this
10 current budgeted headcount at the agency, and is
11 NYCHA aware of the dysfunction of the service due to
12 long hold times to get support to get into their
13 homes?

14 The last one is on corruption. My last
15 question is relating to staff rehabilitation of
16 public housing stock and with the outstanding and
17 egregious case of corruption of housing maintenance
18 and staff embezzling critical funds to be used for
19 maintenance and repair work at numerous properties
20 across the city, what is the impact of the loss of
21 these funds for the maintenance budgeted for these
22 buildings in which theft was taking place, and the
23 last one is, is NYCHA working with the Attorney
24 General or the federal government to get back the
25 funding lost through theft and how much funding is

1 still outstanding from fraud from these buildings?

2 Thank you.

3
4 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Thank you,
5 Council Member Louis. I'll start with the questions
6 related to our capital projects work. I think you
7 initially asked around staffing and staffing budgets.
8 As a non-city agency, we do not receive expense
9 funding for our capital project staffing but, within
10 our operating budget, a significant portion of that
11 around personnel expenses does go to my area that
12 manages our capital projects, and so we're a large
13 division. We're running a large number of projects
14 and, as I mentioned earlier, any of the projects that
15 were paused, including at Glenwood, we are developing
16 a plan to restart them now so that we're able to move
17 all of them forward expeditiously.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Are you saying
19 Glenwood is on your list of the 650?

20 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Yes. Glenwood
21 is on the list. You mentioned two different projects.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: There's one that's
23 awning, and the other is the restrooms from my..

24 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Yeah, so the
25 restrooms is on the list of paused projects and

1 something that we will plan that restart together
2 with stakeholders. The awning, I'll follow up on
3 because I'm not clear on that funding and that
4 project as you mentioned it today. I would mention
5 so, in terms of your point around how do we
6 communicate with residents and stakeholders, we do a
7 quarterly in-person meeting with resident leaders at
8 each site, including at Glenwood, where we go through
9 the status of all projects, whether they are already
10 active, whether they are on hold, whether they are
11 planned for the future. We talk through those issues,
12 any concerns the resident leadership has?
13

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: We currently have
15 no superintendent and, if there is one, we're not
16 aware of who that is.

17 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: This is not
18 the superintendent who has this meeting. This is
19 folks from my team on the capital side.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Yeah, they haven't
21 met with us. I'm just letting you know the last time
22 we had a meeting was a couple of months ago.

23 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: OK, I'll
24 follow up on that. We also provide biannual letters
25 to Council Members' offices regarding all projects in

1
2 their District, the status of those projects, and
3 anytime, you know, unfortunately, last year we had to
4 formally pause those projects. We did one off
5 meetings with stakeholders as well as provided formal
6 letters to everyone around what was happening, why it
7 was happening, and we're working to mitigate any
8 adverse impact from that as we move forward.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: All right. We
10 received no letter in regards to a heating pipe that
11 was supposed to be put in the original plans, and we
12 learned later that that's what halted minors from
13 getting access to a bathroom.

14 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: I'm happy to
15 follow up on that. I'm not familiar with that
16 specific issue but, if there's something there, we'll
17 look into that and..

18 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Just know the
19 holdup holds up young people from being able to have
20 access to a restroom during afterschool programming
21 and Saturday programming.

22 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: I understand.
23 Thank you for raising that.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: If you could please
25 discuss the vacancy issue that we mentioned.

1
2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes.
3 Thank you, Council Member. I'd like to follow up
4 separately with you to hear about these delays that
5 you're referring to regarding policing voucher
6 holders in apartments. I'm not familiar with this
7 specific case, so I think it's best that you brief me
8 on the situation so I can follow up with the staff
9 involved.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: And just know
11 there's multiple Members here that have the same
12 issues in their Districts.

13 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes, I'd
14 like to hear more about that.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Are all of you
16 allowed to have a conversation on corruption?

17 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: We
18 continue to work closely with the IG and the Southern
19 District. We were just as disappointed and dismayed.
20 There is no room for corruption at a NYCHA
21 development and NYCHA as an organization, and we are
22 working, again, with the IG and the Southern District
23 and, to the extent that we can recoup any funds that
24 were lost, we'll work collaboratively with them to do
25 that.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LOUIS: Thank you. Thank
3 you, Chair.

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Questions from
5 Council Member Avilés followed by Mealy.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you, Chairs,
7 and good afternoon to the NYCHA team.

8 I was just thinking that we had a hearing
9 just this past November on safety and security at the
10 NYCHA campuses where we discussed pretty thoroughly
11 the needs in senior buildings so you wouldn't be
12 surprised to know how shocked I was given the
13 discussion there that suddenly 6.8 million is where
14 we're going to find savings. It kind of likened to
15 how NYCHA proposed finding savings with air
16 conditioning. It just makes no sense to me so I'd
17 like to understand the rationale besides all budget
18 cuts are hard, of course they are, and they're
19 particularly hard on our residents who have to live
20 with this on a daily basis. What was the criteria
21 that you used to make this decision? Specifically,
22 can you tell me how many resident complaints you have
23 heard for each of the developments that are impacted
24 by now the sudden removal of safety and security? Can
25 you talk to me about all the different criteria that

1
2 went into making this decision and not purely on a
3 fiscal level, but what quality-of-life concerns did
4 you take into account in making this decision?

5 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

6 As mentioned, we have pretty significant needs at
7 NYCHA. Everyone is aware of those. At the same time,
8 we have a pretty significant tenant arrears of 448
9 million dollars, so that's 448 million dollars that
10 we should have that we don't have and, over the last
11 three years, we've really done the best that we could
12 using reserves and really trying to increase staffing
13 at the properties and in other areas to be able to
14 address the needs at the properties in terms of
15 maintaining and operating aging buildings and also
16 meeting our HUD agreement requirements but, at some
17 point, there just isn't enough money to go around. We
18 do agree with you that it is a really difficult
19 decision to make. We did not take that decision
20 lightly. It weighs on us pretty heavily, the tough
21 choices that we have to make, and I can tell you that
22 we did that looking across holistically, no area was
23 immune from budget cuts. My area got a budget cut.
24 Lisa, it's across the board.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Could you provide,
3 I really do feel badly about this, that the
4 government has defunded NYCHA systematically over a
5 good number of years, and you know I'm a huge
6 cheerleader of the importance of this public housing
7 asset. As we know, 175,000 people are still waiting,
8 despite all the challenges and the 80-billion-dollar
9 capital needs, there's still hundreds of thousands of
10 New Yorkers who need this housing so can you tell me
11 how many complaints did NYCHA receive around safety
12 issues for seniors over the last five years?

13 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I'm
14 sorry, Council Member. I don't have that data with us
15 today, but we can certainly follow up with you
16 separately regarding that.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Okay, and I'd like
18 to know additionally what other criteria you looked
19 on. We talked about safety and security and, sorry,
20 Chair, I'll wrap up really quickly. We talked about
21 layered access. We talked about broken locks and
22 safety assessments that were wholly unfunded, that
23 NYCHA were doing safety assessments but did not have
24 the capital to actually implement anything. Were
25 there any efficiencies to be found in some of these

1 incredibly bloated contracts that have not been found
2 to be very effective. Are we looking in those places
3 for savings?
4

5 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

6 Yes, that's true. We have done a couple of things.
7 First and foremost, we tried to prioritize
8 maintenance and operating funding for the properties.
9 That's our job as a landlord. We also rightsized the
10 public housing headcount, as we discussed, so using
11 attrition to over time as developments move out
12 through the PACT portfolio start to shrink because
13 the revenues are not going to match as those
14 developments no longer receive subsidy. We also
15 reduced central office expenses and reallocated those
16 fundings to core areas and pillar services, and we
17 also put in place significant overtime control
18 measures to really try to constrain our costs. Yet
19 and still, with all of those things together, we
20 could not balance the budget or even get close, and
21 so that's where we had to make those really difficult
22 decisions. Other things that we did, for example,
23 specifically speaking to contracts, we replaced
24 third-party heating vendors with in-house staff to
25 more efficiently manage our heating plants, and those

1 items were previously managed by outside contractors
2 so, to your point, that is an area that we are hyper-
3 focused on and we've already started to see
4 efficiencies as our in-house staff members can do
5 more work in apartments that those vendors could not
6 perform so we hear you, and that's an area that
7 through our work here and then also at the work and
8 our DOI recommendations is something that we're
9 continuing to look at to get rid of fraud, waste, and
10 abuse.
11

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: I appreciate that,
13 and I trust that you're combing for every dollar.
14 This is just not the place to cut. One life, one
15 safety issue. 6.8 million, it's not worth it so I
16 would urge you to really go back or have the
17 Administration, if this is what the Administration
18 wants to leave our seniors out, hang out to dry, then
19 they're going to be accountable for the one injury,
20 the one problem that we're going to have with our
21 seniors.

22 I just want to ask one last question. In
23 terms of RAD/PACT, for something like Hope Gardens,
24 who is a RAD/PACT site, I'm not understanding why
25 NYCHA is carrying still capital projects when that is

1 a RAD/PACT site on the books. Shouldn't that be the
2 developer's responsibility?
3

4 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: I think
5 you're referring to the recovery money, the CDBG
6 money? Yes, so that is a result of some extensive
7 flooding that has occurred since Hurricane Ida, and
8 there have been a number of floods since due to heavy
9 rains, and it's a function of the sewer system in the
10 area that can't handle the capacity so we applied for
11 some funding to make the site more resilient, and we
12 were awarded that money and we're moving forward with
13 those projects.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Of course, I'm in
15 favor of anything that's going to support residents,
16 but it sounds really interesting that we are now
17 having sites that are in private management and
18 should be incurring the costs to do any kind of
19 renovation for these buildings. Yet, we are still as
20 a City applying to subsidize private management to do
21 the upgrades for the buildings that they need so I'm
22 not sure where we're seeing savings if this continues
23 to happen as well. We're subsidizing both private
24 development and then unloading on private developers
25 as well. It doesn't make a whole lot of sense to me.

1
2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: Thank
3 you for the comment. Again, you know, this is an
4 extreme situation. This is not something that we're
5 doing in the regular course of business. It's due to
6 the unique flooding characteristics of this
7 neighborhood.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER AVILÉS: Thank you, Chair.

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: One followup on
10 the vacant units. Could you tell us how many of the
11 vacant units scheduled for renovations are set aside
12 for residents that are in the units that are being
13 converted?

14 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: None of
15 the apartments that are available right now and part
16 of our turnover pipeline are necessarily part of the
17 upcoming PACT conversions. When we anticipate a
18 conversion, those apartments that become vacant
19 become what we call temporarily off the rent roll,
20 and we put them into that separate category in order
21 to hold those vacancies for the PACT developer in
22 order to facilitate in-place relocations during their
23 construction process so we don't do those turnovers
24 so they're not part of our pipeline.

1
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Got it, okay. We
3 have questions now from Mealy followed by Hudson.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Sorry. No, I'm
5 going to say sorry but not sorry. You just said to us
6 that out of your billion-dollar budget, you're saying
7 that you couldn't find no other way to get 6.5
8 million dollars, but you want to balance the budget
9 off the vulnerable population, our seniors, that's
10 how you're going to balance this budget. That's what
11 you just said, right? For the senior centers that
12 will not have security guards.

13 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
14 So...

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: You said you tried
16 to find money, and it came down to taking security
17 guards away from our seniors.

18 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
19 Thank you for that question, Council Member.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: That's what you
21 said, right?

22 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
23 Removing the security guards does not even get us to
24 balance so we are still short 35 million dollars and,
25

1
2 if there's an emergency, we could be short more than
3 that before year end.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: But why would you
5 choose to do that off our seniors? You could not find
6 anything else you could find money for?

7 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
8 We have cut other areas as well.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So you're telling
10 me, the real estate, how much money did you make off
11 the, you have some land at Hugh Gilroy Senior Center
12 that you're taking their backyard and you're
13 developing housing on there right now. How much did
14 you make from that?

15 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: The
16 projects I think you're referring to at Van Dyke...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Not Van Dyke, Hugh
18 Gilroy Senior Center, Kingsborough.

19 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: So
20 those projects are 100 percent affordable projects,
21 and so...

22 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: How much did you
23 make from the land? That was a senior NYCHA building,
24 and now you...

1
2 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: Yes, so
3 those are 100 percent affordable...

4 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: The property behind
5 it.

6 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: Yeah,
7 those are 100 percent affordable projects and so...

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: You're not
9 answering my question.

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: So they
11 require subsidy...

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: You're not
13 answering my question.

14 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: I'm
15 getting there. So they require some subsidy, which
16 could be the form of land value, so we don't actually
17 make a lot of money off of those transactions. We...

18 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So you just gave
19 away land?

20 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: No, we
21 get about, I think for those we can confirm the
22 numbers, but it would be single million dollars.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: I asked at the last
24 hearing, Chair, and, please, Financial Department,
25 last hearing, they said they gave away the land

1 behind a senior center for housing, and you saying
2 you have no money and you're going to give away land
3 that you're going to make billions off our seniors
4 with that new building because they are trying to get
5 on Housing Connect to get in to the apartments right
6 now so you're telling me you just gave away property
7 and you're going to now take our security guards from
8 our seniors to balance NYCHA budget.
9

10 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: We do
11 get very small acquisition...

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: How much?

13 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: A
14 couple of million dollars typically, and we can
15 confirm...

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: How much?

17 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: We can
18 confirm...

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: This is a financial
20 hearing.

21 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: We can
22 confirm the specific amounts for each of the
23 projects.
24
25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: CEO, how much did
3 you make from that sale? That should be at this
4 hearing right now.

5 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER BOVA-HIATT: We
6 don't have that information, but we are happy to
7 follow up with you.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: And I know that
9 property is going to be worth at least 60 million,
10 and you're going to take our seniors' security away
11 from them. Could you tell me if the security guards
12 were unionized?

13 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes,
14 they are part of 32BJ.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So you're getting
16 rid of 32BJ union jobs. Who are you going to replace
17 them with?

18 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: They're
19 not being replaced.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: They're not being
21 replaced at all, so you're taking away good jobs now,
22 and with the senior, oh, you call them campuses now,
23 with the six campuses that has no CCTV, what are you
24 going to put in place to make sure our seniors are
25 secure? Their safety?

1
2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: So just
3 to clarify, again, it's buildings and not
4 developments or campuses that we're talking about so,
5 in total, it's 55 buildings in the senior portfolio
6 with guards right now and six buildings that don't
7 have cameras.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So what you're
9 going to do about that?

10 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: As I've
11 said, we are working with the NYPD to coordinate so
12 that they are aware of this change. We have been
13 working closely with them on additional programming,
14 including walkthroughs in partnership with DHS. We
15 are also doing our comprehensive development safety
16 assessments to identify areas of risk to come up with
17 action plans for each site. Often that includes
18 working on doors and intercoms and other safety
19 measures.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So you're going to
21 give them new intercoms?

22 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: No, I'm
23 not saying we're going to give the new intercoms, but
24 we're...

25 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: You did say that.

1
2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We're
3 evaluating all of the buildings. We look for risks
4 and...

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So if you see risk,
6 what would you do?

7 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We'd
8 have to identify funding in the budget if needed to
9 make any repairs.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: You will find
11 funding in the budget if you find out there's risk
12 for our seniors that may get hurt, robbed, you'll
13 find funding then.

14 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: No, we
15 identify the funding needed, but I can't guarantee we
16 will fund those repairs.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: OK, and I got to
18 say, I guess I have to call the reporter, Miss
19 Morales, to get things done with my Colleague
20 Salamanca. Last hearing we had, we talked about a
21 tree at Park Rock that a blind impaired senior was
22 getting in a taxi and there's a big tree stump there
23 that's been there for almost two or three months and,
24 before I left the last hearing, (INAUDIBLE), who took
25 over the site, said that the stump was gone. I rode

1
2 by there yesterday. The stump is still there so some
3 way or another, you'll have to decide whether it's
4 your property or is it DOT, because when it's snow on
5 the ground and ice, NYCHA get out there and clean it
6 so that's the same exact thing. If that tree fell
7 over and is still on NYCHA property, you have to get
8 that tree stump out the way. That's a safety hazard
9 for the community, and it shouldn't be whether we
10 playing ping pong, no, it's yours, it's mine, it's
11 yours. We need safety for our seniors, and that's one
12 of the things that we have to decide.

13 One more question, Chairs. How many
14 senior centers NYCHA know that are closed?

15 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We can
16 get back to you with that number. I don't have it
17 available right now, how many senior centers are
18 currently closed?

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Do you know Mount
20 Ararat is closed right now, that they didn't have, it
21 was on the news, we were on the news last night. We
22 have Mount Ararat right here today in the audience,
23 you're supposed to go like this, to make sure that,
24 this is a 300-unit NYCHA building where now seniors
25 are not eating. Y'all aware of that because the last

1 hearing, have you thought of anything in regards to
2 that? Have you tried to do anything? We've been
3 trying and we get nothing.
4

5 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We have
6 to work closely with our other City partners on all
7 community centers, whether it's DYCD or the
8 Department for the Aging, and so we work closely with
9 them on providers and repairs that are needed, and I
10 don't have the specifics on the closing, but we're
11 happy to follow up with your office on that.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Can I have just one
13 more? Is it true that by law, tenant associations
14 should have access to their facility community room?

15 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We can
16 clarify...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: At least the TA?

18 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: That.
19 The community centers are supposed to be a resource
20 for resident associations.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Shouldn't they
22 have, it's not access.

23 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: They
24 should have access in order to have to be able to
25 hold resident meetings...

1

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Exactly.

2

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: So it's

3

supposed to be a community resource, and we work

4

closely with our resident associations and our

5

community providers and our city agency partners,

6

like I said, DYCD and Department for the Aging to

7

make those centers accessible to our resident

8

associations.

9

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: OK, so you're in

10

compliance if you're letting them utilize the

11

facility?

12

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: If

13

you're aware of any situation...

14

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: We do.

15

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Where a

16

resident association is not being allowed access,

17

please let me know so we can help facilitate an

18

agreement.

19

COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Mount Ararat, 1630

20

St. Mark's, Brooklyn, New York.

21

CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Again,

22

if the center is closed, that's a different

23

situation.

24

25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: But they still
3 should have access to have meetings in order to make
4 sure that they could get their center re-opened.

5 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: But if
6 the center is closed, then we cannot provide access
7 to it. It's been closed down to probably
8 uninhabitable conditions..

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: No, nothing. We
10 just had a meeting there last night.

11 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: OK,
12 well, then I'm sorry..

13 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Just last night..

14 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE:
15 (INAUDIBLE) line of questioning..

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: New York 12.

17 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We will
18 follow up..

19 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: If you look at it,
20 we were on the news..

21 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: On the
22 issue..

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: So please, let's
24 start talking about that.

25 Thank you, Chairs, for the latitude.

CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Chair Banks.

CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you.

Consistently, we've been hearing that NYCHA has been doing everything to find, well, prevent the cuts to the 6.7 million dollars that are being provided to protect our seniors. I want to know the City forgoes about 105 million annually in payments to NYCHA. I want to know, why is it you didn't reach out to the Administration to get the 7 million dollars to protect our seniors?

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

So what actually happens is that the City allows NYCHA not to pay a pilot, which is called a payment in lieu of taxes, as well as payments to the NYPD. This was done in the de Blasio Administration and thankfully has been continued by Mayor Adams and his team so we're really grateful because that would be another 108 million dollars that we would have to find to pay the City.

CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The savings, does it produce revenue that can then be allocated that can then be allocated?

CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

Quite frankly, if we have a 35-million-dollar budget

1 and the City comes to me tomorrow and says I have to
2 pay them 108 million dollars, now we have 108 million
3 plus 35 million because we do not have that funding
4 to pay.
5

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, once again,
7 it just goes back to the underlying theme today that
8 the budget shouldn't be balanced or NYCHA's deficit
9 shouldn't be balanced on the back of our seniors and
10 you should have found other means to secure our
11 seniors and protecting our seniors with that 6.8
12 million dollars. Thank you, Mr. Chair.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Questions from
14 Council Member Bottcher followed by Brewer.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Good afternoon.
16 You've got tough jobs. I do feel for you sometimes
17 with respect to the issues you've inherited, but I've
18 always been shocked that on NYCHA campuses, there's
19 no staff and security present overnight. The idea
20 that you could have these massive campuses with
21 thousands of people living there with no overnight
22 security or staff presence of any kind I've just
23 found that to be shocking. Is NYCHA compliant with
24 the New York City Housing Maintenance Code with
25 respect to superintendent coverage?

1
2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I have
3 to get back to you regarding the actual code
4 language.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: It says that any
6 building with more than nine units must have a super
7 who lives in the building, within or within 200 feet
8 of the building or within one block of the building,
9 whichever is greater, provide janitorial services on
10 a 24-hour basis.

11 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: I want
12 to get back to you with a definite answer on
13 compliance with that Code. However, NYCHA is staffed
14 24/7 during the day. We have our on-site staff
15 supporting the residents and the maintenance needs.
16 Overnight, we have coverage through our Emergency
17 Services Department, and so we will follow up with a
18 more comprehensive answer for you specific to the
19 Housing Maintenance Code. There is a possibility that
20 we have an exemption to that, and I just want to be
21 sure before I give a final answer.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: NYCHA has a lot
23 of exemptions. If you are a private landowner, and I
24 don't mean this personally, but if NYCHA was a
25 private landowner, people would be jailed for the

1
2 conditions that the tenants are living under. That's
3 just fact because we have landlords who've gone to
4 jail for, quite frankly, better conditions than what
5 NYCHA tenants are living under as a whole. As a
6 policy matter, it seems to me that a priority should
7 be to provide on-site staff presence overnight, and
8 that's something that, given the budget that you're
9 describing and that we've been dealing with for
10 years, it's clearly something that's probably not on
11 the table right now, but that is something that
12 should have been on the table a long time ago and
13 should be a goal of NYCHA to provide staff presence
14 on site. What time does the staff leave physically in
15 the afternoon?

16 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: The
17 shift ends at 4.30 p.m.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: So all the on-
19 site staff leaves at 4.30 in the afternoon?

20 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: That's
21 correct, and then after 4.30, it's Emergency
22 Management Services that deploy roving teams to
23 respond to critical repairs and safety issues after
24 hours and on weekdays.

25

1
2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank
3 you.

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: We have Council
5 Member Brewer followed by Fariás.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you. I guess
7 the two big questions are the senior buildings
8 support and then the vacancy, so I'm not going to ask
9 about them except on the vacancies. Since we're all
10 interested, I've asked about it in the past. Is there
11 a real-time data set that tells us what's been
12 completed and what's in process at NYCHA?

13 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes. We
14 have multiple dashboards that we use to manage our
15 vacancy production. We're able to look at a
16 development level...

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Is that public?

18 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE:
19 Vacancies. It's not public. It's a tool we use
20 internally to manage performance. However, as I
21 mentioned, we're doing over 400 apartments a month
22 now.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I took my notes,
24 but I still think it would be great to have it
25 public, because that's something that could be

1 considered. It's a database. It's an Open Data
2 Platform. It would be something that I think would
3 help you because, otherwise, people don't know that
4 you're doing it so I would really suggest that you
5 try to make that public in whatever way that's
6 possible.
7

8 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: We can
9 certainly discuss internally. We do have a metrics
10 page right now on our website that does note the
11 total number of vacant units.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: No, but it doesn't
13 give you this breakdown. I've seen it so I'd really
14 like to suggest that. Otherwise, we'll make a law
15 that says you have to do it so I would suggest that
16 you do it.

17 On the seniors, so how are they going to
18 get in? I mean, I'm hoping this doesn't happen. We're
19 very upset about it, but I know these key fobs from
20 other situations don't always work. How will they get
21 into their building with no security?

22 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Again,
23 the security was just a single eight-hour shift so it
24 was not around-the-clock security so if there are
25 door issues or issues with key fobs that you're aware

1 of, please let me know so that we can have our teams
2 follow up. We have been taking special note and
3 canvassing our senior buildings to ensure the doors
4 are working. If there are fobs that need to be
5 replaced or reassigned, we can work through...

7 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: I think the issue
8 is, and you know this better than I do, it's hard to
9 get somebody, particularly at night sometimes. I love
10 to know what is the listing of problems that you have
11 through the CCC, whatever it is. They complain, I've
12 said this before, that sometimes at night there's
13 nobody to call. Even though there is somebody to
14 call, I understand that, but it's not like there's a
15 doorman downstairs or a doorwoman downstairs to come
16 upstairs so that is a huge consideration. They're
17 afraid to go out at night because they can't get back
18 in so I think that's another reason to keep the
19 security, even though it's not all the time.

20 Now I've got four questions. Commercial
21 units generally around the city, what's the status,
22 how many are vacant, and you always say we're working
23 on it, but it does bring in some income, commercial.

24 Parking. I want to understand what the
25 contracts are. We don't like LAZ, whoever the hell

1 they are, I don't know this company, but they are
2 horrible so I want to know what's the parking. You've
3 got public parking to make money and then the
4 resident parking so how much income is coming in from
5 the parking contracts?
6

7 Then I also want to understand the whole
8 issue of Harborview is you're going to say it's
9 NYCHA's problem, it's not my problem, but I was told
10 124 units under Hudson Yards I don't know how many
11 years ago. What happened to my 124 affordable units?
12 HPD keeps saying, Gale, we have to give some money to
13 NYCHA. No, I want 124 units of affordable housing. No
14 money to NYCHA. Those are my questions. Parking,
15 vacancy, and Harborview, and thank you for all the
16 work you did on lead abatement. I think your previous
17 monitor takes full credit, but I think you deserve
18 some also.

19 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Thank
20 you so much, Council Member, for all those questions.

21 I'll start with commercial units and
22 commercial spaces. I apologize we don't have that
23 data with us today, but we will certainly follow up
24 with you on the number of commercial spaces in our
25 portfolio and how many are vacant.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And what are you
3 doing about to make them occupied? Wouldn't that be a
4 suggestion?

5 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE:
6 Absolutely. For parking.

7 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:
8 Thank you for the question regarding parking. We do
9 have different rates for parking so we have resident
10 rates, non-resident rates and then, within our
11 resident rates, we also have discounts for persons
12 with disabilities, handicapped placards and the like.
13 On parking, we only earn 5 to 7 million dollars a
14 year, and that goes directly back into the budget for
15 the specific development so, as a HUD rule, that
16 parking lot is considered program income of that
17 development and so that dollar that's earned, how
18 much ever of that 5 to 7 million, has to go back to
19 that development to support their operations.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. If there are
21 problems with the carrier, so to speak, or the
22 vendor, does that have any weight with anything?
23 Also, if it goes back into the development, again, is
24 that something that we can see where the actual

1
2 dollars go in that development? Is that a dashboard
3 that we can see? Is it internal or is it public?

4 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

5 We are required by HUD to produce income and expense
6 statements for every property. I will say that half
7 of our properties run in the red so they are in
8 deficit, but there are lines for items like parking,
9 washing machine fees and the like in every
10 development budget so that does exist, and our
11 property managers have access to that report and they
12 can see that.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay.

14 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

15 It's something that we will be training them on.
16 We're rolling out a training this year.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Okay. Why did this
18 wonderful man show up?

19 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

20 Then in terms of, you know, any issues with the
21 vendor, please make sure that our intergovernmental
22 team is aware.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Oh, we call him
24 24-7 vacation included.

2 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

3 Yes, and we're happy to respond.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: And he responds to
5 his credit.

6 CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER LESCOTT-MARTINEZ:

7 Thank you, Brian.

8 VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: No, thank you, and
9 thank you, Council Member. Harborview, I think we're
10 well past time to sit down once again to talk about
11 the agreement that was put in place (INAUDIBLE) of
12 the Hudson Yards.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: By Gale Brewer.

14 VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: And Jonathan
15 Gouveia and I will follow up with your office and we
16 will sit down to talk about that project and getting
17 it back on.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: All right. Thank
19 you very much.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: We have Council
21 Member Farías.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER FARÍAS: Thank you, Chair.
23 Good afternoon, everyone.

24 I just have a couple questions around
25 some of the discussion that happened earlier with the

1
2 halting of capital projects. I specifically have two
3 projects that I'd like to talk about. I know you
4 mentioned there were 35 projects that were moving
5 forward but were not specific of the sites so I just
6 wanted to know, one, if you have those sites
7 available to you today and, two, if Monroe Houses'
8 Community Center is on that list of sites that will
9 be restarting their capital process for the
10 renovation of the center.

11 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Thank you,
12 Council Member Fariás. I do have the list of sites in
13 the projects that were paused last year and that we
14 are working on a restart plan. Monroe Community
15 Center is not one of those in the sense of Monroe
16 Community Center's funding was defunded as part of
17 this budget process earlier this year.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIÁS: And so with the
19 allocations that we saw within OMB, the money that
20 came down from the State in terms of capital projects
21 for NYCHA, how are you folks looking at restarting
22 some of those projects and, specifically, my interest
23 is with Monroe.

24 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Monroe and a
25 small number of projects that were defunded out of

1 the budgeting process earlier this year, we put those
2 kind of indefinitely on pause until some sort of
3 funding solution can be found to restore the project.
4

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: And so the money
6 that we got is not a solution?

7 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: The money,
8 you're referencing the State funding that was
9 provided to NYCHA?

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIAS: The State funding
11 and within the budget that we saw with OMB that
12 capital projects can be reinstated.

13 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: The State
14 funding, as we discussed a little bit earlier in the
15 hearing, that was appropriated two weeks ago to us,
16 we're now engaging with the State Legislature and
17 stakeholders to understand how we can best utilize
18 that funding. That goes through a process of
19 discussing specific types of investments and scopes
20 of work and different sites to understand what that
21 money can be allocated for so we're not at the stage
22 to yet have a clear view about where we can finance.
23 Traditionally, the State has financed areas related
24 to our HUD pillars so heating, elevators, façade
25 work, mainly in the last few years with all the

1 funding that's come in, rather than community centers
2 and projects like that. On the City side, you
3 mentioned OMB allocations. I mean, the funding that
4 we have in our budget is allocated to specific
5 projects. It's not available for reallocating to some
6 of these defunded projects. However, we're actively
7 happy to work with stakeholders to see if there's
8 other ways to solve these funding impacts that came
9 out of the budget process.
10

11 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIÁS: Yeah. I mean, you
12 folks have actively defunded a community center that
13 not only is critical to the seniors in this community
14 but also to the youth that's within my community. I
15 think we all have a vested interest in ensuring that
16 young people are having afterschool activities,
17 having weekend activities, and you folks are very
18 aware. We were, a couple months ago, picking out the
19 tiles for this center with folks in the community,
20 and you have now defunded this capital project that
21 they have been waiting on for close to a decade. I
22 fully expect to keep the conversations going to
23 ensure that the money gets re-instated and this
24 project gets funded again because it is necessary for
25 my community.

1
2 Additionally, with a capital project, if
3 I may, Chair, get additional time? Thank you. I have
4 a project that has been from two predecessors ago,
5 former Council Member Annabel Palma allocated capital
6 for Bronxdale Nursery in my District, and you folks
7 have not been able to find any qualified bidders, and
8 it was allocated in 2017. How are you folks working
9 on ensuring that these projects don't get left behind
10 and we find qualified bidders and move the capital
11 process along?

12 CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Sure. Any
13 projects that have funding that's before 2020, 2019,
14 we have a very heavy focus on. Often those projects
15 have some earlier funding and then some funding that
16 came in later because they were underfunded or we
17 allocated federal funding to kind of close the gap,
18 and we are very focused on that portfolio, the last
19 two years in particular, discretionary allocations
20 that happened in the past, and a large portion of
21 those projects have now finished construction or are
22 moving towards that. In specific instances, as you
23 mentioned, if we have a procurement and we have a
24 failed bid process, there can be a number of
25 different causes of that. That could be because bids

1 are coming in very high. It could be because we're
2 not able to attract vendors for a certain type of
3 work at a certain site so I don't have the specifics
4 about why the bid failed in that case right in front
5 of me in that project, but I'm happy to follow up
6 with you after the hearing, both around why that
7 happened and what we're trying to do to move the
8 project forward effectively.
9

10 COUNCIL MEMBER FARIÁS: Great. I'd love to
11 have a followup meeting on both of these topics so we
12 can discuss and since you are saying you're coming to
13 me with a meeting, I won't be filling out a form, so
14 please let me know, have your teams reach out to my
15 Staff so we can pick some dates and times. Thank you,
16 Chair, for the additional time.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Chair Banks.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. Just
19 clarification on the hours of security coverage for
20 the senior developments. I just want to find out, and
21 I guess you can correct me if these numbers are
22 wrong. One development, which is Carter G. Woodson,
23 has 24-hour security, around the clock?

24 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes, I
25 believe that's correct.

1
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Eight developments
3 have 16 hours of security service, around for 16
4 hours? Sorry, seven. Seven developments have security
5 coverage for 16 hours?

6 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Yes,
7 seven.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And the other 46
9 just have eight-hour shifts?

10 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: That's
11 correct.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. All right. I
13 just want a clarification on that. Thank you.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: I have a question
15 from Council Member Hanks who had to leave with
16 regards to some of the developments in her District.
17 While West Brighton and Todt Hill Houses are slated
18 for renovations through RAD/PACT, Stapleton Houses
19 have experienced recurrent utility failures,
20 including gas and multiple electric outages leading
21 to unsafe conditions. Can you tell us if the
22 Stapleton Houses are being considered for any
23 renovations and, if not, can you provide detailed
24 plans of what NYCHA is doing to shore up on some of
25 these concerns at Stapleton Houses?

1
2 CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER TRIMBLE: Right
3 now, we do not have a comprehensive modernization
4 plan for Stapleton Houses. We're happy to talk with
5 the resident association there if there's interest in
6 one of our current pipelines, such as PACT or the
7 Preservation Trust. We have been working closely with
8 the resident leader in regards to the current
9 electrical issues that the development has been
10 facing. Our work is ongoing to replace the cables and
11 permanently restore power. The development has been
12 running on generators, and we're working hard to get
13 that work completed.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Do you have a
15 timeline for the completion of the West Brighton and
16 Todt Hill Houses project?

17 EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: I can
18 speak to West Brighton. We expect to complete that
19 conversion by the end of June. It's going to happen
20 in the remainder of the City Fiscal Year and then
21 from that point, it should take about two to three
22 years to complete the renovations.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: West Brighton,
24 right?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: That's
West Brighton, correct.

CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And Todt Hill?

CHIEF ASSET OFFICER MAVANI: Yeah, for the
Toad Hill, which is a Comprehensive Modernization
Capital Project, as we discussed earlier, it's quite
a large budget and integrated scope across the
property. We've recently executed the contract with
the design build entity a couple months earlier than
planned. We're hoping to see physical work start in
2025, and that'll extend for two to three years.
We're currently working with the design builder to
work through the design over the next few months, but
then to have a clear construction schedule that would
lay out those timelines.

CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. For West
Brighton, you said what happens at the end of June?

EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT GOUVEIA: That's
when the conversion will actually happen so we will
transfer management responsibility to the PACT
partner, and they will commence the comprehensive
rehabilitation.

CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Got it. Okay.

1
2 Any of my colleagues have any other
3 questions? Chair Banks?

4 Okay. Thank you all. Appreciate your
5 partnership, and I look forward to working with you
6 going forward. Thank you all very much.

7 We'll take a 10, 15-minute break, and
8 then we're going to hear from the public.

9 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Can everybody settle
10 down and find a seat? We're getting ready to
11 continue. Everybody settle down and find a seat. We
12 are getting ready to continue.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: [GAVEL] Okay.
14 Welcome back.

15 Now, I'm going to open the hearing for
16 public testimony, and I remind members of the public
17 that this is a government proceeding, and that
18 decorum shall be observed at all times. As such,
19 members of the public should remain silent, save for
20 obviously those who are testifying.

21 The witness table is reserved for people
22 who wish to testify. No video recording or
23 photography is allowed from the witness table.
24 Furthermore, members of the public may not present
25 audio or video recordings as testimony, but may

1 submit transcripts of such recordings to the
2 Sergeant-at-Arms for inclusion in the official
3 record.
4

5 If you wish to speak at today's hearing,
6 and you're here today and you haven't done so
7 already, you must fill out an appearance card with
8 the Sergeant-at-Arms and wait to be recognized. Once
9 you're recognized, you'll have two minutes to speak
10 on today's budget hearing. You've got to stay on
11 topic for NYCHA FY25.

12 If you have a written statement or
13 additional written testimony that you wish to submit
14 for the official record, please provide us a copy of
15 that testimony to the Sergeant-at-Arms. In addition,
16 if you want to submit testimony and you don't have it
17 prepared today, you've got 72 hours to include it
18 into the official record, and you can email that to
19 testimony@council.nyc.gov. Obviously, that's for
20 anybody that's watching on Zoom at home. Audio and
21 video recordings will not be accepted, only written
22 testimony.

23 I'm now going to call the first panel.
24 Please pardon if I say your name wrong or I can't
25 read your handwriting. Gwen McGowan-French, Vira

1 Faturova, Terry Campuzano, Metin N. Sarci, Carmen
2 Feliciano, Lawrence Somerville, and Kristie Ortiz, so
3 Gwen McGowan-French, Vira Faturova, Terry Campuzano,
4 Metin Sarci, Carmen Feliciano, Lawrence Somerville,
5 and Kristie Ortiz.
6

7 Okay, you want to start from the left?

8 Just say your name and then you can begin. Just make
9 sure your mic is on.

10 GWEN MCGOWAN-FRENCH: I'm Gwen McGowan-
11 French.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Good afternoon,
13 Gwen.

14 GWEN MCGOWAN-FRENCH: Thank you, Council
15 Chairman, Council Members.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: You may begin.

17 GWEN MCGOWAN-FRENCH: I'm so glad to be
18 here today. I've listened to the proceedings and
19 about the budget, and I've made some notes about it,
20 but it's very strange that you're going to balance
21 the budget by discarding the seniors. I'm from the
22 Woodson Houses. That's in Powell Street, and I'm
23 talking on behalf of, my building is 365, 367, but
24 I'll speak for all the Woodson Houses at this time.
25 The seniors are the pillows of an organization, and

1 from the seniors, we come to the top where you have
2 these officers now. You've got to remember the
3 seniors are there, and you've got to be taken care
4 of. I listened to the police. I wonder if the police
5 will come there every day and stand up inside the
6 place and guard the place for the seniors. The
7 seniors' security is very much needed because the
8 guards that we have there, they know the persons that
9 live within that location. They are doing a wonderful
10 job. Some of the doors don't close, so they will be
11 there when, who come in, they will go back and close
12 it, and they can stand up for the seniors. Seniors
13 are, some can walk like me, but some cannot, and I
14 think that it is a very sad moment to take away the
15 guards because when you're out. Right now, I'm
16 talking, my pressure went up just hearing what is
17 going on today. I'm 75 years old, and the thing is
18 that it leaves me just fearful for the other seniors
19 because if there's no guard, people passing on the
20 street can look in, there's no guard, well, we can go
21 in. We can go in because if, right now, there's no
22 killing in that building, but as soon as you take the
23 guards away, surely there will be. Do you want to get
24 rid of the seniors this way? Police is not there all
25

1
2 the time. The guards are there, and if the guards are
3 there to protect the seniors, and the seniors need
4 help, and I think that is all I can say at this
5 moment because police can just patrol among the
6 areas, and by the time you just call for a police,
7 the person already dead. The building before had five
8 persons that was killed in that building. We don't
9 need it anymore for the seniors, and I think it's
10 time that it remain on the budget where the seniors
11 are concerned in this New York City.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Gwen.
13 We agree. Remind us again. Where do you live?

14 GWEN MCGOWAN-FRENCH: I live at 365-367
15 Powell.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And how long have
17 you lived there?

18 GWEN MCGOWAN-FRENCH: I'm there five
19 years.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. Thank you
21 very much for your testimony.

22 Go ahead. Make sure your mic is on. Just
23 hit the button on the, there you go.

24 Just say your name before you begin.

25

1
2 VIRA FATUROVA: I am Vira Faturova. I live
3 in (INAUDIBLE) City in Housing 77 Vandalia Avenue. I
4 have very fresh example about need security in
5 housing. A few days ago, I was returning from
6 Manhattan near 10 o'clock, 10 p.m. o'clock, and when
7 I opened my door, okay, with me went and run into two
8 very large, very big men, maybe in marijuana, in
9 cannabis, maybe. I was very afraid. I go to the
10 elevator and all the way to the seventh floor, I'm
11 very, very afraid, but it was well that time, but I'm
12 sure that very, very need in senior houses security.

13 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: And you would
14 have felt much safer if you had the security guards
15 there?

16 VIRA FATUROVA: Yeah. Okay.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

18 VIRA FATUROVA: Okay. Thank you.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you so
20 much.

21 VIRA FATUROVA: Thank you so much.

22 TERRY CAMPUZANO: Hi, I'm Terry Campuzano,
23 the TA President of Meltzer Tower. We're a senior
24 building in the Lower East Side, East Village. Our
25 building is in a peculiar situation. It's across from

1
2 Katz's Deli. We're surrounded by bars and everything,
3 and we have school kids that run into the building in
4 the daytimes. We have drugs behind the building and
5 inside the building. We have cameras all around the
6 building, but nobody's monitoring them at all, and
7 I've asked James Secreto from security for a few
8 years ago. Now this email is from 2022, and I was
9 talking to them about the security problem then, and
10 I had asked them, could they please patch our cameras
11 into the NYPD, and all I get is pushback from
12 security, from NYCHA, saying that it's too much money
13 and that it's a difficult job for them to do. So now
14 I was asking Carolina Rivera, no, I had called NYCHA
15 security because it's been an ongoing thing and it's
16 getting worse. You know, people, we have no working
17 intercom in the building. This is a 20-story senior
18 building so NYCHA told me to call Carolina Rivera's
19 office because they had no money so I called Carolina
20 Rivera's office and my friend, Brendaliz Santiago
21 from First Houses, we had put in our own projects, I
22 had put in our intercom so I find out just recently
23 that NYCHA turned down our project, even though it
24 was City Council money, from what I was told is that
25 it was turned down because NYCHA had had its quota of

1 security-related issues. This is not only a security-
2 related issue, because it is a security-related
3 issue, because you can point people to the intercom
4 and say you can't come in here so what's happening
5 now is the kids and the drug people are coming in,
6 they follow our tenants in the building. There was
7 something else that I was, what else was I, remember
8 I was telling you something? It was about, anyway,
9 it's about the drugs and the problems within the
10 building and NYCHA being able to keep up with our
11 buildings at all like I said..

12
13 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Remind me the
14 name of which development you're President?

15 TERRY CAMPUZANO: Meltzer.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay.

17 TERRY CAMPUZANO: Meltzer Tower. We're a
18 senior residence in the East Village.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay, and then,
20 so you're on the list to have these security guards
21 removed and you also currently don't have an intercom
22 system?

23 TERRY CAMPUZANO: Right. Our intercom
24 system is out.

25

1
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: How long have you
3 been without an intercom system?

4 TERRY CAMPUZANO: For a few years.

5 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: A few years.

6 TERRY CAMPUZANO: Right, and they want all
7 the tenants to like, oh, you have to call the call
8 center, but the call center, we have a large Asian
9 population, we have Russians, we have Polish. It's
10 very difficult to communicate with the people. At my
11 last TA meeting, we asked the people, how many people
12 are having intercom troubles? Everybody raised their
13 hand so I've been talking about this for a while, and
14 we just can't get it done. Carolina was going to pay
15 for it. Council was going to pay for it, and they
16 turned us down.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. I'll give
18 you my business card before you leave, and I'll
19 follow up with Councilwoman Rivera as well, and we'll
20 figure this out.

21 TERRY CAMPUZANO: Okay. Thank you. Chair
22 Banks.

23 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I want to find out,
24 how many buildings? Is it one building? Is it a
25 singular?

1
2 TERRY CAMPUZANO: Meltzer, we're a one
3 single, we're a 20-story single building surrounded
4 by bars in the Lower East Side. Graffiti artists, so
5 far they haven't touched the outside of the building
6 like they did First Houses, but they're starting to
7 get into our hallways and tagging our hallways, and
8 the tenants are afraid to go inside the building
9 because it's constant with the kids in there so at
10 night, before our security comes in, our security
11 comes in at nine o'clock, and they're there till five
12 so, when there's nobody there and the sun is going
13 down, and there's people that they don't know in the
14 building, they are afraid to go inside so with the
15 security, talk about throw grandma over the hill, and
16 that's what's happening now. I was the first one to
17 hear about this.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. Thank
19 you for your testimony.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you, Terry.
21 We'll follow up with you.

22 Go ahead.

23 TERRY CAMPUZANO: Thank you.

24 METIN SARCI: Hello. Thank you, Chair
25 Banks. Thank you, Chair Brannan. My name is Metin

1 Sarci, and I'm a public housing specialist with over
2 a decade in public service and political engagement.
3 I specifically specialize in NYCHA policy, community
4 relations, and program implementation. The testimony
5 before you is not representative of the New York City
6 Housing Authority, where I am presently employed, and
7 all opinions shared are based on my service to NYCHA
8 residents. I'm here today for NYCHA community centers
9 and the inadequate funding to support New Yorkers in
10 this Executive Budget. New Yorkers depend on NYCHA
11 centers to vote, receive healthcare, improve career
12 opportunities, or even access to direct services.
13 However, over 70 percent of NYCHA centers do not have
14 lease agreements. City-contracted organizations are
15 led to believe that with no rental fees, they will be
16 able to provide more funding to provide these
17 services. However, the proposed budget this year
18 disinvests in our youth by cutting over 10 million
19 dollars in DYCD programming, affecting over 100 NYCHA
20 facilities. In addition, the current budget of 2.3
21 million is inadequate to cover necessary repairs and
22 maintenance at over 450 locations, that's about 5,000
23 dollars per center, leading to disruption in services
24 and rising capital needs, which has been discussed
25

1 today. To address this, I am actually recommending
2 the funding of staff to support City-contracted
3 organizations in facility oversight, specifically to
4 foster public non-profit partnerships that may bring
5 additional funding opportunities and decrease the
6 need for City subsidy. We already know that NYCHA
7 cannot move forward with certain capital, and it
8 seems to be that the centers are at the heart of
9 that, and so I do believe a public non-profit option
10 is the solution. I think that's a much better
11 investment than the proposed 16-million-dollar
12 decrease in capital repair staff, despite numerous
13 facility violations jeopardizing City-contracted
14 services and City partners' operating budgets,
15 because at the end of the day, if there isn't enough
16 money to do repairs, a lot of the times the CBOs
17 themselves are performing those same repairs, despite
18 the cost savings that they were perceived to believe.
19 Thank you for having me, and I'm happy to answer
20 questions.
21

22 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

23 KRISTIE ORTIZ: My name is Kristie Ortiz.

24 I'm the Director of the Preserving Affordable Housing
25 Program at Brooklyn Legal Services Corporation A, or

1 Brooklyn A. We serve NYCHA tenants, but we could
2 serve far more NYCHA tenants if the Anti-Harassment
3 Tenant Protection Program was expanded. It appears
4 that the scope of work for the AHTP program in Fiscal
5 Year '25 would not fund affirmative legal cases for
6 public housing tenants. Right now, we can only
7 commence actions against NYCHA for individual or
8 group cases if there is a referral from the Family
9 Justice Center, the Office of Civil Justice, or HRA
10 directly or DHS. This means public housing residents
11 typically cannot make use of the valuable legal
12 resources AHTP provides. NYCHA is a housing system
13 that has an estimated 78 billion of repair needs,
14 meaning countless residents are living in inadequate,
15 unsafe, or illegal conditions. And then expanding the
16 scope of AHTP would give us a necessary tool to
17 deliver justice for public housing residents. We
18 actually, under the permission that we were granted
19 last year or the year before, were able to get
20 abatements for 67 tenants who were out of gas for
21 about a year and a half so the first portion of the
22 tenants got about 25 percent for about a year of
23 rent, and then the other had 22 percent for about six
24 months, and so actions like that and an expansion of
25

1
2 the program would allow us to be able to ensure that
3 repairs are done and done adequately. Brooklyn A has
4 submitted applications for renewed funding in Fiscal
5 Year 2025 for its Preserving Affordable Housing
6 Program, which provides legal representation, legal
7 education, and advocacy strategies to preserve and
8 protect affordable housing. We prevent evictions,
9 combat tenant harassment and discrimination, and help
10 tenant associations marshal the power of strength in
11 numbers to protect the rights to safe and sanitary
12 housing. Last Fiscal Year, our PAH program helped
13 more than 3,300 individuals to maintain housing
14 stability and supported, just two more minutes,
15 supported 54 tenant associations to fight for
16 habitable living conditions and combat harassment.
17 This year, we're applying for 550,000 in funding
18 under the Legal Services for Low-Income New Yorkers,
19 LSLINY, and Legal Services for Working Poor, as well
20 as other initiatives. Thank you.

21 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you very
22 much.

23 LAWRENCE SOMERVILLE: Good afternoon. My
24 name is Lawrence Somerville. I live in the senior
25 building, 1634 St. Mark's Avenue. We have a community

1 center of which I am a part, and I'm also on the
2 Board. I teach dance professionally, and I try to
3 keep the seniors moving and being active. Since COVID
4 came along, it has closed down. Our center has been
5 defunded, and I'm here to find out when are they
6 going to open our center because they talked about
7 making it a community, a commercial entity, and that
8 will cover my apartment, because I live in 3R. That's
9 all I have to say. Thank you.
10

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

12 ESSIE DUGGAN: Good afternoon to the
13 speaker, to Council Member Committee Chris Bank, to
14 our Council Member Darlene Meely, and the rest of the
15 Council here. My name is Essie Duggan, and I've been
16 working with seniors for, I guess, over 30 years, and
17 at the time when Mount Ararat Senior Center closed,
18 it was during the pandemic, and it has not been
19 opened yet. Due to the fact that it has not been
20 opened, it has brought about much isolation. Many,
21 many members, residents have died because of total
22 isolation. They didn't have no one to talk to. They
23 didn't have a center to come down to, to eat, to
24 fellowship, to play a game, to take exercise so all
25 of that was cut out of their life so many of them

1 didn't really have too much to look forward to
2 because they were distant from family members, and
3 some of them, the only family that they knew was
4 there at the center, where they can come down daily,
5 whether it was for lunch, breakfast, or bingo,
6 whatever, that they knew that they had some form of
7 companionship or being able to talk to someone so I
8 am here as joining in with those that came from Mount
9 Ararat as an advocate with our Council Member that
10 this center must be opened. It's been closed since
11 2020, and she has been trying to work to get it re-
12 opened, but the senior cannot continue in isolation
13 when it was a very vibrant center. And then the other
14 thing that DFTA claim that they don't have money for
15 this center, I don't see how they can fund other
16 center that has less attendance on a daily basis than
17 Mount Ararat used to have from 40, sometimes to 50
18 people or more. On special holidays, it has been up
19 as high as 150 people, birthdays and things of that
20 nature, but I am saying we need DFTA step in to help
21 to fund this center where it can operate properly
22 along with our Council Member in seeking our funding
23 so that our seniors can have full service in this
24 center. The other reason not our seniors, the tenant
25

1 association, and it was said earlier, is locked out
2 of their center. How can tenants be locked out of
3 their own center where they are a renter and they
4 cannot come in their center from 9 to 5 without
5 getting permission of okay, and that doesn't take
6 place unless they say it's a meeting so that is not
7 right. The tenant association should be able to come
8 into their room in the center to meet where it can
9 plan and negotiate, not just have to do it on the
10 phone, not in person, so that is another thing that
11 needs to be corrected. The other thing in this
12 center, which is major, that needs to be corrected,
13 and that has been going on, I would say, many, many
14 years, a leak from the ceiling, coming down from the
15 ceiling, not necessarily from anybody's apartment,
16 and that is a problem because seniors may slip and
17 fall if they walk in there and there's water in all
18 of the hallway. The other serious problem is there's
19 a sewage problem. There's a certain time within the
20 center there is a sewage smell, and Housing claims
21 there's not too much that they can do about it. They
22 may do something temporarily that the smell kind of
23 settle down but you still smell it, and then after a
24 month or so, it rise back up so these are some
25

1 serious problems, and they're a health problem too.

2 Okay. Thank you. So I just want to say...

3
4 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

5 ESSIE DUGGAN: Please, stay on NYCHA, get
6 with DFTA, and make sure there's money coming to the
7 center. Thank you.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Ms. Duggan, always
9 a pleasure to have you in the house. I just want to
10 find out, do you agree that there's also a need to
11 make sure that Mount Ararat has a security guard or
12 that there's security in the building?

13 ESSIE DUGGAN: Oh, yes, definitely.

14 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay.

15 ESSIE DUGGAN: Oh, yes, definitely.

16 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I just want to make
17 sure you're on the record with that too.

18 ESSIE DUGGAN: Yes, because they have been
19 having incidents, not senior coming into the
20 building, but, you know, other coming into the
21 building, and thank you so much, Council Member
22 Banks, mentioned that. One other thing I had written
23 and done, hopefully is in the plan to build senior
24 housing for grandmother that has to raise their
25 children so they don't have to bring them into the

1 ordinary senior housing so that is a desperate need
2 because you find so many grandmother seniors has to
3 raise their grandchildren now, and so they need a
4 senior housing, not just regular public housing, but
5 senior housing to raise their grandchildren.
6

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you all
8 very much. Thank you for taking the time. You want to
9 say one last thing? Go ahead.

10 LAWRENCE SOMERVILLE: Yes. I used to be on
11 tenant patrol in my building from 8 to 12 p.m. and,
12 when we were told to call for assistance, we were
13 told to call public service, which is on Sutter
14 Avenue off of Alabama. That's exactly about 10 miles
15 away from us. Number one, they don't answer the phone
16 and, when they do, by the time they get to us,
17 whoever the perpetrator is, is gone, and we can't
18 leave our posts to run after them, and they have been
19 terrorizing the tenants.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. That's
21 why we need the security guards. Thank you very much.

22 Okay, I'm going to call our next panel.
23 Diane Johnson, Aixa Torres, Zulay Velásquez, Joel
24 Kupferman, Albert Negron, and Renee Keitt. So Renee
25 Keitt, Albert Negron, Joel Kupferman, Zulay

1 Velásquez, Aixa Torres, Diane Johnson, if you're
2 here.
3

4 You can begin.

5 AIXA TORRES: Good afternoon. Thank you
6 for holding this hearing. My name is Aixa Torres, and
7 I'm going to start with my titles. First, I'm a
8 resident in public housing, I am the President of
9 Alfred E. Smith Houses, but I am also the Manhattan
10 South DCOP Chair, and so today I am definitely as the
11 Chair because I have several of my resident
12 association and one of the seniors already spoke from
13 my District. It is unconscionable. It is incredible
14 to me that NYCHA is cutting the security for seniors
15 and, not only that, but they're asking them to do
16 resident watch, and be very clear, I support resident
17 watch. In my development, we have revised it at this
18 point, right? We've gone from two buildings to now we
19 have like 10 buildings that have resident watch of
20 people younger than me. I am 71, even though I think
21 I'm 17 at times, and I try very hard, but I have a
22 responsibility as a Chairperson. You know, one of my
23 Chairs, one of my members on my DCOP board, texted me
24 and said to me, if they weren't so top heavy, having
25 so many people with so many titles of VP, they could

1 find the money. Somebody has to find the money for
2 these seniors to have security. I can't conceive,
3 right? The reason I now live in NYCHA is when my
4 parents got to be elderly, I moved in with them to
5 take care of them and I have no regrets, right, but
6 not everybody has a daughter to do that or have
7 children to do that. I have three other siblings.
8 They supported me, but I was the one that was
9 available to be able to move in with them. How do you
10 allow seniors to be this vulnerable? And I'm really
11 perturbed about the fact that one of my developments,
12 NYCHA turned back the money, saying we're not doing
13 this when the money was given to them so the question
14 is where are you looking for money, and I always
15 believe in solutions so we get in a lot of programs
16 on the TV, and I know the City gets money from the
17 filming industry for using our developments. Why
18 can't that money be allocated to our seniors? And
19 we're not even talking about, like, I could spend 6
20 million dollars in an hour. Somebody, like, give me a
21 break. Why can we not find the money for these
22 vulnerable seniors? Yes, I'm a senior, too, but I'm
23 just saying in these buildings, like Meltzer, you
24 have to pass through there at night, right? It's
25

1 right on Houston. Not only is the tourism, but the
2 trafficking that goes in front of that building is
3 incredible and across the board, uptown so these
4 senior buildings are in areas where it's highly
5 populated, and they're vulnerable, and some of them.
6 And in my district, I have a building that most are
7 Asian American. They don't even speak English. Forget
8 about that they're going to call 9-1-1, right, and
9 get the services that they need, and I'm not
10 complaining about the PSA. I am just saying that
11 there has to be a better solution to this. We've been
12 trying to get a hold of the Chancellor to sit down
13 and meet with us because one of the other problems
14 we're having is senior students hanging out in our
15 developments because they think it's public housing
16 and they can do that.

18 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

19 AIXA TORRES: Thank you.

20 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Sure. Just make
21 sure your mic is on.

22 JOEL KUPFERMAN: Good afternoon. I'm glad
23 we're here. Just a point of information. Is anyone
24 from NYCHA remaining in the room?

25 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: I think so.

1
2 JOEL KUPFERMAN: Well, maybe put that on
3 the record that...

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Public is the
5 most important part of any hearing.

6 JOEL KUPFERMAN: Okay. I'm Joel Kupferman.
7 I am the Executive Director and Environmental Justice
8 Lawyer at Environmental Justice Initiative. I'm
9 counsel to Smith Houses, representing people at Riis
10 and represented many other NYCHA residents including
11 residents to preserve public housing. Today is World
12 Asthma Day, and I think it's important to point that
13 out, that it's the health threat that's going on at
14 NYCHA housing is unfettered construction. The City is
15 not really doing anything about, especially NYCHA is
16 not doing anything about, all right? Riis has come
17 up. We submitted an article in today's paper. There's
18 another person with high, high arsenic in their
19 blood. What we heard today, NYCHA said, I'm not a
20 doctor, then they should bring in a doctor. There's a
21 City Health Department, the State Health Department,
22 all these other departments. We have a problem there,
23 but what's bad about Riis and all this testimony is
24 it's the soil. The soil at Riis is uncovered in
25 eight-foot piles in front of people's windows. Kids

1 are playing in that soil. They're walking through
2 that soil, and they have very high levels of arsenic
3 so for no one to even bring that up from NYCHA is
4 more than disturbing. It's disingenuous. That soil
5 should be covered up. Besides arsenic, there's high
6 levels of lead in that soil. So we have the federal
7 monitor. There's a new federal monitor out there, but
8 we have to look back at why there's a court case. One
9 was over lead exposure. Kids are being exposed to
10 lead from the soil that's coming in. It's not being
11 covered. The other part is the arsenic is being hit.
12 NYCHA is also spending a lot of money on contractors
13 and construction managers that are not doing their
14 jobs. At Smith, we caught monitors that were
15 monitoring the air around the corner from where the
16 work was going on. They were cutting into the
17 concrete. The concrete was going into a window where
18 two residents had asthma. We brought this up to STV,
19 the construction manager. They said nothing. They
20 didn't penalize. They paid the 28 million dollars on
21 that contract. What did NYCHA do with STV? Now
22 they're their main advisor telling all the other
23 construction people what's good and not good. There's
24 a bad problem here that the good contractors are
25

1 trying to do work and they're not. It's really
2 important to point out that it's also the SVOCs, all
3 those chemicals that are there, they don't want to
4 know. The construction, there's 10 more places that
5 are there because of the storm. The storms upset that
6 water. The water is carrying those SVOCs. The
7 construction is going underneath the buildings and
8 those vapors are going up into the buildings. It's
9 called vapor intrusion. The state and the feds are
10 willing to come in. NYCHA doesn't want to see them.
11 So we have ongoing people getting hit from below.
12 They're also getting hit, we talked about roofs
13 before. The roofs, when the water leaks, it's not
14 just the water that's affecting them. It's going
15 through asbestos. It's going through bird detriment,
16 detritus or whatever. That causes cholera and other
17 diseases. They don't want to test. And there is also
18 (INAUDIBLE) unfettered construction is beginning to
19 really kill the trees. At Baruch, we lost hundreds of
20 trees. At Smith, we lost a lot of trees. The
21 contracts state they have to do tree construction to
22 protect the trees. They're not doing it so the City
23 is telling us we have a Million Tree Program. There's
24 a net loss of trees at NYCHA. The federal government
25

1 has millions of dollars available for tree planting.
2 NYCHA has not asked for that money so all of this
3 land that's there, the work is actually letting the
4 soil go out that should be covered up with fabric
5 that doesn't cost that much money, and we're paying
6 higher-ups, and NYCHA's not, the capital division
7 should be totally looked at. And also...

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

10 JOEL KUPFERMAN: Just give me one more
11 minute...

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: 30 seconds, 30
13 seconds.

14 JOEL KUPFERMAN: Working this for three,
15 four years (INAUDIBLE). Part of the problem is the
16 staff workers are being affected, NYCHA staff, not
17 just the construction workers. We've heard over and
18 over again that we've heard about sewage. Sewage is
19 not a light issue. I was the lawyer that sued the
20 U.S. on behalf of the people in Haiti that the sewage
21 of 13 soldiers went into the water, and there was
22 18,000 cholera deaths so we have a problem of the
23 water being not analyzed and not even being cleaned
24 up in people's houses.

25 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

1
2 JOEL KUPFERMAN: All right?

3 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. We
4 have a lot more to get to. Thank you very much.

5 JOEL KUPFERMAN: But there's plenty of
6 federal help and state help that NYCHA is not asking
7 for.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Appreciate it.

9 JOEL KUPFERMAN: And the contract should
10 not be paid until the work is done the right way.
11 Thank you.

12 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Go ahead.

13 ZULAY VELÁSQUEZ: Hi. My name is Zulay
14 Velásquez. I live in Jacob Riis. That's why I wanted
15 Joe to speak first. Outside of, like, what they need
16 to do to remedy the land that's been documented by
17 Con Edison and in their reports since I can look back
18 2020, they haven't remedied the site but, in addition
19 to that, they've been approached to do so when
20 they're not doing it. As a result, yes, people are
21 dying. People are getting sick. There's one resident
22 that has over 40 people on a list. Just a week ago,
23 someone actually died and, you know, we're
24 encouraging the family to do an autopsy. I think in
25 addition to what Joe was saying, I think because them

1 testing the land and them doing further testing
2 actually will make the resilience project look bad.
3 The East Coastal, what they did between Sandy and the
4 East Coastal resilience actually is what's killing us
5 in Jacob Riis, and I don't know if it's affecting
6 Lillian Wald and Baruch because, you know, we're
7 under the power plant, the old manufactured gas
8 plant, and that's what I think Joe left out, too so
9 we are very compromised as it is when Sandy came and
10 kind of, like, mixed up the soil, but now you have
11 them digging in our site, cutting our pipes. We just
12 had a TA meeting and they said they're going to dig
13 under, down under the FDR Drive to go through our
14 project to do some sewer thing. Well, sewer pipes for
15 who? For us or for what's happening in the resilience
16 project? Every time they do that, they shut off our
17 water, too, so in addition to what's going on you
18 have to run the water for 40 minutes. How about if
19 someone doesn't have a phone so they don't get the
20 texts that say you have to run your water for 40
21 minutes, or you just say your water will be shut off
22 for, you know, X amount of time, but they don't tell
23 you why, or, you know, they don't say that in these
24 texts or these voice blasts that they do, but they
25

1 could, and they're not doing it because they don't
2 want the projects to look bad, the resilience project
3 to look bad but, if I may, a few more seconds.

4
5 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Sure.

6 ZULAY VELÁSQUEZ: Even for the resilience
7 project, for Sandy, I think they're mixing funds, and
8 I say this because Jacob Riis One looks like it's
9 been prepped for RAD/PACT, and RAD/PACT, Jacob Riis
10 is unique where they're letting us vote for RAD/PACT,
11 but we've already been, like, prepped for it, and I
12 can explain that later on, but meaning, like, if you
13 ask me that question, but now, so here we are. We've
14 been prepped for something that we may not even do,
15 and it's bad. I'm just going to say it's bad. Not
16 only has this been a situation, we're not even, at
17 this point, the residents don't even know what's
18 happening about this whole RAD/PACT. They don't. I
19 think we're going through a crisis, and I really,
20 really think that the Department of Health should be
21 stationed outside on Avenue D on every single block
22 to test the residents. That's how bad it is. It's
23 bad, and we're dying. They're ignoring us. Our 3-1-1
24 calls are even going, and I think it's all the
25 developments, is going straight to NYCHA, and it

1 falls short. We have permits that have expired more
2 than two, three years that just came up onto our
3 buildings. 3-1-1 calls, where they go? Those permits
4 are still there.
5

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. How
7 long have you lived in Riis?

8 ZULAY VELÁSQUEZ: I lived there 45 years,
9 and my mother, listen, my mom was very sick for a lot
10 of years, but she really started getting more sick
11 during the time the Resilience started, the project,
12 like, really bad. Hospitalizations one after the
13 other. We never tested her, as far as I'm concerned,
14 for arsenic or lead or anything like that, but we've
15 always wondered why, the doctors, why she was so sick
16 and had so many things wrong with her. The only way
17 right now to see if my mother had these high levels
18 is to exhume her body, but I've had three surgeries
19 potentially related to exposure to this arsenic and
20 lead and I lead a pretty good health, like, meaning,
21 like, diet, and never connected it. You know what I
22 mean? But now, it's not that I'm looking for an
23 excuse, but I have been walking around, sorry, with
24 an EpiPen. I'm affected in that way, too. Severe
25 allergies. I never had that when I was growing up. I

1 know a neighbor, an elderly lady, her eyeballs get
2 this big, and we also have cracks on our ceilings and
3 floors. And this is, if the money hasn't been mixed
4 from the (INAUDIBLE) resilience to what's happening
5 with the East Coast or the PACT or whatever the case
6 may have you, then why is it that we have all these
7 splits and stuff like that in our developments? Like,
8 why put these things on our roof if you know that
9 we're not stable? One more thing, and I am so sorry,
10 I don't know, NYCHA appears to be RAD/PACT. They keep
11 saying, the state is saying that RAD/PACT is NYCHA,
12 and it's like they're having, like, an identity
13 crisis but in public, it's like they're talking in
14 the third or second, like, identity. Like, it's like
15 who's RAD/PACT because you're talking about, like,
16 it's a separate person, but when you talk to certain
17 people, even RAD/PACT representatives that are from
18 NYCHA, they're the same. RAD/PACT is NYCHA. So how
19 can you ask the person, an invisible person, to get
20 back to you when you're the person, and they make, I
21 don't know what's going on.

22
23 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Thank
24 you very much for your testimony.

2 RENEE KEITT: Hello, my name is Renee
3 Keitt, and I'm representing Save Section 9. Let me
4 use a plant analogy. Eliminating security at senior
5 centers is comparable to root shock. Stunted growth
6 can lead to death. This will make our elders
7 vulnerable and distressed. You have starved our
8 housing. This is being done by design to put a stake
9 in the heart of the community. Home is a place where
10 you should feel relaxed, secure, and at peace.
11 Instead, our seniors will feel imprisoned.
12 Experiences of community safety have health
13 implications for older adults. Social disruption,
14 deterioration of mental, physical, and emotional
15 health contribute to the feelings of isolation and
16 loneliness among our elders. There is no excuse for
17 this. You don't balance the budget off of our elders'
18 back. If this was your family, would you do this? How
19 would you feel? Our seniors are our knowledge tree
20 and foundation. They shouldn't be used as a
21 bargaining chip. You don't negotiate humanity. 7
22 million dollars is a pittance. The city has a 108-
23 billion-dollar budget. NYCHA has chosen not to ask.
24 Either you provide security or allow for
25 intergenerational sites so seniors are not left to be

1
2 preyed upon. NYCHA must invest in doors, intercom,
3 and blended sites and, also, asking the PSA can do
4 this. The PSA has a rather large area. They're going
5 from the Rutgers Houses all the way to Fulton and
6 Elliott Chelsea. That's a really large site. They
7 can't do it. They have always said they do not have
8 the capacity. You can't keep having and pass the
9 buck. It continues. It has to stop. Someone has got
10 to make them accountable.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you. Thank
12 you very much. Go ahead.

13 DIANE JOHNSON: I'm speaking on behalf of
14 Brooklyn Mount Ararat. I feel and believe that the
15 seniors are being stripped of their rights. I feel
16 that, and it saddens me. It really saddens me to see
17 all of this. I just was transferred. I lived 45 years
18 in Red Hook, and I was transferred here in Brooklyn
19 at Reverend Brown's Housing, and I've been here only
20 for three months. Also, I see the boredom in a lot
21 of the seniors. They're restless. They're not happy.
22 Also, they're not communicating or being active. We
23 do need security also. We still continue to need
24 security, more hours. I just wanted to speak on
25 behalf of Mount Ararat. The fact that it's closed,

1 and it would be a good thing if they open it up. This
2 way, people that live in the building that are not
3 able to walk around or move around, they're actually
4 basically homebound. They can at least come down to
5 the cafeteria and speak to other people and
6 communicate and be a little bit more active. That's
7 all I have to say.
8

9 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you very
10 much.

11 ALBERT NEGRON: Good afternoon. My name is
12 Mr. Albert Negrón. I'm a tenant of Vladeck Houses for
13 67 years. I'm also the TA president. I want to thank
14 you for having us here. I also have several issues
15 myself. Vladeck Houses' issues (INAUDIBLE) repairs
16 and shambles. We have so many issues with the lead,
17 the cabinets, the heating, the roofing. We just did a
18 roofing. The TDX contractor did a fairly good job,
19 but the issue I have with the contractor is that they
20 get like a 25-million-dollar contract, and they
21 sublease the contract for 2 million dollars. So where
22 does the other 23 million dollars go? To the company?
23 Also issues I have with my own apartment. The housing
24 assistant came to my home and told me my house was
25 unsuitable to live in. I had a cracked ceiling. One

1 circuit breaker. I haven't had a cabinet in five
2 years. My door downstairs hasn't worked in five
3 years. I have a cabinet on the bottom dry rotted. My
4 wife's health is asthma, diabetes. My children have
5 asthma. They refuse to be put all the paperwork in
6 with the doctors. They refuse to give us a transfer.
7 I'm asking for these people for my paperwork so I can
8 take it to the court and something get done. There's
9 nothing being done. I live there so long. This should
10 not be happening. Also the security situation. We
11 have senior citizens who are scared to come out of
12 their apartments. Recently, we just got a couple
13 evictions due to the help with the tenants and the
14 management and the PSA4, but we still got the
15 squatters, we still got the drug situation. There's
16 no PSA4 appearance unless you make a phone call. Last
17 time I went to the subway, the PSA guy was working in
18 the subway. He works for housing. What is he doing in
19 the East Broadway subway? I said, what are you doing
20 here? Oh, they got me over here today. I said, ain't
21 you supposed to be in the PSA4? There's other issues
22 I have. The situation with the RAD. How can they say,
23 like for instance, the Seward Park Extension switched
24 to the RAD, and they say you don't get no capital
25

1 money after that, and there was a situation earlier
2 when they spoke about people still getting capital
3 money from fixing certain areas and they have the
4 RAD, but how can the RAD get money from federal
5 government? The RAD is federal government. So they're
6 getting millions and millions of dollars so, if
7 there's no capital money, they don't get capital
8 money but still get money from the federal
9 government. That's a catch-22. Also, my wife and I,
10 she's a correspondent secretary on my board. We
11 looked up the RAD the other day. There was a
12 gentleman in Manhattanville Projects. He had somebody
13 come to his house with one of those lease things from
14 the RAD and told him that if he doesn't sign the
15 paper, he's going to lose his apartment. They're
16 doing strong-arm tactics that are not being noticed.
17 I live in, as a tenant, I'm the president. They're
18 saying my project is going private, and I don't even
19 know about it. There's too many issues with the
20 housing, like the young lady that was in charge of
21 housing. Every time they spoke to her, she didn't
22 know nothing. How can you have somebody who's the
23 chairman of housing that doesn't know anything?
24 Everything you threw at her, she knows nothing. I
25

1 don't know about this. I don't know about that. What
2 do you know? How can you be a boss? They need to let
3 these people, executive of housing, walk through
4 these projects at night. Let them walk through the
5 project and see what's going on with the drug
6 situation and everything else.

8 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you very
9 much.

10 Okay, everybody, I'll give you 30
11 seconds.

12 ZULAY VELÁSQUEZ: Sorry, I think that some
13 of the money, and I don't know if this is correct,
14 but for my building, we've had a security or a safety
15 guard for five months, and we're not a senior
16 building, and I think they say it's because there's
17 no water in our pipes so they're there Monday through
18 Saturday, the fire guard, but this is a dual agency
19 that provides both service so, yes, I think that some
20 of the money is going there. He's been in our
21 building, but he's only in our building for Monday
22 through Saturday, like a specific shift, and then
23 there's no one else so, if there's actually no water
24 in our pipes, wouldn't that require 24-hour service?
25 I mean, I don't know. I'm not saying that I want it,

1 because I want that money to go towards the seniors,
2 but that's where some of the money might have gone
3 and, if my building is that way, I think it's more so
4 that they have these guards in these buildings that
5 they're developing more or are more conscious of.
6 Because my building, I think that my building is like
7 adjacent to where the actual hub of the old
8 manufactured gas plant. So when you walk, you can
9 feel the heat off the ground, and the tar has
10 developed all over the grass. On the other building
11 where I think is going on, they're doing construction
12 there, too. And where these arsenic levels are coming
13 up is where they've actually dug up the hole so deep.
14 You go see over, like, when you can see it, it's like
15 50 feet down so they're exposing us, and that's where
16 these people, the high level of people who are coming
17 up, are from building right next to it.

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON BANKS: That's the same
20 situation that's taken place at Vandalia Houses,
21 where the water is off or it's not working, and they
22 have a fire guard who's there. I think they have,
23 like, two fire guards who are there, but the seniors
24 there thought that they were security, but they're
25

1 not there to protect the seniors so thank you for
2 your testimony.

3
4 JOEL KUPFERMAN: Can I just say one more
5 thing?

6 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: 30 seconds.

7 JOEL KUPFERMAN: Okay. Here's a letter
8 from Mount Sinai to the State and City Health
9 Department asking for testing of the people at Riis,
10 and everybody refused. It's urine testing. It's very
11 inexpensive to do. She mentioned the Brownfield site.
12 Brownfield site has the highest levels of lead in the
13 VOCs. There's no testing that's being done. This is a
14 300-dollar air monitor that's better than what the
15 Brownfield people are using. The City and the State
16 and NYCHA could put a few of these into their
17 apartments, and we will know every 10 minutes what
18 they're breathing. They're not doing that so I just
19 want to say it's systematic under, you know, seeking
20 information, biological and physical, and also in
21 terms of the water, the water towers have been bad so
22 you can't just keep on saying that the city water is
23 good. There's water tower problems that are there.

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: When we have our...

25 JOEL KUPFERMAN: And the third thing is...

1
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: When we have our
3 hearing with Department of Health and Environmental
4 Protection, we're going to bring it up.

5 JOEL KUPFERMAN: Right, but also with the
6 fire protection, I was the environmental attorney for
7 the Firefighters Union. They want to know planning
8 when there's an emergency. There's no fire drills
9 that go on in NYCHA housing. It's only required for
10 commercial housing. There should be more coordination
11 with the first responders to know how to deal with a
12 flood, know how to deal with a fire and everything
13 else. It's not there, and the regulations right now
14 state that the Fire Department can't really ask for
15 fire drills so there's something you want to look
16 into is that the first responders want a much better
17 bid. Also, they mentioned that there's flooding all
18 over again. There are no real evacuation plans...

19 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

20 JOEL KUPFERMAN: And I just want to say
21 with 28 million dollars that Smith did is they built
22 walls that keep the people stuck in wheelchairs. They
23 can't get out. That's an ADA violation.

24 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

25 JOEL KUPFERMAN: Okay.

1
2 ALBERT NEGRON: May I say one more thing,
3 sir?

4 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: We're going to
5 wrap up. We're going to wrap up now. Go ahead and
6 then that's it.

7 ALBERT NEGRON: The resiliency program is
8 coming to my meeting on Thursday. They're having a
9 90-day, you can't park your cars for like 90 days in
10 our community from Cherry Street and Warder all the
11 way down to Catherine Street. Where are the people
12 supposed to park at? They have a 4.5-billion-dollar
13 budget. Why can't they supply the people with
14 parking?

15 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you.

16 ALBERT NEGRON: Thank you.

17 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. We have two
18 people on Zoom now.

19 Patricia Ryan and Mbacke Thiam. Patricia
20 Ryan and Mbacke Thiam.

21 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

22 COMMITTEE COUNSEL TWOMEY: Patricia Ryan,
23 you may begin.

24 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

1
2 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Mbacke Thiam, are
3 you there? Thiam?

4 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

5 MBACKE THIAM: I'm ready. I'm ready. Can
6 you hear me now?

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Yes, go ahead.

8 MBACKE THIAM: Okay, good. Yeah, I was
9 muted. I was trying to unmute myself and it took a
10 little while. Yeah, so my name is Mbacke Thiam. I'm
11 the Housing and Health Community Organizer at Center
12 for the Independent of the Disabled in New York,
13 mostly known as CIDNY. CIDNY is the voice of people
14 with disabilities in the five boroughs of New York
15 City. We are a non-profit organization founded in
16 1978. We are part of the Independent Living Centers
17 Movement, a national network of grassroots and
18 community-based organizations that enhance
19 opportunities for people with disabilities to direct
20 their own lives. I am here today to testify at the FY
21 Executive Budget hearing regarding, public housing,
22 exactly on NYCHA. As we know, a large number of
23 people with disabilities are benefiting from Section
24 8 and live in these public houses so we receive many
25 calls from our seniors and disabled consumers

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2 regarding accessibility, elevator repairs, and safety
3 issues, especially in NYCHA Grant Senior Center so we
4 want the administrative system, also the City, to
5 take drastic measures and address this issue. I'm
6 curious to how long it should take to repair
7 elevators because people with mobility impairment
8 need it to be immediately repaired in order to have
9 daily activities so let's recognize that what can be
10 very convenient and can be very accessible to someone
11 may not be to some others so we need to take
12 measurement and know how long it should take to
13 repair these elevators so people can have a daily
14 normal life. Also, I'm going to talk about seniors
15 who need to be safe in an environment. However, there
16 is no security guard...

17 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Your time has expired.

18 MBACKE THIAM: There is no security guard
19 or doorman in buildings like St. Nicholas Houses
20 where squatters are occupying, and I believe you're
21 aware of New York squatters' rights, which is
22 squatters who occupy a property for more than a month
23 so they may not be able to be evicted by the police
24 so it always takes a lot of time. It may take time or
25 a process to take them to court in order to get them

1
2 evicted so it's a danger for people with disabilities
3 and the seniors in these NYCHA buildings. I know my
4 time is very limited, so if I can have answers about
5 these issues, that would be great. If not, then I
6 will just submit a written testimony. Thank you.

7 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Thank you very
8 much.

9 Last call for Patricia Ryan.

10 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: You may begin.

11 CO-CHAIRPERSON BRANNAN: Okay. With that,
12 day two of the FY25 Executive Budget hearings is
13 adjourned. Thank you very much, everybody. [GAVEL]

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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 June 6, 2024