

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON AGING

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HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: Margaret Chin
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Margaret Chin
Diana Ayala
Chaim M. Deutsch
Ruben Diaz, Sr.
Daniel Dromm
Mathieu Eugene
Deborah L. Rose
Mark Treyger
Paul A. Vallone

A P P E A R A N C E S

CARYN RESNICK - Deputy Commissioner of External
Affairs.

KAREN TAYLOR - Assistant Commissioner for DFTA

SASHA FISHMAN - Associate Commissioner for DFTA

TARA KLEIN - United Neighborhood Houses

ANDREA CIANFRANI - Director of Public Policy at
LiveOn NY

MOLLY KRAKOWSKI - Directory of Legislative Affairs
at JASA

SANDRA CHRISTIAN - Vice President of Senior Services
For RiseBoro Community
Partnership

MAYER WAXMAN - Managing Director of Senior Centers
at Selfhelp Community Services

JOSE COLLAZO - Site Manager at the Bronx City

JAMES CASEY - Representative for R.A.I.N.

CHAIRPERSON CHIN: [Gavel] Good afternoon.

I'm Council Member Margaret Chin. Chair of the Committee on Aging. Thank you all for joining us today for the Committee's Oversight hearing on Repairs and Upgrades at New York City Senior Centers. The Department for the Aging also known as (DFTA) serves almost 30,000 seniors daily at 249 different sites, 16 innovative senior centers, among this DFTA contracts and they oversee 230 neighborhood senior centers, 16 innovative senior centers, and 29 sites affiliated with senior centers. Senior centers provide important services to older adults including meals, activities, health management resources, educational programming, and socialization.

As the Chair of the Committee and a long-time advocate for our seniors, I have had the privilege of visiting many senior centers across the city. These visits allow me to see firsthand the dire need of repairs and upgrades for many of our senior centers. I have visited senior centers that have poor lighting, chipped paint, leaks, and cracks in their ceiling. I have visited senior centers that were too cold during the winter and have broken air conditioners during the summer. Even though they

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2 were advertised as a cooling center. Some centers
3 that I have visited did not even appear to be fully
4 accessible, in violation of the Americans with
5 Disability Act. That is why I was not surprised by
6 many of the findings in Comptroller Stringer's 2017
7 audit report, which evaluates DFTA's monitoring of 30
8 contracted senior centers. During this audit, the
9 comptroller's office found that 27 of the senior
10 centers' visits had one or more conditions that
11 raised safety, health, and maintenance related
12 concerns. About one third of the center had five or
13 more violations for problems that include unstable
14 stairs and handrails, water damage, peeling paints,
15 and obstructed exits and emergency doors.

16 Although many senior centers are at the
17 brink of falling apart, reports show that DFTA is
18 ineffectively monitoring a senior center. According
19 to DFTA, DFTA's programming officers are required to
20 visit senior centers annually and usually learn about
21 required emergency repairs through emails and phone
22 communication with senior center providers. DFTA
23 also administers surveys to senior center providers
24 to self-identify site deficiencies and require
25 upgrades. However, despite these complaints

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2 mechanism, a 2017 Comptroller report show that DFTA
3 does not have an effective complaint tracking system
4 and would ensure that program officers are completing
5 proper and consistent oversight of senior centers.

6 It is also reported that DFTA does not
7 have standards to guide its program officers on when,
8 where, and how they should help senior centers
9 improve their conditions and operation upon receiving
10 complaints. Most of the time, it comes down to the
11 interpersonal relationship a provider has with a
12 program officer to navigate a process that is already
13 so convoluted and unclear, we need consistency and
14 proactive guidance because of the ineffective
15 management of complaints, many complaints go
16 unaddressed for years.

17 For example, of the six senior centers
18 that were previously audited in 2011-2012 by the
19 Comptroller's Office, five centers had the same
20 deficiencies almost four years later during the 2016-
21 2017 Comptroller audit. Furthermore, it is unclear
22 what the process is like for providers to apply for
23 and receive funding for any repairs and upgrades.
24 There is no centralized place that outlines the
25 timeline for such funding. Who oversees the repairs

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2 and who leads inspections and follow up visits after
3 completion?

4 This uncertainty only exacerbates the
5 state of our senior centers and the increasing
6 pressure of providers to balance the book, to stay
7 afloat. We cannot continue to allow such deficiency
8 to continue to go unaddressed. Our senior's health
9 and wellbeing depend on our actions and it is very
10 important that our city provides the necessary
11 upgrades and repairs to senior centers including
12 adopting and maintaining 21st Century technology. We
13 know that the needed repairs and upgrades come at a
14 cost. However, DFTA has a very small capital plan.
15 In fact, the size of DFTA's fiscal year 2019-2022
16 capital plan is less than one half of one percent of
17 the total adopted 2019-2022 capital plan. This is
18 unbelievable. While capital projects associated with
19 DFTA are often managed by other city agencies, such
20 as the Department of Design and Construction and the
21 Economic Development Corporation, we need proper
22 interagency coordination to ensure that adequate
23 funding is allocated towards these senior centers'
24 repairs need. DFTA's contract to senior center
25 should be the model for safety and access in the

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2 senior service system but without a clear process to
3 apply for emergency repairs and upgrades, providers
4 are literally left in the dark.

5 Today, our Committee seek to gain more
6 clarity about DFTA's capital repair and upgrade
7 process for all senior facilities and more
8 importantly, break down these barriers to receiving
9 badly need support.

10 I would like to thank the Committee staff
11 for their help in putting together this hearing, our
12 Counsel, Nuzhart Chowdhury, Policy Analyst, Kalima
13 Johnson, and Finance Analyst, Daniel Droop, and my
14 legislative director, Marian Gara [SP] and I would
15 like to thank the other members of the Committee who
16 have joined us today. We have Council Member Diaz,
17 Council Member Ayala, and Council Member Vallone. I
18 am going to ask our Counsel to administer the oath.

19 COUNCIL: Please raise your right hand.
20 Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth, and
21 nothing but the truth in your testimony before this
22 Committee and to respond honestly to Council Member
23 questions?

24 CARYN RESNICK: I do.

25 KAREN TAYLOR: I do.

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2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, we invite Deputy
3 Commissioner, Caryn Resnick and Assistant
4 Commissioner Karen Taylor from DFTA to testify, thank
5 you.

6 CARYN RESNICK: Thank you. Good
7 afternoon, Chairperson Chin and members of the Aging
8 Committee. I am Caryn Resnick, Deputy Commissioner
9 of External Affairs for the New York city Department
10 for the Aging. I am joined by Karen Taylor;
11 Assistant Commissioner for the Bureau of Community
12 Services and I would like to thank you for this
13 opportunity to testify on the topic of repairs and
14 upgrades at New York City senior centers.

15 Nearly 1.6 million people aged 60 and
16 older live in New York City, and DFTA is committed to
17 helping older New Yorkers age in place in their
18 communities. Ensuring the dignity and quality of
19 life of diverse older New Yorkers' is an essential
20 part of DFTA's mission. Providing senior center
21 services is one of the key ways DFTA achieves this
22 objective. Senior centers offer congregate meals and
23 an environment where older adults can participate in
24 a variety of recreational, health promotional and
25 cultural activities, as well as receive counseling on

1 social services and obtain assistance with benefits.
2 In FY'18, DFTA funded senior centers served nearly
3 7.2 million congregate meals. Approximately 173,000
4 older New Yorkers participated in senior center
5 programming in FY'18, which is an increase from the
6 prior year with almost 30,000 senior center attendees
7 daily.
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9 As the largest Area Agency on Aging in
10 the United States, DFTA sponsors the most extensive
11 network of senior centers in the nation. DFTA funds
12 a portfolio of 249 senior centers that are operated
13 by contract providers. Site control of a senior
14 center location determines funding eligibility and
15 the level of DFTA's technical oversight for
16 renovation, repair and capital projects. Though for
17 all sites, the agency works closely with providers to
18 help facilitate the process.

19 The majority of senior centers, 103, are
20 located and sponsor leased sites, in which the
21 contract provider leases with a private landlord.
22 The responsibilities for the management of the
23 property, including repairs and maintenance, are
24 governed by the lease agreement.
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2 Thirty-eight senior centers operate in
3 sponsor owned sites, in which the contract provider
4 is the landlord of the property. For sponsor owned
5 locations, the senior center provider generally
6 manages the property and is also responsible for
7 repairs.

8 There are 74 senior centers located in
9 New York City Housing Authority developments. NYCHA
10 is responsible for repairs and maintenance to the
11 facility envelope and building systems, including
12 roof leaks, sewage back-ups and heating. The senior
13 center provider is responsible for maintenance and
14 repairs inside the program space. Senior center
15 programs submit tickets to NYCHA for repair work and
16 DFTA assists with facilitating those requests. At
17 NYCHA developments, there are also on-sit NYCHA
18 personnel that respond to emergency issues on a case
19 by case basis.

20 Twenty-one senior centers are located in
21 City leased sites. For City leased sites, the New
22 York City Department of Administrative Services
23 (DCAS) negotiates a lease, which will typically
24 include improvements to be made by the landlord. The
25 private landlord is then responsible for maintaining

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2 the property and the lease governs how repairs are
3 addressed.

4 There are 13 senior centers located in
5 City owned sites. At these sites, the City agency
6 that has jurisdiction over the property is
7 responsible for repairs and maintenance. Regarding
8 DCAS buildings, there is personnel available on-site
9 who respond to emergency maintenance issues. DFTA
10 also coordinates some repairs with the New York City
11 Department of Parks and Recreation at several of
12 their buildings that house a DFTA senior center.

13 City owned and NYCHA sites are eligible
14 for City capital funding for major improvements. All
15 non-historic and/or non-flood plain sites are
16 eligible for Federal Community Block Grant funding
17 (CDBG), for renovations and code compliance projects.
18 All senior center sites are eligible for expense
19 funding.

20 DFTA program officers and nutritionists
21 each make at least two visits to every senior center
22 annually and part of their assessments include
23 facility safety standards. Often, the need for other
24 types of repairs are also noted, such as painting.
25 In addition, DFTA has surveyed senior center

1 providers to self-identify facility issues. The
2 agency works to ensure code compliance and HVAC
3 issues at all senior centers are handled in a timely
4 manner. There is ongoing communication with senior
5 center contract providers in response to emergency
6 issues, such as flooding, plumbing leaks, and
7 malfunctions of heating and cooling systems, and DFTA
8 assists in addressing these critical repairs.
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10 DFTA works closely with senior center
11 providers to ensure that responsive and thorough bids
12 are obtained for critical repairs, if needed, and
13 that funding is made available through their
14 contracts. If projects are especially technical,
15 DFTA works with senior center programs to determine
16 the scope of work and identify list of vendors.

17 DFTA's facility staff attend project meetings to
18 ensure that the work is well-constructed and meets
19 timelines for all CDBG projects, DFTA funded capital
20 projects and more complex expense funding projects.

21 Thank you again for this opportunity to
22 provide testimony on repairs and upgrades at senior
23 centers and we are pleased to answer any questions
24 that you may have.
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2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you for your
3 testimony but from your testimony, I guess now, we
4 are going to have to ask a lot of questions, because
5 it was not addressed in your testimony. So, what is
6 your definition of repairs and what is your
7 definition of an upgrade for the senior centers?

8 CARYN RESNICK: A repair can be anything
9 from a hole in the wall to a plumbing, toilet leak,
10 to a ceiling tile problem. I mean, there's a huge
11 gamut of repair situations.

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And from your
13 testimony, those are supposed to be taken care of by
14 the provider depending what kind of facility they're
15 in.

16 CARYN RESNICK: Yeah, I think that's the
17 critical point of the testimony is, and I know we're
18 here today to talk about capital. Only a very small
19 number, about 13 sites are actually capital eligible,
20 and the rest depends on the lease situation, whether
21 it's a city-owned lease or a private-lease and then
22 the repair and maintenance would be determined by the
23 lease agreement.

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2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Can you repeat that
3 again? Only 13 sites are capital eligible, can you
4 explain that?

5 CARYN RESNICK: So, the only way that a
6 program is capital eligible is if it's actually a
7 city-owned property and we have a very small number
8 in our portfolio, that is actually city-owned
9 property, that's 13 out of our 249 senior centers.

10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But if a senior center
11 is located in a facility run by a non-profit and they
12 need to do upgrade, like upgrading a kitchen after 30
13 years, wouldn't they be able to apply for a capital
14 project with DFTA?

15 CARYN RESNICK: Not through DFTA capital
16 funds. Often times the Council will appropriate some
17 capital funds or a borough president will appropriate
18 some funds to the provider, and then that may run
19 through our department.

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I think that's the
21 question that we are really looking at. That DFTA is
22 an agency that oversees you know, all these hundreds
23 of senior centers, should have a capital budget
24 because I know senior centers, they come to Council,
25 my office, you know, and they ask for capital funding

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2 and often times, you know, we don't have enough
3 capital funding to support all the senior centers,
4 that's why it's really important that DFTA have that.
5 Now they're a non-city capital projects and then you
6 also have projects that are through NYCHA?

7 CARYN RESNICK: Yes.

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: If the center is in a
9 NYCHA building -

10 CARYN RESNICK: That would be capital
11 eligible.

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: They're a capital.
13 So, are they included in the 13?

14 CARYN RESNICK: No, they're not. Those
15 would be eligible through NYCHA capital funding.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, because I have a
17 center that is in a NYCHA building and they haven't
18 been able to get any kind of support, and that's why
19 now their coming to the Council.

20 KAREN TAYLOR: I think if I could also
21 introject, one of the issues with capital budget
22 funding in private properties is that there are
23 mortgages and leases usually with privately owned
24 properties and the terms of capital budget funding,
25 which I'm not an expert on, but I have been informed

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2 that that's one of the reasons that capital - the
3 city capital cannot be used on those sites. However,
4 we do have Community Development Block Grant funds
5 that for instance, your kitchen renovation you
6 alluded to earlier, we have renovated kitchens with
7 CDBG funds and there are expense funds that we can
8 also use and which we use quite often actually for
9 repairs, maintenance, and special projects like that.

10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, what is the CDBG
11 funding amount that you have?

12 CARYN RESNICK: Its approximately two
13 million dollars annually.

14 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Two million dollars.
15 That's not a lot, right? And what is your expense
16 budget that you use to do repair?

17 CARYN RESNICK: It's on an as need basis.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, you got to have
19 money set aside or allocated, right? And also, how
20 does the provider know that this funding exists, so
21 they can apply?

22 CARYN RESNICK: The providers come to us
23 and they should come through the program officer but
24 often things are brought to us in a variety of ways,
25 but they reach out to the department, we'll come in

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2 and take a look at whats required, come up with some
3 scope of work for what needs to be done. It may or
4 may not have to get bid out, depending on the cost of
5 the repair. We help facilitate or oversee that and
6 then make funding available. So, there really is a
7 process in place.

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: You have a process in
9 place but then like what was your total for the last
10 two fiscal years, FY'18, FY'19 that you use expense
11 money for repair?

12 CARYN RESNICK: We think it's probably
13 under a million dollars for the last year. We can
14 get back to you with something more precise but its
15 roughly around that.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And also do you
17 coordinate with the other agencies that are providing
18 the upgrade for senior centers that are using other
19 money? Because I know I have one senior center for
20 example, in a park, and we allocate a funding to
21 upgrade their windows quite a few years back and they
22 still haven't done it. So, I don't know, if it's
23 like if DFTA also knows about all these projects and
24 also can help follow up with the centers? Or do you
25 know about these projects?

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2 CARYN RESNICK: We know certainly about
3 the projects that come through the department and
4 then we farm those out to EDC or DDC primarily. We
5 do coordinate with Parks as well.

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Do you track all the
7 capital – the funding that comes through the Council
8 that are provided to senior centers in your
9 portfolio?

10 CARYN RESNICK: We only track the ones
11 that are attributed to our agency.

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, there funded by
13 DFTA, and you would track if they are getting capital
14 –

15 CARYN RESNICK: If a Council Member made
16 an allocation that's running through DFTA's budget,
17 then we would track that. I don't know that we track
18 all the capital dollars that have been assigned to
19 every other agency.

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, that's something
21 that I think that DFTA should really look at because
22 if the money is going to upgrade and improve the
23 senior center, that's under your supervision, you
24 should know where every dollar goes, right? If their
25 getting you know, new windows, or new kitchens and

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2 they're not coming directly from your funding, you
3 should definitely be able to track that, right?

4 CARYN RESNICK: I'm being told by the
5 head of our facilities department that it would be
6 virtually impossible to track all of the funding
7 assigned to every other agency in the City, but I
8 will take that back and we can take a look at it.

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, there's 249
10 senior centers' so far.

11 CARYN RESNICK: Yeah.

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, you got to find a
13 way, I mean to - because the Council is supporting a
14 lot of the centers and there might be other
15 resources.

16 KAREN TAYLOR: We are aware of capital
17 projects for instance, that come through NYCHA for
18 senior centers. We've been informed and go to
19 meetings and are involved in discussions regarding
20 those even though we're not the lead agency on the
21 renovation, but yeah, and we do stay in close contact
22 with our centers, so we hear about things when we go
23 visit or when we're contacted by the program, but we
24 don't have lists of capital projects.

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2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, we should find a
3 way of getting that information. I mean, even if the
4 funding is coming from Council Members and the
5 Council could provide you with a list to help and
6 then we should really, DFTA should really kind of
7 centralize and know all the projects that are
8 happening and ultimately, DFTA should have their own
9 capital budget so that they could really support all
10 the senior centers. I'm going to pass it over to my
11 colleague with questions, Council Member Ayala.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Thank you, Madam
13 Chair. I actually have several questions. I'm a
14 little confused about how this works because I have
15 several senior centers, like I have I'll give you a
16 few examples, Covello Senior Center, one without a
17 lift for three years denying accessibility to seniors
18 and motorized wheelchairs. That's when I worked for
19 the previous Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito and
20 we were proactive in asking for a bid to provide the
21 funding we did and still two years later, the lift
22 had not been repaired and there didn't seem to be
23 very much advocacy coming from DFTA to expedite that
24 process. Betances Senior Center, the roof was in
25 such disrepair that it created flooding to the HVAC

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2 and every time that it rained outside, it would rain
3 inside. The situation became so dire that former
4 Council Members Melissa Mark-Viverito and Carmen
5 Maria Machado actually advocated that the seniors be
6 removed from that center because the environment was
7 so dangerous. It's been four years and the
8 constructions are now being finalized leading into
9 the displacement of money of our older adults who
10 would not travel to the new program. Mitchell Senior
11 Center, if you sit there, every time I go there,
12 there is leaking. I mean seniors are literally
13 sitting there and there is water falling on their
14 plate of food and it has taken lots of time and
15 effort on our end to try to rectify these leaks, but
16 there has been no movement that I can see on DFTA's
17 part to try to arrange for maybe another location for
18 the senior center, considering I mean, the ceiling
19 has caved on several occasions in another room in
20 that same center. Patterson Senior Center, I was
21 there last summer, they didn't even have AC because
22 their windows do not open and allow for an air
23 conditioning unit to be placed and so they had
24 nothing, and it was like 90 degrees in there. So,

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2 what is DFTA's capital budget? What does that look
3 like?

4 CARYN RESNICK: So, our capital budget this
5 year is about 10 million dollars and a large part of
6 that is assigned to the Covello Senior Center for a
7 major renovation.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: And that building
9 needed renovations, but it wasn't because the
10 building was in desperate need of renovations but
11 rather that it was for cosmetic reasons. Those were
12 not emergencies and it's one of my favorite senior
13 centers, I love them, and we actually put a lot of
14 money as well into the renovation of that senior
15 center but if I was prioritizing senior centers, I
16 would be prioritizing capital dollars to senior
17 centers that are dilapidated where you know, senior's
18 might be in jeopardy. So, you know, I don't
19 understand that but when we were negotiating the
20 budget last year, was there ever an attempt to
21 increase the budget line for capital repair work at
22 DFTA funded senior center? Has there ever been an
23 ask, because I have never been asked.

24 CARYN RESNICK: So, again there are 13 of
25 our 249 senior centers that would actually be

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2 eligible for capital funding. So, I think that's
3 where we're getting into a little bit of confusion.
4 So, we primarily use expense dollars to make repairs
5 and a number of the centers that you mentioned are
6 actually in NYCHA facilities where we do work very,
7 very closely with NYCHA to be able to get repairs
8 done, but there are systemic issues that sometimes
9 slow some of these things down.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I mean but they're
11 city owned property.

12 CARYN RESNICK: Yes, correct.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I think the point is
14 here that there is an issue that's not being
15 addressed and that's where we're having a problem,
16 right? There is a disconnect somewhere. If you see
17 that there is a leaking roof, then maybe it merits
18 more immediate attention. We can't sit on it and
19 wait for five years to see if one of the Council
20 Members you know, will put up the funding and most of
21 the time, I will be honest that the funding requests
22 isn't even coming from the Department for the Aging,
23 it has never actually come from the Department for
24 the Aging. It has always come either from the
25 seniors or from those organizations that are you know

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2 a little bit more proactive then not and have come
3 before us and requested the funds but other than
4 that, we've never, ever heard from the department for
5 the Aging regarding capital needs and I know in my
6 district, so I will speak for myself.

7 KAREN TAYLOR: I'd like to respond to a
8 couple of your other statements, if you would.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Yes.

10 KAREN TAYLOR: The Covello Center is one of
11 our city-owned sites and the renovations that have
12 been done there are for code compliance. So, that is
13 one of the sites where we are able to use some of our
14 capital budget and we need to do that in order to
15 bring the building up to code even though it's
16 certainly a great building and we agree. Betances,
17 yes, Betances had a terrible roof problem many years
18 ago and NYCHA has been with their own budget been
19 working to repair that roof and it is taking a while.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: It wasn't NYCHA's
21 budget, it was ours but go ahead.

22 KAREN TAYLOR: It was you, okay. It was
23 yours, it went through NYCHA though and fortunately
24 the program will be moving back in, in hopefully the
25 beginning of the year.

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COUNCIL MEMEBR AYALA: Yes.

KAREN TAYLOR: Mitchell, I would say, East Side House sponsors Mitchell. We would love to hear from them. I don't get all the information that comes through the staff of the community services staff, but I will definitely check to see if we've received any complaints. If we had received those complaints, we would have been on this already because I didn't realize Mitchell had those.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: It's been through several years that they've been going through this.

KAREN TAYLOR: We'll definitely look into that.

COUNCIL MEMEBR AYALA: So, when you do the annual assessment, is the condition of the – the environmental condition part of what you're factoring in?

KAREN TAYLOR: Yes, what we check for are things like, peeling paint, floor problems, leaks, making sure things are clean and exits are unobstructed and that sort of thing.

COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: Well, I will add that you should also consider for instance, at Mitchell, we have two bathrooms, neither of which are

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2 accessible because they're so old and dated that the
3 opening is actually so small that if you have a
4 wheelchair or if you have walker, you have to go in
5 sideways to be able to access the restroom and that's
6 also a problem.

7 KAREN TAYLOR: We can look into that and get
8 back to you.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER AYALA: I'd appreciate it,
10 thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Council Member Vallone.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Thank you Chair
13 Chin. Good afternoon everyone. A lot of the
14 information is similar to what we were looking for
15 when Margaret and I passed this summer the
16 information requirement for senior centers, requiring
17 expenses to be outlined and I know that's due this
18 December. A lot of that frustration led to that bill
19 which is what we're experiencing today, which is
20 DFTA's overseeing the process and now, we're asking
21 DFTA to be involved in the process, so that
22 information can be disseminated, reviewed, and seen
23 how we can best address these 249 senior centers and
24 not just say, well, it's the private landlord, it's
25 the lessee 109 here, its NYCHA there and we only have

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2 13 buildings with Two million dollars fixing it.
3 That's not a place we can be. So, now the next step
4 is well, where should we be? And that's where we
5 need your input today as to where to you foresee DFTA
6 being in that process. So, going through the list
7 that you gave us today, the majority of the senior
8 centers 103, are located in sponsor Lee sites, in
9 which the contract leases with the private landlord
10 the responsibilities for the management of that
11 property are governed by the lease agreement. What
12 role does DFTA have in the lease agreement and any
13 capital expenditures, repairs, coming to your
14 attention that need to be done at those sites.
15 That's just for the 103.

16 CARYN RESNICK: We are not partied to the
17 lease, but our centers general do share the lease
18 agreements with us and we take a look at them and
19 make sure that our contractor is provided for and
20 they're not getting into some kind of crazy lease
21 situation.

22 COUNICL MEMBER VALLONE: No, but is there
23 any information?

24 CARYN RESNICK: On a signatory lease
25 agreement.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Does any of that,
3 or if there is a roof situation or an HVAC or a
4 heating situation or a disability situation that
5 comes up at that site, does any of that information
6 ever get passed on to DFTA?

7 KAREN TAYLOR: Absolutely.

8 CARYN RESNICK: Yes.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Okay, well that's a
10 good starting point. So, there's the information
11 that we're looking for. So, how much of that on an
12 annual basis does DFTA accumulate from those
13 particular sites? That's the type of information
14 that we can work with you on figuring out a plan on,
15 well, maybe that's not the right site, or maybe that
16 contract shouldn't be renewed because there's
17 asbestos, there's electrical issues, there's a roof
18 leak, there's unofficial heating. So, can we get
19 access to that data? That's that first step, where
20 is that data maintained, because otherwise then we're
21 going to have to submit a bill saying we need access
22 to give us that information. We just can't say its
23 operated and leased by a third party. We need to
24 know our seniors are safe. So, if their operating in
25 a building that has deficient facilities or capital,

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2 that's a process - so, is that information we can
3 obtain?

4 KAREN TAYLOR: Yes.

5 CARYN RESNICK: Yes.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Okay, how soon can
7 we obtain it? And that's just starting with the 103,
8 my next section, I'm just going to go with your
9 paragraphs and you have 74 senior centers at NYCHA.
10 So, NYCHA's having not a very good year right now.

11 KAREN TAYLOR: I do want to say something
12 though about the sponsor leased, even the sponsor
13 owned, that does not mean that we don't go near them
14 when they have an issue. We do a huge amount of
15 tentacles assistance and actual direct funding of
16 projects in those sites.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: How so?

18 KAREN TAYLOR: Oh gosh, let's see, let me
19 think -

20 CARYN RESNICK: So, we have a facilities
21 unit and the director of that unit is sitting here
22 who could in her sleep basically tell you the
23 physical condition of everyone of the 249 centers and
24 what projects are going on in those centers, and she
25 has a staff and so, we are very involved. Depending

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2 on the provider, some are much more sophisticated
3 than others, so some are quite capable of handling
4 leases and repairs on their own and some of the
5 smaller independent programs need much more
6 handholding, and we're there to do that. It crosses
7 all boroughs and comes to my desk, where I'm making a
8 call to NYCHA in order to ameliorate a you know,
9 cooling situation in the summer. So, its very hands
10 on.

11 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, you have a facility
12 division?

13 CARYN RESNICK: We do.

14 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, how many staff do you
15 have in that division?

16 CARYN RESNICK: We have about six staff that
17 are just in the facilities unit but then of course
18 the work around that crosses over into the budget
19 department and clearly into Karen's department with
20 our program officers, make their way to me and my
21 staff, so it's more than six people who are dealing
22 with repair and maintenance issues. It kind of cuts
23 across a large part of the agency.

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2 KAREN TAYLOR: As well as the provider staff
3 on site. They also work with us and we work with
4 them to – because most of the funding for these –

5 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So, what is the
6 role of the facilities managing site if there is no
7 budget for the capital, what are they doing?

8 KAREN TAYLOR: Well, there's a Community
9 Development Block Grant Budget and there is a Capital
10 budget –

11 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: How many of those
12 sites have applied for Community Block Grants that
13 have been approved?

14 KAREN TAYLOR: I'd have to get back to you
15 on that, I don't know, and the Community Development
16 Block Grant is not a good resource for immediate
17 repair or maintenance usually because of the timeline
18 that is usually required with CDBG money with the
19 registrations and the types of projects. So, usually
20 its expense money –

21 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So, of the requests
22 made of that program, have they been 100 percent
23 funded, or is there a wait list?

24 KAREN TAYLOR: There's no wait list that I'm
25 aware of.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So, every request
3 for funding has been received?

4 CARYN RESNICK: Yeah.

5 KAREN TAYLOR: They prioritized and triaged.
6 Yes, the two million dollars is not sufficient to
7 cover all of the projects in a given year.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: We're trying to
9 help you on that number, so that's where we're going.
10 So, if we had a larger fund -

11 CARYN RESNICK: But we get a new allocation
12 each year. So, we have projects that are in the
13 pipeline.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So, it goes back to
15 what the Chair and I are always advocating for which
16 is that interagency cooperation between this, because
17 obviously DFTA doesn't have control over the majority
18 of these situations and if you just go to the next
19 paragraph in your testimony, which is NYCHA, where is
20 DFTA's role in NYCHA's capital improvement schedule
21 of the NYCHA run senior centers?

22 CARYN RESNICK: I think NYCHA has to answer
23 that question, I don't know that we can answer that
24 question, but they are constantly advocating for our

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2 sites and our centers in terms of repairs and
3 especially emergency repairs and maintenance.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Does NYCHA provide
5 to DFTA a breakdown of capital repairs done at NYCHA
6 sites, senior center sites?

7 CARYN RESNICK: No.

8 KAREN TAYLOR: No.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, that sounds
10 like a good place. I would want to know what NYCHA's
11 doing with my senior centers, especially with the
12 year NYCHA's having. I think they're probably going
13 to have not some good answers for us either. So,
14 that's probably a whole separate hearing that our
15 Chair is going to probably want to tackle is since
16 we're talking about over 74 senior centers are NYCHA
17 centers.

18 KAREN TAYLOR: But we also do repairs and
19 maintenance in NYCHA senior centers as well, its not
20 always just NYCHA.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So, there is some
22 type of coordination?

23 CARYN RESNICK: Oh absolutely.

24 KAREN TAYLOR: Yes, I'd say almost -
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2 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So, what would be a
3 repair that DFTA would be looking to do at a NYCHA
4 senior center? What would be DFTA's repair as
5 opposed -

6 CARYN RESNICK: So, inside the facility,
7 which could be anywhere from painting to a bathroom
8 repair, or you know, chipping paint, a hole in the
9 wall kind of situation and those we try to address
10 within our own budget and in a very timely way but if
11 there's a leak for example, from an apartment above,
12 that's causing a flooding problem in the Center, then
13 we really have to go to NYCHA to deal with internal
14 plumbing or you know, a building wide repair.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: So, how is that
16 decision made?

17 CARYN RESNICK: I think we can allow and
18 access the nature of whats happening.

19 KAREN TAYLOR: We reach out to NYCHA, I mean
20 we have a situation in your district that you know,
21 one of the social clubs at Meltzer, that has had in
22 the past chronic leaks and we reach out to NYCHA and
23 NYCHA will go out and do repairs and we will stay in
24 touch with them until the problem is resolved as we
25 have done in many other centers. If it's a situation

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2 such as we've had this summer, I know we had some
3 HVAC air conditioning issues, if NYCHA was not able
4 to respond and to bring in a replacement or a repair,
5 we work with the provider, with NYCHA and internally
6 to come up with a solution, which we have done -
7 although we didn't make it in time for air
8 conditioning season, but we hope to make it in time
9 for heating season. So, we work very diligently and
10 conscientiously on these. Yes, it takes too long
11 sometimes but we are aware of and in a lot of
12 communication with NYCHA especially because their the
13 primary other agency that we share seniors in a
14 responsibility with.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Oh, there's a lot
16 there in that paragraph. So, it's a matter of
17 determining what is being prioritized through DFTA
18 versus whats being handled through NYCHA for a senior
19 center and then where that puts that senior center in
20 the line of waiting for relief and I think that's our
21 responsibility is to determine that chain of command
22 and where we need to expedite it, where we need to
23 extra fund, and where we need to step in and I don't
24 think we're at that place yet. I mean, it seems like
25 there's just you work it out together and who ever

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2 can get to it – obviously that’s not a place that we
3 as a Council want to be at. We want to be in a more
4 systematic guideline, I know that’s what we’re
5 hearing from. Of the 21 senior centers that are
6 located in the city lease sites, DCAS negotiates the
7 lease. Where is DFTA’s role with DCAS on those
8 sites?

9 CARYN RESNICK: At the table in discussion,
10 we discuss with the provider and with DCAS the terms
11 of the lease, the scope. In particularly the scope
12 of work that might be needed as the lease is renewed.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: For that scope of
14 work, is there any accountability? Do they respond
15 back on an annual basis, quarterly basis?

16 CARYN RESNICK: Let me check.

17 KAREN TAYLOR: These are projects that
18 happen right away, that coincide with lease renewal.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Okay, so when the
20 lease is renewed then the work completed is provided
21 at that point?

22 CARYN RESNICK: That’s right and if there’s
23 anything additional in the future, they would let us
24 know, and then we would work that out either with
25 DCAS or with the landlord.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Do we have a list
3 of any of the pending work that needs to be done at
4 these sites that for a budget on an annual basis?

5 KAREN TAYLOR: We can review and get you a
6 list. We don't have it with us today.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I think that would
8 be something we'd like to help champion for you when
9 it comes to budget -

10 CARYN RESNICK: Yeah, I'm being told that a
11 lot are up for renewal right now.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Alright, I'll turn
13 it back over to the Chair, since I know she has more
14 questions, thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: We've been joined by
16 Council Member Eugene, Council Member Dromm, and
17 Council Member Deutsch, and Council Member Diaz with
18 questions.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you Madam
20 Chair lady. Commissioner, I'm going to stay with
21 NYCHA. It is of public knowledge that NYCHA is a bad
22 landlord. We all know that NYCHA has been taken to
23 court by the federal government forcing NYCHA to do
24 repairs and we all know that there have been children
25 that have been getting sick because of lead

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2 poisoning. So, NYCHA has proven to be negligent in
3 maintaining their facilities and senior citizens are
4 the most fragile citizens that we have. Has the
5 Department or the Agent created any special unit of
6 any special inquiries in making sure that those
7 senior centers that are located in NYCHA buildings
8 get special attention from the department or the
9 agent? Is anything created special for the seniors?

10 CARYN RESNICK: The NYCHA senior centers are
11 like, as with all of our senior centers, we
12 absolutely do stay in close contact with them because
13 many of the NYCHA centers are old and have some
14 facility issues. We are always - well, we seem to
15 work with a large number of NYCHA centers very
16 regularly. So, when you ask if we have special
17 programs -

18 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Yeah, something
19 special to be sure that the senior citizens centers
20 that are located in NYCHA, NYCHA pays the necessary
21 attention.

22 CARYN RESNICK: Right, our professional
23 staff do make multiple site visits to these sites
24 every year. Our nutritionists go out and our program
25 officers go out and we take a look at the facility,

1
2 different aspects of the facility when we're out
3 there.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Let me give you two
5 examples. One, last year, we had a problem with
6 Castle Hill Senior Center.

7 KAREN TAYLOR: Castle Hill.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: 625 Castle Hill. We
9 had to pick in order for NYCHA to pay attention to
10 the heat. Yesterday, we had to call NYCHA again
11 because the senior citizens were there with coats but
12 they're telling me that even when they call agents to
13 apply for the aid, nobody cares. Not NYCHA, not the
14 department or the agent.

15 CARYN RESNICK: I don't know who they spoke
16 to, but we have program officers that are assigned to
17 Castle Hill and we'd be happy to follow up with them.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Okay, I would
19 appreciate today. You put a call in to Castle Hill
20 and to Bronx River Senior Center. So, those two, my
21 district, they are complaining already they have been
22 neglected.

23 KAREN TAYLOR: About heat, right?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Yeah.

25 KAREN TAYLOR: Okay.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: So, if you could do
3 something about it or pressure NYCHA to be sure that
4 they are taken care of, it would be appreciated.
5 Thank you very much.

6 KAREN TAYLOR: We'll reach out.

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. Council
8 Member Deutsch, Dromm, you have questions?

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you, thank
10 you madam Chair. Good afternoon Commissioner. You
11 mentioned in your testimony that you make at least
12 two visits to every senior center annually. You also
13 mentioned that there are 13 senior centers located in
14 city-owned sites. So, when you make those two visits
15 on these 13 senior centers in city-owned buildings,
16 what do you do with that information if you see
17 repairs that need to be made? What happens with that
18 information?

19 CARYN RESNICK: That information gets
20 brought back to the department by actually, it's more
21 like four visits, because its two visits by a program
22 officer and two visits by a nutritionist. Although,
23 they look at slightly different -

24 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: But the
25 nutritionist doesn't check the building, right?

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2 CARYN RESNICK: No, they check other things.
3 They check the bathrooms, they check the water you
4 know, to make sure that there is hot and cold water
5 and they check the kitchen. The information is
6 brought back and entered into a system so that we can
7 then – and then we send notice – well, first of all
8 after they have visited and they've noted any
9 particular items, they sit down with the program
10 director and they have an exit interview where they
11 go over what they found and provide suggestions or
12 help them come up with a plan to address these items
13 and then they bring back the information, load it
14 into a system that we have into the department so
15 that we can follow up. The program then gets a
16 letter and sends a response back identifying what
17 their correct of action plan is and that we do track
18 and then later on when they do their second round of
19 visits which are follow ups, they check to make sure
20 that those things have been corrected or that there
21 is a plan in place to make a correction and in the
22 meantime, we'll provide technical assistance if
23 needed to help the program effect a remedial action.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, lets assume so,
25 if it's a city-owned building, lets assume you make

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2 your visits and you see that the roof is leaking,
3 what happens then?

4 KAREN TAYLOR: If it's a city-owned
5 building, our facilities unit has staff that will go
6 out and take care of that and handle that with the
7 landlord.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, the landlord is
9 the City, right?

10 KAREN TAYLOR: Yes.

11 CARYN RESNICK: Yes.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, the money comes
13 from the city. So, if there's major let's say, roof
14 repair that's needed or the elevator broke down, so
15 you go down there, you inspect the site, you see the
16 elevator is not working. Its no longer handicap
17 accessible and it's a senior center. You're roof
18 needs some much needed repairs and it could cost
19 let's say \$500,000, what happens then?

20 CARYN RESNICK: We'll take care of it.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Where is the money
22 coming from?

23 CARYN RESNICK: That would come out of our
24 capital budget.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, when do you ask
3 for that money in the capital budget. Let's say its
4 during July?

5 CARYN RESNICK: Well, these are things – the
6 things that you're mentioning are emergencies quite
7 frankly. I mean if its something more cosmetic, it
8 might be a longer wait, but –

9 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, is there money
10 in reserve to make those repairs?

11 CARYN RESNICK: I think we said earlier, we
12 do have a capital budget.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: I'm sorry.

14 KAREN TAYLOR: Okay, to meet the emergency
15 situation, we would do whatever we need to do on a
16 short-term basis, sort of like a patch job and then
17 we would work on a long-term solution.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, if the short-
19 term solution is a large amount of money that's a
20 high cost, so what do you do then? Is there money
21 that you have in reserve to make those repairs
22 immediately? Or do you wait until the next fiscal
23 year?

24 CARYN RESNICK: Let me consult just for a
25 minute.

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COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Yeah.

CARYN RESNICK: I am reminded that we always fund emergencies. They do not go unheated. We always fund emergencies and then we'll work on a more long-term solution if the emergency can be met with a short-term interim step, that's what we'll do first, in order to free up more time, but we'll address emergencies, we do have funding for that.

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, whatever you need to make, like high cost repairs, are you guaranteed the money in the next fiscal budget, or is it something that doesn't always come through?

CARYN RESNICK: There's never a guarantee, but we do try and so far, we've been successful in coming up with funds for emergency repairs.

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, if on your 13 senior centers located in city-owned sites, how many are NYCHA? How many are NYCHA owned buildings?

KAREN TAYLOR: How many centers are in NYCHA buildings?

COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Yes, correct.

KAREN TAYLOR: 74.

CARYN RESNICK: And that's an addition to the 13 others.

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2 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, its 13 and you
3 have 74.

4 CARYN RESNICK: Plus 74, yeah.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, on the 74 NYCHA
6 buildings, who's responsible for those repairs?

7 CARYN RESNICK: So, we talked about that a
8 little bit before you got here. Primarily, if its
9 systemic or if it's the roof or the electrical or
10 some major part of the building, we call it the
11 envelope, then NYCHA is responsible and DFTA will
12 take on repairs that are internal to the senior
13 center, more of minor repairs.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: So, that's where I
15 have a concern. My concern is that we all know that
16 NYCHA's under fire because they can't even control
17 their own developments. So, if they cannot control
18 their own apartments that they are supposed to make
19 repairs, how can they be accountable to repair the
20 senior centers, the 74 senior centers that are in
21 NYCHA housing? So, I know that with the FDNY and
22 other city agencies, they do come to the New York
23 City Council Members within the district and they
24 make a budget request for each member and from the
25 allocations that we receive, each member receives, so

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2 it's our choice to give those agencies some capital
3 money in the budget from the money that we are
4 eligible to disperse. In addition to that, then if
5 we are made aware of some needed repairs in a NYCHA
6 building, then we can advocate during the budget
7 season to make sure that those funds – we work very
8 hard to make sure those funds go through. So,
9 actually we can't rely on NYCHA to make those repairs
10 and if you're saying that it's the NYCHA that has to
11 make those repairs, but I'm curious to know from the
12 74 that you do four inspections a year, is that how
13 many of those repairs that you have noted are still
14 not repaired because NYCHA did not respond? Do you
15 have a number on that?

16 KAREN TAYLOR: No, I don't have a number,
17 but this would be repairs for instance, to the roof
18 or to the building systems and so forth.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Yeah, so if you
20 don't have a number, I would guess probably none,
21 based on the NYCHA's track record. So, my
22 recommendation is that before the next fiscal year
23 that the Department of Aging should come up with a
24 comprehensive list on all 74 NYCHA senior centers and
25 present those to the members of who have those senior

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2 centers in his or her districts and then let us help
3 you fight for the funding to make those much-needed
4 repairs. For example, in my district, I have
5 Mitchell Lama of 22,000 Mitchell Lama apartments in
6 three developments. So, I allocate the money to keep
7 those maintenance costs down. So, I help out those
8 capital repairs. So, we as members, we have that
9 ability to fight for that capital funding whether its
10 for NYCHA or its for Mitchell Lama or any other type
11 of public city-owned buildings. So, my
12 recommendation is that you should give us a list of
13 each development and what repairs need to be made, so
14 we can help you in the process.

15 CARYN RESNICK: Thank you.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER DEUTSCH: Thank you.

17 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Council Member Eugene
18 also has a question.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you very much
20 Chair Chin. I don't know if you answered this part
21 of the repairs question. You mentioned that there
22 are certain repairs in terms of emergencies. There
23 are certain repairs that are under the responsibility
24 of DFTA and other repairs that are under the
25 responsibility of NYCHA, but in case NYCHA should do

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2 some repairs, and the repairs are delayed, or they
3 are not done, what is the position of DFTA? What
4 happens if for one or either reason NYCHA are
5 supposed to do the repairs and the repairs are not
6 done or have been delayed and the seniors do need
7 these services, what happens?

8 CARYN RESNICK: So, again these are on a
9 case-by-case basis, but we constantly are in
10 communication with NYCHA, we advocate on behalf of
11 our centers and if it's a repair that we can
12 facilitate and get it done and in a more expedited
13 manner, than we will go ahead and make that repair.
14 Otherwise, we continue to work with NYCHA to try and
15 expedite them making the repair. And there are by
16 the way, I mean, I saw a number recently you know,
17 over a hundred million dollars in repairs and
18 renovations have been made by NYCHA in this past
19 year. So, we are constantly making repairs and doing
20 maintenance.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Uh huh, but you
22 know, in case that you are advocating, you keep
23 advocating, then the best that we can do for NYCHA to
24 do the repairs and the repairs are still not done.
25 What does DFTA has in its power to force and to make

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2 sure that NYCHA does the repairs or handle the
3 situation?

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CARYN RESNICK: I mean, we don't officially
5 have any power that requires them to do anything and
6 as I said, if we have the funding and we can make a
7 repair but if its structural, if its an elevator or a
8 roof problem then its outside of our jurisdiction.

9

COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: So, that means if the
10 repairs need to be done and you use all
11 possibilities, everything in terms of advocacy to
12 NYCHA, and NYCHA doesn't do the repair and the
13 seniors will be there will them until you know,
14 somebody of good faith and something happens, and the
15 repairs are done, is that correct?

16

CARYN RESNICK: In some extreme
17 circumstances, we have told the center they would
18 have to close until repairs are done. I can't think
19 of a specific example in NYCHA, but I know that we -

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KAREN TAYLOR: That's really very rare,
21 ever.

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CARYN RESNICK: That's very, very rare.

23

COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: I'm sorry. Could
24 you repeat that again for me? The center would have
25 to close?

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2 CARYN RESNICK: If until the repair is done.
3 If its something that is so egregious that it would
4 interfere with the health or the safety of the
5 seniors, we would definitely say, you know, let's
6 close for a few days and let them get in and do the
7 repair and that is one alternative we have. Although
8 it is a very last resort.

9 KAREN TAYLOR: We always work with NYCHA if
10 we have to raise it up at the flag pole within their
11 hierarchy, we do that. I myself, the Commissioner
12 has been on the phone with the Chair, or the manager
13 and we press as hard as we need to, to get the repair
14 done. Sometimes a Council Member may call directly.
15 So, we keep working at it until it gets done and
16 really in almost every instance that has happened.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: I do understand
18 that's maybe a very difficult situation for you to be
19 in but is there anything that can be done within you
20 DFTA, and NYCHA in part with the City Council or
21 their administration to prevent the closure of the
22 centers in case such situations happen? Because we
23 have to be preventive and proactive. Our seniors,
24 they need these services. They need the services, so
25 that would be very unfortunate to see that you are

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2 forced to close senior centers when we could have
3 done something to prevent it. I would recommend, and
4 I wish that you know, you can think about that
5 strategy or something that could be done within NYCHA
6 and DFTA in part of that administration, or the City
7 Council to prevent the closure of the centers that
8 the seniors need so badly.

9 CARYN RESNICK: We have an ongoing and
10 continued dialog with NYCHA. Sometimes DYCD may also
11 be in a location, so there are other agencies
12 sometimes our facilities are shared, so we have all
13 the partners at the table to try and ameliorate the
14 situation.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: But I would
16 appreciate again you know, I'm going invite my
17 intervention, but I would appreciate any effort that
18 can be done to make sure that we can prevent a
19 closure of senior centers because those seniors, they
20 need our support. They have paid their dues and we
21 owe them that.

22 KAREN TAYLOR: We are too, and I probably
23 misspoke a little bit earlier when I said, that is
24 not a typical tactic that we have.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: But that can happen.

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2 CARYN RESNICK: In an extreme situation,
3 that could happen.

4 KAREN TAYLOR: If a roof is caving in like,
5 Council Person Ayala referred to earlier, if the
6 building is totally unsafe and we have to move the
7 center, or move the seniors to another site, so that
8 NYCHA can go in and start to repair. That would be
9 the only situation. It's not that we just
10 arbitrarily say that they can't operate.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: So, that means - I'm
12 very glad that you bring this precision but what I
13 mean is there is something that can be done to
14 prevent the building to get to the point that it is
15 unsafe, and the seniors cannot be there. I'm not
16 talking about things that are not under your
17 possibility and NYCHA a possibility to do something.
18 I'm talking about regular repairs or emergency
19 repairs that could be prevented.

20 CARYN RESNICK: Absolutely.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: So, anyway thank you
22 so very much. Thank you, madam Chair, thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. I just wanted
24 to follow up. I know with all these repair issues;

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2 do you have a designated budget for emergency
3 repairs?

4 CARYN RESNICK: On an as needed basis.

5 KAREN TAYLOR: It's on an as needed basis,
6 yes. Non-designated but available for emergency
7 repairs.

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, how much did you use
9 last year for emergency?

10 CARYN RESNICK: We're going to get that to
11 you.

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Because we heard it was
13 around ten million.

14 CARYN RESNICK: No, ten million is what I
15 said was our capital budget for the current year, but
16 we will get from our budget director the exact amount
17 of money that we spent on repairs from expense money.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, you don't have a set
19 aside budget for emergency, or for repair, in terms
20 of your total budget but you manage to find the money
21 when its needed, I mean?

22 CARYN RESNICK: That's correct.

23 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Well, we'll follow up
24 with that, I'm not getting it. Now, you kept talking
25 about 13 centers that are eligible. So, for the rest

1
2 of the senior centers, whats the process if a
3 provider wanted to apply for capital funding to do
4 some upgrades and improvement? Is that a process
5 that DFTA let them know how they can apply?

6 CARYN RESNICK: Right, yes. They would come
7 to us and they would say they want to say, upgrade
8 their kitchen, we would have our facilities staff and
9 perhaps our nutritionist go and take a look and start
10 to work up a scope, find out what they want to do and
11 depending on the extent and the estimated cost of the
12 project, we would either look for Community
13 Development Block Grant funds, if it fit that
14 criteria or we would start talking with the provider
15 and talking with our budget unit about what kind of
16 funding we could find.

17 KAREN TAYLOR: Providers, our provider
18 network has been very creative in raising funds for
19 some. Some are very, very large-scale projects where
20 they've raised foundation money, private, had their
21 own capital campaign, gone to the Council, gone to
22 the state dormitory authority. There is an entire
23 variety of places that people seek funding and some
24 very extensive projects have been done over the years
25 and we stay abreast of whats going on, oversee if

1
2 there's a bidding process that needs to happen and do
3 handholding along the way.

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Now, according to the
5 report, the hearing report that the Council put
6 together for the fiscal 2019-2022, DFTA related
7 capital project, there was a total of 82 projects and
8 29 was under DFTA and then 25 is under DDC, 21 is
9 EDC, NYCHA has 6, and DCAS has 1. So, in those
10 situations like how does one center end up with EDC
11 and one center end up with DDC? I mean, NYCHA I can
12 understand, they're in a NYCHA building and then
13 DFTA, there are like 29 that's under DFTA directly.
14 Are you sure you want to come up, we're going to
15 swear you in?

16 COUNCIL: Please raise your right hand. Do
17 you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and
18 nothing but the truth in your testimony before this
19 committee and to respond honestly to Council Member
20 questions?

21 SASHA FISHMAN: I'm pretty sure that 28 out
22 of the 29 DFTA managed projects that you're referring
23 to are not renovation repair projects. They could be
24 computer projects, they could be vehicle projects, or
25 they could just be left over from projects that have

1
2 been ongoing and there is a small amount of funding
3 left in the budget which surely is kind of going to
4 be **[inaudible 1:08:48]** eventually because it becomes
5 noncapital eligible if its under \$45,000. So, you're
6 probably looking at some of the projects that are on
7 the DFTA management. The big renovation projects
8 are, I believe they are city-owned buildings. They
9 are managed by DDC, if they are non-city owned, they
10 are managed by EDC. Occasionally there is a project
11 or two that could be managed by HPD and yes, there's
12 a couple that were managed or will be managed by
13 NYCHA.

14 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, because this is in
15 your adopted capital plan, 2019-2022. So, I assume
16 you would have information about all 82 projects,
17 even though you only manage 29, the rest is with the
18 other agencies.

19 SASHA FISHMAN: Yes, we have information on
20 all projects that are ongoing. Some of those
21 projects that are new, have not yet started, the
22 information is being gathered, they're being bid out.
23 We talk to DDC or EDC, other agencies that are
24 involved in this project.

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, you do have more than
3 Two Million dollars? Two Million dollars CDBG but
4 like this capital plan is 61.9 million?

5 SASHA FISHMAN: Over five years.

6 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Over five years, okay.
7 Now, so the process for the provider to sort of know
8 how to apply, you're saying that they could just
9 contact you and you will kind of guide them through
10 the process.

11 SASHA FISHMAN: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Like if they want to
13 renovate their kitchen or make their building
14 accessible?

15 CARYN RESNICK: Yeah, the first thing is
16 usually they bring it to our attention.

17 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: And they know that they
18 could do that?

19 CARYN RESNICK: Absolutely.

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Now how many – are there
21 some technology projects that DFTA right now are
22 helping centers upgrade their technology and would
23 that consider capital?

24 SASHA FISHMAN: There isn't any ongoing that
25 I know of. There might be some that were newly

1
2 allocated, but there is none that I know of that are
3 ongoing.

4 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But if they want to
5 upgrade their technology, they can also come to DFTA?

6 SASHA FISHMAN: Oh, absolutely and they do.

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, how do you arrive at
8 how much capital requests you need to put in for the
9 fiscal year or for the next five-year plan?

10 CARYN RESNICK: I'm sorry.

11 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I mean, how do you gather
12 the information in terms of what your capital needs
13 are for your centers or other senior centers?

14 SASHA FISHMAN: But usually by the time the
15 capital budget time comes around, we would already
16 have requests for capital needs because they come way
17 before the capital budget.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, when do you tell a
19 provider that they have to come in with their
20 requests?

21 CARYN RESNICK: They come in throughout the
22 year. There is not a particular moment in time.

23 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But if they have to make
24 sure that they get into the capital plan - I mean
25 right now, if the capital plan right now is five

1
2 years already set, then you mean that the provider
3 now if they decided they want to do something to
4 renovate their center –

5 CARYN RESNICK: They may get a capital
6 allocation from the City Council or from the borough
7 president, or from somewhere else and you know, that
8 money may come through our budget.

9 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay.

10 CARYN RESNICK: So, we keep an ongoing list
11 and prioritize but then there are still new things
12 that may come our way.

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, I mean, we're
14 trying to get at in terms of the capital needs that
15 you have because when you just said earlier you know,
16 CDBG to Williams, I cant do much with that two
17 million and also with all the – because a lot of the
18 centers are pretty old and they have a lot of issues
19 and that's why we're trying to you know, in the new
20 affordable housing buildings –

21 CARYN RESNICK: Yes, I was about to say, we
22 recently met with HPD to do some mapping and cross
23 walking of every new development that's going up and
24 seeing if there is a community space where we might
25 relocate a center, so we're looking for opportunities

1
2 like that if we're in you know, where we have
3 facility problems. Some of the NYCHA infill have
4 build new community space and we're looking to see by
5 the time of our RFP if we can relocate or recite a
6 center into some of those. So, we also look for
7 opportunities to relocate.

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Are there possibilities
9 in terms of relocating let's say now, and Council
10 Member Ayala, she has a senior center in a NYCHA
11 building that's not in good condition and meanwhile,
12 across the street there's a new building, that has a
13 new facility. So, if they want to move over to be
14 able to provide the services in a new facility, can
15 they come to DFTA to ask for additional funding if
16 they need that?

17 CARYN RESNICK: They can, yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Because they'll be
19 providing for more seniors.

20 CARYN RESNICK: Exactly.

21 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Because there's a senior
22 in the new building and the senior that's been going
23 to the center.

24 CARYN RESNICK: Yes, they can, and they do
25 and then we have other situations where programs have

1
2 to find another space and we help them look for that
3 as well. I just wanted to say one thing though about
4 the requests and the planning. As we had said
5 before, the large majority of our centers are not
6 eligible for capital funding and so we would on
7 expense funding, which is one year at a time, many of
8 our repairs plans come up – come up, there's a
9 problem, they come up, they need to be addressed,
10 they get resolved and then there's the next one that
11 comes up. So, planning into the long term, first of
12 all really can't be done as well with expense money
13 but also, there are unaddressed that come all the
14 time and that really – in order to keep the center
15 safe for the seniors and pleasant for the seniors, we
16 have to continue to address things on either a
17 seasonal basis or certainly as they come up basis and
18 I think that it may be odd to hear that we don't have
19 a designated pot of money but we always do find
20 money, is because we don't always know. We didn't
21 know last winter it was going to be as cold as it was
22 and so forth, and we need to be prepared for those
23 kinds of eventualities as well. We do still have
24 some long-term projects and the CDBG funds, if its
25 not capital eligible can be used at times for some of

1
2 those longer-term funds. So, we have different ways
3 of working it but a lot of what we're talking about
4 today is on an annual basis with the expense funds.

5 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, how much money did
6 you kind of like put aside on the expense side?

7 KAREN TAYLOR: We said, we're going to get
8 back to you.

9 CARYN RESNICK: We're going to get back to
10 you on what was spent.

11 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, the expense is also
12 considered you put emergencies in there, you put non-
13 emergencies -

14 KAREN TAYLOR: Yeah, in fact most of it is
15 expense.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Also, can you get back to
17 us in terms of how many projects were funded by the
18 expense funding last year? And how many were not
19 funded?

20 CARYN RESNICK: Yes.

21 KAREN TAYLOR: Yeah.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: There is a lot left
23 unanswered, but you mentioned that for the projects
24 that are DDC run and EDC run compared to city versus
25

1
2 non-city, what information is provided to DFTA on an
3 annual basis on those projects?

4 SASHA FISHMAN: You mean the progress?

5 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Yes.

6 CARYN RESNICK: We check in with them and
7 they check in with us. In fact, today the
8 Commissioner who is in Queens at City Hall in your
9 borough met with the Commissioner of EDC and DDC and
10 touched base on a number of these issues.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, touching base
12 is a good thing but to actually have the information
13 is another. Is there a requirement that they have to
14 provide to you, a capital update on projects?

15 KAREN TAYLOR: Our facility attend project
16 meeting and project meetings are ongoing throughout
17 the project.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Oh, I mean
19 attending the meetings is a good thing, but again, we
20 can give that backbone to DFTA by requiring every
21 city agency that has a senior center agency project,
22 capital or otherwise to report back to DFTA on the
23 progress of that capital budget.

24 KAREN TAYLOR: We're very much at the loop.

25 CARYN RESNICK: We're at the meetings so.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: At the meetings is
3 one thing. You keep saying the same thing but having
4 the information at a hearing today is quite different
5 and that's what we're asking for, right? So, you
6 keep telling me, we're at the meetings. We're there,
7 we're involved, that's not what we're looking for
8 because then I have to either be myself at the
9 hearing to get the information. We're looking for
10 the information to come back to us, so that we can
11 make a decision as to what needs to be going forward.
12 I don't doubt that you're at the table and I don't
13 doubt that you're at the conversation. That
14 information needs to be brought back. So, if there's
15 no accountability from EDC or DDC to require to give
16 you that information, then you can turn that over to
17 us and we can fight for that on a capital basis.
18 That's where the frustration is today. We want to
19 give DFTA that arm. So, if they're not giving it to
20 you, we will make them give it to you is where it
21 comes down to.

22 CARYN RESNICK: We, I don't think have an
23 issue getting information nor sharing the
24 information. We were not prepared or asked to come
25

1
2 in armed with that information and we will get it to
3 you as soon as we can.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: Well, I mean, I
5 think that's based on your breakdown of the senior
6 centers, I think the frustration you're seeing today
7 is there's an answer for each group or whatever, it's
8 a 109, a 15, a 9 of the 270 centers. I want that
9 information from DFTA to come forward as to the
10 status of capital projects and obviously Two million
11 dollars, I mean if we all get SCA in schools and if
12 the local libraries don't get parks, I can't do an
13 upgrade to a park that doesn't cost me two million
14 dollars if I want to do a kiddie center on a park.
15 So, I can only imagine the cost of a roof, an HVAC
16 system, and so those are going to run through the
17 roof. If there is a problem with a particular
18 project, for example, I know in my neck of the woods,
19 **[INAUDIBLE 1:20:07]** and HVAC process ran for over a
20 decade and EDC and them just weren't on the same page
21 for ten years and who suffered were the seniors.
22 What is DFTA's role to help expedite or step in in a
23 process where there's a disconnect there between your
24 senior center, the contractor, and the provider?

1
2 CARYN RESNICK: I'm not familiar with the
3 **[inaudible 1:20:28]** project, but we in the facilities
4 unit are called upon to step in quite regularly and
5 sometimes that makes its way up to the Commissioners
6 office if there's really a log jam. So, we use
7 everything at our disposal to try and move things
8 along. Construction takes a long time, capital
9 funding, I mean I think what you're hearing is -
10 because I had to study some of this to come before
11 you this morning. It's quite complicated. What can
12 be spent on capital is complicated. It's not all
13 very straight forward. You know, compounded by going
14 through -

15 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: No, it may not even
16 fall under your jurisdiction, I get it. So, its
17 tough trying to get that information.

18 CARYN RESNICK: So, its not that we're not
19 trying to be transparent, its you know, wrapping our
20 arms around the whole - and when you use the word
21 capital, it may not be the same definition of what
22 we're calling capital. So, some of this is also by
23 definition but we're really happy to continue the
24 dialog and share whatever information it is that your
25 seeking.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER VALLONE: I mean I'll turn it
3 back to Chair Chin, I think there's an opportunity
4 for us to put in the checks and balances with some of
5 the other agencies that are taking the responsibility
6 or actually responsible for some of these projects
7 and then we have spectacular sites with senior
8 centers that maybe looking for extra help and I think
9 that's where we need to find whether its NYCHA having
10 their emergency problems, we have to have a system in
11 place that we can tap into those extra capital
12 resources so we can make those changes and
13 accountabilities where we need from these
14 interagencies so that we don't have to keep fishing
15 around on whats going on, but thank you for today's
16 information. I'll turn it back to the Chair.

17 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Just a couple more
18 questions on terms of how many of the DFTA senior
19 centers are designated as cooling centers and if
20 they're cooling centers are there HVAC repairs, takes
21 a priority?

22 CARYN RESNICK: All of the DFTA senior
23 centers that have air conditioning of the 249, they
24 start out as being designated cooling centers.
25 During the course of the summer what inevitably

1
2 happens is that some of the ACs either stop working
3 or stop working sufficiently to remain a cooling
4 center and then they are taken offline and this is
5 something that goes on in concert with the Office of
6 Emergency Management all summer. So, I think we had
7 one point late in this last summer, we had maybe 29,
8 30 programs that were originally cooling sites that
9 were addressing their HVAC or their AC problems and
10 had to be taken off, but we have well over 200
11 centers I think at any given time that are cooling
12 sites.

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Now, the one that was
14 taken off - one of them I know is in my district, I
15 didn't hear about it from DFTA, I didn't hear about
16 it - only I ran into a constituent and they were
17 telling me that they hadn't had air conditioning for
18 a while. So, if those centers, if their air
19 conditions break down, are they considered as
20 emergency repair that DFTA will step in and try to
21 get it done? Usually how long would it take?

22 CARYN RESNICK: Yeah, it depends on the
23 repair. Sometimes it's a window unit but if it's a
24 you know, a bigger HVAC system, it might be more
25 complicated. We had issues where there's a part

1
2 that's necessary and you know, its like a repair in
3 your house, it depends on what the nature of the
4 problem is but we work with all of those centers
5 particularly during you know, heat emergencies to
6 make sure the repairs are made as quickly as possible
7 and sometimes it may not be the whole center, it
8 maybe a room. So, part of the center is cool, but a
9 particular room may not be as cool.

10 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Have you had any centers
11 coming in with issues of mold or lead?

12 KAREN TAYLOR: Issues of mold or lead?

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Uhm, hmm. That they need
14 abatement?

15 KAREN TAYLOR: No, I think we've had one
16 case of mold in a kitchen area that needed to be
17 addressed, which was addressed. Lead, I have no — I
18 don't recall anything coming in regarding lead at
19 all.

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: I mean if those issues
21 comes up, that would be through your inspections and
22 —

23 CARYN RESNICK: Yeah, and that would be
24 addressed usually fairly easily. Mold is an easy fix
25 actually.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, some of these
3 questions I think we gave you a heads up. So, how
4 many DFTA senior centers, , social
5 daycare are not ADA compliance or wheelchair
6 accessible?

7 CARYN RESNICK: A very small percentage, ten
8 percent or less and those are buildings or churches,
9 synagogues that were built before I think its 1972
10 when the ADA went into effect. So, there in essence
11 grandfathered in but then we try to do ramps or other
12 work around to make it accessible and if there's
13 absolutely no way then we have at least one if not
14 more senior center in every district which is
15 accessible. So, if there were a senior that needed
16 transportation to another center, we would be able to
17 accommodate for that.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, so also what is the
19 total head count of DFTA staff who work on capital
20 budget?

21 CARYN RESNICK: I mentioned that earlier
22 that its hard to -

23 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Six? You mentioned six.

24 CARYN RESNICK: There were six in the
25 facility unit, that's our facilities unit but then it

1
2 touches upon obviously budget and the bureau
3 community services and program officers. So, its
4 really a much larger number.

5 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: The other question was,
6 what percentage of repairs are under \$35,000 and wind
7 up being paid for by your expense budget?

8 CARYN RESNICK: So, it's about 90 percent of
9 our repairs are small projects and get paid out of
10 expense budget and then anything above I think its
11 actually \$25,000 have to be bid out.

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Above 35?

13 CARYN RESNICK: I think it's 25.

14 KAREN TAYLOR: But there still expense
15 projects.

16 CARYN RESNICK: Oh, 35 for capital, 25 are
17 expense.

18 KAREN TAYLOR: Oh, I see.

19 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, 25 for expense budget
20 you would have to bid it out?

21 CARYN RESNICK: Hmm, hmm.

22 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Even though if its for
23 repairs or whatever but if it's coming out of your
24 expense budget, you have to bid it out.

25 CARYN RESNICK: Yeah.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Do you have any
3 statistics on how many air conditioners outage
4 complaints that you received last summer?

5 CARYN RESNICK: We had approximately a dozen
6 centers that had – oh, I'm sorry, that's heating.

7 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Yeah, heating too but –

8 KAREN TAYLOR: Yeah, as I said, it's a
9 little bit of a rolling number, a moving target, and
10 all of that but roughly around 29, 30 in the middle
11 of August that number of centers did not have
12 sufficient AC to be a cooling center.

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: What about heat?

14 CARYN RESNICK: About a dozen had ongoing
15 heat problems last winter.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: How many, half a dozen?

17 CARYN RESNICK: One dozen.

18 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, you were focusing on
19 I guess to help them solve their problems, so that it
20 won't happen again next year.

21 CARYN RESNICK: Hopefully that's fixed.

22 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Are they on your expense
23 list?

24 KAREN TAYLOR: Yeah.
25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay, alright, I think
3 we're going to let you go because we have a lot of
4 providers and they'll give us more suggestions but
5 ultimately our goal is to help you get more capital
6 funding and funding's for repair and funding for the
7 total DFTA budget, that's our goal and I think that
8 we want to work together with you because our seniors
9 deserve better and the senior population is growing
10 so, the budget's got to increase. We can not
11 tolerate another year of less than one half of one
12 percent of the total city budget. So, lets get it to
13 a percent or more, right?

14 CARYN RESNICK: I won't argue with this
15 zone.

16 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: That's our goal.

17 CARYN RESNICK: Department for the Aging is
18 just one slice of funding in a senior's life. They
19 of course access the MTA and transportation,
20 sanitation, and a whole lot of other agencies, so to
21 me it's still a little bit -

22 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Its still not that much,
23 okay, but Department for the Aging is the agencies
24 that take care of our seniors and you have to have an
25 adequate budget. I mean that's the key point.

1
2 You're the one in charge taking care of our seniors
3 and there's so much need so, we got to increase the
4 size of that budget. Thank you for being here and
5 we'll continue to follow up with all of you.

6 CARYN RESNICK: Thank you, thank you for the
7 opportunity to be here.

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: We're going to call up the
9 next panel. Molly Krakowski from JASA, Tara Klein,
10 UNH, United Neighborhood Houses, Andrea Cianfrani
11 Live On New York, Sandra Christian from RiseBoro
12 Community Partnership. Thank you and thank you to
13 our advocates and providers for waiting. Is someone
14 from DFTA staying behind? Okay, thank you. I want to
15 make sure you hear from the providers. Please begin.

16 TARA KLEIN: Hi, so I'm Tara Klein from
17 United Neighborhood Houses. So, I am a Policy
18 Analyst with UNH. UNH is New York's association of
19 settlement houses. Our membership includes 40
20 settlement houses in New York City and two affiliate
21 members upstate New York. We collectively reach more
22 than 765,000 people across all ages at over 680 sites
23 throughout the city and many of our members run
24 senior centers. So, its not a secret that many of
25 the City's senior centers are in need of very serious

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2 repairs. There are reports of leading roofs,
3 dilapidated kitchen appliance, and broken air
4 conditioners, many within cooling centers, as we just
5 heard, and these are all too common. Internal
6 heating, plumbing, and electrical systems often need
7 major overhauls. Many centers are located in
8 decades-old or even centuries-old buildings which
9 tends to make these problems more frequent and more
10 extreme. Beyond basic repair needs, senior centers
11 also struggle with updating their buildings to be
12 modern and competitive. In an age where computers
13 and tablets are becoming the norm for older adults,
14 many senior centers have outdated equipment and are
15 slow to install basic needs like Wi-Fi.

16 So, unsurprisingly, poor building conditions
17 have a direct negative impact on attendance at senior
18 centers with older adults preferring not to spend
19 time in a building that's in disrepair, or as many
20 have told me, is gross.

21 So, as we've heard today repairs and
22 renovations are generally not included in our senior
23 center contracts and programs need to secure funding
24 outside of the regular contract process. This can be
25 a time-consuming and confusing process, especially as

1
2 many of these projects arise as emergencies and many
3 programs and practice are forced to cover costs
4 through their own limited budgets or to put off
5 repairs until the City can produce the funding, and
6 this can affect the center's overall programming and
7 activities.

8 These problems are even more acute for those
9 senior centers that are located in the NYCHA
10 facilities, where it is NYCHA's responsibility to
11 maintain the building. It was recently reported that
12 NYCHA needs \$500 million dollars for repairs to its
13 senior and community centers but in the context of
14 NYCHA broader repair needs estimated at \$32 billion
15 the upkeep of senior centers in NYCHA facilities run
16 in community-based organizations has become a back-
17 burner priority, leaving many in need of basic
18 facility and maintenance resources.

19 So, neither NYCHA nor DFTA are able to
20 consistently provide the funding or labor needed to
21 maintain the aging infrastructure in public housing.
22 Programs often need to make a difficult choice
23 between working with the housing authority, finding
24 money somewhere in their own budgets, or, far too
25 often, waiting. Providers have been known to wait

1
2 for more than a year for severe issues like leading
3 pipes or cracked ceilings to be addressed. In one
4 case, the senior center located in Hernandez Houses,
5 operated by University Settlement, had a leak that
6 caused a small waterfall to develop on a wall, and
7 while NYCHA came and investigated, and DFTA was
8 supportive in ensuring communications occurred, NYCHA
9 was very slow to provide skilled laborers to fix the
10 problem and this went on for many, many, months until
11 plumbers finally arrived and did some asbestos work,
12 but then the leak soon came back and the process had
13 to start again, and this is still ongoing.

14 Switching over to accessibility, we've heard
15 briefly today about the Americans With Disabilities
16 Act, Accessible Design Standards. These were first
17 issued in the 1990's which is long after many of the
18 senior center buildings were constructed. These
19 standards are very important for senior centers,
20 where limited mobility is a real challenge, but
21 compliance has to be balanced against the reality of
22 capital budgets as we've heard today. In one case,
23 at the Lincoln Square Neighborhood Center, in
24 Amsterdam House, the bathrooms are not wheelchair
25 accessible and the building was constructed before

1
2 the passage of the ADA, but there's no capital
3 funding to make repairs to ensure accessibility. So,
4 as a result, older adults who use wheelchairs and
5 attend the senior center require assistance from
6 aides just to use the bathroom.

7 Next, senior center staff have expressed
8 concerns over many bureaucratic challenges for both
9 small and large repairs. A common experience is a
10 senior center requesting a repair, getting referred
11 to the appropriate City agency to make the repairs,
12 and while waiting for the work to commence, getting a
13 citation or a fine from a different City agency. For
14 example, the E. Roberts Moore Center, operated by
15 Bronx Works in a NYCHA building, submitted a ticket
16 to NYCHA to repair a crack in the wall and while
17 waiting for NYCHA to respond and make the repair, the
18 DFTA program officer came in and investigated and
19 issues a citation for the crack, despite seeing that
20 there was a repair ticket in the works. So, in these
21 types of cases, this can also be issued by the Fire
22 Department, the Department of Health and Mental
23 Hygiene, or the Department of Buildings, or other
24 agencies and this is basically resulting in a
25 phenomenon of the City fining itself. In a case of

1
2 larger renovations, the Sirovich Innovative Senior
3 Center, operated by Educational Alliance, has been
4 working with DFTA on much needed large-scale building
5 repairs in its interior space. They've been working
6 with DFTA since 2014 consistently getting delayed by
7 many administrative challenges. So, these really
8 all-to-common anecdotes could be resolved by stronger
9 agency coordination and a streamlined repair process.

10 So, to address these challenges, UNH
11 recommends increasing the amount of money the City
12 makes available for senior center repairs and
13 streamlining the funding process. So, first in terms
14 of funding this really needs to happen in two key
15 ways. First, is to make sure that DFTA has its own
16 dedicated capital projects fund so it can support
17 large scale repairs and renovations and that fund
18 should be centralized at DFTA and made larger and as
19 we've heard additionally, City rules for capital
20 budgets have a minimum value of \$35,000 and require a
21 period of usefulness for at least five years and many
22 projects, repairs, cost less than that, so funds need
23 to be made available both at DFTA and we are also
24 recommending that the City Council look at
25 establishing a separate flexible discretionary fund

1
2 for senior center repairs and that senior centers
3 located in NYCHA should also be eligible for this
4 funding and then finally, there should be a clear
5 process for how to apply for funding for repairs or
6 upgrades whether through DFTA or NYCHA, and there
7 needs to be swift and appropriate responses. Once
8 repairs have been requested, DFTA should facilitate
9 stronger communication between senior centers and the
10 various government agencies responsible for repairs,
11 such as the Department of Buildings. This will help
12 troubleshoot any contradicting or inaccurate
13 information and avoid the phenomenon of the City
14 fining itself. So, my contact information is in the
15 written testimony. Feel free to follow up with any
16 questions. Thank you.

17 MOLLY KRAKOWSKI: Hi, my name is Molly
18 Krakowski, Director of Legislative Affairs at JASA
19 and I want to thank Council Member Chin for chairing
20 today's meeting. There are a handful of things that
21 I would have included in today's testimony, but I
22 actually am holding off for the NYCHA hearing because
23 a lot piggy backing on my colleague here of issues
24 when it comes to NYCHA senior centers.

1
2 JASA currently sponsors 22 DFTA-funded
3 senior centers operating in Manhattan, one in
4 Manhattan, eight in the Bronx, nine in Brooklyn, four
5 in Queens. Each center is unique, varying in size,
6 demographics, and programs. The senior centers
7 provide a socially inviting environment designed to
8 appeal to the diversity of the community in which
9 they are based, with engaging activities, health and
10 wellness programs, and culturally appropriate meals.
11 One unifying and underlying issue impacting all
12 senior centers, is their struggle to operate with
13 very limited budgets.

14 As I've noted in previous hearings,
15 including at the DFTA Annual Plan Summary hearing
16 yesterday, JSA is very appreciative of the funding
17 that the Administration is investing in senior
18 centers through the model budget process. Funding is
19 significant and will be very helpful in supporting
20 not-for-profit agencies as they establish new
21 programs and recruit and retain valuable staff. We
22 see the additional funding as a recognition that
23 senior centers are a key element of effective
24 services for New York City's older adults and have to
25 be upgraded to meet the needs and preferences of

1
2 growing senior population. However, although we were
3 optimistic that the model budget would address
4 additional and significant needs at the senior
5 centers, including: rent, utilities, related
6 facilities expanses, salaries for kitchen staff and
7 food related expense, this was not the case. We are
8 particularly challenged by the fact that many senior
9 centers were established more than 40 years ago and
10 are located in facilities that are not designated for
11 nor support innovative operations. In New York City
12 facilities expenses escalate at a rapid pace. We
13 need funds to ensure that senior centers are
14 appropriate, that, for example they are ADA
15 accessible, have adequate space for congregate meals
16 and programming. JASA, like other organizations, is
17 constrained by the limitations of available space for
18 senior centers and the ongoing cost of making centers
19 appealing. Given that most providers are unable to
20 move their programs and make major upgrades, we are
21 ever more reliant on the Administration to provide
22 assistance in ensuring that services are able to be
23 delivered in the current spaces.

24 Some examples of the types of challenges we
25 face as a result of this limited budget for senior

1
2 center facilities and our inability to apply for
3 capital funding to make improvements. The air
4 conditioning units are not functional. These are
5 expensive fixes and they are not always fixable. We
6 have one center that is housed in a synagogue and has
7 close to a \$200,000 repair necessary. Obviously,
8 we're not holding our breaths. Leaks, during big
9 rains, there is need for roof repairs that can easily
10 cost tens of thousands of dollars. Floors are in
11 need of replacement that can cost \$5000. Bathrooms
12 are broken and/or in need of replacement can run up
13 to \$50,000. Lighting fixtures are needed, they need
14 to be upgraded and its again in the thousands.

15 Ongoing Maintenance, maintenance expenses
16 are critical to ensure the long-term functioning of
17 centers, but most providers do not have enough
18 funding to budget for the upkeep. JASA just had an
19 AC fixed at a senior center located in a NYCHA
20 development, which was not easily done but the repair
21 cost DFTA \$16,000. JASA was alerted that maintenance
22 is going to be required at \$1,500 per quarter to keep
23 the system functional. We don't have \$6,000 annually
24 for this expense. Floor waxing and things of that
25 nature are easily \$1,000. So, you know, we'd like to

1
2 voice concerns about the need for this kind of
3 additional funding for maintenance, but also again,
4 piggy backing on my colleague, voice our concern
5 around the DFTA citations. When there is an issue
6 tht needs addressing at a senior center and there's
7 been a ticket issued with a landlord of public
8 housing, it is unfortunate to be cited during a
9 center assessment for not having everything in order.
10 Senior center staff are always working to make sure
11 that we are in compliance. When there is a clear
12 history of attempting to work with a private or
13 public landlord to fix ongoing problems, barring any
14 safety concerns, we ask that DFTA be more flexible.

15 In order to attract new participants to
16 senior centers and retain members, centers need to be
17 places that are physically attractive, and a place
18 people want to be. Centers are often referred to as
19 a home away from home. Centers should be bright and
20 comfortable, clean and welcoming and to achieve this,
21 requires ongoing investment and at times relocation
22 to more suitable space. So, we thank you for the
23 opportunity to testify.

24 ANDREA CIANFRANI: Good afternoon. I'm
25 Andrea Cianfrani, I'm the Director of Public Policy

1
2 at LiveOn NY. LiveOn NY is a nonprofit membership
3 organization that represents over 100 community-based
4 agencies, many who are here today to take the time to
5 come and be at this hearing to talk about these
6 important issues. You know, I think we're here today
7 to really talk about the need that the senior centers
8 that serve over 30,000 seniors a day are equipped and
9 accessible to serve the needs and to provide the
10 important services they provide at the community and
11 I think what we can also all agree on is that this is
12 complicated. Centers are located in different types
13 of buildings and as was discussed earlier, there are
14 different types of funding that theoretically centers
15 could have access to for different types of repairs
16 that maybe capital expense repairs or other types of
17 funding. With that said, the fact that its
18 complicated can't be the end of the conversation. I
19 think we can also agree that we can all collectively
20 work together to do better and now is the time to
21 have these discussions as we are looking ahead to a
22 future RFP for senior centers that will shape the way
23 that senior centers are run in the future.

24 So, as always, LiveOn NY comes here today in
25 the spirit of positive collaboration with our City

1
2 colleagues, with DFTA, and with City Council, so that
3 senior centers can truly continue to be the corner
4 stones of community resilience today and in the
5 future. So, I'll touch base on a few challenges
6 systemically that we have heard as well as some
7 recommendations as we move forward. First, there is
8 no baselined funding in contracts to meet the minimal
9 health and safety standards that senior centers need
10 to meet. Many routine inspections and maintenance
11 are required annually or several times a year
12 including extermination, grease trap cleaning, hood
13 cleaning, fire suppression systems, security and
14 alarm services, maintenance of HVAC as we talked a
15 lot today, and refrigerators and freezers. Deep
16 power cleanings are also real important in kitchens
17 and necessary to prevent against rodent infestations.
18 Other common expenses include addressing sewage
19 backup problems. These are things that senior
20 centers deal with regularly that are predictable and
21 expenses that they have calculated and know that they
22 will need fund year after year. While there may be
23 some small amounts in budgets under occupancy costs,
24 or shifting things around, there is not nearly enough
25 in their annual budgets as you've heard to cover all

1
2 of these expenses. They could cost over \$10,000 a
3 year, and providers just don't have that. We
4 recommend that DFTA work with providers to identify
5 and estimate these routine expenses and add funding
6 in every senior center budget today and looking ahead
7 to the future to fully fund these costs.

8 Second, as we talked about today, there is
9 not a general, clear process for funding for
10 emergency repairs. Requests and approvals occur on a
11 case-by-case basis, which is confusing, inconsistent
12 and inefficient for both centers and DFTA staff, who
13 we do know try very hard to address these concerns.
14 Even if approval is given for a repair, funding
15 doesn't necessarily follow and at times the center is
16 instructed to fund it from somewhere in their budget
17 or to use accruals which they are not able to do
18 especially if something happens in the beginning of
19 the year and we all know that emergencies, we cannot
20 plan. It's our understanding that some City agencies
21 add a line in contractor budgets for emergency
22 repairs that might not meet the capital threshold.
23 This could be something that Council and the City
24 could look at to address this and to allow centers to
25

1
2 draw down on funds and to increase the efficiency of
3 how they can access that funding.

4 Third, there is no funding or systemic
5 process or upgrades and equipment and other repairs
6 as we talked about today, especially HVAC and kitchen
7 equipment which we know are central to senior
8 centers. Because of uncertainty whether requests for
9 repairs or upgrades will even be addressed, let alone
10 funded, centers typically purchase equipment only
11 when something breaks or in a crisis. This is
12 disruptive to service delivery, inefficient and
13 preventable. It's also extremely dangerous,
14 especially for localities where the center is a
15 cooling facility, as we talked about at length today
16 and the fact that many seniors rely on their senior
17 center to receive their nutritious meal every day.
18 So, you know, one of the things we also talked about
19 today were the assessments that DFTA comes out and at
20 the very least, this assessment process should shed
21 light on the replacement needs for equipment over
22 time so that DFTA can be provided funding in its own
23 budget to address predictable replacement of repairs
24 for HVAC and kitchen equipment across the entire
25 portfolio. Something they can really use to look

1 forward and be forward thinking and I think that
2 that's something that we should look at. As we talk
3 about, we always want seniors to age in place, but we
4 do not what the equipment that serves them to age in
5 place. We want that to be safe and effective and
6 repaired and a lot of this is preventable if we work
7 together and look at the information that we do have.
8 You know again, I won't go into NYCHA because I know
9 that we'll be talking about that more and I know a
10 lot has been addressed here, but we share the
11 concerns that there is you know, kind of a lack of
12 understanding and a lack of process on how centers
13 can access and deal with repairs. One thing that I
14 wanted to note that wasn't mentioned today is
15 providers have noted that they do have trouble
16 accessing the NYCHA approved vendor list at times. I
17 guess there's a vendor list that they need to use if
18 they do need a vendor, so that's just something that
19 I wanted to draw to your attention, that I don't
20 believe was mentioned today. You know, we have the
21 full information in our testimony, but again, we just
22 don't want a hearing to go by where we don't talk
23 about the needs for the entire Human Service sector
24 to be addressed through fully funding contracts,
25

1 including other costs that it takes to run a senior
2 center. We talk about in directs, we talk about
3 fringe rates, we talk about increasing funding for
4 insurance and that's something we'll continue to talk
5 about moving forward and the last two things I wanted
6 to quickly mention that I didn't today is, you know
7 one word that we didn't talk about was innovation and
8 looking towards the future and you know, we hear from
9 our incredible members, senior center directors,
10 executive directors, who are running senior centers
11 and have expertise in serving older adults and they
12 really want to be looking forward and innovating for
13 all the needs of tomorrow and its very hard to do
14 that when your talking about HVAC systems and sewage
15 backups and where your going to get funding for that.
16 So, it's something that's really important that we
17 want to highlight. You have an incredible service
18 sector here and we want to support them how we can
19 and again, I reiterate that we're looking forward to
20 a future RFP and we share the common goal of working
21 with DFTA and with the City, and with you all to make
22 New York a better place to age. Thank you.

24 SANDRA CHRISTIAN: I am Sandra Christian, I
25 am the Vice President of Senior Services for RiseBoro

1
2 Community Partnership. We run one innovative center,
3 5 Neighborhood Centers, and 3 Senior Clubs in
4 Williamsburg Bushwick and Bedford Stuyvesant. We've
5 talked about the larger issues and I will concentrate
6 on just the struggles we have and some of the
7 coordination and I think it highlights where some of
8 the things we've been told occur don't really occur
9 and we don't have support for our centers.

10 Of our nine centers, five of them are
11 operated in NYCHA developments. One is a former
12 NYCHA Development which is now operated by a private
13 company. One has a private lease with a landlord and
14 two, our direct lease is with DECAS with the City of
15 New York. The centers operated that are private
16 leases and direct lease with the city have relatively
17 few repair issues and the landlords are responsive to
18 repairs and needs which I'll touch on later are
19 really equipment needs for those centers.

20 Our NYCH centers are where we've had
21 experience is the greatest concerns related to
22 repairs and upgrades. In all five locations, we've
23 had serious conditions related to HVAC systems in the
24 last year. The systems are outdated and in at least
25 two we need to have an entire replacement of the HVAC

1
2 systems. Five of the centers had to come off five of
3 the twenty, that I think she mentioned, had to come
4 off the cooling center list and again, these are in
5 very poor poverty housing developments where there
6 are no other options for seniors to go.

7 There is no MOU between NYCHA and DFTA to
8 take care of the repairs in these centers and even
9 though we're told that the building and the structure
10 is NYCHA requirement, that isn't consistent in each
11 of the NYCHA developments. We've had two of these
12 centers who for over two years have had no air in the
13 summer, no heat in the winter for two years. These
14 two centers, last year we went through an extensive
15 process to identify a vendor in which Andrea said, we
16 could not get a NYCHA vendor list for months. When
17 we finally did get that list, most of the vendors
18 will not bid on these jobs because they've not been
19 paid from NYCHA for past work. When we finally got
20 two vendors that were willing to come out and bid, we
21 selected one for both of our sites, then we waited
22 nine months as these bids were bounced around at
23 NYCHA to look at the scope of those bids. Finally,
24 we got the right person to look at them, they added
25 many revisions that our vendor had to come up which

1
2 pushed the cost probably \$40,000 on each of the
3 sites. Then we had to wait another two months as
4 they had to get someone at NYCHA to approve their DOB
5 bids that needed to be placed on these sites. We
6 hope to have those two sites repaired within early
7 November, they're a very significant cost. DFTA has
8 advocated and gotten approval through their expense
9 money to pay for these repairs, however, the
10 amendments have not been registered. We had to pay a
11 large portion of a down payment and we doubt that if
12 we get these repairs in November that we will have
13 the money to pay for these costs and it will affect
14 our cash flow for our whole entire agency.

15 Please note that both of these centers serve
16 way over 200 clients a day. Also, in one of the
17 locations, we had to pay six to seven thousand
18 dollars just on repairs of refrigerators and freezers
19 because the heat was so hot in the kitchen that they
20 would breakdown. So, that money had to come from our
21 bottom-line, we were told that it had to come from
22 without our accruals.

23 This summer, the other three sites had
24 problems and we were asked by a program officer to go
25 out and identify someone to repair those systems

1
2 because NYCHA could not repair those systems. In one
3 of the sites we had to rent temporary cooling units
4 that cost \$2,400 which is a major expense which we
5 had to take from classes for seniors to pay for that.
6 The one site that did get repairs through NYCHA had a
7 rally by Brooklyn Borough President, Eric Adams and
8 that's why the repair was done in that NYCHA site.
9 It shouldn't take City Council or the Borough
10 President to get those sites repaired.

11 Please note that our Senior Service Division
12 does not have funds for facility staff to handle all
13 this coordination attempt to review bids for this
14 type of work. I believe this is consistent across
15 the board for all senior services. As a larger
16 sponsor, we've been able to assist program directors
17 in these tasks, but expensive time has come from our
18 administration on developing and getting bids and
19 taking care of these situations. We're not able to
20 then effectively develop programs and improve the
21 quality of services.

22 DFTA staff has been helpful in this
23 situation but the facility staff has a small staff as
24 well and there is no effective means of communicating
25 with NYCHA. In one of the locations, getting the

1
2 total replacement of the HVAC system we also had a
3 rodent infestation. It closed the center down for
4 three months. This is in a NYCHA site. We went back
5 and forth and if it wasn't for my Director of Senior
6 Services going each day to program management, we
7 would not have gotten back into the site. The
8 vendors that they used did a sloppy job, contaminated
9 the whole site, we had to throw out everything and
10 within our Model Budget funding for last year we had
11 to replace the furniture and all the equipment in the
12 center.

13 We intended to reopen, when we went back in,
14 there were still several openings in the ceilings in
15 the buildings and this is a senior building and the
16 seniors could see the rats on the roofs that were
17 getting down into the center.

18 The lack of action and bureaucratic
19 complications of NYCHA sites also consistently cause
20 us problems in resolving other repairs and
21 maintenance at NYCHA locations. We often have to
22 depend on our individual relationships with the
23 program management staff at NYCHA to get the repairs
24 done and at times, Council Member Reynoso got
25 ceilings and floors put into on the centers, but

1
2 again, he had to advocated for that after about two
3 years of those problems.

4 Finally, in regards to all locations,
5 programs struggle with aging equipment that needs to
6 be repaired until the time that a total replacement
7 is needed. Our expenses in maintenance repairs go up
8 every year in repairing outdated equipment. On a
9 case by case basis, we have had to request a repair,
10 purchase emergency equipment which we were then told
11 has to come from accruals. We believe that there
12 should be equipment inventories across all centers,
13 centralized and a plan developed to fund and replace
14 these items ovens, freezers, and refrigerators when
15 they meet a useful lifespan of that equipment.

16 This is done for our Meals on Wheels and our
17 transportation trucks, that once their useful life is
18 out, there is a date, and those items are replaced.

19 We also need resources from the Department
20 for the Aging to review new DOH and Fire Department
21 regulations that affect our programs. Once again, we
22 have limited senior center staff and we hire
23 directors and staff with experience in human services
24 not facilities and code compliance to run our
25 programs. Our budgets do not allow for facility

1
2 staff or a licensed Nutritionist. Our custodial
3 stall and kitchen staff are paid at or close to the
4 minimum wage and we do not have the resources to
5 maintain compliance on items like exhaust hoods or
6 indirect waste. Our directors are often called on to
7 become experts at fixing everything. Thank you for
8 letting me share our concerns.

9 MAYER WAXMAN: Hi, my name is Mayor Waxman.
10 I am the Managing Director of Senior Centers at
11 Selfhelp Community Services.

12 Thank you to the Aging Committee Chair
13 Margaret Chin and the members of the committee for
14 the opportunity to testify on repairs and upgrades at
15 New York City senior centers.

16 Selfhelp operates five senior centers
17 throughout Queens, including one of the City's first
18 innovative senior centers. Together, our centers
19 have over 10,000 members and we serve over 200,000
20 meals. We strongly believe in the role that senior
21 centers play in providing high quality nutritious
22 meals, engaging activities, and health and wellness
23 programming.

24 We are grateful for the Council's long
25 standing and ongoing support for senior centers and

1
2 for always emphasizing the needs of older adults in
3 policy decision and budget allocations. In today's
4 testimony, I will focus on our priorities regarding
5 our experience with oversight, repairs, and upgrades
6 at Selfhelp's five New York City senior centers.

7 Selfhelp appreciates DFTA's partnership
8 regarding the realities of budgeting constraints when
9 facing unplanned expenses and repairs. Our staff
10 budgets for planned expenses, such as rent, and
11 staffing and food costs. However, when unexpected
12 cost arises, such as when equipment breaks or when
13 there is damage to the building, we often face
14 challenges in covering the cost in a timely manner.

15 When a senior center faces an unexpected,
16 unbudgeted need, such as a broken refrigerator or a
17 leak in the roof, it's often the center's
18 responsibility to pay for the repairs out of accruals
19 or fundraising. However, some of the budget line
20 items are restricted in use and some accruals are not
21 fungible. For example, a senior center cannot
22 utilize accruals from Personnel or food to cover
23 building repairs. Even if the Personal budget has an
24 excess because a social worker was not on staff for
25 the full year, the additional funds in that line item

1
2 cannot be used for capital repairs or upgrades. This
3 rigidity makes it a challenge to fund the most
4 pressing needs when they arise.

5 As such, we support the creation of a fund to
6 be allocated by DFTA to assist senior centers with
7 small capital repairs and upgrades, including new
8 ovens and repairs to ventilation and air condition
9 systems. This fund would allow senior centers the
10 flexibility they need to make unplanned small repairs
11 and upgrades throughout as needed and with
12 appropriate oversight by DFTA.

13 Regarding security, in New York City,
14 security is an important issue. Given this timely
15 conversation on upgrades, an important issue to
16 consider is security at senior centers. Our senior
17 centers are open to all older community members and
18 we strive to create a safe and welcoming environment
19 for all. Currently, there is not a funding source
20 for cameras or security guards which would allow our
21 directors to have oversight to who is coming and
22 going into each center. Moving forward will be
23 important to account for security needs at each
24 center.

1
2 Regarding NYCHA, I'm not going to minimize
3 this much, but I don't have that much to say but I do
4 want to point out, there are unique needs within our
5 senior centers that's located in the Community Center
6 of NYCHA's Latimer Gardens complex and Flushing, in
7 which serves more than 1,700 people each year. IN
8 order to provide valuable services to the residents
9 and to the community, NYCHA has partnered with DFTA,
10 as well as with the Department of Youth and Community
11 Development and their not-for-profit contractors.
12 The partnership provides immense benefits to the
13 community, although it does not provide support for
14 necessary repairs and upgrades. When repairs are
15 needed, such as leaks or AC or other malfunctions,
16 the senior and youth programs need to report eh
17 repair needs and obtain a ticket number through
18 NYCAH's standard tenant repair structure. The
19 response to such repair requests is often slow. This
20 slow response is troubling for the individuals and
21 families who live in NYCHA housing and is exacerbated
22 when there are hundreds of individuals relying on
23 community centers, and this is what the Council
24 Members Eugene and Diaz, and Deutsch were suggesting
25 also.

1
2 For example, our Latimer Gardens Senior
3 Center serves as a New York City cooling center.
4 However, the air conditioning broke in August 2018
5 and therefore the senior center was not able to
6 serves as a cooling center for at least three days
7 when a heat advisory was in effect. Despite support
8 from our local partners in NYCHA and DFTA, as well
9 our local elected officials, the issue has still not
10 been resolved.

11 We suggest that there be some channel
12 created or a guess, a better channel created between
13 DFTA, NYCHA, DYCD, and other partner City agencies to
14 move quickly address the communal repair needs within
15 NYCHA buildings.

16 Regarding the Model Senior Center Budget, we
17 commend the Department for the Aging, the Office of
18 Management and Budget, and the City Council for the
19 ongoing commitment to senior centers since the
20 beginning of the model senior center budget process.
21 WE are appreciative that in our experience, there has
22 been enough flexibility within the model budget
23 process to allow additional funding to be used for
24 numerous upgrades to the Selfhelp's senior centers.
25 We found that some spending, especially related to

1
2 building repairs was difficult to achieve in the
3 short timeframe between receiving the funds in the
4 end of the fiscal year, in which they had to be
5 spent. Our relationship with DFTA is stronger
6 because of our work together in implementing the
7 model budget process and we would like to thank them
8 for a collaborative relationship.

9 So, thank you for the opportunity to testify
10 today. On behalf of the 20,000 clients we serve, I
11 am grateful for the Council's support on so many
12 important programs.

13 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you, thank you all
14 for your testimony and for some of your
15 recommendations. If you will look at in terms of see
16 what the Council can do with some flexible funding,
17 but I think it is also important that DFTA has their
18 own capital fund and that's something that we have to
19 continue to advocate for because I don't think its
20 enough just a provider making the request and they
21 put it together and if they have a designated part of
22 capital funding every year, and then they could plan
23 out you know, with providers to make sure that the
24 needs are being met because right now, it sounds like
25 its really reactive. You have some requests, you

1
2 come in but there should be some kind of designated
3 funding that they can let people know so that every
4 year a certain amount of senior centers can prepare
5 to apply. So, we look forward to continuing to work
6 with you to really improve the system and make sure
7 that all the centers are well funded and are in nice
8 facilities that they love. Thank you, thank you for
9 being here. Yes, we have another panel, we have two
10 more people from Sage center in the Bronx, Jose
11 Collazo and then we have James Carey from Rain,
12 please begin.

13 JOSE COLLAZO: Council members, on behalf of
14 SAGE, thank you for holding this hearing on repairs
15 and upgrades at our city's senior center. My name is
16 Jose Collazo, I am a Site Manager at the Bronx City,
17 one of those senior centers.

18 SAGE stands for advocacy and services for
19 LGBT elders. SAGE is the country's first and largest
20 organization dedicated to improving the lives of LGBT
21 older adults. Founded here in New York City in 1978,
22 we have provided comprehensive social services and
23 programs to LGBT older people for nearly four
24 decades, including the nation's first full-time
25 senior center, the Edie Windsor SAGE Center, located

1
2 in Chelsea and launched generous support from the
3 Council. Building on the positive strides of the
4 SAGE Center made in reducing isolation faced by LGBT
5 older adults. In June 2014, the New York City
6 Council awarded SAGE funding to open SAGE Center
7 stand-alone sites in Brooklyn, the Bronx, Staten
8 Island and to expand our SAGE Harlem program into a
9 full-service SAGE Center site and for that we are
10 enormously grateful.

11 LGBT older adults are a significant part of
12 this rapidly growing elder population. However, they
13 remain largely invisible and at increased risk. They
14 are often severely isolated and disconnected from
15 services. In fact, LGBT elders are twice as likely
16 to live alone; half as likely to be partnered; and
17 more than four times less likely to have kids. Many
18 LGBT elders were shunned by their families and, as a
19 result, are half as likely to have close relatives to
20 call for help. Roughly one quarter of LGBT elders
21 have no one to call in case of an emergency. A
22 recent study stated that the impact that isolation
23 has on one's physical health is equivalent to smoking
24 fifteen cigarettes a day. More needs to be done to

1
2 ensure our city's most isolated elders can find
3 meaningful connection.

4 Because of their thin support networks, LGBT
5 older adults often need to turn to mainstream service
6 providers for care as they age. Yet, they're often
7 distrustful of these mainstream providers and for
8 good reason. LGBT older people are more likely to
9 face discrimination around their sexual orientation
10 and gender identity when accessing health care,
11 social services, and other programs. Experienced
12 discrimination and extreme isolation are a lethal
13 combination for LGBT elders.

14 SAGE is our City LGBT elders' safety net.
15 SAGE services are designed to combat LGBT elders'
16 isolation and improve their overall health outcome.
17 SAGE provides LGBT elders in our city with
18 comprehensive, competent, and holistic services
19 through our five SAGE Centers, care management, and
20 related health, housing and other services and these
21 services have a high retention rate. 70 percent of
22 our participants return to a SAGE Center after
23 visiting for programing and meal.

24 When planning series and programs for our
25 City aging demographic, it is crucially important

1
2 that vulnerable and special populations, like LGBT
3 elders, can access senior centers, services and
4 programs that are culturally competent and offer high
5 quality programming and provide deep and social
6 support like mental health services.

7 Recognizing the acute need among our City,
8 LGBT older adults for LGBT-welcoming elder housing.
9 SAGE and our partners, HELP USE and BFC Partners, are
10 developing New York City's first LGBT-welcoming
11 senior housing in Brooklyn and in the Bronx. The
12 marquee of each development will be a full-service,
13 state-of-the-art ground-floor SAGE Center, built on
14 our successful model designed to increase access to
15 senior centers support for building residents and the
16 larger community in which each building is located.
17 Both of these buildings are 100 percent affordable
18 and each have set aside for formally homeless elders.

19 Given this population, SAGE will need to
20 provide more intensive services to ensure that these
21 residents can maintain their housing and remain
22 stably housed. In addition, SAGE expects to serve
23 man more older adults through our co-located SAGE
24 Centers. That will require more investments from
25 DFTA and New York City.

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2 In addition, in our experience, operating a
3 network of five senior centers across the city, also
4 means that SAGE assumes much of the responsibility
5 for upkeep and maintenance of these sites, further
6 stretches SAGE's budget. So many of the City's
7 senior centers are in disrepair, and with a rapidly
8 growing in our City's older population, the City will
9 need to improve the current conditions in these
10 centers, invest in the infrastructure and support
11 more culturally competent aging services to reflect
12 the diverse identities and needs of our city's older
13 population.

14 We hope that the New York City Council will
15 increase its support of services for LGBT elders and
16 prioritize their need for culturally competent
17 services and dedicated senior centers. We look
18 forward to increased investments from the Council and
19 all our senior centers, and especially those that
20 support elders that are more vulnerable and isolated.
21 Your support continues to be greatly valued and
22 appreciated. Thank you.

23 JAMES CASEY: Okay, and as we come to the
24 end of a long grueling day, thank you for hanging in
25 there. So, I'm going to try to make it short and

1
2 sweet and to the point here. I represent R.A.I.N.
3 and R.A.I.N. provides an umbrella of services, not
4 only senior centers, we have twelve senior centers
5 located in the Bronx and upper Manhattan. We have
6 one stop which is information and referral, case
7 management, Meals on Wheels, Cucina Dolores, which
8 delivers meals to the homeless, an Alzheimer's
9 support group and the Geriatrics Workforce
10 Enhancement program providing education to seniors on
11 how to manage their chronic disease. So, we're
12 really committed to improving the healthcare of the
13 people in the Bronx and reducing the healthcare
14 disparities.

15 We've covered a lot of situations, but I
16 just wanted to give some comments that our directors
17 at R.A.I.N. came up with, so you can get a feel for
18 what's going on, on the ground. So, our concerns at
19 our community center is that the center has been
20 promised for the past two years project renovations
21 under DASNY which are essential for the program since
22 we were under a NYCHA building. For example, we were
23 unable to proceed with major renovations, replacing
24 the air conditioning system which old and repairs are
25 just band aids. You know, again HVAC. Another

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2 director, we are experiencing constant repairs and at
3 some point, we may face the need for major
4 renovations. Every winter and summer for the past
5 two years, we experienced issues sporadically with
6 the boiler and with our air conditioning system.

7 Another director from another center, our
8 biggest concerns are the leaking from the roof and
9 ceilings when we have heavy rain, peeling paints in
10 the ceilings and water damage to the ceilings
11 reappearing molds in the back bathrooms.

12 Another director for R.A.I.N., Repairs is
13 needed at our center as a wheelchair ramp or proper
14 flooring placed in the kitchen. Large kitchen
15 equipment such as dishwashers or stoves are in need
16 of replacement but are extremely expensive and we
17 don't have that amount of money in our budget.

18 The Boston Road Senior Center, which I
19 represent, also experiences difficulties with HVAC
20 systems, leaking roof, aging toilet fixtures, and
21 peeling paint due to leaks, and this is a fairly
22 young building at maybe twelve years old. SO, we
23 don't have that kind of money in our budget to fix it
24 and when we called NYCHA, especially I was surprised
25 to hear today that NYCHA takes care of the HVAC

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2 systems, because it is a NYCHA building and when we
3 call NYCHA, a lot of times they'll give us the
4 ticket, they will close the ticket, don't tell us the
5 tickets closed until we follow up with NYCHA.
6 Specifically, they told me that the HVAC system after
7 about two months was our responsibility. So, then I
8 had to go out and find contractors. You know, again
9 this directly contradicts what I heard today, which
10 was illuminating to me.

11 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But in that situation,
12 did you reach out to DFTA about what happened? That
13 NYCHA did not fix the HVAC system?

14 JAMES CASEY: Right because well,
15 fortunately one of our buildings, this was in the
16 winter, so one of our large rooms are dining areas
17 working. The recreation area wasn't working, so
18 yeah, and our members were complaining also. So, you
19 know NYCHA was called.

20 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But did DFTA come in and
21 provide some assistance and to see if they can fix
22 the units?

23 JAMES CASEY: No.

24 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: But did you contact them?
25

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2 JAMES CASEY: Oh, yeah, we contacted them,
3 and they authorized the repairs. I mean the money we
4 needed for the repairs.

5 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: So, DFTA did provide
6 funding?

7 JAMES CASEY: Right.

8 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Okay.

9 JAMES CASEY: But again, as many people
10 said, we had to find that funding within our accruals
11 and –

12 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Oh, so they didn't give
13 you extra funding?

14 JAMES CASEY: No.

15 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: They just say, if you
16 have left over from your budget you can use that
17 money.

18 JAMES CASEY: Right, so you plan on working
19 on your budget to fit that in with what we had to do.
20 So again, you know, when we have to fund repairs out
21 of accruals, that's money I would rather spend on
22 improving the food quality because that would up our
23 centers. When the rooms are cold, you know, we
24 develop the customer base and customers are
25 dissatisfied and they leave us. So, that impacted

1
2 our day-to-day centers. You know, so it has all
3 kinds of repercussions that go on. So, you know, we
4 had a few recommendations and actually pretty much
5 what you're recommendations where and some other
6 people had come up with that there's a regular
7 routine maintenance program that we can address these
8 situations and when we see the equipment is breaking
9 down and its time to replace it, you know that that
10 funding is available to do that but in the meantime,
11 we have a real maintenance schedule, so that we can
12 keep the equipment operating as long as good as shape
13 as possible. So, there's that old commercial for
14 changing the oil filter where the mechanic comes up
15 to the guy and says, well you can pay me now or you
16 can pay me later. So, we think that if a good
17 control of preventive maintenance, having somebody
18 from facilities realize that when equipment has
19 reached the end of its lifetime, you know, that
20 that's recognized and that there be funding available
21 to replace it. So, again, thank you for your
22 attention and hanging in there in this long, grueling
23 hearing.

24 CHAIRPERSON CHIN: Thank you. Thank you for
25 coming to testify to provide this information. This

1
2 way we will continue to work with all the advocates
3 and make sure that there is sufficient funding. I
4 mean, maintenance is a regular expense that DFTA
5 should really look at and also emergency repair and
6 also, capital money to improve the facility and also
7 purchase new equipment. So, we will definitely
8 continue to work with all the providers and thank
9 you, all of you, for coming today and we look forward
10 to continuing to work with you on this. Thank you
11 and the hearing is adjourned. [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 April 1, 2018