

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON CULTURAL AFFAIRS,
LIBRARIES AND INTERNATIONAL
INTERGROUP RELATIONS JOINTLY
WITH THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON LIBRARIES

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March 20, 2015
Start: 10:20 a.m.
Recess: 3:00 p.m.

HELD AT: Council Chambers - City Hall

B E F O R E: JAMES G. VAN BRAMER
Chairperson

COSTA CONSTANTINIDES
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Elizabeth S. Crowley
Julissa Ferreras
Peter A. Koo
Stephen T. Levin
Andy L. King
Laurie A. Cumbo
Helen K. Rosenthal

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

Linda Johnson
President and CEO
Brooklyn Public Library

Tony Marks
President and CEO
New York Public Library

Bridget Quinn Carey
Interim President and CEO
Queens Library

Val Colon
President of Local 1930
New York Public Library

Cuthbert Dickinson
President of Local 374

John Hyslop
President of Local 1321

Eileen Muller
President of 1482

Joe Reese
Custodial Worker
New York Libraries

Tom Finkelppearl
Commissioner
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs

Kathleen Hughes
Assistant Commissioner
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs

Rabbi Ben Huda
Queens Resident

Carina Nieves
President
Friends of Richmond Hill Library Group

Linda Sailor Marshawn

Nina Manning
New York Public Library
Andrew High School Braille and Talking Book Library

Sherry Ann Joseph
Brooklyn Public Library

Christian Alfman [sp?]
Teacher

Ann Dennin
New York City Arts Coalition

Andrea Louie
Director
Asian-American Arts Alliance

Holly Block
Executive Director
Bronx Museum

Mohiah Lansdown [sp?]
Artist

Heather Woodfield
Executive Director
One Percent for Culture

Paul Otto
Brooklyn Public Library
Business and Career Library
Downtown Brooklyn

Thomas Wynn
Library Custodian

Cana Wells
South Hollis Library
Library Computer Specialist

Dr. Maria Galvan
Centro Clinico de la Americano

Tamara Greenfield
Executive Director
Fourth Arts Block (FAB)
Co-Director Naturally Occurring Cultural Districts
in New York or NFCDYNY

Kemi Ilesanmi
Executive Director
Laundromat Project

Stephanie Beacums
Laundromat Project

Betty Yu
Laundromat Project

Bismark Contreras
La Puente

Andre Powell
Coordinator
Hospital Storytelling
Brooklyn Public Library

Mel Hindko
Branch Manager
Jamaica Bay Branch Library

Robert Oboso
Supervisor
Rugby Branch of the Brooklyn Public Library

Sonya Ferrardo

Andrew Oppenheimer
Stapleton Branch - New York Public Library

Katy Rubin
Theater of the Oppressed NYC
Concrete Justice

Naji Newbold
Theater of the Oppressed
Concrete Justice

Nina Ziacola
Russian-American Composer

Jenny Louloundes
Executive Director
Alliance of Resident Theaters New York

David Johnston
En-Eng

Jackie Torres
Girl Be Heard

Ashley Mariaccio
Girl Be Heard

Guy Lawrence
Elders Share the Arts (ESTA)

Guy Yedwab
Managing Director
League of Independent Theaters

Anthony White
NY Public Library

Deborah Wynn
Bayside Branch Library

Dawn Zimmerer [sp?]
Wakefield Branch Library

Shantel Houston

Kathleen Chi
Senior Librarian
New York Public Library, St. George Branch

Ceil Khaldun Al Shakir
President
Friends of Laurelton Library

Eleanor Cohen

Hulan Jack
Friends of Lafrak Library

Yuki Kiendo

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[sound check, pause]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Good morning everyone. How did everyone like the rally? [cheers] It was a lot of fun. So if the three library system heads are ready, then I think we are about ready to go. So good morning, everyone and welcome to the Fiscal Year 2015 Preliminary Budget hearing overseeing the budgets of our three public library systems. I am Majority Leader Jimmy Van Bramer, Chair of the Committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations, the committee with the longest name in the City Council. [laughter] And I am joined by the Chair of the Select Committee on Libraries, Council Member Costa Constantinides, whom we will hear from shortly and with this gavel, we are in session. And we will have council members coming and going throughout the day, but we're thrilled to have our three great public library systems, the Brooklyn Public Library, the New York Public Library and the Queens Library here each on the front lines in our city's battle against inequality. Located in the heart of nearly every neighborhood in our city, libraries are uniquely positioned to support our neediest

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1 residents, and are crucial to the lives all New
2 Yorkers. Every day libraries and library staff, the
3 hardworking men and women who work in our libraries
4 deliver life changing and life enhancing resources in
5 so many ways. Including after school programming for
6 youth; English language learner classes; senior
7 programs; free Internet access; immigration services;
8 and now IDNYC enrollment. Libraries are critical
9 foundations for our communities' future, and serve an
10 incredible role in combating inequality.
11

12 Funding libraries should not be
13 considered a luxury. It should not be an after
14 thought. It is a critical investment in the future
15 of our city and its residents. The Mayor's Fiscal
16 2016 Preliminary Budget for Library Systems is \$313.1
17 million. But that is not what we need to make sure
18 that every library is open six days a week. On the
19 expense side, we need \$65 million. \$65 million in
20 the budget this year to make sure that every library
21 has the hours and days of service that they need.
22 Last year, at budget adoption, we added \$10 million
23 for libraries, which was a step in the right
24 direction. Not enough, but a step in the right
25 direction. However, the Administration did not

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1 baseline that funding. So we are now going back and
2 having to fight for the \$10 million we added last
3 year all over again. We've got to end the budget
4 dance when it comes to libraries. We should have \$65
5 million added to this budget, and we should baseline
6 it so we never have to have this fight again.

8 We also want to talk, and have to talk
9 about the Capital Plan, the Ten-Year Capital Strategy
10 for the City of New York. We had a hearing last
11 month about that, and we just had a rally with this
12 terrific report, Invest in Libraries, which
13 highlights the over \$1 billion need that exists today
14 to make sure that our libraries are in a good state
15 of repair. And as I said outside, it is imperative
16 that we add the expense money to this year's budget,
17 and that every library is open when they are needed
18 by the people who need them. But, but those
19 libraries need to have heat in the winter, air
20 conditioning in the summer, and they need to have
21 roofs, and doors and windows that don't leak. And
22 they must have the technology that is required for
23 today's society. So we are fighting for all those
24 things. I'm anxious to hear from the three library
25 systems, and from the unions that represent the

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1 workers at those libraries. We must invest in
2 libraries. That is our clear universal and undivided
3 message that we invest in libraries today, every day.
4

5 I want to thank the staff of our
6 committee Aliya Ali who put together an incredible
7 amount of information for this hearing. Amita [sp?]
8 Kilowan, our Counsel; Tonya Cyrus; and my staff Matt
9 Wallace, my Chief of Staff and Cody Ryder, my Deputy
10 Chief of Staff for Budget and Legislation. And now,
11 I'd like to hand it over to a good friend, a great
12 champion of libraries, and all things good in
13 Astoria, Queens, the Chair of our Select Committee of
14 Libraries Costa Constantinides. [laughter]

15 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you,
16 Chair Van Bramer.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [interposing]
18 And just to--to--well, I would applaud for Costa
19 Constantinides as well. If everyone wants to
20 applaud, or you hear anything that you agree with, we
21 do this in the City Council because clapping is not
22 allowed in the City Council apparently. So, now I'll
23 reintroduce him, and if you love Astoria, Queens and
24 you love Costa Constantinides, do this. [laughter]
25 There you go.

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2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you,
3 Chair Van Bramer. I'm going from the Chair of the
4 longest name of the committee to the Councilman with
5 the longest last name on the City Council. But, you
6 know, thank you for your steadfast commitment to
7 libraries and all the great work that you do on
8 behalf of the three systems and the people of the
9 City of New York. Thank you for your great work, and
10 good morning everyone. I share Council Member Van
11 Bramer's sentiments that library systems are a vital
12 part of our city. They provide a broad range of
13 services to all New Yorkers. Libraries play a big
14 role in our neighborhoods as community centers, as
15 places where everyone comes. Which far--goes past
16 just access to books. There are places that it
17 increases the Internet, and it closes our digital
18 divide for New Yorkers. Where immigrant populations
19 can learn English. Where the under-employed and
20 unemployed New Yorkers can go and make their resumes.
21 Recognizing their importance to New York, I was glad
22 to see last year that there would be baseline funding
23 for libraries, but we know we need to do better. We
24 know that our hours, our librarians do an amazing job
25 every single day. Our libraries do an amazing job

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1 every single day. They do more with less, less
2 resources, and they have to do a bit of everything
3 every single day for every New Yorker. And we
4 appreciate that, and we know we need to do better.
5 We know we need to have the libraries open when some
6 needs to use them. We have to have the \$65 million
7 for six-day service because we know that there are
8 parents, and all of New Yorkers who want to use those
9 libraries on the weekends and don't have access. We
10 know that we have to have hours that make sense for
11 everyone, and we know that when it comes to the
12 capital needs-- I was happy to learn that for the
13 first time in recent history, the library system was
14 asked to submit a Ten-Year Capital Plan. However, I
15 was disappointed to see the allocation of only \$62.3
16 million. We need \$1.1 billion. That leaves us with
17 a gap, and we're talking about leaky roofs, and heat
18 not being there. Windows not being opened, but also
19 ADA compliance. Making sure that every New Yorker
20 can use our library system in the same way. And
21 honestly, we need to go beyond that. As we talk
22 about the 21st Century. As we talk about resiliency,
23 our libraries are one of the few public spaces
24 equally spread out through out city making them
25

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2 ideally suited to be part of any resiliency and
3 national disaster response plan. Out of our 207
4 branches, 74 are located in flood zones, 75 are
5 located within half a mile of one. We saw a number
6 of these branches used after Super Storm Sandy when
7 the American Red Cross and several branches such as
8 New Dorp, Red Hook, Far Rockaway as staging areas and
9 distribution points for badly needed supplies. So
10 how then can we only talk about \$62.3 billion--
11 million dollars when the need goes far behind--beyond
12 what the \$1.1 billion is. And we have to ensure that
13 our libraries are resilient, and can be part of the
14 sustainable future that we need to talk about in the
15 City of New York to meet our 80 by 50 reduction--
16 emissions reduction plan. So I hope as we move
17 through this budget process, we can have a capital--a
18 ten-year capital plan that is more in tune with the
19 needs of our library system, the needs of our New
20 Yorkers. And give our libraries--to be able to find
21 a solution to plan long term for capital. And meet
22 the growing demand of all New Yorkers. We must
23 acknowledge the accomplishments of the library
24 systems. And the significant impact that they make
25 on each and every one of our communities in terms of

1 education, cultural enhancement, and a safety net for
2 New Yorkers by providing them adequate capital
3 funding to have them continue their amazing work that
4 they do in our neighborhoods.
5

6 In closing, I would like to thank my
7 staff, my Chief of Staff Nick Olson; my Legislative
8 Director, Nick Wyzowski [sp?] and all of the staff or
9 our committee for their work in putting this hearing
10 together. And again, Council Member Van Bramer for
11 leading our rally this morning in what is supposed to
12 be spring, but not quite. [laughs] With that, I
13 look forward to hearing the testimony of the
14 libraries. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
16 much, Chair Constantinides. I want to acknowledge
17 and welcome a great colleague of ours, Councilwoman
18 Helen Rosenthal from the Upper West Side of Manhattan
19 who's joined us for this very important hearing. And
20 now, I believe we will turn it over to the three
21 systems and it looks like Linda Johnson from the
22 Brooklyn Public Library will lead us off.

23 LINDA JOHNSON: Good morning. Thank you.
24 My name is Linda Johnson, and I'm President and CEO
25 of Brooklyn Public Library. And I'd like thank City

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2 Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito; Finance Chair

3 Julissa Ferreras; Majority Leader and Committee Chair

4 Jimmy Van Bramer; Committee Chair Costa

5 Constantinides; and the entire City Council for their

6 support of New York City's Libraries. Also, to all

7 the members of the staff of Brooklyn Public Library

8 who are here. Thank you and to the wonderful workers

9 of DC37 who have been so supportive through this--

10 through this charge. Thank you. We're grateful to

11 the committee for giving us the opportunity to

12 testify about our considerable capital needs at

13 hearings in December and in February. And we hope

14 that you'll support the Ten-Year Capital Plan to

15 modernize our libraries, and ensure their continued

16 service to New Yorkers who value and depend upon

17 them. But today we'd like to share with you the many

18 great things that are happening inside our buildings,

19 and how much more Brooklyn Public Library could

20 achieve with increased support from the City for our

21 operating budget.

22 In 2014, nearly 900,000 Brooklynites

23 attended library programs, an increase of 28% over

24 the previous year. Many of the people who attend our

25 programs will go on to start businesses, graduate

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2 from college, or contribute to the artistic and
3 cultural life of the borough thanks to the help they
4 received from the staff and volunteers of Brooklyn
5 Public Library. Patrons logged more than two million
6 sessions on our 1,100 public computers in 2014. And
7 usage of the library's free wireless Internet
8 increased by almost 40%. Many of these patrons found
9 jobs, acquired professional certifications, or earned
10 United States citizenship thanks to the availability
11 of free technology, and digital resources at the
12 library. In the past year, we introduced new
13 initiatives to help immigrant communities access
14 legal services and gain United States citizenship.
15 We engaged a record number of children and teens in
16 our summer reading program. And we added to the many
17 services we provide outside our branches. For
18 example, our pop-up libraries offered specially
19 curated collections at homeless shelters and other
20 underserved locations. We taught the art of comic
21 book creation to elementary school students at New
22 York City Housing Authority community centers. And
23 our Tell A Story program facilitated virtual story
24 time, sing-alongs and other bond activities for
25 incarcerated fathers and their children. Our

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2 outreach efforts have not gone unnoticed. Brooklyn
3 Public Library has been named a finalist for the
4 Institute of Museum and Library Services National
5 Medal for Museum and Library Service, the nation's
6 highest honor given to museums and libraries for
7 serving their communities. Library usage is at an
8 all-time high, and demand for our services has never
9 been greater. Unfortunately, the City support for
10 its libraries has not kept pace. The Mayor's
11 Preliminary Budget Proposal for Fiscal Year 2016
12 provides the library with 20% less discretionary
13 funding than we received in 2008. These are the
14 funds that we would use to hire staff, acquire
15 materials for our collections, and deliver programs
16 that help Brooklynites achieve their dreams.

17 While the recession that precipitated the
18 City's budget cuts has passed, New York libraries are
19 still waiting for a recovery. Last year, City
20 Council partnered with Mayor de Blasio to baseline
21 our funding and allocate an additional \$10 million to
22 New York's three library systems. Brooklyn Public
23 Library delivered an extraordinary return on your
24 investment. With the support of our--with your
25 support and our implementation of numerous operating

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2 efficiencies, we undertook our most extensive hiring
3 and training since 2008 bringing aboard 28 new staff
4 members most of whom are youth librarians. We train
5 staff to ensure that all 60 of our branches would
6 have technology resource specialists to help patrons
7 access our free technology and improve their digital
8 literacy. And thanks to your help, we have expanded
9 our hours of service at branches throughout the
10 borough. The number of libraries offering six-day
11 service increased from 23 to 39.

12 The number of libraries offering Saturday
13 Service increased from 40 to 47, and we added evening
14 hours at many of our locations. While we continue to
15 serve New Yorkers where they live, work and play, one
16 of Brooklyn Public Library's highest priorities is
17 that our branches be open to the people who value our
18 collections and depend on our services. The single
19 most important thing libraries can do for their
20 patrons is to provide consistent reliability
21 services. In other words, to be there when we say we
22 will be there. And despite your support, our doors
23 are too often closed when patrons need us the most.
24 Only two of our branches are open seven days a week.
25 All New Yorkers should be able to take their children

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2 to the library after work and on the weekends. That
3 should be able to visit the library in the evening to
4 study--to work on resumes or just to find a good
5 book. Unfortunately, Brooklyn's libraries are only
6 open an average of 45 hours a week. Our libraries
7 offer fewer hours of service than libraries in cities
8 like Chicago, Boston and Seattle.

9 Our patrons, your constituents, deserve
10 beautiful, inspiring, well-maintained facilities that
11 are open to all who need them. But the Mayor's
12 Preliminary Budget Proposal eliminates the funds that
13 allowed us to expand our hours, and to hire more
14 librarians. If that funding is not restored,
15 Brooklyn Public Library may be forced to roll back
16 our expanded hours and to reduce our staff. We hope
17 this is not the beginning of a new budget dance.
18 There is a better way forward. We are asking that
19 you allocate an additional \$65 million in this year's
20 budget to New York City's libraries so that we may
21 provide the level of service that you and your
22 constituents expect and deserve. With our share of
23 the funds, Brooklyn Public Library will finally be
24 able to restore six-day service to all of your
25 branches. We will extend morning and evening hours

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1 at branches that are currently open six days. And we
2 will increase the number of branches offering seven-
3 day service from two to ten.
4

5 Furthermore, patrons who visit our
6 branches during these expanded of operation--expanded
7 hours of operation will enjoy more robust
8 collections. City budget cuts have forced Brooklyn
9 Public Library to reduce its acquisition budgets by
10 20% since 2008. With your help, we will increase the
11 size of our print and digital collections to decrease
12 wait times for popular materials. And to make it
13 easier for patrons to access practically all of
14 humanities' accumulated wisdom. We will also make
15 our branches safer and more inviting by hiring more
16 custodial and facility staff. Our overstretched
17 librarians, public safety professionals, custodial
18 workers, and clerical staff have performed heroically
19 under difficult circumstances. We are deeply
20 grateful, but nonetheless, our partners at DC37 and
21 Local 1482 have been such strong advocates for
22 Brooklyn Public Library. Several members or our
23 staff are here today to testify about the
24 extraordinary challenges they must overcome to serve
25 our patrons.

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2 It is because of our people, our hard-
3 working staff, and volunteers that the library is
4 able to contribute so much to the life of every
5 community in Brooklyn. No civic institution in our
6 borough serves more people in more neighborhoods than
7 Brooklyn Public Library. Brooklynites visit our
8 branches to learn to be entertained, to connect with
9 their neighbors. Today, the future of our libraries
10 is in your hands. We hope the City will honor the
11 covenant it entered into with New Yorkers more than
12 100 years ago when visionary elected officials and
13 philanthropists like Andrew Carnegie imagined a New
14 York in which all people would have access to
15 exceptional libraries. They were champions for
16 libraries as you are, and we are confident that you
17 will continue to support New York's libraries in both
18 word and deed as they did. Thank you for your
19 support of Brooklyn Public Library. We look forward
20 to working with you together.

21 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
22 much, Linda and yes a rousing applause. [laughter]
23 You couldn't hear it, but it was there. I saw it. I
24 love that photo, by the way, of that--

25

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1
2 LINDA JOHNSON: [interposing] Isn't that
3 great? Yeah.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --great grounds.
5 It was a great photo. I want to recognize we've been
6 joined by two members of the committee, Council
7 Member Elizabeth Crowley from Queens and also Council
8 Member Peter Koo also from Queens and it looks Tony
9 Marks President and CEO of the New York Public
10 Library is next.

11 TONY MARX: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
12 Thanks to you, to the Speaker, to Council Member
13 Ferreras, the Chair of the Finance Committee to Costa
14 Constantinides, the Chair of this Subcommittee. To
15 all the members of the City Council and the
16 administration and, of course, a special thanks to my
17 great colleagues who are here from the staff of the
18 library, from DC37. As well as the public who are
19 here today because everyone cares so deeply about
20 this set of issues. Of course, I fully concur with
21 what Brooklyn--my colleague Lind has already said and
22 what I think Bridgett from Queens will say. I have
23 prepared a written testimony. You have it. I am not
24 going to read it to you. I want to make sure you

25

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1 have something good to read this evening when you get
2 home over the weekend.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: That is very
5 generous of you, Tony.

6 TONY MARX: Yeah, yeah. [laughs] It's
7 great.

8 LINDA JOHNSON: [off mic] Always
9 providing reading material.

10 TONY MARX: Yes, that's what we're here
11 for, right. So as--as was said outside, the
12 libraries are the institution at the cornerstone of
13 civic society in this time. Here we are in the
14 capital of the information age, and the libraries are
15 the foundation of that great strength of New York.
16 It's the place where the greatest array of New York's
17 amazingly diverse population come together. And it
18 is the diversity of New Yorkers that is our great
19 historic strength going back to our founding as New
20 Amsterdam. And you combine that with access to all
21 the world's ideas and information and books, and
22 images, and that is the secret to the explosive
23 history and possibilities of prosperity and vibrant
24 democracy in this city. The libraries for over 100
25 years have been the foundation of that. They are

1 where the bottom third of New York come because they
2 have no place else to get access to what they need to
3 read to skill themselves, to inform themselves as
4 citizens. To get access to computers, educational
5 programs, quiet, heat, air conditioning, all the
6 rest.
7

8 We are here simply asking for a
9 restoration of what has been lost. The uses of the
10 library have gone up while we have seen close to a
11 20% reduction in funding. We will retain the
12 efficiencies that we have been forced through hard
13 times to gain. But we want to rehire great staff and
14 colleagues so that we can do more of exactly what the
15 City Council and the Mayor of our city have said they
16 want to see more of. So let me summarize that for
17 you. We at the New York Public Library were
18 fortunate. We did not have to reduce our hours much
19 during these lean years. We actually have more
20 branches than we've ever had. But we did because of
21 the loss of great--positions of great colleagues on
22 the staff, we have not been able to meet the
23 educational program needs that so many New Yorkers
24 depend on. So after school, we have--we've more than
25 doubled our after school slots in the last year.

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1 We've gone from 15 to 25 locations. With a full
2 restoration we can get close to 10,000 regular after
3 school spots, and maybe another 10,000 or so of less
4 regular spots. We can be one of the largest
5 providers of after school since the kids are already
6 coming to us to stay safe after school. Let's help
7 them in terms of their achievements.
8

9 Calvin Guzman, who you see here, is a
10 great example. He was having some difficulties in
11 school. He came to our after school programs, and
12 now he's just doing so much better. The demand here
13 is great. We joined in the City and the City Council
14 and the Mayor's commitment to after school. In
15 addition to our own after school programs, we are
16 reaching out to all the providers of after school in
17 this city to say come use the library. Come use our
18 great librarians, our great staff, facilities, our
19 computers and our books.

20 Similarly, on early childhood literacy.
21 We share the City's commitment to meeting the great
22 needs in this arena. In fact, we have gone--With a
23 full restoration, we can have programs for closed to
24 350,000 attendees. And we are reaching out to all of
25 the Pre-K programs in the city in our areas to say

1 come in and use the library during the day. Use our
2 books. In fact, the My Libraries NYC Program that
3 makes available our 17 million circulating books for
4 delivery into the public schools is now also being
5 used by the Pre-K program. So the kids can have the
6 books. This is not about babysitting. This is about
7 educational enhancements so that all of our young
8 folks can join--can go to school and have the kind of
9 head start that we all need.
10

11 Emily Nichols, our Manager for Children's
12 Education Programming speaks so eloquently on this.
13 The demand is so great at Webster Library, for
14 instance, a line begins 90 minutes in advance to get
15 into just our Reading to Kids programs. Parents are
16 forced to get tickets in advance. I mean this is
17 crazy. These are people, New Yorkers who want their
18 kids to be inspired, and to learn how to read. And
19 come and love the library and use the library, and
20 they have to stand in line because we don't have the
21 resources to meet what they need. That's just crazy.
22 I mean these are people, New Yorkers who want their
23 kids to be inspired and to learn how to read. And
24 come and love the library and use the library, and
25

1 they have to stand in line because we don't have the
2 resources to meet what they need. That's just crazy.

3
4 Technology also we--we are--we doubled
5 since 2012 our tech training classes. We've added
6 coding classes. As we've all talked about, we now
7 are lending Internet at home because close to three
8 million New Yorkers are in the digital dark. And we
9 thought together if we don't get at this, nothing
10 else that we provide in terms of Internet access will
11 make difference to close to three million New
12 Yorkers. And if nobody is going to solve it, the
13 library is going to have to weigh in. We've been
14 partnering with the Mayor, and with the City Council
15 on this. We're super excited, but there's--there so
16 much more to do.

17 So Nadia Paguerrero [sic] at the Bronx
18 Library Center for instance was having trouble in
19 high school. In fact, she had to drop out. She
20 didn't know how she was going to get the skills that
21 she needed. And at the same time we were hearing
22 from the information technology industry, the fastest
23 growing industry in New York that they couldn't find
24 enough skilled folks. And they weren't finding
25 diversity of those folks. So now we're teaching

1 coding in the South Bronx and Harlem for the first
2 time that anyone is doing that for free. And when
3 Nadia heard about it from a friend, she grabbed her
4 kids, put the--put the--literally put the dinner on
5 the back burner. I hope turned the burner off, and
6 ran down to sign up for her coding classes, and we
7 just wish her well. All New Yorkers should have
8 those--should have those opportunities. We also
9 course focused so much of our efforts on the
10 immigrant community that makes up all New Yorkers.
11 In fact, really throughout history and such a robust
12 part of our city. English language classes we have a
13 fourfold increase since 2011, and with a full
14 restoration we can get up to close to 20,000 of those
15 seats. The demand here is so great. There are 1.3
16 million who are foreign born in New York, and there
17 are only about 62,000 free seats for English language
18 in this city. In addition, we teach citizenship.
19 There is so much more we can do.

21 The numbers that I've given you, Mr.
22 Chairman and colleagues, show that the library had
23 been moving. We haven't waited for this moment to
24 start to expand our ability to meet what New Yorkers
25 needs. We've been blessed with private donors who

2 have helped us to get started so that we can do the
3 increases of English language, after school computer
4 skills, coding, all of that. But those gifts will
5 come to an end. And I can tell you--we've talked
6 about this, the donor community that we rely on is
7 very clear that if the City doesn't step back up in
8 full partnership, the private support in this public-
9 private partnership that goes back to Carnegie, will
10 come apart. And not only--and we will lose the
11 private donors that have helped us get jump-started.
12 Who are waiting for the City to come back as full-
13 fledged partners, just to restore where we were in
14 terms of city funding in 2007.

15 And then as has already been mentioned,
16 all this can only happen in facilities that are, you
17 know, that can manage these expanded uses that we're
18 seeing. As I said outside, it's simply incredible
19 that in the 21st Century we're in a situation where
20 we're not able to plan more than one year at a time.
21 Where we can't think about how to efficiently use
22 your resources to ensure that your facilities, and
23 the public's facilities are well maintained. It ends
24 up costing the taxpayers more because we can't plan.
25 And we're doing band-aids and the band-aids come

1 apart in these in some cases hundred year-old
2 facilities. It's--I think we all understand it. And
3 hats off to the Mayor and the Administration for
4 welcoming us to submit to the Ten-Year Capital Budget
5 for the first time. But let's get a fully robust
6 capital budget because there is so much more that
7 needs to be done.
8

9 Lastly, I just want to point out that in
10 particular in this last year I think we've seen the
11 libraries have this particular strength. We are
12 everywhere. We are in every neighborhood. Everyone
13 loves the library, and uses the libraries more than
14 any other institution. We have the trust of New
15 Yorkers, and they rely on us. We are at scale.
16 Unlike any other set of institutions in this city in
17 terms of reach, and we can move. When the City
18 Council and the Mayor ask us to help address a
19 pressing need, we are there, and we can respond at
20 scale. We may be unique as a resource to the
21 government of the City of New York. When you said
22 you wanted IDs for the hundreds of thousands of New
23 Yorkers who were living in the shadows, it's the
24 public libraries that moved quickly to become the
25 largest place for signing up. And indeed, right now

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1 we're going from three locations or sign-up centers
2 in Mid-Manhattan to 15 because we're not satisfied
3 that there's enough. We took some of the funding
4 that you all helped to make possible additional last
5 year, and we hired four additional staff just to make
6 the ID program work as well as we could for you. It
7 wasn't something we anticipated, but we agreed with
8 you all that it was essential. We agreed with you
9 all that we have to get out of the digital divide.
10 That we have to bring millions of New Yorkers who
11 live in the digital dark into the future. And that's
12 why we could raise the money to get started a program
13 that we hope will become the national leader in
14 solving the digital divide. And why we are so
15 committed to working with the Mayor's Office of
16 Immigrant Affairs, and the United States Citizenship
17 and Immigration Services to create new American
18 corners in all of our neighborhood libraries. So
19 that not only can people come in and get the respect
20 and the services that they rely on. The books in any
21 language, the English language instruction. They can
22 also get citizenship classes, get their IDs. This is
23 the cornerstone of the kind of civil society that New
24 York has to have. And we need your help to make sure
25

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1 that we have the funding in partnership with private
2 donors. Otherwise, that will fall apart as well as
3 the facilities in which we can meet all the needs of
4 New Yorkers. It is really the future that is at
5 stake here, and it is time that we solve this set of
6 problems. Thank you.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
9 much, Mr. Marx and arousing applause there. I know
10 we were joined by members of the committee, Ferreras
11 and Levin, who may have stepped out for a moment.
12 We're also joined by a special guest Council Member
13 Lander to the Committee, and we welcome him. But,
14 before we hear from the Queens Library, we have some
15 very special guests in the balcony. We are thrilled
16 to be joined by P.S. 149 from Queens, Jackson Heights
17 Queens. We applaud. This is how we do applause.
18 [laughter] We wave. We're also waving hello.
19 [laughs] And we're here with a group of library folks
20 representing our libraries to talk about how
21 important our public libraries are, and how important
22 it is to fund our public libraries. And we're about
23 to hear from the woman who runs all of the libraries
24 in Queens, Bridget Quinn Carey.
25

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1
2 BRIDGET QUINN CAREY: Thank you. Good
3 morning. I'm Bridget Quinn Carey. I'm the Interim
4 President and CEO of the Queens Library. And I want
5 to thank Speaker Mark-Viverito, Majority Leader Van
6 Bramer, Council Member--Council--Finance Chair
7 Ferreras, Subcommittee Chair Constantinides,
8 Delegation Leader Weprin, and the entire City Council
9 for your stalwart support of libraries. And our--and
10 our missions and programs throughout the City of New
11 York. Your leadership and support is greatly and
12 sincerely appreciated.

13 Our city's public libraries serve the
14 many and varied needs of a constantly growing number
15 of people. They function as community centers and
16 educational hubs, and provide a broad range of
17 essential services that are free and available to all
18 New Yorkers including those most in need. They
19 provide adult literacy programs, easy access to
20 community healthcare and medical information services
21 for non-native speakers and new citizens. Academic
22 opportunities for children of all ages, and I could
23 go on and on. I am sure everyone in the Council
24 appreciates the value of libraries in every
25 community, and I know that you've been supportive of

1 libraries even during the lean years. Which have
2 helped us maintain a level of service we were able to
3 even in the face of the 20% reduction in funding.
4

5 We now have the opportunity and ability
6 to do better for the people of the City. As the
7 economy grows, so should the investment in libraries.
8 So that together we ensure all of our residents and
9 communities grow and thrive. for the past several
10 years, you've heard us talk about how vital our
11 library services have been to our communities during
12 the recession. You've heard about how we've provided
13 digital access to bridge the digital divide for those
14 who can't afford it. The pivotal role our Job and
15 Business Academy has played in helping people prepare
16 to go back to work. How we've helped families
17 survive by making sure they have access to
18 information about benefits. And, of course, serving
19 as an access point for city services as IDNYC. And
20 during the disaster recovery after Super Storm Sandy,
21 community wellness, adult basic education, digital
22 literacy. We have struggled to provide this, but we
23 have continued to provide it because we know how
24 important it is to our communities during the bad
25 times especially.

1
2 But now, I want to tell you about what's
3 happening. You've made an investment in the
4 libraries, and in the first half of Fiscal Year 15
5 our visitorship is up. Attendance at free library
6 programs is up 6.7% just in the last six months, and
7 up 43% over the last five years. The demand for
8 library programs and services continues to grow. The
9 economy has improved, but we all know it has not
10 improved for everyone. You can see how your small
11 investment has already show big payoffs. So this is
12 really indicative of what an investment in libraries
13 can do. We know this Mayor and this Council truly
14 believes in equity growth, resiliency, sustainability
15 and there is never going to be a better time to
16 invest in libraries. We need funding for a minimum
17 of six-day service in every library in every
18 community. And we need funding that will enable us
19 to have the services and materials people want and
20 need no those days as well. It's not just enough to
21 have the libraries open. We need to have all of the
22 range of services available for everyone. Otherwise,
23 it's not equity of service. Thanks to the leadership
24 of Council Member Van Bramer, Council Member
25 Ferreras, and the entire Council we received this

1 increase in Fiscal Year 15, and we are so thankful.
2
3 Most of it went to restoring staff positions, and the
4 rest went into materials. And you can see it's had
5 immediate results, but we need to do better. Working
6 families need to have access to Early Childhood
7 programs such as our new Family Place in Corona. And
8 that needs to be on the weekends and in the evenings.
9 Adult learners need to be able to access adult basic
10 education, high school equivalency preparation and
11 English classes on the weekends and in the evenings,
12 and in the mornings and whenever they can get there.
13 And everyone needs more access to public computers,
14 and skilled training programs.

15 Council Member Constantinides has
16 mentioned that in the NYCHA housing 40% of the
17 residents don't have Internet access. And
18 unfortunately, that's not an unusual situation.
19 Almost 30% of Queens residents rely on the library as
20 their sole source for Internet access. Public
21 computers in the library are in constant use every
22 day. Those computers are bringing the necessity of
23 the Internet as something--it is something that
24 everybody has to interact with everyday. And if you
25 don't have it at home, you need to have somewhere

1 reliable to find that, and the library is that place.
2
3 Technology lending programs including the Google
4 Tablets that we lend out, and the new mobile hot
5 spots. Which are a fantastic service enable people
6 to take that home with them to make sure the library
7 impacts their lives even when we're closed. But you
8 can't use the computers in the library, borrow a
9 Tablet or take a digital literacy workshop when the
10 library is closed. 43 community libraries in Queens
11 are closed all weekend long. If we were open six
12 days a week, we would be able to provide the classes
13 to hundreds of thousands more people in Queens.
14 Think about how that would help change the game not
15 only in NYCHA and other public housing, but for all
16 Queens residents.

17 Speaker Mark-Viverito and Council Member
18 Stephen Levin and Antonio Reynoso funded the Early
19 Childhood Literacy Initiative because they along with
20 all of you understand how important it is to the
21 future of our city to help parents raise strong and
22 proficient readers. Queens Library knows this, too,
23 and we deliver innovative services for early learners
24 as I know my colleagues do as well. We offer a
25 library based UPK program. We establish a Family

2 Place at the Corona Library, which is a research
3 based learning environment for young children that
4 teaches the value of early learning and ready to read
5 skills for families. But if working parents can't
6 come to the library with their children. And if they
7 can't use the library when it's convenient to them to
8 make sure that reading skills are a priority for
9 their children and their family, we're only
10 scratching the surface and we're not really getting
11 to all of the people that we know we can serve in
12 Queens. We need funding so our libraries can remain
13 open during more hours when families have access to
14 programs and resources. Chair Van Bramer has often
15 spoken about how he used to come to the library as a
16 child, and I would like to report that his mom still
17 brings him to the library. [laughter] As she
18 brought him to the Broadway Library recently for a
19 celebration of a new children's room there, and it
20 was wonderful to see you together in that space. We
21 need to make family library time accessible to this
22 generation of children. We need funding to keep our
23 libraries open longer, and for the programs and
24 services that are essential.

1
2 Queens has the largest percentage of
3 foreign-born residents in the New York City, and the
4 most ethnically and linguistically diverse county in
5 the country, the world's borough. We welcome recent
6 immigrants and those born here to celebrate their
7 cultural heritage, adapt to life in the United
8 States, learn English and advance their pursuit of
9 the American dream. Sadly, last year we had to turn
10 away more than a thousand ESOL students because we
11 simply did not have another chair to put them in.
12 And those are just the people that showed up. Year
13 after year this is the case. So we know the demand
14 for these services. We could serve at least the
15 number of people that we serve now, if not more.
16 They have a dream. They have a desire to learn, to
17 want to improve their future and their skills, but we
18 have to turn them away. It's time to open the doors,
19 expand our classes, and make sure that the thousands
20 of people that need help can get it in our libraries.

21 I'd like to tell you about Kadijah Rashid
22 [sp?]. She wanted to be here with us today, but I'm
23 pleased to tell you that she can't be because she's
24 working. She's got a job. It's wonderful. She
25 lives in Auburn on the Rockaway Peninsula. Kadijah

1 is a very hard-working college student who happened
2 to be in the library when we first started to lend
3 Google Tablets. She was one of the first ones to
4 borrow one, and having that tablet allowed her to
5 make better use of her time commuting to school. She
6 used it to complete her degree at the College of New
7 Rochelle, and she got excellent grades I would also
8 like to report, which is wonderful. She used it on--
9 and now she's in a graduate school program as well as
10 working. And following Super Storm Sandy, we had
11 private grants that enabled us to keep the Auburn
12 Library particularly open seven days a week. And it
13 was so well used, but it's over now unfortunately.
14 So, Kadijah and her family and all the families in
15 that community need to have the access, and they need
16 to have the city invest in New Yorkers by investing
17 in libraries.

18
19 Thanks to the restoration of funds this
20 year, we were able to hire more staff and serve the
21 public with their--with their needs, and to purchase
22 more library materials. But that was for one year
23 only. The Preliminary Budget that was released does
24 not include the \$10 million for libraries that you
25 restored last year, putting us even farther behind.

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2 Our ranks and our team has been so dedicated, and so
3 loyal, and I just want to shout out to all of our
4 wonderful employees for really sticking in there, and
5 working so hard during these lean times. They're so
6 dedicated and loyal, and they are--they are the ones
7 that are making this happen. But it's time to give
8 them some relief. It's time to help them, you know,
9 be able to deliver these services, and not always
10 feeling that they're at their last, you know, bit of
11 energy. Because they're giving it all to the
12 library.

13 We've talked about capital funds. I've
14 been here to testify along with my colleagues about
15 capital funds, but it bears repeating again. While
16 it is so important to have our operational needs met
17 with additional funding, the need for capital funds
18 for facilities has to be addressed as well. We
19 recently announced, you know, the new construction
20 that's happening at the Hunter's Point Library. We
21 recently completed a library in Glen Oaks. We've got
22 project all over the borough underway to improve and
23 enhance library spaces. But even so, the needs
24 outweigh our budget. The Center for an Urban Future
25 is re-envisioning New York's Branch Libraries Report.

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1 It has detailed \$1.1 billion, and I know we keep
2 saying that, but it bears repeating because it's a
3 big number, and it's a real number. It's not
4 something we're pulling out of the air. It is
5 something that has to be met because that's
6 infrastructure, but that's also improvements and
7 expansions for libraries across our city. In Queens
8 we've requested \$4.8 million in projects over the
9 next ten years that will get our system to a state of
10 good repair; replace six and expand five libraries
11 and renovate 20 libraries to create suitable library
12 spaces for 21st Century Library services. That plan
13 has not been funded yet, and we certainly ask for
14 your support in making that a reality.
15

16 Queens Library, New York Public, and
17 Brooklyn are asking for \$65 million baselined to
18 increase the city operating funding for libraries,
19 and we're asking for a rational sustainable capital
20 plan so we can keep our physical spaces worthy of our
21 missions. I hope I can count on all of you to make
22 that happen. Please invest in libraries, and invest
23 in New Yorkers. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
25 much to all three of our great library systems, and I

1 enjoyed the video accompanying your testimonies as
2 well. They were very illustrative. And Bridget, I
3 would be remiss if I did not thank you for including
4 my mother in your testimony. [laughs] And it's true
5 that she held my hand as we crossed Broadway in
6 Astoria.
7

8 BRIDGET QUINN CAREY: [laughs] I'm so
9 glad.

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And now, I like
11 to think I hold her hand as we cross Broadway to get
12 to the library, but the important thing is that we
13 are still holding each other's hands. So, we thank
14 you for doing that. To all three of you I ask two
15 questions. One is the \$65 million, which I agree we
16 need to do. We need to make that investment, but we
17 also need to baseline library funding so we're not
18 back here all over again. And there's got to be a
19 fundamental agreement that in good times we would
20 love to have every single library open seven days a
21 week in the City of New York. But even in difficult
22 times we should never fall below every single library
23 open at least six days a week. Every single library
24 open six days a week. So Linda mentioned the
25 negative impact that not restoring the \$10 million we

1 added last year would have. That's an important
2 piece. Thank you for including that, but to all
3 three of your systems, what would adding the \$65
4 million mean in terms of hiring, in terms of being
5 able to do what you do? And then talk to us a little
6 bit about the value of baselining, and the critical
7 piece of baselining your funding. Whoever wants to
8 go first.

10 LINDA JOHNSON: Thank you for your
11 question. One of the benefits of baselining the
12 increase that we had last year and obviously
13 continuing that as we move ahead in years to come is
14 that the conversation would be different. We
15 wouldn't be here telling you what we'll have to do if
16 the money isn't baselined, which is a negative. We
17 would be here talking about what we can do, you know,
18 with the kind of budget that we need. And we think
19 frankly, and I speak for my colleagues as well, we
20 deserve. We've shown time and again how effective we
21 are at spending the money that the City Council and
22 the Administration earmarked for the library. We
23 really feel that we give you a very great return on
24 your investment. And if, in fact, we get the \$65
25 million that we're requesting, Brooklyn will return

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2 six-day service to the 19 branches that currently do
3 not have it. So we would have six-day--six-day
4 service everywhere. We would create seven-day
5 service at eight more branches for a total of ten
6 branches. And we would provide more late days and
7 morning hours at branches that currently have six day
8 a week service. So, these are--our business is
9 really about people, and about making sure that we
10 have enough staff because that translates into hours.
11 We basically spend money on people and material, and
12 those are the two areas that we would focus on. That
13 would translate into more hours, higher circulation,
14 better program attendance. Just more robust numbers
15 in every field that we measure.

16 TONY MARX: Mr. Chairman, the--so the \$65
17 million restoration--I like that word rather than
18 increase. It's a restoration. Would enable use to
19 add 320 new jobs. It would allow us to increase by
20 about 6,000 spots of after school programming in
21 addition to other forms of after school outreach. It
22 would allow us to add about 150,000 Early Childhood
23 literacy program spots. It would allow us to add
24 about 40,000 tech training including the coding
25 classes I described. It would allow us to add 7,000,

1 though I suspect it would be more, English language
2 and related citizenship, and other such classes. The
3 fact that we--we came in--we did not come into the
4 City Council or to the Mayor and ask for the moon.
5 We asked for a restoration. And we're being quite
6 explicit about what the City gets in return, right.
7 This isn't just feed us. This is here's what those
8 dollars will get you that fit the agenda of the City
9 Council and of the Mayor that we happen to share as
10 an agenda in terms of meeting those real needs.

12 We didn't ask for twice as much so that
13 we could be cut back and negotiate. That's true on
14 the capital side as well. We're being honest brokers
15 here, and as I've said before in these chambers time
16 will tell whether that will be rewarded or not. But
17 that seems in keeping with our principles. When you
18 get--when we received the \$10 million three-system
19 addition last year we kept to our commitments. We
20 said we will increase our hiring and increase our
21 educational programming. We hired I think it was 55
22 new staff. We can't hire quality staff and say to
23 them, you know, this is just temporary because a year
24 from now we don't know what the funding will look
25 like. We absolutely can't have those folks disappear

2 on us. That would be irresponsible to them and to
3 the people who rely on them for the services that
4 they provide. But it's an example of how difficult
5 it is to plan. If you don't have commitments, then
6 how do you build programs that can meet needs?

7 The other example of that is if you don't
8 know what capital investment you're going to get
9 other than year-to-year, how do you plan to ensure
10 that the buildings are kept up well and are inspiring
11 and beautiful spaces? We haven't been able to do
12 that. That means band-aids. It means librarians and
13 our great staff are spending their times worrying
14 about facilities coming apart rather than being able
15 to worry about meeting the educational and learning
16 needs of the community. It's all part of the same--
17 the City gets less for its investment if we can't
18 have some sense of security about how that builds
19 over time, and is maintained. We can do the capital
20 projects for half the cost in half the time if we're
21 able to plan. Everyone benefits from this. It's
22 completely rational, and that's why I believe it will
23 be completely achieved.

24 LINDA JOHNSON: I just want to add I
25 didn't give you a specific job number, and just for

1 the record with the restoration, the full \$65 million
2 across the three systems, Brooklyn will add 166 jobs,
3 150 of which are union jobs.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Bridget.

6 BRIDGET QUINN CAREY: The Queens Library
7 with the res--with the \$65 million restoration we
8 would be able to restore 250 jobs at the Queens
9 Library. And that is, you know, the bulk of which
10 are direct public service front line folks that we so
11 desperately need in order to expand hours. And not
12 just to expand hours to open the doors, but to expand
13 hours to make sure that the programs and services
14 that are key for people when they walk in there are
15 there available for them. And that's what I mean
16 about equity of hours. So that somebody that walks
17 in on a Saturday doesn't know it's a Saturday because
18 oh, sorry, that program is only on Mondays. That
19 that's what's going on across the borough at all of
20 the libraries whenever they are open. And like my
21 colleague, the other--the other result of an increase
22 in funding is more spaces for Early Childhood, more
23 ESOL classes, more after school classes. Really,
24 everything that we know that we're not meeting the
25 needs because we have to turn people away, gets

1 increased to be able to better serve the people that
2 we are not now. And the value of baselining I
3 think--and Tony was eloquent, and I don't need to add
4 much. But we do spend a lot of time worrying about
5 what happens if, and creating models for well if we
6 have this funding we have to do this. If we don't
7 have it, we have to do this. And creating so many
8 what if scenarios that that staff time can be much
9 better spent on planning for staff training and
10 development. Or, really investing that in more
11 strategic thinking about how do we leverage our
12 technology better. How do we, you know, provide
13 services better. So the baselining would not only be
14 a--you know, a good thing for us on an emotional
15 level, but it really has a direct payout. Because we
16 spend a lot of time making sure that we've got all
17 the bases covered if and when something else happens
18 if we don't get the money.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you all
21 very much for those numbers, and as you were doing
22 those numbers, I suddenly got into my mind the
23 Mayor's State of the City speech, which was a great
24 speech that so eloquently spoke to the need for more
25 affordable housing. I was remembering one of the

1 lines in his speech that behind every number was a
2 family, was a New York family. So, for every
3 apartment, every affordable apartment that we were
4 able to build or maintain that would change the life
5 of a family. And then he just sort of talked about
6 it in exponential numbers. And as Tony said, 6,000
7 additional after school spots just in three boroughs
8 represented by your system. I thought of the 6,000
9 families and the children whose lives would be
10 changed with 750 or so jobs that would be created.
11 And what changes the life of a family more than a
12 good job, and these are good jobs that you wall would
13 be--would be hiring for. And, all of the numbers and
14 the hundreds of thousands of, if not millions, of
15 additional people that you would be able to serve.
16 And us thinking about that in terms of all of those
17 children, all of those families whose lives would be
18 improved because we're able to do this. So, needless
19 to say you have my support, and I believe our support
20 in getting to both the \$65 million, and the
21 meaningful, meaningful capital plan that allows you
22 to do your work. So, with that, I want to ask our
23 Chair Costa Constantinides to speak and ask
24
25

1 questions. And I believe there are some questions
2 from members as well.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you,
5 Chair Van Bramer. Good morning. I know we've talked
6 about this before, but what are your funding needs in
7 terms of upgrading technology infrastructure. You
8 know, please elaborate on what kind of--what is that
9 investment going to mean in our libraries?

10 BRIDGET QUINN CAREY: Well, I can
11 certainly address that. In our Ten-Year Plan we've
12 asked for \$25 million for technology investments over
13 that Ten-Year Plan. And what that enables us to do
14 is make sure that the technology that we have in our
15 libraries is up to--up to date, and it also performs.
16 So making sure our wireless networks are upgraded,
17 making sure that our--you know, our PCs have the
18 right software on them. It also enables us to
19 leverage new technology to the extent we can for
20 capital funding to provide access that otherwise is
21 not available to people at home. And make sure that
22 all of our back office stuff runs well, the servers
23 and that. And that is an essential piece of our
24 capital ask. As far as the expense, we absolutely
25 need to invest in that part for technology as well

1 because that is where not only do our staff learn,
2 but then our--then our employees can help our
3 community residents. The people coming into our
4 library learn how to use technology. They can, you
5 know, use devices. They can learn how to use
6 software. They can use--they want to have more maker
7 spaces. So that technology is an accessible thing
8 through our libraries, and it's not a barrier to
9 somebody succeeding in their career and in their home
10 life.
11

12 LINDA JOHNSON: So, you know, the
13 question about technology is a complicated one
14 because it's--it's not a discrete separate, you know,
15 issue for libraries. There's the technology that we
16 use to run the operation of the library, and we're
17 always working on doing as much as we can with as
18 little as we can spend. Making sure that we have the
19 technology we need to actually run the library
20 system. But the most important thing about
21 technology is really providing access to the digital
22 material, and to the world beyond to our patrons.
23 Both to those who are on the wrong side of the
24 digital divide. Those who need to come to the
25 library in order access public computers. As well as

1 making sure that we have technology that is not only
2 embracing what we already are sort of accustomed to
3 using today. But a little bit ahead of the curve so
4 that people can start to imagine how technology can
5 transform their lives. And that might mean, you
6 know, having a Tablet so that you can download a
7 book. It might mean like in the information comments
8 that at the Central Library on Grand Army Plaza,
9 databases and spaces where people can access a much
10 higher level of our digital collections. And also be
11 assisted by librarians who are well trained to assist
12 people with technology that is too expensive for most
13 people to have in their homes. We also have
14 recording studios, and so it's really about being
15 digitally literate, which is, you know, where we're
16 all--they're all moving. So last year we were able
17 to provide over 2.1 million public access sessions on
18 our computers. And with our share, you know, of the
19 \$65 million we would hope to increase those trained
20 by another 50,000. But the real point is that we
21 should be looking at technology in terms of how it's
22 changing the way we work, and the way we live. And
23 making sure that our use of the funds are allowing
24 all of our patrons regardless of where they are on
25

2 the spectrum in terms of using technology, to be able
3 to take the next step ahead.

4 TONY MARX: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. So
5 our ten-year capital ask includes \$89 million over
6 the ten years for the computer needs, and that's--
7 You know, we think that is reasonable, but also, you
8 know, we didn't ask for as much as we might have
9 because the needs keep growing in this arena. But
10 that will again, as my colleagues said, so many
11 people rely on us. One of the differences between
12 technology investments in the library, and technology
13 investments in other agencies that come before you is
14 the vast majority of our computers are for public
15 use. They're not for our back office, which we try
16 to do increasingly efficiently, and increasingly by
17 cooperating across the three systems. But they are
18 the vast majority for the public use, and for that
19 portion of the public that has no alternative. I
20 also should point out that not only are we hoping to
21 get this kind of funding that again will allow us to
22 meet those needs and to plan rationally for meeting
23 those needs. But we had hoped to have a conversation
24 with the City Council and with the Mayor's side about
25 some of the rules under which technology is funded.

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2 The assumption is that capital is for desktops. But
3 increasingly, you know, the distinction of what is a
4 desktop, and what is a mobile device is getting more
5 complicates. The Cloud is no longer a physical place
6 to store, but something--a sort of combination of
7 physical spaces. There--this technology is moving,
8 shall we say faster than the city's rules about how
9 we can spend money has moved. That's a topic that
10 we're going to need to get to so that we can spend
11 these resources in the best possible way for the
12 public--for the public's use.

13 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I know
14 that, you know-- I know--I know we're definitely
15 committed to doing that as well, and keeping up with
16 the 21st Century. And as you look to meet your
17 mission and all the great work that you're doing in
18 each and every one of the branches, helping close the
19 digital divide is-- You know, we've talked about our
20 NYCHA residents. Two out of five do not have
21 Internet access, and closing that divide for all New
22 Yorkers. Ensuring that no matter where you are, you
23 can come. You can use the best technology, and
24 learn. Additionally keeping our collections being
25 the amazing that they already are. Having that good

1 balance in our libraries that you have the E-Books
2 and the iPads and the Tablets, and all of the great
3 things to be able to transfer [sic] but still be able
4 to borrow a book and take it home, and enjoy that
5 level of reading. We have to have that strong
6 balance, and provide the opportunity to do so. So I
7 know that we're working at doing that as well.

9 And just quickly a couple of other
10 points. As we talk about equality and access I asked
11 this last time, and I'm just going to ask you again
12 just more for just sort of driving home the need.
13 You can probably give me the same answer as last
14 time. But as far as ADA compliance, you know, many
15 of our branches just-- You know, with this \$1.1
16 billion it would allow our--the men and women who
17 can't get to that second floor, can't get to that
18 basement floor access to our libraries in a much
19 better and larger way. And we have an amazing
20 library staff, custodians and librarians who help
21 those men and women everyday. But it would be just
22 more accessible if we had that accessibility. So
23 where are we currently there and where is that \$1.1
24 billion? How do we--what portion of that gets us
25 there?

1
2 TONY MARX: So, Mr. Chairman, since the
3 New York Public probably has the oldest in terms of
4 capital of the three systems I believe. Therefore,
5 we have additional challenges. So many of our
6 Carnegie's for instance were built in an era before
7 we were all sensitized, as we need to be to meet the
8 ADA needs. The cost of ensuring accessibility ranges
9 from half a million roughly. A little over \$2
10 million per branch. System wide we believe we have
11 something in the area of \$19 million of ADA
12 compliance related capital needs. And that includes
13 making sure that the disabled but, of course, when
14 you make that possible you also add space for all New
15 Yorkers.

16 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES:
17 [interposing] Uh-huh.

18 TONY MARX: So if we have a third floor,
19 which could be a 100% or 50% increase in space by
20 taking an old custodial apartment and making it
21 library space, program space. It has to be ADA
22 compliant with an elevator for instance and should
23 be. But that also enables that space to be available
24 to the public as a whole. So we're deeply committed
25 to that, and I should also point out that we also are

1 proud to be the greater New York hub for meeting the
2 particular needs of the--of people who are sight
3 impaired through the Andrew Heiskell Braille and
4 Talking Book library. And that's a pivotal resource
5 through federal funding--we're happy to say--that's
6 meeting the needs of 82,000 visits and half a million
7 Braille and talking books and digital items. So
8 that's another example of ways in which the library
9 is pivotal for meeting the needs of the disabled.
10 Because again, the diversity of New York's talents
11 includes folks who have a variety of talents, and
12 challenges, and we need all of that brought to bear.
13 And that's what the library is helping to make
14 possible.
15

16 LINDA JOHNSON: In Brooklyn we have 14
17 branches that need some level of improvement in order
18 to be completely ADA compliant, and the estimated--I
19 say estimated because the cost today is about \$14.2
20 million to take care of those needs. These are all
21 capital issues, but the problem with capital issues
22 and the funding process is that by the time we get to
23 these issues, the price has typically gone up. So I
24 would say that if we were to fix the problems today
25 it would be 14-2--\$14.2 million.

1
2 BRIDGET QUINN CAREY: In Queens we have
3 ten libraries that are not accessible, and a number
4 of those we have been working on to secure funding.
5 So I'm pleased to say that we--we are making progress
6 on that. But we still need an additional \$5 million
7 in order to make sure that all of those libraries are
8 completely ADA accessible.

9 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: And that's
10 all part of the \$1.1 billion that we've put out
11 there--

12 BRIDGET QUINN CAREY: [interposing] Yes.

13 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: --
14 absolutely, and I know Steinway Library is one of
15 those that we've provided funding for.

16 BRIDGET QUINN CAREY: Yes. That's one
17 break that underway, but unfortunately, Astoria is
18 not. So we've got--we've still got work to do.

19 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: All right.
20 I wholeheartedly agree with you on that. [laughter]
21 Look, I know we're meeting very soon to talk about
22 that. But I definitely, you know, as we talk about
23 equality and we talk about accessibility to every New
24 Yorker I know that this is important to this
25 committee, and it's important to our Chair. And he

1 and I have spoken about it a great deal, and we're
2 looking forward to continuing that conversation with
3 you. And lastly, I want to definitely have my
4 colleagues ask more questions as far as how are we
5 doing in the ongoing struggle since Hurricane Sandy,
6 and I'm looking forward to resilience, as I
7 referenced in my opening statement with 74 branches
8 being in some type of flood zone, and the other 75
9 being close to a flood zone. I know--I feel like I'm
10 almost asking you about a luxury talking about
11 additional money beyond the \$1.1 billion. But what
12 else could we do when we talk about how we're
13 recovering from Hurricane Sandy, and looking to the
14 future in ways of resiliency and sustainability?

16 BRIDGET QUINN CAREY: Well, I can start.
17 I'll start. I wish I could say that all of our
18 libraries from--that were damaged by Sandy were--are
19 open. They're not. We have opened all but one
20 thankfully, and restored those. The Peninsula
21 Library is under construction, and when that reopens,
22 there will be features that do address the resiliency
23 and the sustainability of that building. So we have
24 made design choices to ensure that should there be
25 another disaster-- And let us all hope that there is

1 nothing like that again, but we all know that there
2 might be. So we have made sure that we have, you
3 know, moved outlets. We've moved boilers and
4 chillers up. We have better doors to hold back the
5 flood waters should they come again. So we've made,
6 you know, very conscious choices on those libraries
7 like Sea Side, like Peninsula, like Howard Beach and
8 Broad Channel to make sure that they, if not now,
9 will be prepared for the next storm. And we do--we
10 will open the Peninsula this year. That is the good
11 news, and look forward to the day of reopening that
12 because our--I talk about our hard-working staff.
13 The people at the Peninsula have really been working
14 in a trailer since Sandy. And, you know, thanks to
15 them they are just so dedicated. They want to keep
16 the library service there going, which is an amazing
17 thing. But, unfortunately, the trailer gets cold in
18 the winter and we can't always be open. But that
19 would be an amazing celebration when we can say
20 that all of our Sandy affected libraries are finally
21 re-opened.

22
23 LINDA JOHNSON: I'm pleased to say that
24 within a year after the storm the six libraries that
25 were most critically damaged by--by the floods and

1 the wind were reopened. In many cases, Coney Island
2 and Gerritsen Beach in particular where the damage
3 was most devastating, the branches had actually
4 reopened, and are more beautiful and more appealing
5 and inspiring than they were before the silver lining
6 of the storm. But, yes, many lessons learned. Where
7 to--where to store things within the building. How
8 to--how to create an environment that is equally
9 functional, but prepared--also prepared for future
10 storms. And my colleague from Bridget Queens--from
11 Queens has mentioned some of the ways to do that.
12 Including, you know, the--where we place things in
13 the library making sure that things aren't on the
14 ground. But yes as we--as we build and improve the
15 libraries, resiliency is a priority that will be
16 forefront and center.

18 TONY MARX: Mr. Chairman, the New York
19 Public for reasons of where we are located
20 physically, we did not have the kind of destruction
21 that--from Sandy that my colleagues had. But that
22 doesn't mean that we feel singled. In fact, we're
23 taking close address to make sure that we have the
24 resiliency. To back up our operations moving things
25 like where we store our backups of all of our

1 technology. You know, because none of us can be sure
2 as to what will happen. We also again consistent
3 with that are working on sustainability issues that
4 are so much the central focus of this Council and of
5 the Mayor.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I

8 appreciate that, and we owe you a larger discussion
9 on how we help you get there. So, we'll continue to
10 do that. Thank you, and thank you, Mr. Chair. Thank
11 you.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very

13 much Chair Constantinides. Just a little bit of
14 housecleaning here. This is the Preliminary Budget
15 hearing for both Cultural Affairs and Libraries.
16 Commissioner Finkelppearl is scheduled to testify at
17 around 11:30, which is about right now. I believe
18 that they are in the building. So I'm going to
19 conclude after my counsel or our colleagues have had
20 a chance to ask questions with this panel. Then
21 we're going to hear from the two library union local
22 heads. Then we're going to hear from the
23 Commissioner of Cultural Affairs. And then we're
24 going to hear from the public, many of whom are here
25 on both Libraries and Cultural Affairs. And we'll

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2 probably intersperse those two topics throughout. So
3 with that, we have three Council colleagues who have
4 questions, Council Member Crowley followed by Council
5 Member Koo, followed by Council Member Levin. We're
6 going to go to a five-minute clock on the questions
7 from Council members, and then we're going to go to a
8 clock on the future folks who testify as well.
9 Council Member Crowley.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Thank you to
11 both our Chair and good morning to all the libraries.
12 I agree with what has been said earlier about how too
13 few of our libraries are open on Saturdays. And I
14 want to be helpful to us getting there this year, and
15 making sure that as many or if not as many but all
16 can reopen for six days a week. It would, you know,
17 a big benefit for the people who need it out in
18 Queens and throughout the City. Now, in preparation
19 for today's hearing, I've been requesting the capital
20 plan, and then also the ways the Capital Budget has
21 been spent over the past couple of years particularly
22 for Queens Library. Because of what happened with
23 the CEO over the past year, and concerns that I have
24 as to whether funds were spent in a way that's fair.
25 And serving the communities that need it the most.

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2 I'm still not clear in what I've received. It's not
3 organized in a way that I could look at dollar for
4 dollar where the money went. So my first question,
5 Bridget, is when can I have that? Do you have that
6 information internally?

7 BRIDGET QUINN CAREY: Well, I know we've
8 provided a number when communicating with your staff.
9 So if it's not clear, we will certainly continue to,
10 you know, communicate with you to make sure that you
11 have the information you need. So absolutely we'll
12 do that until it makes--until everybody is on the
13 same page with that. But yes, we do have the
14 information.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Have you
16 reviewed the spending and found problems with it?

17 BRIDGET QUINN CAREY: The capital
18 spending for the last years we are in the process of
19 reviewing it all. In fact, we had a robust
20 discussion about it last night at our board meeting,
21 and have scheduled a special meeting of the Buildings
22 and Grounds Committee to review all of the capital
23 spending over the last, you know, probably about five
24 years. And reviewing all of the projects that are
25 currently funded as well as what's been put in the

1 capital plan. The funding that has been allocated
2 typically from the exec money over the last few years
3 has been for a variety of projects. There have been
4 funds spent to shore up cost overruns for projects.
5 There have been funds that have been allocated to
6 projects, to unique projects to fill gaps. That is a
7 pot of money that, you know, while I don't have--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]
9 Great.

10 BRIDGET QUINN CAREY: --the lowest
11 history it has been a flexible pot of money for the
12 board and all of our participants.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: The way I've
14 always seen the pot of money or believed it to have
15 been was for maintenance, not for new projects. And
16 it looks that certainly last year that \$3.5 million
17 of the \$5 million set aside for maintenance was used
18 for a new building. Most of the money the year
19 before does not appear that way. And so, I just want
20 to make sure that we know where that \$5 million is
21 going, and, you know, if there are various different
22 libraries that need certain improvements, why they
23 have to be put on a back burner and not given the
24 services that they need. Because what I've always
25

1 believed that money to be was for maintenance first.
2
3 And I'm just trying to get at more transparency to
4 makes sure that the funding has been spent in a fair
5 way, and that equity is shared throughout the city,
6 and certainly in the Borough of Queens.

7 BRIDGET QUINN CAREY: Yes, well--

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: [interposing]

9 And I'm going--we're going to meet again before the
10 next capital budget hearing. But I want to talk about
11 jobs. Last year there was concern that there were
12 jobs that were not prevailing wage jobs. There were
13 people who were working in the library. I know in
14 Queens Library service--building service workers were
15 being paid. They were being contracted out. How
16 much of that contracting out is still happening? And
17 can we as a committee be assured that everybody who
18 is working-- Because the vast majority of the funds
19 are city dollars, and the workers should be being
20 paid a prevailing wage. So how could we be assured
21 that that contracting out is not happening? Is it
22 still happening?

23 BRIDGET QUINN CAREY: When I first came
24 into my position as Interim President and CEO, the
25 first thing that I did was to ensure that we would

1 end the cleaning--the contract cleaning contracts
2 that we had. And I'm pleased to say that at both
3 Flushing and Central Libraries we are completely done
4 with the contracts for cleaning at those two
5 locations. And we were able to hire custodians to
6 clean those buildings. So that was my first priority
7 was to get that done. We had existing contracts in
8 place, and we still do. They are in place until June
9 30th for custodial services at a few of our other
10 locations. When those contracts expire at the end of
11 this year, we will not renew them and do have plans
12 to hire custodians in order to fill those needs as
13 well.
14

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Just [bell] in
16 closing, the Council passed a law about a year and a
17 half ago. It was sued by the Bloomberg
18 Administration--but it's no longer in court--
19 mandating that if an organization received over a
20 million dollars from the City of New York that they
21 have to pay prevailing wages to their service
22 workers. So I want to make sure that the Library
23 even though it's contracting out, is not breaking
24 this particular prevailing wage law. So, we'll talk
25 more about that.

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1
2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
3 much, Council Member Crowley for that question, and
4 Bridget, I want to thank you for your commitment to
5 ending those contract cleaning services. And
6 restoring those jobs to the library. Council Member
7 Levin would be next, but I think he's not around.
8 Council Member Koo.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you, Chair. I
10 want to thank all the administrators who are here
11 from the different libraries. We all know libraries
12 are really important in our lives, right because
13 knowledge is power. Where they enable people to have
14 knowledge, and this will enable the city to get
15 better and more competitive for the future. My main
16 question today is about the under service of the
17 libraries because I live only one block away from the
18 Flushing Library. And every day I go to the office I
19 see lines of people waiting to get into the door. So
20 it means the library doesn't open enough hours. They
21 should open up earlier and they should open up later
22 because people after work and some of the libraries
23 are closed already. So they can't have access to the
24 library system. Libraries are one of the few
25 services that's completely free to our citizens.

1 That's very important. We want to maintain it, and
2 we want to keep it that way, but a lot of the--when I
3 use the library, I find a lot of the infrastructure
4 are not up to the standard. The bathrooms are
5 disgusting, you know. [laughs] Right? And this is--
6 -this is frustrating because we live in America. New
7 York City is the top city in the world, and we can't
8 even have good bathrooms. That means our budget for
9 the maintenance is not good enough. And a lot of the
10 stuff we use for the libraries, you have to buy heavy
11 duty stuff, the industrial strength. You can imagine
12 a toilet in your home is only flushed a few times. A
13 toilet in a public library is flushed thousands of
14 times a day. So there is usually a problem, or the
15 faucets are leaking, and the bathrooms are dirty. So
16 those things I want you guys to put a priority on
17 those things, and we want to make sure we have enough
18 funding--we want to make sure we have enough funding
19 for the bathroom fixtures. [laughter]

21 The second thing I want to talk about is
22 like the roof or the air conditioning or the AC
23 systems. Those are very important. Just like your
24 own house. We want to make sure our roof is not
25 leaking and the AC system is good because the library

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2 has thousands of people in it. We don't want people
3 to suffer from air illness, you know, or asthma and
4 all those other things. And I agree with all of you
5 the budget is not enough for this. Because I just
6 noticed in this budget things the Municipal ID Card a
7 total of \$35,000. \$35,000 has been added to the
8 budget in Fiscal 2015 for technology upgrades to
9 allow those who have Municipal IDs to use the library
10 system. I think \$35,000 is not enough for the
11 library system to use for this upgraded technology.
12 We have--how many libraries do we have? Hundreds,
13 yeah. So this is--I guess my point of view is we
14 have to help--we have to help you guys to make sure
15 you have enough funding, and I went to the Mayor and
16 the Chairman here. The Mayor always says the tale of
17 two cities. We don't have the tale of two cities in
18 our library system. We want to make sure the poor
19 laborers has more library service. So that the
20 citizens and these are kids who are up in those areas
21 will catch up. Will have technology, they have
22 knowledge, just like the regular laborers. And I
23 hope the Mayor will listen to us, and we can achieve
24 all this together. So I want to ask maybe Bridget,
25 please, how do you want to fix the infrastructure in

1 the library system? What's the first priority?

2 Thank you.

3
4 BRIDGET QUINN CAREY: Well, the first
5 priority is all of those libraries that have boilers
6 and HVAC systems that are 50 plus years old. So at
7 the Douglaston Library that HVAC system is literally
8 54 years old. And it's a credit to our incredible
9 maintenance staff that they are able to keep that
10 thing going, and we--knock on wood--haven't had to
11 see closures because of a failure there. But it's
12 only a matter of time. So those are the libraries
13 that we've priorities for roofs and for HVAC because
14 that's critical maintenance that we have to get done.
15 And it's sad to say that the reason it hasn't been
16 done is because unfortunately, there are other
17 libraries that have, you know, more critical needs
18 than that. So, we are aware of them, and we've
19 certainly done our-- Well, we've come--we've come to
20 our Council members who have been incredibly generous
21 in providing funding. It's not glamorous. It's not
22 sexy to fund a boiler. But our Council people do,
23 [bell] and we thank them for that, and we will
24 continue that and it's also in our Ten-Year Plan.

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
3 much, Council Member Koo, always a striking the right
4 cord and hitting a nerve with good quality bathrooms.
5 Which we can all [laughter] can agree is an important
6 part of library service. And I love the comment the
7 tale of two cities does not exist in our libraries
8 where democracy and equality reign. Council Member
9 Levin has joined us once again. He'll be the last
10 Council member to ask questions of the three systems,
11 and I see Commissioner Finkelpearl in the rear view
12 window there. But we will hear from our three or
13 four library local presidents after these systems,
14 and then Commissioner Finkelpearl. So Council Member
15 Levin.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you very
17 much, Mr. Chairman. Thank you very much to this
18 panel. I just have one question about City's First
19 Readers, which is an initiative out of the City
20 Council that we worked on the library systems with
21 last year. We tried to get as much funding for this
22 initiative as possible, and I just wanted to ask
23 specifically if you could go a little bit more in
24 depth on how it's working in terms of ramping up.
25 And how you would be able to use more funding? Do

1 you think that more funding is necessary? And what
2 do you think maybe is the optimal amount of funding
3 for the systems themselves as part of this
4 initiative?
5

6 TONY MARX: So I can speak for the New
7 York Public Library, but again, thanks to you all for
8 the City Council's Early Childhood Initiative
9 funding. We had 211,000 attendees expected in FY15.
10 We purchased 15,000 Early Literacy kits. So we think
11 this is a great partnership, but as I mentioned
12 earlier, our hope is to reach out to--to all the Pre-
13 K programs at least in our boroughs--I can't speak
14 for my colleagues here--to say we want all those kids
15 to come through the libraries. And to talk to our
16 librarians, and we have these kinds of kits and use
17 our books. You know, I mean that's what the library
18 is for. We're all in this together, and this was an
19 example of the beginnings of a great partnership.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: How much does each
21 kit cost? Do have anything specific?

22 TONY MARX: Five dollars? Five dollars.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay.

24 TONY MARX: I'll bring one to you.
25

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: But there's--there
3 is a--if you could hire-- Basically, the more funding
4 that's available, the--you know, that's as much as
5 you can use or is there--is there an option on that?

6 TONY MARX: I think--so let me get back
7 to you. My guess is, you know, you can always use
8 more material, but we also need the funding for the--
9 for the librarians to-- You know, the material by
10 itself doesn't make it go. It's my great colleagues
11 who make it go, and so that--exactly what that right
12 balance is to maximize the use of the facilities to
13 be able to say to every Pre-K kid in town come to the
14 library once a week or whatever--whatever it works
15 out to. We can get--we're very interested in that
16 question as well.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay.

18 LINDA JOHNSON: Yes. So--and Brooklyn as
19 well. We love the program. We'd love to do more,
20 and, you know, like all the questions that have
21 actually come from the Council it's a balancing act.
22 And, you know, you spend money on one thing means
23 that you don't spend it on something else. So more
24 is always appreciated. In terms of specific numbers
25 I don't have the stats for the past year, but we will

1 provide them to your office immediately. But I do
2 know that as my colleague from New York Public
3 Library said, it's all about making sure that the
4 program is staffed with the right people and that the
5 materials get into the hands of the--of the children
6 who need them. Which, of course, is the
7 responsibility of our librarians.
8

9 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: So in terms of the
10 initiatives dollars was that used at all for staff
11 lines, or was it specifically just for the packets?

12 LINDA JOHNSON: It was just for the kids,
13 yeah.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay.

15 LINDA JOHNSON: Sorry. It's the kits.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Okay.

17 BRIDGET QUINN CAREY: At Queens we've
18 used the funding. We received \$175,000, which is
19 incredibly helpful, and thank you very much for it.
20 We have been able to implement the Family Place at
21 Corona Library, which has been an amazing success.
22 And additional funding would enable us to spread that
23 program to other community libraries. So, yes, we
24 would like additional funding. And it's also been
25 able to support something we're trying to kick off to

1 kindergarten. So a real full suite of Early
2 Learning, Early Literacy initiatives that make sure
3 that our youngest residents are prepared and ready
4 for school, and I think that helps all of us make
5 sure. So it's money well invested in your libraries
6 and we're very thankful.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Good. Thank you.
9 Thank you, Mr. Chair.

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
11 much. Council Member Cumbo, you have a question?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [off mic] No.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: No. Okay. So
14 with that, I want to thank all of my colleagues. I
15 want to thank the heads of the three library systems.
16 We can give them all a big round of applause. We are
17 going to fight like heck to make sure you get what
18 you rightly deserve for the restoration of the \$65
19 million baseline, and then fight for somewhere in the
20 region of a billion dollars in capital over ten
21 years, which you rightly deserve. So thank you all
22 so much. We are now going to call the heads of the
23 Library Local Unions, Eileen Muller from Brooklyn and
24 Val Colon [sp?} from the New York Public Library with
25 Joe Reese, I believe. Is Joe Reese with Val and the

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1 team? And I know that John Hyslop representing the
2 Queens Library Workers is imminent. So we will go to
3 a three-minute clock, a three-minute clock for this
4 testimony. Eileen, why don't you start us off, and
5 then we have Commissioner Finkelppearl, who is in the
6 wings waiting to join us. And then we will go to
7 public testimony alternating libraries and cultural.
8 So who wants to start? Val? Okay.

10 VAL COLON: [off mic] I want to say
11 first of all--

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [interposing] Is
13 the mic on? Okay.

14 VAL COLON: Okay. Just a quick
15 statement. As the heads of the Four Library Locals,
16 we want--I do want to say that we represent all the
17 library workers, and not any particular type. You
18 know, we try to get away from having one title
19 mentioned, and we have a lot of representation in
20 this room from all the titles. And as part of the
21 clerical staff officially, you know, I want to make
22 sure that it's library workers.

23 EILEEN MULLER: Understood. Okay. Good
24 afternoon. It's morning so I should say good
25 morning. I'm usually the afternoon person. Good

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1 morning, Chairman Jimmy Van Bramer, Chairman Costa
2 Constantinides. Thank you for giving my fellow
3 presidents and me the opportunity to testify at this
4 year's joint committee on Cultural Affairs, Libraries
5 and International Group Relations and the
6 Subcommittee on Library hearing for the three library
7 system budget. Val Colon President of Local 1930;
8 Cuthbert Dickinson, President of Local 374; John
9 Hyslop, President of Local 1321; and I Eileen Muller,
10 President of 1482 come before you united. Our needs
11 may differ because of our respective size, but our
12 goal is the same: Ensuring our members have the
13 financial and human resources to improve and expand
14 the library services our patrons, your constituents
15 demand from us everyday. As you heard from the three
16 library directors, over 2,800 frontline members of
17 our union provide an amazing array of programs and
18 services while maintaining a safe and inviting
19 environment for over--in over the 200 locations for
20 millions of New York City residents of all ages,
21 educational backgrounds and nationalities. However,
22 over the last--or the past eight years, this has
23 become more and more difficult because the workers
24 have lost over 870 or 21% of their fellow co-workers.
25

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1 Valiantly, they do more with less, but are extremely
2 overworked and have a very difficult time meeting the
3 current mass of demands. In addition to this, every
4 year frontline workers are asked, and in some cases
5 mandated to become library service integrators
6 providing new and expanding services to our ever-
7 expanding communities. Everyone wants us to offer
8 more hours, more after-school programs, more adults
9 learner classes, more material and more programs. We
10 appreciate and recognize--we appreciate that you
11 recognize libraries are an indispensable resources to
12 New York City citizens making our city more livable.
13 However, these services require more funding and more
14 staff. For years, we have heard from the Union's
15 presidents. Now you need to hear from the men and
16 women who are in the audience who do this work
17 everyday. In the coming testimony, New York City--
18 Pardon me. New York Public Library, Brooklyn Public
19 Library and the Queens Public Library Workers,
20 frontline workers will speak directly to you about
21 the impact this budget, or the budgets in the past
22 have had on their lives as frontline workers in the
23 libraries. Thank you very much for giving us this
24 opportunity, but we hope that you will consider the
25

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1 funding because there are patrons, but they're your
2 constituents. So thank you very much.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
5 much. And John Hyslop is perhaps the best timing
6 I've ever seen for a hearing. Impeccable.

7 JOHN HYSLOP: [off mic] It is pretty
8 mic.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah. [laughs]
10 Joe, would you like to go next?

11 JOE RESSE: Sure. Good afternoon, Chairs
12 Van Bramer and Constant--

13 EILEEN MULLER: Costa Constantinides.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Constantinides.
15 You were almost there.

16 JOE REESE: All right.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: That's great.

18 JOE REESE: Constantinides and members of
19 the Cultural Affairs, Libraries and International
20 Intergroup Relations Committee. My name is Joseph
21 Reese, and I'm representing my President Cuthbert
22 Dickinson, and my fellow members of Local 374. I
23 have worked as an electrical maintainer for New York
24 Public Library for the last 31 years. As
25 maintainers, we are responsible for the upkeep of 92

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1 library buildings. Among other things, we keep the
2 lighting, power, and facilities working. We keep the
3 water running. We keep the AC running in the summer,
4 and the boilers running in the winter. Custodians
5 and porters keep the bathrooms clean, mop and vacuum
6 floors. Our security guards keep the buildings safe,
7 and protect the employees and patrons. These tasks
8 are a constant challenge under normal circumstances.
9 But with our budget being repeatedly cut, we are
10 forced to do more with less, which has become a
11 burden on my co-workers and me. The reduction in
12 manpower has greatly limited our ability to complete
13 our projects and assignments in an adequate amount of
14 time. I may visit anywhere from two to ten buildings
15 in the course of a day, and the cuts have affected
16 all departments. The branch staff has been cut to
17 dubious levels. I see buildings open with only two
18 staff members present in some of the city's tougher
19 neighborhoods. When I see--when I see this done, I
20 fear leaving unless there's a male staff member in
21 the building. Additionally, everyone's job is
22 changing and expanding with the new technology
23 upgrades and the additional programs added to the
24 library's schedule. The library has been trying to
25

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2 utilize every square foot possible in our buildings
3 for computer labs, classroom space and comfortable
4 workspace for our patrons. The opening of additional
5 space, however, has increased the burden on our
6 custodial staff as much as 100% in some cases. Where
7 a library only had two floors open to the public
8 [sic] in the past, and the buildings may have been
9 renovated and now have four floors open. More
10 bathrooms to disinfect. More cleaning up behind
11 teenagers that are always inventing new ways to make
12 a mess--

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [laughs]

14 JOE REESE: --in our new teen centers.
15 More learning programs, and more special programs and
16 auditorium space to clean up behind. Along with six-
17 day service, and expanded hours, and on top of this
18 approximately 90% of our custodians have two
19 buildings that they have to take care of in the
20 course of a day.

21 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Are you about to
22 wrap up there?

23 JOE REESE: Yes, sir.

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: All right.

25 Thank you, Joe.

1 JOE REESE: Two more lines.

2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

3 JOE REESE: We have done so much with so
4 little. I sometimes fear that the bottom will fall
5 out of the library and the city. We desperately need
6 more staff to upgrade and maintain what has been the
7 infrastructure of education for the citizens in New
8 York City for the past 120 years. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
10 much, and the next time I see Cuthbert I will tell
11 him that you delivered excellent testimony in his
12 stead. We've known each other a long time. He's a
13 great friend, and I just want to say to you and to
14 Val as well as some of you know, I was raised by a
15 custodian of a public school, a custodian, my step-
16 father cleaned those floors, and mopped those
17 bathrooms. So I have great respect and reverence for
18 library workers both librarian titles, but all
19 titles. I know how important that work is to making
20 sure the libraries are safe and clean and serving
21 people. So thank you very much.

22 JOE REESE: Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: John, do you
24 have something you would like to add.
25

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1
2 JOHN HYSLOP: No, I think Eileen spoke on
3 my behalf. So definitely fine.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Well, we thank
5 you for your timely and brief appearance here at the
6 [laughs] Cultural Affairs, Libraries and
7 International Intergroup Relations Committee. John
8 is a great leader of Queens Library Guild, and a good
9 friend. So we thank you all so much for the work
10 that you do representing all library workers, and we
11 couldn't agree more that we need the \$65 million. We
12 need it now, and your members and the City of New
13 York will benefit. John looks like he's itching
14 towards the mic but not sure.

15 JOHN HYSLOP: Eileen asked the question
16 so I was responding through Joe.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Okay. [laughter]
18 All right, well, you worked that out amongst
19 yourselves, but thank you all so very, very much for
20 being here. You are free to go, and now we will turn
21 our attention to the Cultural Affairs world and
22 welcome the Cultural Affairs Commissioner into the
23 room, and the library folks are free to leave. But
24 those who still want to testify as part of the public
25 session, you are free to stay and listen to the

2 Cultural Affairs Commissioner for his piece. Then we
3 will go back to public testimony, and alternate
4 between libraries and culturals So thank you all so
5 very much.

6 [background comments, pause]

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So we are going
8 to try and move as expeditiously as we can.
9 Commissioner Finkelpearl, feel free--

10 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]
11 Excuse me.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: -- to take a
13 seat. Commissioner Finkelpearl.

14 SERGEANT-A-ARMS: Quiet down please. We
15 still have the hearings on.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So thank you
17 very much for those who are departing for their love
18 of libraries, and for those who are arriving. And
19 for those who are staying, we are about to continue
20 our hearing. But move to the Cultural Affairs
21 portion of today's hearing, and we're thrilled to
22 have the Commissioner of the Department of Cultural
23 Affairs here. I'm joined by Council Member Laurie
24 Cumbo from Brooklyn; Council Member Steve Levin from
25 Brooklyn; and I know that Council Member Costa

1 Constantinides will be back after taking a brief
2 break. And welcome to everyone here from the
3 Department of Cultural Affairs, and from the greater
4 cultural community. And as I mentioned in the
5 housekeeping portion a little bit earlier, we're
6 going to hear from the Commissioner. And then we
7 will go to public testimony, and we'll alternate
8 between library panels and cultural panels. So that
9 everyone who wishes to comment on both, we would
10 appreciate. So all I would ask is that we be
11 respectful. Commissioner Finkelppearl is about to
12 testify. So if folks could take their seats and we
13 could take conversations outside of the room.

14
15 The Department of Cultural Affairs
16 provides support, advocacy and technical assistance
17 to the City's cultural community to ensure that
18 culture and the arts remain thriving futures of this
19 city's civic and economic life, one that New Yorkers
20 have come to expect. The Mayor's Fiscal 2015
21 Preliminary Budget for the Department of Cultural
22 Affairs is \$150.4 million. That is less some funding
23 that the City Council has appropriated last year into
24 the budget for the arts. But we certainly hope that
25 at a minimum it will be continued, if not increased.

2 So we are always hopeful. Thank you very much for an
3 increase in that budget. And, these funds support
4 the 33 city-owned cultural institutions that form our
5 cultural institution group. And, of course, supports
6 hundreds of non-profit cultural organizations through
7 the Cultural Development Fund. With great programs
8 like Percent for Art and Materials for the Arts
9 through IC represented in the front row. It is
10 absolutely vital that we continue to increase funding
11 for culture and the arts. Let me repeat that. We
12 should increase funding for culture and the arts in
13 the City of New Yorker, and--

14 SERGEANT-A-ARMS: [interposing] Quiet
15 down. Quiet down please.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Apparently, we
17 had librarians in the room before, and they were a
18 little bit quieter. Now, we have the cultural
19 community. So in the Council Chambers we are not
20 allowed to clap, but if you really agree with
21 something very strong, we do this. And then the
22 Sergeant-at-Arms doesn't interject. But those of you
23 who believe we should increase funding for culture
24 and the arts now you can do your thing. There you
25 go. Thank you all very much. So, it's been an

1 exciting year, and Commissioner Finkelpearl is
2 approaching his one-year anniversary as our
3 Commissioner. And we all believe in all of our
4 cultural organizations including strengthening some
5 of the smaller community based organizations that are
6 equally important to those of our large institutions.
7 And we've done some great things. I'm particularly
8 proud of the expansion of the CASA Program, a
9 significant expansion of CASA. A significant
10 expansion to the Coalition of Theaters of Color; the
11 Cultural Immigrant Initiative, which I created with
12 my colleagues with the help of the Speaker, and so
13 many other things.
14

15 So, I also would be remiss if I didn't
16 say that one of the signature achievements this year
17 for this Administration that being the IDNYC card.
18 Which is wildly successful beyond everyone's wildest
19 imaginations. It could not have been, I believe, as
20 successful, as desirable were it not for the
21 inclusion of free memberships and other benefits from
22 our major cultural institutions. And the cultural
23 institutions groups members who came to the table
24 there. We're thrilled that Materials for the Arts
25 Continues to do amazing work. I'm also thrilled that

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2 they're in Long Island City, Queens. But it is my
3 pleasure to be the Chair of Cultural Affairs to work
4 with a visionary and someone who is generous with his
5 time and his spirit, and I might say a good partner
6 in a cultural town hall meeting, which we had a
7 couple of days ago. So, with that, on behalf of the
8 City Council, I want to thank you and welcome you to
9 testify here today, Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl.

10 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Thank you very
11 much, Chairman Van Bramer.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Can you hold on
13 one second?

14 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes.

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, as you know,
16 we have the administration of an oath that we ask for
17 Commissioner level folks. So Amita, our counsel,
18 will read to you this, and if you would agree, that
19 would be helpful.

20 LEGAL COUNSEL: Commissioner, would you
21 raise your right hand? Do you affirm to tell the
22 truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth in
23 your testimony before the committee, and to respond
24 honestly to council member questions?

25 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: I do.

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LEGAL COUNSEL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Now you may
testify.

COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Okay. So good
morning Chairman Van Bramer, Council Member Levin,
Koo, and Cumbo. I'm Tome Finkelpearl Commissioner of
New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. I am
pleased to present testimony regarding the Mayor's
Fiscal 2016 Preliminary Budget. I am joined today by
many members of my team. Today I will start by
reviewing the Mayor's Preliminary Budget Proposal for
the Department of Cultural Affairs. For Fiscal
2016, Mayor de Blasio's Proposed Preliminary Budget
includes a baseline of \$149.7 million for Cultural
Affairs, an increase of \$1.7 million over the Fiscal
2015 baseline at adoption. This is due to collective
bargaining and other adjustments. These preliminary
proposals--the preliminary proposal would allocate
\$28.5 million for program groups through the Cultural
Development Fund and \$109.8 million for operating and
energy subsidies at the CIG. The Fiscal 2016
baseline forecast also includes \$5.1 million for
CASA. Overall, these figures are largely consistent
with the Fiscal 2015 Adopted Budget not counting any

1 one-time initiatives or discretionary funding that
2 might have been added at adoption. DOCA started
3 Fiscal 2015 with an Adopted Expense Budget of \$157.2
4 million, which has since been modified to protect
5 overall adjustments. Hence, currently at \$159.4
6 million. The Fiscal 2015 adopted figure was the
7 largest budget of the last five years, and the third
8 largest in the agency's history.
9

10 Turning to the agency's Four-Year Capital
11 Budget, we continue to work with our colleagues in
12 the City Council, and the borough presidents to
13 manage grants to cultural groups through the city--
14 throughout the city. The agency's current Four-Year
15 Capital Plan includes \$722 million for 418 projects
16 at 218 different cultural organizations. This
17 portfolio allows non-profits to leverage hundreds of
18 millions of dollars in additional private
19 investments. And encompasses a wide range of
20 projects that improve accessibility, great equipment,
21 reduce energy consumption, and provide New Yorkers
22 with access to high quality cultural programming.

23 Some upcoming highlights include upgrades
24 of Snug Harbor Music Hall in Staten Island; a
25 complete renovation of Bronx River Arts Center. The

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2 Jim Henson Galleries; the Museum of Moving Image; the
3 Atteborough Academy Facility; and Family Garden at
4 the New York Botanical Garden. The opening of Saint
5 Ann's Warehouse, a new home and at the former Tobacco
6 Warehouse in DUMBO, and the opening of the new
7 Whitney Museum in Chelsea next month.

8 By now many of you are familiar with the
9 programs managed by my agency, and my staff keeps you
10 up to date on the application process and deadlines.
11 So you can inform your constituents. These include:
12 The Cultural Development Fund, which provides grants
13 to around 900 non-profits each year for publicly
14 accessible arts programming. It reflects incredible
15 diversity by city. Materials for the Arts, which you
16 mentioned before, which collects donated supplies and
17 provides them free of charge to non-profits, schools
18 and government agencies with arts program--
19 programming. And trains arts and educators how
20 creative use can improve their programming while
21 maximizing resources. MFTA represents a long-
22 standing successful partnership with Sanitation, and
23 the Department of Education.

24 The Community Arts Development Program,
25 which builds capacity at small community based

1 cultural groups to improve the stability and
2 programming of these groups that are critical to
3 their neighborhoods. A Percent for Art, the City's
4 public art program that enhances our libraries,
5 courthouses, plazas, schools and other public spaces
6 with permanent art installation. SPARC, Seniors
7 Partnering with Artists Citywide, a partnership with
8 the Department for the Aging and Five Boroughs Arts
9 Castles that places artists in senior centers
10 engaging seniors with a wide range of arts
11 programming and providing stipends for working
12 artists. And the Cultural After School Adventure
13 Program, CASA, newly expanded this year, which allows
14 council members to designate cultural organizations
15 to partner with schools for afterschool programming
16 providing additional cultural education opportunities
17 in all 51 Council Districts.

19 I would like to point out that my agency
20 manages expenses. These expenses. These expense in
21 capital funds along with these additional programs
22 with an agency headcount of just over 60 people and
23 only around three percent of our Annual Expense
24 Budget going to staff and administration. We may
25 look like a \$150 million agency in the budget, but

1 operating expenses count for only \$5.6 million of our
2 total funding. With the rest going straight out to
3 the constituent cultural groups. If you want updates
4 on specific programs, I'm happy to provide more to
5 you during Q&A. We are proud of all these programs,
6 and proud to be the largest municipal funding agency
7 for the arts and culture in the United States.
8

9 I would to turn now to a set of new
10 initiatives. These are programs launched in the last
11 year, programs that inform--programs informed by the
12 vision of the new Administration and the City
13 Council. They represent our efforts to find new ways
14 to open the doors of the greatest museums, concert
15 halls, zoos and gardens in America. To enrich the
16 lives of the newest New Yorkers. To find new tools
17 of assessment to better understand the value of art
18 on a community level to see how local institutions
19 enrich the City as a whole. And they prevent--they
20 represent our conviction that that we need to value
21 artists, and look for concrete ways to address the
22 issues of affordability in New York City. So here
23 are the new programs.

24 In July 2014, I was proud to join the
25 Mayor and many of you to announce--many of you from

1 the Council--to announce increased funding for the
2 arts in our schools. Thanks to this funding
3 allocated by Mayor de Blasio in partnership with the
4 City Council, the city has been able to hire arts
5 coordinators to better coordinate cultural
6 activities, and fund additional certified arts
7 teachers for the public schools. We look forward to
8 continuing this work to create a quality, sequential
9 arts education curriculum for public school students.
10 This is the foundation for all arts activity in our
11 city, and a top for the Administration.

12
13 Last September, many of you joined the
14 Mayor--Mayor de Blasio at the Bronx Zoo to announce
15 that our partners in the CIG had agreed to offer a
16 free one-year membership to the IDC. Here's my card.
17 I hope everybody in the room gets one. IDNYC card
18 holders. I think it's no coincidence the demand for
19 the card has been off the charts, and we have
20 received our first reports of hundreds of card
21 holders redeeming their memberships. I would like to
22 emphasize for everyone has yet to have their
23 appointment to get their IDNYC card, but the year-
24 long CIG membership begin the day that you sign up.
25 For year 2 of the IDNYC program, we are eager to

1 begin conversations with CDF groups for future
2 partnerships. The Social Impact of the Arts Project,
3 which I have updated the Committee on once before has
4 started its work in compiling a comprehensive report
5 on what cultural services are provided and where.
6 And what impact they have on the communities in which
7 they occur. This report will capture the impact not
8 only of the 1,200 or so non-profits that are eligible
9 for City funding, but thousands of cultural service
10 providers that engage New Yorkers in neighborhoods
11 where they live each and every day. Social Impact of
12 the Arts Project measures the impact of the arts on a
13 range of benefits for community vitality and social
14 wellbeing, an excellent complement to the economic
15 impact studies that we've seen in the past. We can
16 expect early results from this report in the coming
17 months and a full report next year.

19 The Fiscal 2015 Budget includes \$1.5
20 million for the Cultural Immigrant Initiative, a new
21 program imagined and funded by the New York City
22 Council, and administered by my agency, which
23 supports arts and cultural activities that serve
24 immigrant New Yorkers. There are total of 88
25 cultural immigrant initiative designations going to

1 72 organizations in Fiscal 2015. I look forward to
2 making safe visits for these programs in the spring.
3 In January, my agency announced an initiative to
4 examine the diverse city staffs, board and audiences
5 of cultural organizations that receive city funding.
6 We hosted two discussions on the topic. The first at
7 the Ford Foundation in January, and second at BRIC in
8 February. These forums were attended by hundreds of
9 cultural organizations throughout the city. I was
10 thrilled that you were able to join us at the Ford
11 Foundation, Jimmy Van Bramer. Having a culture
12 sector that reflects the community it serves is
13 critical to the future of arts in New York City--arts
14 and culture in New York City. Following these
15 kickoff events, my staff has worked to form a
16 diversity committee consisting of representatives of
17 the field that will help design a survey that will
18 examine race, gender, disability and other factors.
19 We hope to distribute the survey this summer with
20 results expected in the fall.

22 In his State of the City Address last
23 month, the Mayor announced our plan to build 1,500
24 affordable housing units and 500 affordable housing
25 work spaces for artists. This unprecedented

1 commitment demonstrates just how serious the
2 Administration is about retaining the artists, the
3 city's creative talent, and making sure that New
4 York, which benefits in so many ways from its
5 cultural community retains a place where artists--
6 Remains a place where artists of all backgrounds can
7 live and work. The program is still at the very
8 early stages, but my staff is already starting to
9 work to identify sites. And we expect HPD to issue
10 an RFP by the end of the year.
11

12 I would like to point out [coughs] that
13 we've been working with partners from the folks from
14 the philanthropic sector including Ford--the Ford
15 Foundation, New York Community Trust, the Landon
16 Foundation, the David Rockefeller Fund, the Cigna
17 Foundation, Rockefeller Brothers Fund and Mertz
18 Gilmore Foundation to underwrite many of these new
19 initiatives. It is important to us that we build
20 coalitions for more sustainable impact, and fundraise
21 to better serve the cultural field and maximize our
22 city investments.

23 I'm happy to report that you can follow
24 updates no all these programs in our recently
25 launched social medial channels. You can follow us

1 on Twitter at NY Culture, Instagram at NY Cultural
2 Affairs, Facebook where you can search for New York
3 City Department of Cultural Affairs. And our Percent
4 for Art at Tumblr blogs that showcases permanent
5 public art around the city. So after this hearing if
6 you're upgrading for more conversation on all things
7 cultural, you can find us there. My colleagues and I
8 have also been pleased to continue working with you
9 on proposed legislation to create a cultural plan,
10 which was discussed at the Town Hall meeting at MoMa
11 PS1 on Long Island City on Wednesday evening. I
12 think this has been a valuable process of working
13 together to find ways to better serve New Yorkers.
14 In closing, I would like to thank Chairman Van Bramer
15 for his leadership, committee members, and all of our
16 colleagues, all of your colleagues in the City
17 Council for your continued support. I'd be happy to
18 answer questions--any questions you have.
19

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
21 much, Commissioner Finkelparl for your leadership,
22 and this very exciting first year that I know you've
23 had. So speaking of the budget, there's a lot of
24 discussion about the Ten-Year Capital Plan for
25 Libraries this morning, and I'm wondering your

1 thoughts on the Ten-Year strategy as it relates to
2 your department?
3

4 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes, it's a
5 little bit different in the sense that the individual
6 institutions have capital plans. But we're a funding
7 agency for institutions. It's different from
8 libraries where they have a capital plan that looks
9 at the entire system comprehensively at once. So
10 received--we're just receiving our capital requests
11 for this year. It's more of a year-by-year situation
12 for the culturals. Because you're dealing--you see
13 what I'm saying? We get the applications each year,
14 and they--our friends in the cultural community over
15 here are the ones that have the long-term capital
16 plans.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So you would not
18 turn down more money for capital in the cultural?

19 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [laughs] No.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: With respect to
21 CF and the expense side, what would you do with
22 additional funds, and do you think that we're in a
23 place where we could envision increases both to the
24 CIGs and to CDF?
25

1
2 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So I mean I'm
3 here to present the Mayor's Preliminary Budget and
4 these are the numbers that we have--are presenting as
5 the numbers that we support. I think that the--you
6 know, the proposed--if there are proposals for an
7 increase in CDF and other parts of the budget, we
8 could look at that. I think that the scope of the
9 funding is--and then the way the funding is
10 distributed I think is really vastly improved from
11 last time I was at Cultural Affairs. When I was
12 there in the '90s, this was much more ad hoc I think
13 at the professionalization of the panel process has
14 been really excellent. So I think that there are a
15 lot of great improvements that have occurred in that
16 since I was--

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [interposing]

18 So--

19 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: --last there.
20 [sic]

21 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So given that,
22 do you think it would be a wise investment? Do you
23 think the money would be well spent if we were able
24 to allocate additional funding for programs at your
25 agency?

1
2 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: I can say that
3 I have full confidence in the staff to wisely spend
4 whatever budget we are presented with.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: That's a ringing
6 endorsement of an increase in funding, Commissioner
7 Finkelpearl. To turn to a matter that some
8 colleagues from the Bronx have raised with me, and I
9 want to raise it with you, and ask for you to take a
10 look at it. There's been some concern that capital
11 projects particularly in the Bronx--there's been a
12 need to come back and ask for additional funding.
13 Obviously, this--it happens, as we know, in many
14 projects because of unforeseen circumstances and
15 changes and whatnot. But I'm wondering if you've
16 noticed any trend--

17 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]
18 Yes.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --particularly
20 in the Bronx, and if you've heard about this, and I
21 would ask that you speak to some of our colleagues
22 including--

23 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]
24 Yes.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --the delegation
3 chair about this.

4 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So yes. So
5 I'd be happy to talk. I think I am familiar with
6 some of the projects you're talking about. I will
7 say that the funding--the bidding environments that
8 the cost estimating has, you know, a certain set of
9 figures that are sort of what we expect. And the
10 amount of money that it costs to build projects right
11 now, it's a very hot environment in capital so that
12 we have seen a number of bids coming quite high. I
13 think that there is no question about that. That's
14 not a Bronx project, or an issue. That's a citywide
15 issue with capital projects, and it's sort of the
16 overheated environment of building in New York City
17 creates this. But it is absolutely an issue. I'm
18 happy to talk to folks from the Bronx. I'm happy to
19 go with my capital unit. We've had some
20 conversations already about specific projects in the
21 Bronx, but I don't think it's particularly a Bronx
22 issue. Certainly, my head of Capital Units would say
23 also it's not particularly a Bronx issue. But if
24 there are people that want to talk about it,
25 absolutely.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: There--there
3 most certainly are, and I'm happy to chat and they
4 did ask that--

5 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]
6 Yes.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --I bring this
8 up in the hearing today. So, you don't--you don't
9 see a variation for the Bronx so that in terms of the
10 capital projects?

11 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]
12 No, I--I--

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: With the
14 cultural capital projects there's--there's a real
15 outlier.

16 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: I don't and
17 more importantly, my head of Capital Units who is
18 very on top of all of the projects doesn't see a
19 particular pattern in the Bronx. It is a particular--
20 -it's a problem that's happening citywide right now.
21 We've got a lot of projects that are coming in high,
22 and we're addressing them.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Well, we'll
24 continue the discussion, and I know the multiple
25 colleagues in the Bronx--

1
2 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]
3 Yeah.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --that raised it
5 with me that you and your colleagues will continue to
6 meet with and talk with, and address those concerns.
7 We were reviewing, the staff and I the PMMR and the
8 MMR, and I think the agency is performing extremely
9 well across all levels. But we noticed one slight
10 uptick in terms of the CDF payments and it takes for
11 the CDF payments. And in the document it's doubled,
12 and it's relative. I mean we're talking about four
13 to eight days, but I was wondering why the change?

14 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: There are new
15 requirements for CDF, which for example the insurance
16 requirements have extended the time period. So I
17 mean we can report on that specifically, but it's not
18 that the staff is doing things more slowly. There
19 are more things to do, and that makes things happen
20 more slowly. So that particular new requirement the
21 law department for insurance, for CDF contracts.

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I think we all--
23 all agree it's very important for these groups to get
24 their money as soon as possible.

25

1
2 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Right, and I
3 think it's also, you know, from the Administration's
4 perspective also important to protect taxpayers with
5 insurance.

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Of course and I
7 would think that we could probably do both at the
8 same time. So, thank you for that. One of the
9 things we were talking about also with respect to the
10 PMMR is one of the things we rightly should be very
11 proud of is the number of people who are coming to
12 our cultural institutions and reporting on gate
13 count. For example, the number of programs and
14 things like that are not always done particularly for
15 the cultural institution with members and others, and
16 I was wondering if you have given any thought to
17 that.

18 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]
19 Yeah.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Because we
21 looked at it because the numbers are great, and they
22 make the case. That these institutions are
23 incredibly important and popular and doing great
24 work, and why not shout that from the rooftops so--
25

2 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]
3 Yeah, so the way MMR [coughs] is measuring stuff that
4 we have control of. So we make payments. So we can
5 measure how quickly we are making payments. We are--
6 we've been talking to operations to Mindy about
7 different kinds of measures. And this is something
8 we've been talking about in relationship to the
9 Social Impact of the Arts Project to get more complex
10 and more let's say outcome oriented measurements.
11 Because if you think about, you know, getting a
12 payment isn't an outcome. What is an outcome is
13 providing excellent cultural services to the people
14 of the City of New York. So, we are talking about.
15 We are thinking about it. These are the same
16 measures that have been in place for a long period of
17 time. We have been looking at it. I can promise you
18 that. We've been having conversations to create new
19 metrics. Then again, they have to be things that we
20 have some ability to have an influence on. There
21 could be something happens at a great cultural
22 institution in a particular year that's an amazing
23 show. We didn't imagine the show. It draws in
24 millions of people. The next year we're down. We
25 haven't done something different. They have.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Sure. I
3 understand that there could be variations and the
4 reasons for that, but it's something we should
5 continue--

6 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]
7 Uh-huh.

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --to talk about
9 in more ways to demonstrate the value of these
10 institutions and organizations to the broader public.
11 We've been talking an awful lot about the Cultural
12 Plan, and this is primarily about budgets. So not
13 that there's budget component to that, but I am
14 pleased that we are--we are closer to a great place
15 on that. And also A Percent for Art, which is in the
16 news this week more than usual.

17 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Uh-huh.

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: But we've also
19 got some great news there, and some progress. Maybe
20 you can speak to both of those before we go to
21 colleagues, Council Members Koo and Cumbo who have
22 questions.

23 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Maybe I'll say
24 something similar to what I said at the Town Hall the
25 other day that I think it's sometimes a really good

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1 thing to be at the stage where I don't want to
2 comment on it. I think we are making lots of
3 progress on the plan. I think we're very close. I
4 think we're going back and forth. I think people
5 already know that. So as we approach I think there
6 are just a couple of issues to iron out. I'm really
7 excited about it. I'm excited about the partnership
8 that we've had on that. It was a little bit sort of
9 rocky at the beginning perhaps, but this is great.
10 And I think it's going to be fantastic. So as for a
11 Percent for Art, I think we're also in good
12 discussions with you and other council members. I
13 think that the law is, you know, many decades old.
14 But there are ways in which it could be better
15 implemented. Community input is one of those
16 aspects. But I thought it was really gratifying.
17 We--for people who don't know in the audience, the
18 Town Hall 250 people came. It was a packed house,
19 and there was--whatever issues it might be with a
20 particular work of art, the general support for
21 public art and Percent for Art was extremely high in
22 the room. I think you would agree with that.
23
24
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I thought it was
3 remarkable, and that it was almost universal I
4 thought.

5 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes, there was
6 no--nobody said we shouldn't be spending public money
7 on this. It's a waste of money. It was no we should
8 be doing this. It's a great program. Let's talk
9 about how to make it even better.

10 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah, no I
11 thought it was a reaffirmation of what you and I both
12 believe, and you in particular have dedicated a
13 significant portion of your career to it. So it's
14 very exciting, and the feedback I've been hearing at
15 the Town Hall has been incredibly positive about the
16 discussion, the kind of discussion that--that we had
17 and that we involved the community in. The more that
18 we can do that, the better.

19 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]
20 Yes.

21 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And some folks
22 suggested that we take it on the road, Commissioner,
23 and do that in another borough and all of which I
24 would love to do.

25

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2 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes, agreed.
3 I thought it was a great public dialogue. I think.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So thank you
5 again for doing that, and I think we helped really
6 bring the level of dialogue on *The Sunbather*, and a
7 Percent for Art to a level where--where people felt
8 really good about it. So with that, I want to ask
9 Council Member Koo who has some questions.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you, Mr. Chair
11 and thank you, Commissioner Finkelpearl. First, I
12 want to thank you for your wonderful service and your
13 dedication to be the Commissioner of City Department
14 of Cultural Affairs.

15 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Thank you.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: I noticed in your
17 testimony that you said every year you gave away 900
18 departments [sic] funding for their programs.

19 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: So in the past,
21 people in the outer boroughs, the so-called outer
22 boroughs, just not--except Manhattan, right. We
23 always complain that we don't have enough funding for
24 cultural things in Bronx and Queens and Staten

25

1 Island. So I want to know do you have a formula of
2 allocating these funds to the different boroughs?
3

4 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: No. I will
5 say that 65% of the groups are outside of Manhattan.
6 It's a panel process and the panel process means that
7 outside professionals are evaluating the grants.
8 There is a lot of diversity in terms of who is on the
9 panel and where they from. But I mean that having
10 been said, Council Member Koo, I just spent the last
11 12 years right between--you know, between Flushing
12 and Carina and I want to--to get out and about into
13 the boroughs into a multi-lingual situation where we
14 can be a little bit more out and about talking to
15 people. We do borough by borough training or what is
16 it called? Seminars. So we do those--we do--we're
17 out in the boroughs. We're having seminars for CDF.
18 There's a lot of outreach. I think we could do more
19 and, you know, I'm talking to staff about how to do
20 that more. And it's not that the door is not open.
21 The door is open. The door is--you need to go out
22 the door and ask people to come inside. You know, I
23 feel that that's--that's something I learned in my--
24 actually 24 years of working in Queens. So I mean
25 look we're out there. We have hundreds of groups.

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1 You know, many hundreds of groups applying, but to
2 get there a little bit more I think is something that
3 is--could be a goal for the next coming years.

4
5 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: So your agency can
6 provide a capital funding group?

7 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: So, I wanted to ask
9 you--

10 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]
11 And so the capital funding like it says in the
12 testimony there are over 200 groups currently with
13 capital funding. And there's a certain level that
14 you have to either own your space or there are
15 restricted covenants that have to be negotiated with
16 landlords. There are capital seminars done every
17 year that people are invited to come to. So there is
18 quite--and that's, by the way, one of the biggest
19 differences in the agency from the time I was there
20 in the '90s to now is the number of groups and the
21 breadth of the capital funding to the entire field.
22 But it's not just the CIGs. It's hundreds of other
23 groups.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Okay, and the reason
25 I asked those questions is because in Queens or

1 especially my area in Flushing, a lot of visionaries
2 come every year. And many of them have different
3 talents. Some of them they are group local voices,
4 or they want to, you know, do a chorus. Or some of
5 them are dancing. Some of them are small groups.
6 They asked me about the funding, but I told them
7 that--
8

9 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: So we could
10 talk further. I'd love to talk to you. There is--
11 also money is distributed through the Borough Arts
12 Councils. So in your case Queens Council and the
13 Arts. To get funding from us you have to be
14 established as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization
15 for a couple of years. You have to have proven
16 programming. To get programming money from the Arts
17 Councils there is a lower bar to jump over. But, you
18 know, I understand what you're saying. Look, I
19 worked with dance--various dance groups in Queens.
20 They weren't even established as a non-profit. Like
21 the great dance groups that you see in each
22 community. So I'd like to, you know, find other ways
23 to open doors for those folks as well. The doors are
24 open. We have mechanisms through the Borough Arts
25 Councils. If you would like to talk further about

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1 how to get the word out in Flushing, I'd be happy to
2 talk to you.

3
4 COUNCIL MEMBER KOO: Thank you very much,
5 Commissioner.

6 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
8 much Council Member Koo. Council Member Laurie
9 Cumbo.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Good afternoon,
11 Commissioner. So happy to have you here, and to work
12 with you. I have a lot of questions. So I'm going
13 to try and get them in as quickly as I can. The
14 first question goes for in your testimony it says for
15 Fiscal Year 2016, Mayor de Blasio's Proposed
16 Preliminary Budget includes a baseline of \$149.7
17 million for Cultural Affairs, an increase of \$1.7
18 million over the Fiscal 2015 Baseline at Adoption.
19 This is due to collective bargaining, and other
20 adjustments.

21 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yeah.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I wanted to ask
23 you is collective bargaining the only tool that's
24 being used as a driver for an increase to the CIG
25 groups?

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2 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes. The--
3 the--yeah, essentially, the--the difference is the
4 Labor Settlement and the City's contribution to
5 covering labor settlement for the--mostly the DC37
6 union employees.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay, and that's
8 good that that increase will happen, but then the
9 remainder of the institution many of which are not
10 involved or recognized by a labor union--

11 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]
12 Right.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: --or programming
14 and those sorts of things. So in many ways that's
15 remaining flat.

16 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Right, and
17 that--but it includes half the CIG.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Right, right.

19 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Not '16--'16?
20 Yes. So have the CIG has union employees, and half
21 does not. But, I also want to say that when you
22 think of CIG funding, I think it's important to
23 remember that a lot of the money, a big chunk of the
24 money is going to those union jobs at--at the
25 unionized CIGs.

1
2 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I think that's
3 fantastic, but at the same time, other programmatic
4 staffing positions and anything from your curators to
5 your educators to your information front desk
6 workers, tour guides. They are also not receiving an
7 increase simultaneously. And what is the
8 administration's position on that, that these
9 institutions are remaining flat?

10 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Right. So
11 the--the idea behind it is that the collective
12 bargaining agreement is done on behalf of the CIG by
13 the city. And so, it's not that they're not
14 influencing at some point. [sic] So there's a labor
15 agreement. This is a long-standing deal that's been
16 this way for many, many generations. Therefore, that
17 negotiation results in an increase for those
18 unionized workers is covered by the city. That's--
19 that's the deal, the long time--the longstanding
20 deal.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I know. I think
22 that that's great that raises were given, and that
23 those collective bargaining agreements were reached.
24 But the challenge with it at the same time, and this
25 has always been the case in the arts, is that for so

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1 many of the employees that are not a part of the
2 union that their salaries are not growing and
3 increasing. And many of the programs that many of
4 these organizations are implementing are also not
5 being funded by the City at the level that they would
6 need to be successful.
7

8 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Well, I mean
9 just from my experience. In the past, Queens was
10 known as a smaller institution. It was not
11 unionized. Staff still got increases. It wasn't
12 that they didn't get increases. It just wasn't
13 mandated by a union settlement with the City.

14 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Right.

15 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: The City
16 negotiated. So I mean I hear what you're saying.
17 This is what we're presenting as our budget, and
18 that's what I'm saying.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I hear you. The
20 other one goes into the Department's Fiscal 2016
21 Preliminary Budget. It includes almost \$34.4 million
22 for cultural programs, and that's \$8.3 million less
23 than planned in the Fiscal 2015 Adopted Budget. The
24 \$8.3 million decrease is due to Council initiative,
25

1 and discretionary funding in Fiscal 2015, which is
2 not included in the Preliminary Budget.

3
4 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Right.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Can you give me--
6 and I'm confused about that in that way, and the fact
7 that it's going to be a reduction, but the reduction
8 is going to go to other places instead of that. [sic]

9 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]
10 No, not it's--it's a--we're showing the baseline
11 budget--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Uh-huh.

13 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: --and there
14 are going to be these increases, or maybe there are
15 going to be increases from the Council, the one-
16 times, the discretionary money. Which most likely
17 will be added back in. We're just showing what--what
18 we're doing with the baseline budget sets. And so
19 it's similar to other years. If you guys put back
20 in-- You know, if you give discretionary money to
21 individual groups, that will be reflected in the
22 final budget. But right now we're just at the point
23 of showing the baseline.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay. The other
25 question that I have about that is in your first

1 initial that you were talking about, I wanted to know
2 what has been the increase? This preliminary
3 proposal would allocate \$28.5 million for program
4 groups through the Cultural Development Fund.
5

6 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes.

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: So is there--what
8 is the increase there?

9 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: No, that's the
10 same.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: That's the same?

12 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yeah.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Now, was the last
14 big increase maybe about 10 years ago?

15 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: For CDF?
16 Kathy, when was the last big increase? [bell]

17 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: [off mic] Fiscal or
18 before?

19 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Fiscal or
20 before? Fiscal, all right. [sic]

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Because I believe
22 and correct me if I'm wrong, when Commission Levin
23 came in I think it went form like \$3 million to like
24 \$30 million. For which one?

25 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: [off mic]

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2 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: If Kathy, who
3 is the long-time and fabulous Director of CDF.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And then
5 Council Member Cumbo if I could just--

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Yes. Uh-huh.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Okay.

8 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: [off MI] I am
9 Kathleen Hughes [on mic] Assistant Commissioner.
10 Thank you. Kathleen Hughes, Assistant Commissioner.
11 The Base Budget was not as low as \$3 million when the
12 previous commissioner joined us.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: What was it
14 around?

15 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Closer to 22 I
16 think.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Oh, was it?

18 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Yeah. The portion
19 you may be thinking of was the competitive portion.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: There we go?

21 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Yeah, which was
22 closer to \$3 million, and then with the adjustments
23 that we made for Fiscal '08 the program funds became
24 competitive across the board.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: And did the--

2 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: [interposing]

3 That was the big reform that happened.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Did the amount
5 increase?

6 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Yes, I mean--

7 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [interposing] To
8 what?

9 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: --it increased.
10 Toe approximately 30.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Okay, that's the
12 one that I was talking about.

13 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Which is
14 right. So when--so the competitive part--

15 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [interposing]
16 Right.

17 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: --was five
18 times ten.

19 COMMISSIONER HUGHES: Correct.

20 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: Yes.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Are we going to
22 see any type of increases like that at his level?

23 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: I'm here to
24 present the project.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: [laughs]

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2 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: It's proposed
3 by the Mayor.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Tom, you are
5 remarkable for being on message, I would like to say.

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: That's right. Are
7 we going to do a second round or--?

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: We are not,
9 unfortunately.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: We are not. Okay.

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So, you--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: So we'll talk more
13 about these issues later, but I wanted to see if
14 there were discussions about any major increases to
15 the budget in that way. Even if they're not
16 happening right now, would there be planned or
17 hopefully being planned for the future?

18 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: I'm happy to
19 talk about the future, but this is our plan for this
20 year.

21 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: I got you.

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So if I--if I
23 could just dovetail I think Council Member Cumbo and
24 I would both love to see increases, meaningful
25 increases in all areas of the Department of Cultural

1 Affairs. And obviously, you are here to present the
2 Mayor's Preliminary Budget. And so you're not
3 necessarily going to publicly agree with Council
4 Member Cumbo and I, but I know in your heart that you
5 probably will. [laughter]

7 COMMISSIONER FINKELPEARL: But I will say
8 also and, of course, I think everybody in the room
9 understands this. That to have a couple of years in
10 a row without the cuts that have been experienced
11 year after year is I think-- I know I've heard from
12 the field and from the Council, et cetera, quite
13 positive and it shows that this Administration cares
14 about the arts and-- Yes?

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I believe that,
16 and I know that this Council and this committee
17 believes very passionately in the arts. And we will--
18 we will go through this budget process and seek
19 meaningful editions to the budget, and enhancements
20 to these incredible programs. And yes, Council
21 Member Cumbo, I will make sure that the funding that
22 we put in last year for CASA and for Coalition of
23 Theaters of Color; and the Cultural Immigrant
24 Initiative are not only back in the budget again this
25 year, but God willing increased as well. So because

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2 we have about 50 members of the public who have
3 signed up to speak, and it is actively snowing as if
4 it is the middle of January, we are going to say
5 thank you to Commissioner Finkelppearl for his time,
6 and for all of your work. For team here who we have
7 great respect and admiration for, and look forward to
8 working with you through this budget process and
9 beyond including some very exciting cultural policy
10 initiatives, which are happening. I think it's going
11 to be an incredible year for culture and the arts.
12 But we thank you Commissioner and your team, and look
13 forward to a good year. And with that, we will take
14 a one-minute break to allow for some folks to leave.
15 And then we're going to start calling members of the
16 public. Again, we're going to alternate cultural and
17 libraries so that everyone gets a chance to be heard.
18 And we're going to go to a two-minute clock. Because
19 we really do have about 50 folks signed up to
20 testify, a two-minute clock in about a minute. Thank
21 you all very much.

22 [pause, background comments]

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Okay, everyone.

24 We're going to resume--

25

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2 SERGEANT-A-ARMS: [interposing] Please
3 find seats.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --the hearing,
5 and we are going to return to libraries first, and
6 then have our first cultural panel. We're going to
7 do panels of five, I think. Again, we're going to go
8 to a two-minute clock because we have so many people
9 excited to testify on behalf of libraries and
10 cultural. And we're joined once again by our Chair
11 of our Subcommittee on Libraries, Costa
12 Constantinides and, of course, Council Member Cumbo
13 here as well. So, the first panel I will ask
14 everyone to come up and again two minutes Christian
15 Alfman [sp?]. Is Christian Alfman from the Queens
16 Library here? Christian. Carina Nieves, Carina
17 Nieves from Richmond Hills Friends of the Library.
18 Great. Rabbi Gabriel Ben Huda [sp?]. Thank you very
19 much. Linda Taylor Marshawn [sp?] And Nina Manning
20 from the New York Public Library. Is Nina Manning
21 from the New York Public Library here? That one is
22 here and I think one more. How about Sherry Ann
23 Joseph? Is Sherry Ann Joseph here?

24 SHERRY ANN JOSEPH: I'm here.

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: All right.
3 That's our first library panel, and we will call a
4 cultural panel right after that.

5 [background conversation]

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: All right. All
7 right, again I apologize. We are going to a two-
8 minute clock. So we want to hear from everybody. So
9 if everyone could keep their comments as succinct as
10 possible we'll get to hear from everybody who would
11 like to testify today.

12 RABBI BEN HUDA: For each.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Two minutes
14 each. [laughs] But if you wanted to really be
15 brief.

16 FEMALE SPEAKER: I need to do three.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: But we're going
18 to ask you to do two. So Rabbi, do you want to kick
19 this panel off?

20 RABBI BEN HUDA: Good.

21 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So thank you
22 very much.

23 RABBI BEN HUDA: Yes, good afternoon,
24 Council Members. My name is Rabbi Ben Huda [sp?]
25 from St. Albans, Queens, and I'm here to really

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2 support the library because especially in St. Albans
3 Library, Cambridge Heights Library, which is in the
4 same area and Rose Library is in the basic same area.
5 These libraries do tremendous work. You know, like
6 our kids don't have any facilities in our communities
7 to do anything, and the only place they can go to is
8 the library. Now, we have like for example after
9 school programs that we do in those libraries, right,
10 like homework help. Nowhere else to go. So we
11 really support the services necessary, and I'm also
12 in agreement with expanding the library to the six
13 days. Except that yes in our community you could do
14 Saturday service, but I want you to consider in some
15 of those communities we observe the Sabbath, that we
16 do not have those services on the Sabbath. So I am
17 for all those services, and it's a tremendous asset
18 to our community. And we definitely need support. I
19 also want to thank you, Mr. Chairman, for some of
20 the work that you've done in the Queensbridge Houses,
21 the public library there. Tremendous work and the
22 residents of that public housing really appreciate
23 it. And we do need expanded services there. So with
24 that, I am for that and again I wish you in the name
25 of peace Shalom Aleichem.

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2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you so
3 much, and for your work in Queens and also for
4 recognizing the good people of Queensbridge, which is
5 very close to my heart.

6 RABBI BEN HUDA: Okay, and also
7 [laughter] just finally I want to just thank
8 Councilman Richards who has done tremendous work in
9 adding money to the library and trying to expand the
10 libraries. And Councilman Daneek Miller, who is my
11 Councilman.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Those are two
13 great colleagues, and great champions [bell] of our
14 libraries. Thank you for recognizing Council Members
15 Richards and Miller.

16 CARINA NIEVES: Hi. My name is Carina
17 Nieves. I'm the President of the Friends of Richmond
18 Hill Library group and thank you for having a space
19 today that we could talk about libraries and advocacy.
20 The Richmond Hill Branch is 110-year-old branch
21 donated by Andrew--from Andrew--by Andrew Carnegie.
22 Just to give you some perspective about our branch,
23 last month we were No. 3 in programming; No. 7 in
24 reference, No. 14 in gate count; and No. 16 in
25 circulation. That's very phenomenal for a very old

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2 branch that has not received renovations. Though our
3 children's library was renovated, we are in dire need
4 of renovation for our adult reading area. We have
5 peeling paint, broken windows and 100-year-old boiler
6 that takes up a whole room. And we have basement
7 that is a storage facility for Queens Public Library.
8 That space could be utilized to serve our greater
9 community. And we have a staff, and our staff area
10 has broken windows as well that no don't--no longer
11 open. And they have a piece of plywood holding up
12 the ceiling. That goes to show like we really do
13 need to be on the Ten-Year Capital Improvement Plan
14 for Community Public Libraries. And Monday we had a
15 tutoring session held in a room that warehouses snow
16 blowers, and lawn mowers and the gas--it smells in
17 there. It's dangerous, and we would never want
18 people to be in that room ever. What I'm asking is
19 six-day service is great, but renovations are needed
20 for the older branches that haven't been renovated as
21 of yet. So, thank you and also technology is a major
22 factor. We did not receive new computers until our
23 first branch was closed this past summer. So we just
24 got Windows 7 computers. Thank you and please keep

25

1 in mind the older branches that have not been
2 renovated. [bell]

3
4 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: So, I'll
5 quickly say, Carina, it's great to see you again.
6 Thank you for your FYI, we certainly agree that we
7 need to expand our Capital Plan. We have to improve
8 technology, and great to see you go from Queens
9 College. And I was talking about public policy in
10 class with you. Here you are at the New York City
11 Council and making policy happen. So thank you for
12 your advocacy.

13 CARINA NIEVES: Thank you.

14 LINDA SAILOR MARSHAWN: Good morning
15 Council Members. My name is Linda Sailor Marshawn.
16 I'm the wife of the Rabbi, and I started in the
17 libraries at 16 years old, and I don't want to say
18 what year, but I worked up my way in Queens Library
19 to a branch manager, and I took the experience that
20 Queens provided into other cities and other states,
21 and provided services there. And what Carina left
22 out is that her branch only has one restroom, just to
23 pick up on what Councilman Koo said. Restrooms are
24 extremely important. So, in your fixing or building
25 up that branch, we need another restroom over there.

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2 Because facilities in the businesses where we go,
3 where we pay our money, they don't have that. The
4 library provides that service. Also, Richmond Hill
5 Friends of the Library representative is networking
6 at the local high schools. Joshua was just a
7 Richmond Hill High School yesterday where Mayor de
8 Blasio was. So they have a small building. They're
9 doing a lot of outreach. I was in the building the
10 story time is packed to capacity. So Richmond Hill
11 and the other numerous libraries in Queens need
12 space. Six days of service. I'm promoting seven
13 days of service because of the Sabbath on Sunday and
14 on Saturday. We have to look at both of those as
15 well. I passed around a community City Council
16 coloring page to many of the individuals here, and
17 I'm going to keep passing it around. Because our
18 children have council members who are working hard,
19 and we want them to color their council members. And
20 we want these sheets to be posted in the local
21 businesses in Queens and all the other boroughs
22 because you're the ones that are deciding on these
23 funds to keep the libraries open. You're the ones
24 that are deciding on the funds that keep--improve our
25 schools. So this coloring sheet has Council Member

1 Donovan Richards who I learned [bell] was a Power
2 Ranger growing up at the Queens Library. So we want
3 all of our Council member Power Rangers to be
4 colored. So I'm going to pass--

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Uh--

6 LINDA SAILOR MARSHAWN: --this around.

7 And I'm sorry. I know I have two--

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: No, you've done
9 well. You also revealed something about our
10 colleague that we did not know. [laughter] And we
11 are [laughs] are--

12 LINDA SAILOR MARSHAWN: [interposing]
13 Sorry about that.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --we are going
15 to have to talk to Council Member Richards about that
16 story. But it's--it's great and Council Member
17 Richards is amazing so--

18 LINDA SAILOR MARSHAWN: So I just want to
19 say that at the Queens Library we know it's used all
20 over. My mother who is 80 years has an invention,
21 and I had to go into the Queens Library because where
22 she lives in another state, there's only libraries
23 that service them. She can't get to the library. So
24 I was able to get to the Queens Library, get a
25

1 designer in Queens Village to work on her invention.
2 She's 80 years old and she's happy about this. So I
3 mean it's touching on not just in the United States,
4 all over the world.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
7 much. I appreciate that. Thank you so much.

8 NINA MANNING: Hi. Good afternoon. My
9 name is Nina Manning, and I'm from the New York
10 Public Library. And I'm currently at the Andrew High
11 School Braille and Talking Book Library. And from
12 what we've heard all morning, this afternoon, the
13 libraries, Brooklyn, Queens, and the New York Public
14 are all in need of money.

15 LINDA SAILOR MARSHAWN: Amen.

16 NINA MANNING: Money. We have a
17 fantastic institution that offers not only Pre-K but
18 immigration, family time, second languages. We're
19 needed. We're needed. The library is needed. When
20 9-11 occurred, we had to open up so that people had a
21 way of communicating their families. When Sandy
22 occurred, we had to find a way to open the nearest
23 branches so that people can communicate. So the
24 library is really, really an institute of great need,
25 learning, family and just being able to communicate.

1 Technology and so on. And speaking of technology,
2 even at the libraries for the Blind we have a system
3 that's called BUD where you can dial all your
4 materials. Where you can listen to them. And we
5 have technical people that teach blind users or
6 people that have visual disabilities how to use the
7 computer. So we--we matter. We matter. And so I'm
8 just asking for the support and the sustained support
9 of funding for not only the New York Public Library,
10 but Brooklyn and Queens as well. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you so
13 much, and could you pass the mic? Applause from your
14 immediate right. That's great.

15 SHERRY ANN JOSEPH: Hi. Good day. My
16 name is Sherry Ann Joseph. I'm at the Brooklyn
17 Public Library, and I'm representing my neighborhood
18 library's supervisor at the Stone Avenue Branch.
19 [background comments] I want to start by thanking
20 everyone on the panel for giving me the opportunity
21 to address the issues that occurred in the Brooklyn
22 Public Library. In the Bronx--in the Bronx community
23 is one of the highest concentrated public housing in
24 the entire country. I know the impact that the
25 library funding has on such a community. I know

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1 first hand that this community has a high crime rate
2 statistic. No viable outlets for young people to
3 interact positively with each other. The library is
4 the next best thing to the community center for most
5 of them. The people in Bronx view the library as a
6 safe haven for their children after school and out of
7 school time. The ones that are not fortunate enough
8 to be able to send their children away always safe
9 for these holidays. They look forward to us
10 providing programs that will keep the children
11 occupied, entertained and productive for the hours
12 that they come into the branch. Libraries including
13 Brooklyn Public Library has long been the place of
14 first option service or information on how to get
15 services for the entire community. New immigrations
16 wanting to learn English. People wanting information
17 on where they could attend classes to take the test
18 exam. Parents looking for homework help for their
19 kids. The homeless and homeless persons wanting to
20 know where is the nearest shelter, pantry of Social
21 Service Office or just having a quiet and safe place
22 to sit the day before going back to the shelter.
23 Over the years, Brooklyn Public Library has had to be
24 content with doing more with fewer funds year after
25

1 year. The impact of having minimal funds means less
2 materials for the public to use, less staff, and at
3 times less hours of services. The library has had to
4 offer a cutback in service hours at times, as
5 mentioned. It has always maintained a high standard
6 [bell] of program and commitment from staff to do its
7 best.
8

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I thought you
10 were going to finish that one line. It's the last. I
11 was reading along, and--

12 SHERRY ANN JOSEPH: [interposing] Okay.
13 Oh, yeah, because he said the way my card to do best.
14 [laughter] To do best that you they can see, and do
15 best to the best of their ability. [sic]

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [laughs] Thank
17 you.

18 [background comment]

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: All right.
20 Thank you so much.

21 CHRISTIAN ALFMAN: I wrote this whole
22 speech about all the stuff that I think we could just
23 go over--I mean just to figure out because I don't
24 understand. I think on the right side of my head.
25 But basically I have been able to do things with

2 those kids coming Widener--my first job in Harvard
3 Library Widener that I couldn't do anywhere else. If
4 it was outsourced, if it was environment or whatever,
5 it wouldn't work out. And the Queens Library allows
6 us to give these kids the things that they need to go
7 to Wall Street, to go City Hall. I've seen many of
8 the all over. And when I went to Albany they told me
9 the reason why your kids don't have funding--the
10 reason why your kids don't have these things is
11 because--this is what they actually said--people at
12 the very top don't want to pay taxes so it comes out
13 of the city's things. I'm not saying who and all the
14 cities are education and everything else. And we
15 seem to think in America today that if we underfund
16 everything and make people easy to manage, basically
17 and give them like entertainment all the time, we'll
18 be able to have a society of people like Steve Jobs.
19 People like this gentleman up here, and people like
20 Mr. Koo who I heard before. I have two of his quotes
21 here. and that's just not the case, and the very
22 things that maybe tomorrow they won't be in those
23 seats. The people who are making these decisions.
24 We need this for these kids. These kids come here
25 and they have nothing else. Their parents can't

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2 afford after school programs. I'm there literally
3 living in China--that's what it feels like sometimes--
4 --with all these kids that are diverse. And teaching
5 them to be proud of their own language. Teaching
6 them to sing songs and encouraging them to watch
7 Chinese movies. Otherwise, they're just absorbed in
8 all these things-- I'm sorry, nothing wrong with a
9 Japanese soldier. I knew a Japanese soldier. But we
10 do really great things, and we can't do them if the
11 libraries are under-funded. So I want to encourage
12 the libraries to stay funded. Fund education
13 schools, libraries. It's the really important
14 foundation of society. Knowledge is power. You
15 know, whatever floats the boat, but that's really
16 important. Thank you for listening to me.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
18 much and you made it with three seconds to spare. So
19 now we're going to call our first cultural panel. If
20 Ann Dennin is here from the New York City Arts
21 Coalition; Heather Woodfield, One Stands for Culture.
22 Is Heather still in the room? She is. Eric Pryor.
23 Is Eric Pryor with us. Eric Pryor, Center for Arts
24 and Education. I do not see Eric. Andrew Louie I
25 know I did see before. Andrew Louis here. Looks

1 like we might also be having a performance. Everyone
2 get ready. [laughter] One more. Let's see. And I
3 know--is Holly Block here from the Bronx Museum of
4 the Arts? Holly is here. We'll add Holly to this
5 panel. And I think that's still the chair is pretty
6 good for this Cultural Panel and, of course, we're
7 going to go right back to libraries after panel. So
8 why don't we start with you Ann and we will close
9 with a crescendo. It seems like it's going to be
10 good whatever it's going to be.
11

12 ANN DENNIN: Thank you so much. I'm Ann
13 Dennin representing the New York City Arts Coalition
14 Membership Group comprised of cultural groups from
15 all five boroughs from the smallest to the largest
16 working in all disciplines. I'm particularly focused
17 in the city and state arena on arts policy and
18 funding for the arts. Over the last years leadership
19 from cultural advocacy groups from across the city
20 have been meeting more and more regularly to come to
21 consensus on initiatives on funding for culture in
22 the city and other arts policy. We think that more
23 voices in the room often seek conference call voices.
24 We can be more effective for all artists in the
25 organization. We're pleased with the initiatives of

1 the Administration and the Council has put in place
2 in the last year, and we're looking forward to seeing
3 them roll out the facade of an even stronger cultural
4 base. We welcome the increase in the funding of CASA
5 and the Coalition of Theaters of Color, and we remain
6 enthusiastic about the cultural plan, and we're happy
7 to learn that it keeps moving forward. The New York
8 City Diversity Initiative and the Special Impact Art
9 Study recently launch. The New York City along with
10 other cultural advocacy including the CIGs are asking
11 for an additional \$30 million to the Mayor's Budget.
12 This would bring it back to the level in 2008, which
13 is adjusted for inflation is \$186,000. We'd like to
14 see that \$30 million divided equally between the CIGs
15 and the CDS. [bell]

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
18 much.

19 ANN DENNIN: Thank you very much.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Ann, you got to
21 the--to the ask in an appropriate amount of time.

22 ANN DENNIN: [off mic] With my Southern
23 accent.

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: It was very
25 good.

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ANN DENNIN: Right. [laughs]

ANDREA LOUIE: I'll try to speed it up.

Council Member Van Bramer and members of the committee, please accept my deepest appreciation to give testimony today regarding the New York City Preliminary Budget. My name is Andrea Louie and I'm the Director of the Asian-American Arts Alliance, an arts service organization that for 33 years has supported individual artists and small arts group right here in the five boroughs. I'm also here to support it. But I have three points to share today. First, the Arts Alliance deeply appreciates the support given to the arts community by the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs. And we would not be able to serve our artists without this funding. The funding from DCA supports our core programs, which help create concrete pathways of access to cultural decision makers like curators and artistic directors. And in addition, the Alliance also convenes important dialogue around race, identity and art making. Second, the Arts Alliance is grateful for the City Council initiative that helps advance cultural equity here in New York. And

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1 urges the Council to continue and strengthen these
2 initiatives.

3
4 First, the Cultural Immigrant Initiative
5 sponsored by our esteemed chair here provide \$1.5
6 million in new funding to arts organizations
7 providing services to immigrant communities across
8 the five boroughs. Second the Communities of Color
9 and Non-Profit Stabilization Fund was championed by
10 the Black, Latino, and Asian Caucus and the New York
11 City Council under the leadership of Council Members
12 Ferreras, Chin and King. This initiative provided
13 \$2.5 million in new capacity building funding to
14 organizations of color that provide direct services
15 to our city's most diverse constituents. Again, the
16 Alliance is deeply grateful to the Council for this
17 important and critically needed support to small
18 community based organizations, and we urge the
19 Council to continue both these initiatives and grow
20 them in FY16. The Alliance stands with our
21 colleagues in the 15% in growing coalitions, and
22 respectfully requests that the Non-Profit
23 Stabilization be increased to \$5 million. Third, the
24 Alliance joins our colleagues in the New York City
25 Arts Coalition On Percent for Culture, and members of

1 the Culture Institutions Group to respectfully
2 request an increase of \$40 million to DCA to be
3 evenly divided between the CIGs and the Cultural
4 Development Fund. This would restore funding to the
5 FY08 amount. So thanks for your kind attention, and
6 I am done. [bell]

8 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Amazing.
9 [laughter] I have to say, Andrea, I was following
10 along just hoping you would make it, you know,
11 [laughter] because I saw how little you had left.
12 And you did it perfectly. Holly.

13 HOLLY BLOCK: Okay, good afternoon.
14 [coughs] I'm Holly Block. I'm the Executive
15 Director of the Bronx Museum and I'm a member of the
16 Cultural Institutions Group. This is a coalition of
17 some of the most respected art, science, performing
18 arts institutions in the world. Our exhibitions and
19 education programs attract New York City residents,
20 school children, teachers to us each year. At the
21 Bronx Museum alone attendance has grown from 20,000
22 in 2010 to 70,000 in 2014. This surge is attributed
23 to new partner--new programs known to partnerships
24 especially with our Community Advisory Council. I
25 also wanted to bring up that this past summer the

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2 Bronx Museum with Transportation Alternatives and a
3 hundred other arts organizations and social service
4 came together to sponsor Boogie on the Boulevard
5 where over 3,000 people took part in outdoor
6 programming. The first time the Concourse was closed
7 since Giuliani. Obviously, thank you for your
8 support. You've been incredible and I'm here to
9 truly advocate to ask for an additional \$30 million
10 from the Department of Cultural Affairs. We're
11 advocating both equal between cultural institution
12 groups \$15 million and the Cultural Development Fund
13 \$15 million. Cultural organizations are cornerstones
14 of the communities. We spend more than \$30 million
15 annually purchasing goods, services, and more than
16 11,000 New York City based vendors. We're a
17 critical, essential component of the city's economic
18 development goals. We support public education,
19 offer creative solutions and address social issues.
20 I really just wanted to mention that the amount that
21 the city invests in culture is less than one percent.
22 It provides a remarkable return on investment that is
23 significant and critical to the city's long-term
24 economic development strategy. Thank you so much.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you and
3 Heather and team.

4 MOHIAH LANSDOWN: Good afternoon. I'm
5 Artist Mohiah Lansdown [sp?] and I'm excited to
6 welcome Heather Woodfield, the Executive Director of
7 One Percent for Culture onto the Red Carpet. Heather
8 can tell me a bit--Can you tell me a bit about the
9 hat you're wearing today?

10 HEATHER WOODFIELD: Why yes, the hat on
11 my head is one of my own designs, but I'm also
12 wearing two figurative hats today. One as a cultural
13 advocate and one as an artist.

14 MOHIAH LANSDOWN: How fabulous. Is there
15 anyone you plan to thank at today's hearing?

16 HEATHER WOODFIELD: Well, yes. On behalf
17 of One Percent for Culture and over 550 coalition
18 partners, which includes cultural organizations,
19 small businesses and civic and social organizations
20 throughout all 51 City Council Districts, I'd like to
21 thank the City Council for their steadfast support of
22 the non-cultural community.

23 MOHIAH LANSDOWN: One Percent for Culture
24 advocates an increase in the city's financial
25 commitment to the non-profit cultural communities to

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1 one percent of the Municipal Expense Budget. Are you
2 asking for an increase this year?

3
4 HEATHER WOODFIELD: Yes. I'm delighted
5 to join with my arts and culture colleagues to submit
6 testimony in support of a \$30 million increase to the
7 Department of Cultural Affairs budget--

8 MOHIAH LANSDOWN: [interposing] Wow.

9 HEATHER WOODFIELD: --divided evenly
10 between the Culture Institutions Group and the
11 Cultural Development Fund.

12 MOHIAH LANSDOWN: Fantastic. Why is
13 funding cultural arts a good investment for New York
14 City?

15 HEATHER WOODFIELD: Well, non-profit
16 culture makes this great city stronger, fairer, and
17 smarter. Cultural benefits are communities that are
18 providing access to the under-served and by helping
19 elevate the voices and enrich the spirits of all New
20 Yorkers. Culture is a driving force in our local
21 economy, and vital to the success of many of our
22 local businesses. In addition, the non-profit
23 cultural community provides life long educational
24 opportunities for all ages.

25

1
2 MOHIAH LANSDOWN: So true. The vast
3 range of cultural offerings also makes our city one
4 of the most exciting places to live, work, and visit.

5 HEATHER WOODFIELD: Well, that's
6 absolutely correct, and with additional funding, DCA
7 could support the continuation and enhancement of
8 accessible programming that benefits families,
9 seniors, school children, public teachers, and
10 individual New Yorkers.

11 MOHIAH LANSDOWN: I think our time is
12 about up. Do you have anything you wish to share
13 with our audience?

14 HEATHER WOODFIELD: Yes. I'd like to
15 thank the City Council and all of my advocacy and
16 artist colleagues who are testifying today. One
17 Percent for Culture looks forward to continuing to
18 build partnerships in collaboration between city
19 governments and the cultural community in order to
20 better serve all New Yorkers.

21 MOHIAH LANSDOWN: Fantastic. [laughter]

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: These hearings
23 are getting better and better. [laughter] I've been
24 doing this for a long time, and that was great. That
25 was really entertaining, and those hats are really

1 fun can I just say. And I just want to say than you
2 seriously to everyone. I know Council Member Cumbo
3 has a question for this panel, but I couldn't agree
4 with you more. Thank you for your service.
5

6 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Thank you. That
7 was awesome. That was fantastic. I think it's great
8 that the CIGs and the CDS are working together. I
9 think that that's like so empowering, and I think it
10 creates a greater sense of the cultural vitality of
11 New York City when it's not an us against them, but
12 it's really we're floating our boats together. I
13 wanted to know how you came up with the figure \$30
14 million, and just where did that come from? Because
15 I think that's fantast.

16 HEATHER WOODFIELD: We looked back
17 historically at the budget, and we specifically
18 looked at the numbers for 2008. And when it's
19 adjusted for inflation, it's about \$30 million up
20 from last year's adopted budget, and that's where we
21 came up with that number.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CUMBO: Fantastic. I'd be
23 happy to advocate for this. I think it's incredible.
24 Thank you.
25

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2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you all
3 very much, and now we have our library panel that
4 we're thrilled to have Paul Otto. Is Paul Otto still
5 with us? Dean Carrington, Mike Wong, Kane Miller. I
6 hope I'm saying that right. Thomas Wynn. How many
7 of those are here. Mike Wong. There's Mike. Dean
8 Carrington. Paul Otto. Thomas Wynn, and-- Well, it
9 looks like everybody is here.

10 [pause, background comments]

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Why don't you
12 start right there.

13 PAUL OTTO: Okay. Good afternoon. My
14 name is Paul Otto. I work at Brooklyn Public
15 Library's Business and Career Library in Downtown
16 Brooklyn. We share a building with the Brooklyn
17 Heights Branch. When first started working in this
18 building in 1996, we have five full-time custodians.
19 Now, we have only one with occasional assistance from
20 other staff, but we now circulate many more
21 materials, present more programs and have much more
22 traffic than 1996. As one of the biggest and busiest
23 branches in Brooklyn, we see people coming to borrow
24 or return materials, participate in computer
25 training, or one of our many speaker programs,

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2 workshops or one-on-one counseling sessions. In my
3 location one-on-one assistance is a high profile and
4 growing service. Staff and our community partners
5 work together to provide resume and career help,
6 small business assistance, financial counseling, free
7 legal advice and research assistance on any business
8 related topic. The constant flow of programs means
9 our on custodian is often setting up a meeting room
10 or cleaning up after an event. Yet, we have four
11 floors and six public bathrooms that still need to be
12 cleaned everyday, sometimes several times a day.

13 Technology is a crucial element of our
14 service especially the programs and the one-on-one
15 services. Many people visit the library expressly to
16 use our computers or our Wifi. Yet, response time
17 can be frustratingly slow. Crowding, rising
18 expectations from our users and deteriorating
19 infrastructure can create explosive situations. In
20 1996, we had two special officers in the building.
21 Nowadays we have one officer about half the time we
22 were open. The Business and Career Library prides
23 itself on transforming people's lives at my location.
24 Like every public library in the city, it needs an
25 increased operating budget so that we have the

1 resources to create a safe and clean environment
2 where we can meet our users' needs.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Go ahead.

5 MIKE WONG: Okay. [bell] Good afternoon
6 and thank Chairman Van Bramer and Chairman Costa
7 Constantinides. Thank you. I got that right. So
8 I'm here to testify here. My name is Mike Wong, and
9 I'm a librarian at the Broadway branch, my childhood
10 branch and I didn't get to witness what transpired
11 upstairs in the trans room because I was downstairs
12 at the records desk. And I am a Local 1521 member.
13 I'm here to testify for funding for our public
14 library staff particularly at Queens branches. Ten
15 years ago my branch had twice as much staff. We
16 mostly had books to deal with them, maybe some audio
17 books, CDs and video cassettes. Now, we are running
18 around trying to troubleshoot the computers helping
19 customers connect to Wifi and trying to help someone
20 find a DVD along a dozen shelves. This can be a
21 needle in a haystack since we do not have enough
22 hourly way to shelve materials and keep them in
23 order. There have been instances where we had to put
24 a sign at the first records desk and say go
25 downstairs to say go downstairs to the other records

1 desk if you need assistance. Over the years, we have
2 lost 187 public service staff, 20% reduction. We
3 have wonderful facilities that were recently
4 renovated. However, our library cannot run without
5 staff. We are working more hours with less staff.
6 We are barely making our five-day service. Some of
7 us work extra hours to cover branches that are open n
8 Saturday and Sundays. Everyone including your
9 constituents want us to provide six-day service and
10 our library staff understand that need. Please
11 provide us with enough funding so that we can meet
12 the demand. I implore you as our representatives of
13 this great city to provide us the funding for the
14 things that we need and for our libraries. Thank you
15 for your time and consideration.

17 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you
18 for your testimony and as the Council Member who
19 represents the district right across the street from
20 the Broadway Branch. [laughs] Yeah, I think we--you
21 know, Council Member Chin and Van Bramer and I both
22 share your commitment and appreciate all the work
23 that all of you do--

24 MIKE WONG: [interposing] Thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: --to make
3 sure that our libraries run every single day. And as
4 we said, more than once a day. You're doing much
5 more with less, and we understand the work that you
6 do.

7 MIKE WONG: We appreciate that and we're
8 running more busier branches in the system. Thank
9 you.

10 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Can we have
11 the next--

12 THOMAS WYNN: Thank you. I'm sorry.
13 Good afternoon, Committee. I want to thank you for
14 letting me testify today, especially you, Mr. Van
15 Bramer. I had a chance to work with you. I'm from
16 Queens Borough Public Library. My name is Thomas
17 Wynn. I'm the library custodian. You know, six-day
18 a week funding is great. I mean opening up six days
19 gives the chance to help people in the community and
20 all that. But the most important thing is like we're
21 keeping the library clean and safe for everybody, for
22 the elderly, the children and everything. And being
23 that there is one little kicker. It's hard on us,
24 you know, that we had--custodians had to go and work
25 in two and three branches when in your branch you

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1 don't have time to do project work, the work is so
2 strenuous. But that's why I'm here, advocating more
3 funding to cover, you know, more programs and more
4 things. We have to keep the library clean. So that
5 comes with more staff, and in order for us to have
6 more staff, we're going to need the funding to keep
7 it open like six days. It's a beautiful day and we
8 can have new equipment, more proper equipment so we
9 can work and do our job thoroughly. Because some of
10 the equipment we have is out of date. We're going to
11 need funding for that. And it's been really, really
12 just hard this winter on us as custodians. Also, I
13 just want to collaborate a little bit on what I think
14 Council Member Koo had spoke on about the bathrooms
15 not being clean. That's because we're so short
16 staffed. It's hard for us to maintain that when
17 you've got to go and cover two and three branches in
18 a day. That's kind of really rough on us. You know,
19 so I'm really asking and begging that, you know, we
20 can get the funding that would help us out
21 tremendously to keep the library clean and be safe to
22 visit. And think that's the number one priority is
23 it has to be clean and safe for everybody. I want to
24 thank you for letting me share. That's it.
25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you
3 for your testimony as well, and as far as keeping the
4 bathrooms clean, and making sure that our libraries
5 are in tip-top shape every single day, they're clean,
6 they're secure. They look their best. We appreciate
7 the work that you do, and all the men and women of
8 the custodial staff do [bell] and a big part of that
9 \$65 million is to make sure that we have the funding
10 to support the work that you do. So thank you.

11 THOMAS WYNN: Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Go ahead
13 with the next testimony.

14 CANA WELLS: Good afternoon, my--good
15 afternoon, everyone. My name is Cana Wells from
16 South Hollis Library where I am a computer
17 specialist. And the reason why I'm here to talk
18 today is for a source of funding for better services
19 for our community. I'm going to give you a quick
20 synopsis of our branch. In the afternoons when the
21 children come in, we could have over 60 to 80
22 children all vying for computers, and each of the
23 computers are an hour each. So you can imagine it's
24 great to have children coming in a library, but it's
25 also the supplies meets demand. Excuse me. Because

2 each kid is vying for homework time, and it's one
3 hour and 80 kids are sitting at computers. So you
4 can imagine the competitive nature between each kid
5 trying to vie for homework and midterms and book
6 reports and such. So we instituted a program at
7 South Hollis doing--we have--we call it the Homework
8 Zone from the hours of 3:30 to 4:30 to take the most
9 critical children who have the most projects to do.
10 We have an additional ten laptops that are used. And
11 in some events you can have 30 kids all sharing
12 together a laptop trying to get their homework done.
13 It breaks my heart sometimes. They come and they
14 can't get the proper services and they leave in
15 tears. I even use my own desktop and also, you know,
16 I have a flash drive designated for the children to
17 help them do their homework safely so they can get
18 their projects done. It's very important because we
19 are a community, and the children's success is based
20 on how we as a community can relate and help them.
21 So we do our part. Their success is part of us. The
22 reason why I'm here to advocate for funding for the
23 library is that ladies and gentlemen knowledge is
24 power. And as gatekeepers of this knowledge and
25 power, we each have a vital part in the success of

2 children's lives. And like a quote from Katherine
3 Hepburn says, What would we do if we didn't have our
4 libraries. Thank you for your time. Thank you for
5 listening, and I hope that we can reach out and have
6 this funding to better the kids not only in my
7 community, all communities. [bell]

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: You made it
9 right there on time, and thank you. And as we talked
10 about earlier, it's not only ensuring that we can get
11 that \$65 million, it's also looking at ways we can
12 change the funding streams to get those, the brand
13 new technologies into libraries to support the work
14 that you guys get done. So we can have the
15 computers, the iPads, the Tablets, the services that
16 you need to ensure that we close that digital divide,
17 and those children can use those computers. So thank
18 you all for your testimony. We appreciate it. We
19 all appreciate it.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And I just want
21 to say to all of you, and particularly to my former
22 colleagues at the Queens Library it was an honor to
23 serve with you. And we will fight very hard for all
24 of this. Thank you very much.

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2 CANA WELLS: Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Now, we're going
4 to go back to Culture and the Arts before having
5 another library panel. Jennifer Cook from the Field;
6 Kenny Wasami [sp?] from Long Island Project. There
7 she is. Is Bismark Contreras still here? Bismark
8 Contreras yes from La Puente. Dr. Mary Lou Galvant.
9 [sp?] and is there--Oh, is Tamara here? Tamara
10 Greenfield--

11 TAMARA GREENFIELD: [interposing] Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --from Fourth
13 Arts Block.

14 [background comments, pause]

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Whoever would
16 like to start particularly because there's a
17 presentation. So however you want to do that is
18 great. [laughter]

19 [pause]

20 KATE BROWN: Good afternoon. My name is
21 Kate Brown. Thank you Chair Van Bramer and the
22 Cultural Affairs Committee for the opportunity to
23 talk to you today about funding for the arts. And
24 specifically on behalf of the Field, a service
25 organization which I am a member and fiscally

1 sponsored. I believe that increasing funding for the
2 Department of Cultural Affairs and for the Field and
3 similar organizations is crucial not only to support
4 compelling art, but also to engage people who are
5 normally left out of programming by the large
6 established cultural institutions. I build large-
7 scale public sculptures with the public in places
8 around the world that are dealing with traumatic and
9 conflicting histories. The sculptures are called
10 cocoons, and they provide a platform for people who
11 stories are rarely, if ever, heard in public art
12 forums. Over here, now you can see the portraits of
13 five participants from hundreds and hundreds of
14 people who participated in pods cocoons. The most
15 recent cocoon was built last fall in the Gudor, a
16 neighborhood of Paris that has long been home to
17 immigrants from France's ex-colonies in North and
18 West Africa, including Algeria, Morocco, Mali,
19 Senegal and Devar, among others.

21 I have also created cocoons in the Mexico
22 City and in Jackson and in Greenland, Mississippi. I
23 continue cocoon work in the South Bronx. The cocoon
24 itself is quite large, about 24 feet long and 10 feet
25 high. It is built over a four-week period. However,

2 that short period is proceeded by a year or two of
3 organizing in the community by reaching out to the
4 various constituencies that exist painstakingly
5 gaining their trust. An convincing them that cocoon
6 can be their project. That it can literally make
7 visible their stories in the public space. These are
8 normally not the people who are engaged for the large
9 established cultural institutions in their city. And
10 though I reach out to these institutions as well in
11 my organizing, it is usually painfully clear that
12 they are instinctively uncomfortable with having to
13 share the project with others in the community.
14 Sometimes I think bridging these gaps is my real
15 artwork. Groups [bell] like the Field are crucial to
16 my ability to raise money, and to accept tax
17 deductible donations.

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
19 much and these hearings have gotten much more
20 creative. [laughter] And I encourage it. I could
21 not--thank you for that. That was very powerful and
22 whoever would like to go next.

23 DR. MARIA GALVAN: Good afternoon. I
24 want to thank the Chair and the Committee for
25 allowing me to address the public. I am Dr. Galvan,

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2 Maria Galvan from Centro Clinico de la Americano
3 [sic]. It is the oldest American organization, and
4 it has dedicated its live to preserve our culture and
5 our heritage. But also to encourage and make sure to
6 empower our community to the arts. We are immigrants
7 and we have to learn about other immigrant cultures,
8 and to also learn about this cultures making
9 ourselves stronger and better citizens. To that
10 extent, Centro Clinico de la Americano had dedicated
11 52 years of this activity. I'm here on behalf of the
12 small non-profit 50(c)(3)(1) organization that saved
13 three hushes in filling out application for minimal
14 amount of money. We feel that it should be
15 simplified, and it should be increased because we are
16 the grass root organization that is keeping this
17 community integrated into the fabric of the city and
18 of this nation. At this point in time, I want to
19 thank this committee for the hard work that they are
20 doing in providing funds to the Department of
21 Cultural Affairs. However, they should really try to
22 emphasize and see and provide the needs of the small
23 organizations. Thank you and I want to thank you
24 again.

25

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2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
3 much. Tamara.

4 TAMARA GREENFIELD: Thank you. I'm
5 Tamara Greenfield. I am the Executive Director of
6 Fourth Arts Block or FAB, a neighborhood wide
7 coalition of 28 arts and community organizations in
8 the East Village on the Lower East Side. I'm also
9 the Co-Director of Naturally Occurring Cultural
10 Districts in New York or NFCDYNY, a citywide alliance
11 of artists, cultural and community organizations
12 working to revitalize New York City from the
13 neighborhood up. FAB represents small cultural
14 groups and businesses with community connections that
15 stretch back more than 40 years. These small
16 cultural organizations have deep roots in our
17 community contributing to the cultural vitality of
18 the Lower East Side while continually integrating and
19 connecting new artists and partners. Each year they
20 engage more than 2,500 artist and 300,000
21 participants in their programming. We testify in
22 alliance with other community based cultural
23 organizations from across the city who play an
24 essential role in the cultural life of New York City.
25 The funding that we and our neighboring arts

1 organizations receive from the city comprises an
2 essential part of our core operations.
3

4 City funding helps bring stability and
5 leverages investments by other individuals and
6 funders. This funding helps our members create new
7 work, pay artists, provide arts education in our
8 schools, engage community residents and partners in
9 creative and civic experience, and contributes to
10 local economic renewal. The Lower East Side has
11 benefited in innumerable ways from the long-term
12 investment by the city in our community's sustained
13 cultural vitality. However, there are many
14 communities that have not benefitted from this
15 support across the city. Increased funding for the
16 arts can help bring more funding to population,
17 artists and communities that reflect the city's
18 diversity and cultural richness. We hope that you
19 will strongly consider increasing for culture, and
20 ensuring that the benefits of this investments is
21 shared more equitably across the city. I look
22 forward to working with you to build a just and
23 equitable and creative city. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
25 much.

1
2 KEMI ILESANMI: Good afternoon. My name
3 Kemi Ilesanmi. I'm the Executive Director of the
4 Laundromat Project. We fundamentally believe in the
5 power of arts to nourish and transform communities.
6 We work with over 6,000 New Yorkers every year. We
7 particularly focus on communities of color and those
8 living on modest incomes. We have learned and we
9 know that one of the greatest gifts as artists is to
10 help us imagine what could be. So I invite you to
11 imagine and to share your imaginings on these cards.
12 What would it be like to share your story in the
13 laundromats or in other community settings? What
14 would it be like to take Yoga or learn English as a
15 second language at a park, or your local library or a
16 laundromat. And to continue these imaginings, I've
17 invited two of our artist who you will meet now.

18 STEPHANIE BEACUMS: Good afternoon. My
19 name is Stephanie Beacums [sp?] . I am a life-long
20 resident of New York. I grew up in Tottenville,
21 Staten Island. I now reside in and choose to reside
22 in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn. I am a member of the Board of
23 the Laundromat Project because I believe they do
24 unparalleled work within very local communities. And
25 I also believe that arts and culture is a way to

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1 bring communities together. So I invite you guys to
2 imagine if residents from communities across the city
3 felt their voices mattered and were equally heard. I
4 also invite you to imagine, as was evidenced in my
5 project for the Laundromat Project a little girl
6 tired of waiting for her mother to finish the weekly
7 laundry who was engaged by the sight of a bench made
8 entirely of books. And skipped away from the
9 laundromat clutching a new prized book for the day.
10 Thank you.

11
12 BETTY YU: My name is Betty Yu and I'm
13 also a Laundromat--part of a Laundromat project. I
14 was the artist in residence. I am from Sunset Park,
15 Brooklyn and I am the daughter of garment workers. I
16 have to say that the reason I got involved in media
17 making and--and--and social--media making and art
18 making for social change is because in the mid '90s I
19 saw the negative portrayal of my immigrant Chinese
20 community in the media, and wanted to counter that.
21 And I also saw the police violence and harassment of
22 China--Chinatown vendors, street vendors. So I
23 wanted to really counter that. So, I know that the
24 Mayor has already shown his interest and concerns
25 around these issues that affect communities of color,

2 immigrants and low-income people. So imagine the
3 rich collaborations and dialogue that community
4 members and affected communities could have. The
5 City can and should invest in local arts, artists,
6 artist organizations and projects in these
7 communities. Imagine if you and your children create
8 an astonishing mural about police accountability with
9 your artists and neighbors and got everyone to talk
10 to one another about this. And one last imagining.
11 Imagine if you could transform your local public
12 school gym into an art exchange day where local
13 artists, poets and artisans and school children can
14 barter and make crafts and drawings based on a
15 community issue, and later have it exhibited in the
16 gym. Thank you very much for your time.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you and
18 are there other speakers?

19 TRANSLATOR: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: You're waiting
21 patiently. Thank you very much.

22 TRANSLATOR: Hello. Hi, we're here to
23 testify on the Public Library in Corona. I don't
24 know why we were included in this group, but can we
25 testify in the--

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2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: You know, one of
3 the things that I love about the way we're doing this
4 is we're kind of merging culture and libraries
5 [laughter] and there's a great deal of work that we
6 all share in common. So I'm happy to have you on
7 this panel.

8 TRANSLATOR: All right. Okay. So I'll
9 be translating for our member.

10 BISMARCK CONTRERAS: [Speaking Spanish]

11 TRANSLATORS: Good afternoon--

12 [background comments, pause]

13 TRANSLATOR: Sorry. Good afternoon. My
14 name is Bismark Contreras. I am a member of La
15 Puente. La Puente is a grassroots community
16 organization that works to engage and empower
17 immigrant workers so that they can bring change to
18 the communities where they live. I live in Corona
19 and I am here to talk today about the need to expand
20 the Queens Public Library in Corona to solve the
21 problem of overcrowding. And expand its hours so
22 that it is open on Saturdays.

23 BISMARCK CONTRERAS: [Speaking Spanish]

24 TRANSLATOR: Most afternoons usually at
25 4:00 p.m. when I take my five-year-old to the library

1 to receive help with her homework, the library is
2 overcrowded. The problem gets so bad that the
3 library staff has to lock the door to prevent a
4 safety hazard. The library can only hold about 150
5 people, and there are only two emergency exits, the
6 principal door and a side door. Therefore, I
7 understand why the library has to take this
8 precaution when the library becomes overcrowded.
9 Which makes almost--which happens almost everyday in
10 the late afternoon.

12 BISMARK CONTRERAS: [Speaking Spanish]

13 TRANSLATOR: This problem of overcrowding
14 could be solved if the library had the money to
15 expand two floors. But in the short-term, the
16 library could relieve the overcrowding problem if it
17 was open on Saturdays.

18 BISMARK CONTRERAS: [Speaking Spanish]

19 TRANSLATOR: On Saturdays when the Corona
20 Library is closed, people go to the Langston Hughes
21 Library on Northern Boulevard, but I can't go to the
22 library on Northern Boulevard because the staff
23 doesn't speak Spanish. I want to learn English, but
24 at this point I don't know enough to communicate with

25

1 the staff, and neither can they communicate with me
2 because they don't speak Spanish.

4 BISMARK CONTRERAS: [Speaking Spanish]

5 TRANSLATOR: Today I'm asking for Council
6 Members, especially Council Member Julissa Ferreras
7 in whose district I live, to allocate funding to
8 expand the library. But in the short-term to expand
9 the library's hours so it can open on Saturdays.
10 Thank you for your time, and I apologize for not
11 speaking the language.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: No. Muchas
13 gracias.

14 TRANSLATOR: [Speaking Spanish]

15 BISMARK CONTRERAS: [Speaking Spanish]

16 TRANSLATOR: [Speaking Spanish]

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [Speaking
18 Spanish] [laughter]

19 BISMARK CONTRERAS: [Speaking Spanish]

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you all.
21 Thank you so much. It's a library one.

22 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: All right.
23 So now we're going to be moving to--we had some of
24 the library panel, but an entire library panel.

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1 Andrea Powell, Mel Hindko [sp?] , Robert Oboso [sp?]
2 Sonya Ferardo, and Andrew Oppenheimer [sp?].

3 [background comments]

4
5 ANDRE POWELL: Good afternoon. I want to
6 start out by thanking the Finance, Cultural and
7 Library committees for allowing me the opportunity to
8 testify at this budget hearing. I am Andre Powell,
9 Coordinator--the Coordinator of Hospital Storytelling
10 for the Brooklyn Public Library. Hospital
11 storytelling is a literacy program in which readers
12 go visit medical facilities in Brooklyn and read
13 aloud to children. We see anywhere from 3,000 to
14 5,000 children per year. At each session, we give
15 each child a free book to take home. We also
16 encourage the caregivers to read aloud at home. This
17 is the only program of its kind in the country. For
18 me there are many reasons why this is an important
19 program. There's a distraction from pain and
20 suffering, which is a part of the healing process.
21 There's the ability to reach children who may be
22 unreachable by most other efforts. But if you were
23 to talk about one important reason, it would that
24 reading and understanding helps make children better
25 readers, brighter and more engaged citizens.

2 Not all hospitals provide education
3 activities for children. Some in-patient wards have
4 teachers on staff, but there are times when the whole
5 summer goes by and the kid in the ward will get no
6 instruction. Our program fills the gap. There are
7 many who feel that outreach endeavors like hospital
8 storytelling is just feel good programs and as such
9 they aren't justifiable to the driven [sic] To them,
10 success is encountered in the number of books a
11 library loans. Programs such as these are, in fact,
12 one of the most important things a library does. I
13 don't meet the same children who are disparaged in
14 public schools. I meet children who are always
15 curious who always take their selection of reading
16 materials seriously, and parents and medical staff
17 who support the effort. Teams in the clinic will
18 often become translators and will sometimes help out
19 by reading aloud to the younger children. This is
20 the very essence of community engagement where people
21 even children and teens feel empowered enough to
22 participate in their own development. We meet kids
23 everyday who are enthusiastic about getting books.
24 One recent report from a volunteer from the Bed-Stuy
25 Family Health Center stated, There is definitely a

1 sweet spot for reading somewhere between ages 5 to
2 10. It's difficult to get children younger than that
3 to sit still long enough to listen to a whole book.
4 Often older children are surprised when they have to
5 put down their computer game, and listen along with
6 the younger students while they're being read aloud
7 to.
8

9 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you
10 for your--thank you for your good testimony.

11 MEL HINDKO: Okay. Good afternoon
12 honorable City Council Members, fellow Brooklynites
13 and library patrons statewide. Although I'm a
14 Sheepshead Bay resident, I've spent the last 4-1/2
15 years as the Branch Manager of the Jamaica Bay Branch
16 of my 32-year career with the library. And Jamaica
17 Bay is in the Canarsie section. We serve the
18 southern half of Canarsie. This is about 50,000
19 residents that we cover the needs of. Unfortunately,
20 right now we're only open five days a week on a
21 Monday through Friday basis. We seem to alternate
22 with our nearby neighbor the Canarsie Branch as far
23 as who gets to be open on Saturday and in essence I
24 have more detail in the handout that I was providing
25 for the City Council members. But in essence, what

1 happens is when we're closed for Saturdays, only half
2 of those computer work stations, which is a large
3 amount of what the patrons are using. In other
4 words, even though we have an Nexus 7 loan program
5 and some patrons, of course, bring their own
6 electronic devices, most of these people are using
7 the hard wired work stations. And by only having one
8 of these two branches open, there are about 130
9 people that we don't get to serve between the two
10 branches. And it could be remedied. Like two
11 collections would be available as well as there would
12 be the opportunity even in community meeting rooms.
13 So, there is more detail in what I handed out. But
14 our story and the needs of Jamaica Bay are not unique
15 unto itself. I have about 60 colleagues who are also
16 neighborhood supervisors at their own library
17 branches. Please help us to re-staff for the benefit
18 of all the library users in Brooklyn. Thank you very
19 much.
20

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you
22 very much for your testimony and we appreciate your
23 great work.

24 ROBERT OBOSO: First of all, I want to
25 thank you. Really I mean I've seen these hearings

2 and seeing how much patience you have and the
3 endurance you have to have the public testimony, I
4 truly appreciate it. My name is Robert Oboso and I'm
5 a neighborhood library supervisor at the Rugby branch
6 of Brooklyn Public Library located in East Flatbush.
7 And what I want to do is tell you about what I do by
8 telling you what additional funding would do for the
9 Rugby Branch. An increase of funding in the Rugby
10 Branch would that I could help more people use the
11 computers to apply for both unemployment and
12 employment, and to get tickets for buses and tickets
13 for planes. Many people in the East Flatbush
14 community have no computers, and they don't have
15 access to the Internet, and they can't get
16 unemployment insurance properly or apply for a job or
17 get a ticket for a bus. And the library provides
18 them that service.

19 In an addition, with that increase in
20 funding we'd have more story times for pre-school and
21 more after school activities. In the afternoon, the
22 Rugby Branch, every seat in the branch is occupied.
23 We provide arts and crafts, homework help and a safe
24 place. But there would be more help available if we
25 had more for the libraries. An increase in funding

2 and I won't read because I see I'm running out of
3 time, would mean I could do a lot of other things.
4 But one of the things I want to do is say that I've
5 enjoyed serving the community at the Rugby Branch. I
6 find it rewarding, and I want you to know that other
7 branches have the same problems. They need more
8 money to do more services, not less money and provide
9 more services like we've done in the past. This is
10 why I'm asking you to increase funding for Brooklyn
11 Public Library. And this is an institution that I'm
12 proud to say serves all, the rich and the poor,
13 learners at all levels from birth to old age. And
14 it's so engrained in Brooklyn that the public hardly
15 thinks of it because they think it's just like water.
16 You turn on the tap and it's there. [bell] And the
17 fact that we have hearings to fight over funding for
18 the library, we don't need a hearing to fight over
19 funding for water. We shouldn't need one for the
20 library. Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you
22 very much for your testimony. We appreciate it.

23 TRANSLATOR: off mic] This is Sonya
24 Ferrado [sic]. I'll be translating for her. She's
25 one of our students at the Inwood Branch Library at

1 the new public library. She utilizes our computer
2 for her computer classes.

3
4 SONYA FERRARDO: [Speaking Spanish]

5 TRANSLATOR: I'll try to make this short
6 because she said a lot, which is she utilizes our
7 computer program at Inwood Library and she's proof
8 that they work and we need the funds to continue our
9 programming not just ours but libraries in general.
10 Not just the computer programs, but as well as the
11 physical appearance of our libraries. And basically
12 she says she's proving that it works. It's free, and
13 before the program she didn't know anything about
14 computers, and she can defend herself on the
15 computer. Just as anyone else who has take computer
16 courses in colleges and in universities. And she
17 said that she is just requesting for the funds for
18 the libraries in general. Thank you.

19 SONYA FERRARDO: [Speaking Spanish]

20 [laughs] Gracias.

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Gracias.

22 Thank you.

23 SONYA FERRARDO: [Speaking Spanish]

24 Okay.

25

1
2 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you
3 for your testimony. Go ahead.

4 ANDREW OPPENHEIMER: Hello everyone. My
5 name is Andrew Oppenheimer, and I work at the
6 Stapleton Branch of the New York Public Library on
7 the North Shore of Staten Island. And our original
8 building was a gift from Andrew Carnegie. And we
9 have recently had an enormous renovation extension
10 designed Andrew Brennan. And the library is going to
11 celebrate its 108th and second birthdays respectively
12 in June. We receive frequent compliments and
13 comments like, "I haven't been here in 20 years.
14 This is amazing." Or, "This is the prettiest library
15 I've ever been to." And while I'm slightly biased, I
16 wholeheartedly agree with them every time. The
17 original Carnegie building while beautifully designed
18 was not ADA accessible. It was too small floors
19 without an elevator or even a public restroom. The
20 roof leaked. It was barely able to serve its vibrant
21 neighborhood. It was one of the least visited
22 branches on Staten Island. The message that it sent
23 was not a positive one. While the library was never
24 unwelcoming, the building was uninviting. When the
25 building was redesigned, it was made to be

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2 accessible, resilient and incredibly welcoming. It
3 was expanded three times over with all the public
4 space on one wheelchair friendly floor. The new
5 building makes extensive use of natural lighting with
6 floor to ceiling windows, and they make patrons feel
7 free. We now have more than 40 public computers,
8 which are in near constant use. Book circulation has
9 increased tremendously from before the renovation,
10 and our business continues to grow even from the year
11 and a half that we have been open again. When I
12 started at the library almost a year ago, officially
13 a year this Tuesday, I was told that we are the third
14 busiest branch on the Island trailing only behind
15 Saint George and Tow Hill. After a year of service
16 with the library, I can see why. Stapleton Library
17 is located within walking distance from three schools
18 for children ages 5 through 13, and a short bus or
19 train ride from three public high schools. Many of
20 the neighborhood children come to our library as they
21 would their own front yard or their living room.
22 When my co-workers recently got married, some of our
23 child patrons were upset that they were gone for two
24 weeks. [bell] This happened twice are there were
25 two recent weddings at the branch. We miss them,

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2 too, since it's hard for a staff eight to serve a
3 community of hundreds even when our full staff is
4 present. I'll be quick. I'm almost done. We have
5 more than 50 scheduled programs and events for the
6 month of March ranging from stop motion animation
7 workshops for teenagers through a drawing class for a
8 50 plus community. There are regular readings for
9 kids, too, and in the past we've hosted author visits
10 for all age groups. And none of this would have been
11 possible before the renovation. Stapleton likely
12 would have still be an inadequate, underutilized
13 branch that did not serve the community. The
14 Stapleton Branch is an example of what can happen
15 when capital funding is put to use. I've been to
16 every hearing this fiscal year on the subject about
17 the library's future and the Capital Budget. And I
18 have been heartbroken from the stories that I've
19 heard. As you no doubt have as well. It's
20 unconscionable that any library should have to move
21 its computer when it rains or that a branch should
22 need to close because they could not get their
23 building enough--warm enough to be habitable. It is
24 my hope that the City Council and the Mayor's Office
25 will work together to help libraries serve the

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1 citizens of New York City in a way that they deserve.
2 And give every community the same opportunities that
3 Stapleton Library has been able to provide. Invest
4 in libraries. Invest in New Yorkers. Thank you.

5
6 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you
7 very much and we definitely hear you about investing
8 in libraries. We are committed to doing that. And
9 just quickly to reference your point before about our
10 endurance [sic]. I appreciate--we appreciate your
11 live for the libraries. Your--your endurance to be
12 here today to be part of the rally this morning.
13 Your steadfast commitment in doing your work every
14 single day in improving our libraries. We thank you
15 for your great work--

16 ANDREW OPPENHEIMER: [interposing] Thank
17 you very much.

18 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: --and
19 everything that you guys are doing. So thank you.

20 ANDREW OPPENHEIMER: [off mic] We thank
21 you, Mr. Chair.

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
23 much Council Member and Chair Constantinides. We
24 have one more panel, one final arts panel and then we
25 have three more library panels. So is Katie Ruben

1 still here? I know I saw Katy Rubin, Jenny
2 Louloudes [sp?]. Jenny I saw earlier. Is Guy
3 Yedwab. Guy Yedwab. [off mic] Here.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: The League of
6 Independent is in the house. David Johnston. Here
7 we go and is Guy Lawrence.

8 GUY LAWRENCE: [off mic] Right here.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: We are all here.
10 All right. So all the folks here for the arts this
11 is the last arts panel I think for the day.

12 [background comments, pause]

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: All right.
14 Katie, why don't you have a seat. Are there some
15 more seats?

16 KATY RUBIN: We have a performance.

17 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Oh, we love
18 that.

19 KATY RUBIN: Is it possible for our
20 performer to stand with a portable mic? I know that-
21 -is that okay?

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah.

23 KATY RUBIN: To stand over here? Okay.

24 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yes, because we
25 have the best sergeant-at-arms in the whole world.

1
2 KATY RUBIN: Okay.

3 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: That is
4 possible.

5 KATY RUBIN: Okay. So I'll just
6 introduce myself. I'm Katie Rubin--

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Sure.

8 KATY RUBIN: --for Theater of the
9 Oppressed NYC. We partner with communities facing
10 discrimination to inspire concrete action. And I'm
11 introducing Naji Newbold from our troop Concrete
12 Justice, and she's going to take it away with the
13 piece from Concrete Justice, Housing Circus.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: All right.

15 NAJI NEWBOLD: Greetings everybody. I'm
16 juggling my schedule for housing. I got to keep up
17 with all my appointments. See, on Monday I got to go
18 see my psychiatrist, and I know exactly what he's
19 going to say. He's going to say something like, How
20 are you? [laughs] How are you? You know what, I
21 want my--I'm going to tell you exactly how I'm doing.
22 I can't eat. I can't sleep. I can't even think and
23 the medication it makes me too drooly, too sleepy,
24 and too moody. I mean I need love. I need care. I
25 need help. Seriously, I need help. Can somebody

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2 help me? Help me. Yes. Whoo, I pulled it off. I
3 got my medication. But still I've got Wednesday, and
4 on Wednesday I go to my case manager for housing.
5 Oh, how am I? I'm fine, thank you. And yes, I have
6 all my documents in order. I have my birth
7 certificate. I have my passport. I've got my Social
8 Security and I've got all my medical records all in
9 order for you. Yes, and I must say that your blouse
10 matches your eyes, and your eyes matches the sky.
11 Have a good day. Bye-bye. Whoo, I did it. Yes, I
12 made it through the week. But wait a minute, I've
13 still got Friday. On Friday that's when I go to my
14 drug rehab program. Oh, yeah, they take you in every
15 Friday. But I'm good. I'm soaking. I am so
16 prosperous. I mean I don't want no distractions in
17 my life, but guess what people, today I received a
18 letter from Housing. Well, really it was SSI, and
19 SSI told me that they're going to cut my funds. I
20 mean how am I going to live? How am I going to
21 survive? What am I going to do? You know, it's
22 times like this that I wish I could just escape and
23 run away and what? Yeah, I'll take some of that.
24 I'll choke over it. [coughs] You know, what, I'm

25

1 enjoying it. So have a good day. Bye. [applause]
2
3 I want to thank you all--

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [interposing]
5 Thank you.

6 NAJI NEWBOLD: --for listening, and I
7 want to say that Theater for the Oppressed has
8 changed my life and we're taking problems and finding
9 solutions through theater and form theater. It
10 functions and I've been through places and spaces,
11 and I'm grateful for Theater of the Oppressed. Thank
12 you.

13 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you and I
14 am grateful for Theater of the Oppressed as well, and
15 that's why I'm proud to support Katy and her work and
16 so grateful that you are here today and you shared
17 that with us. I think that we're going to have to
18 have a performance at every single committee hearing
19 from here on out. This has been tremendous, all of
20 the three performers, and I know we have more
21 performances coming. And this is the first time that
22 we've had performances as testimony, but it's so
23 right. It is so right. So thank you very much, and--
24 -

25 KATY RUBIN: [interposing] Thank you.

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2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --who goes next?
3 Jenny, are you setting up?

4 JENNY LOULOUEDES: [off mic] I want to
5 break it up a little bit.

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Got it. All
7 right, so why don't we have David go and then Jenny
8 will arrange the musical situation in the back there.

9 DAVID JOHNSTON: Jenny just told me I'm
10 going next. My name is David Johnston. I'm the
11 Executive Director of Exploring the Metropolis, and
12 we work with performing artists and cultural
13 facilities to provide work space solutions in New
14 York City. And I wanted to give my time to some of
15 our composers today so that they could speak to you
16 and we have a little performance.

17 [pause, background comments]

18 NINA ZIACOLA: Okay, no problem.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Do we need a
20 hand-held mic again or--

21 NINA ZIACOLA: Whatever. No problem.

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: As good as we
23 are. [sic] Okay.

24 NINA ZIACOLA: Hello, everyone. My name
25 is Nina Ziacola [sp?]. I was born in Belarus [sic],

1 Minsk where I studied my musical studies. I want
2 down to for musical profession [sic] to Cologne
3 Academy for Music in Germany and new hometown in
4 Little Neck, Queens.
5

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Great.

7 NINA ZIACOLA: When Demitri Shastakovich
8 was asked by a social worker, "What do you do?" The
9 famous composer answered, "I'm a composer." "Well"
10 said the social worker, "But what's your profession?"
11 I'm glad that this answer is not a question for
12 exploring the Metropolis program and for the members
13 of this audience. While being a resident at Flushing
14 Town Hall [sic] I was able to complete numerous
15 pieces acquired in celebration of 150th Anniversary
16 of Chancey Delos [sic] in Finnish and Swedish. A
17 cycle for a recording, which will be published and
18 for a year this spring in St. Petersburg. Two
19 concerto pieces for violin and piano and harmonica
20 [sic] and piano and the latter one will be coming out
21 in Japan. And I also started a violin concerto for
22 our renowned violinist Arturo Darmani [sp?] which I
23 hope to be printing this very soon.

24 Now composers nowadays don't think we sit
25 home and compose. We are very much involved in

1 community life and international projects. So by
2 expanding the program, exploring the metropolis, not
3 only more composers will be able to fulfill their
4 creative needs by having a piano, having space,
5 having a stipend, and promotion, their music will be
6 performed in different countries just like mine. In
7 Japan, Russia, Germany, and Belarus, and just like I
8 hoped for my must for many years. [sic] So by
9 expanding the program, exploring the metropolis there
10 will be the next step in the direction of a new trend
11 in the spirit of American culture, which will be
12 presented all over the world by the composers. And
13 as a Russian-American composer, I'm proud to be a
14 part of this process. Thank you.

15
16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you.

17 EN-ENG: Hi, everyone. My name is En-Eng
18 and I'm from Hong Kong. I recently graduated from
19 New York University with a masters degree in music
20 composition. And I just want to say that, you know,
21 as a young artist I am sharing an apartment with
22 somebody in Manhattan and it's almost like luxury to
23 have a full sized instrument for me to compose. And
24 the program is called the Metropolis who granted me
25 access to a piano studio with a full sized grand

1 piano for me to really work on the craft. And now,
2 I'm working with a ballerina from the American Ballet
3 Theater, and working on a project. We're creating a
4 new piece of choreography for the ABT Jake Hill
5 School. We will involve a lot of students, and
6 without exploring the Metropolis Program, I would not
7 have had this opportunity. And it was definitely a
8 huge career boost for me as an American young
9 composer. Thank you.
10

11 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you. And
12 now.

13 ERIC LENNON: Hi, my name is Eric Lennon.
14 I'm a composer. I live in Inwood. And I just want
15 to say that I'm going to be playing a excerpt and
16 some improvisation on a piece that I didn't write
17 during my time during exploring the Metropolis, but
18 it was a piece that was created through the support
19 of the Department of Cultural Affairs.

20 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Good.

21 ERIC LENNON: It was a Lower Manhattan
22 Cultural Council grant.

23 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you. Why
24 don't you come forward. [laughter] Perfect.

25 ERIC LENNON: [Violin performance]

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[applause]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you so much for that piece and for being here, Eric. That was beautiful. For all of you, all of the artists who are here, this has been a very special hearing, and yes we are in the fifth hour of this hearing. But it's just picking up now. It's just picking up. [laughter] And it's so great to have all of you here. Jenny is next.

JENNY LOULOUEDES: Hi, I'm Jenny Louloudes

Executive Director of the Alliance of Resident Theaters New York. We are the leadership organization New City's 350 theaters, and I am giving my time to Jackie Torres and Ashley R. Marinaccio Artist Director of Girl Be Heard. Girl Be Heard is a non-profit theater company that brings global issues affecting girls center stage by empowering young women to tell their stories. Ladies and gentlemen, Girl Be Heard.

[Musical performance by Girl Be Heard]

[applause]

JENNY LOULOUEDES: You're sure?

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: They're great.

[laughter] Thank you so much. That was amazing. I

1 even clapped, which I'm not supposed to do.

2 [laughter] So I apologize--

3 JENNY LOULOUDES: [interposing] Thank
4 you.

5 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: --for that.

6 [laughs]

7 JENNY LOULOUDES: Since I have a few
8 minutes left or one minute left, I'll just briefly
9 say that I want to repeat and echo my colleagues who
10 were asking for \$30 million more so that more money
11 can go to groups like Girl Be Heard, the service to
12 communities. I also want to thank you Chairman Van
13 Bramer as both Majority Leader and as Chairman of
14 this committee for all the support you've given the
15 arts over the years. And also I want to acknowledge
16 Mayor de Blasio for not cutting us last year because
17 it was the first year we didn't have to do a budget
18 dance. And not having to do that budget dance saved
19 us time, and allowed groups like Girl Be Heard to
20 look on their work instead of working on testimony.
21 We are incredibly grateful to what you've done, for
22 the CASA Program. The cultural funding new
23 initiatives that you've done for immigrants. The
24 arts and educations increase, the DCA's access to
25

1 board development resources. The work and
2 affordability for theater artists, and all of this is
3 needed. And if there is anybody that can make it
4 happen, it's you. So I want to say [speaking Greek]
5 and thank you to Jimmy Van Bramer. I am done.

6 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [laughter]
7 Costa, do you have any Greek there?

8 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Yes.
9 [speaking Greek]

10 JENNY LOULOUEDES: We just said thank you
11 to each other.

12 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Okay.

13 JENNY LOULOUEDES: It wasn't anything
14 more. [laughter]

15 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Well, if there
16 is George is going to tell me later.

17 JENNY LOULOUEDES: Yes, he will. Yes, he
18 will.

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: So we have any
20 other testimony from this panel? Yep.

21 GUY LAWRENCE: Good afternoon, Chair Van
22 Bramer and member of the Cultural Committee. I'm Guy
23 Lawrence and I'm an elder participant in the Arts
24 Program from Elders Share the Arts. ESTA it's
25

1 called. I'm here to testify because my life was
2 altered by being a member of ESTA. After a long and
3 extremely very glamorous career, I have a lot of
4 voids that occurred in my life. I went through a
5 very difficult breakup. My mom became physically
6 incapacitated. She suffered a litany of other issues
7 as well, and I became extremely depressed, and I
8 didn't know where to turn. I didn't know what to do.
9 I'm a single person. I don't have brothers and
10 sisters, and I have no children. So taking care of
11 her became very, very laborious and I needed an out,
12 which I couldn't find. And so ESTA miraculously, and
13 I managed to find a group that cares about me through
14 its many and varied art programs. I've taken several
15 of their courses including digital photography,
16 storytelling and collage. None of which I had
17 exposure ever before. ESTA's ability to combine art
18 techniques, storytelling, and their bonding is
19 unique. I am now reinventing myself as a result of
20 these efforts. Andre Matisse produced his famous
21 cutouts in his latter years. In a way, I followed
22 his lead. I am no longer lonely or withdrawn. I
23 look forward to new programs from ESTA. It is never
24 too late to express yourself in a new way. People
25

1 are interested in your story. I am proud part of our
2 group, which is diverse, inclusive, welcoming and
3 non-competitive. In the *Wizard of Oz*, Dorothy's ruby
4 slippers revitalized her. I feel revitalized myself.
5 The power to follow the Yellow Brick Road to a
6 productive and happier life has been attainable with
7 ESTA's help. I am grateful for your support, and
8 urge you to extend funding for opportunities to the
9 arts, especially for elders. So that all New York
10 City people can benefit from our cultural programs.
11 Thank you very much. God bless you and God bless my
12 ESTA family.

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you so
15 much for sharing that very powerful story, and I'm
16 very glad you've had this experience. And the
17 organization was there for you when you needed it.
18 The last speaker on this panel.

19 GUY YEDWAB: Great. Thank you to the
20 Committee for the opportunity to appear today. Thank
21 you to the excellent stage managers that are the
22 sergeant-at-arms. My name is Guy Yedwab and I'm the
23 Managing Director of League of Independent Theater.
24 We're a political advocacy organization testifying on
25 behalf of 50,000 independent theater artists. Our

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1 membership includes individual theater makers and
2 performance venues from all five boroughs whose self-
3 produced work outside of establishing confusion in
4 venues 99 seats or less or in alternative venues. I
5 would have brought a performance today, but about 10%
6 of our members are able to sustain themselves on the
7 arts. So many of them are at second or third or
8 fourth jobs today.

10 Amongst our membership over 50
11 independent venues that we're aware of have been
12 shuttered since 2009 and many others are in danger.
13 Since 2008, the financial crisis has severely limited
14 the amount of money available in the private sector
15 to support the arts. Ticket sales have dropped as
16 have charitable donations. Rents, which comprise 36%
17 of our members' budgets have risen precipitously
18 causing a severe crisis for our members. We are
19 joining with our cultural partners to ask that the
20 cultural funding be raised by \$30 million to account
21 for this period of time. Losing grants that
22 organizations have relied on for years, or facing
23 sudden increases of rent, or losing key donors can
24 spell the difference between continuing to practice
25 art and having venues to practice in. Or, being

1 forced to shutter to move--to leave neighborhoods.
2
3 It could mean cultural deserts in neighborhoods where
4 local artists have been forced out of their
5 communities unable to live or work in the community
6 they used to call home and leave gaps among their
7 neighbors.

8 But I'm here today because I really
9 believe that this is a moment of incredible
10 opportunity. We're here to testify, as I mentioned,
11 to raise those rates, and to return the cultural
12 sector to where we were before this setback and
13 realize a new opportunity. At an event at the CUNY
14 Graduate Center we talked about many different
15 strategies for supporting the arts. And we believe
16 that with a return to that higher level of cultural
17 funding we can have a long-term strategy for
18 sustainable arts. Thank you.

19 [pause]

20 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you
21 all for your testimony. All right, our next panel
22 will be Deborah Wynn, Anthony White, Dawn--I can't--I
23 can't read it. I'm sorry.

24 DAWN ZIMMINER: [off mic] That's okay.

25 [sic]

1
2 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Himler? As a
3 Constantinides I completely know. [laughs] Sean
4 Paul Huzon, and Nathaniel Faber.

5 [background comments]

6 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: I said
7 Deborah Wynn, Anthony White, Dawn Himler, Sean Paul
8 Huzon and Nathaniel Faber. Is Nathaniel Faber here?

9 [background comments, pause]

10 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Joseph
11 Reese. Is he here?

12 FEMALE SPEAKER: No, he testified
13 already.

14 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Testified
15 already. Okay, Kathleen. Okay, all right. I guess
16 we'll start right there with you and we'll go from
17 left to right.

18 ANTHONY WHITE: Okay. Good afternoon.
19 My name is Anthony White. I'm a 28-year employee of
20 the New York Public Library, and over the last 28
21 years I've seen user count increase year after year
22 after year. In my location, it's a rare occasion
23 that you walk by and you find an empty seat.
24 Libraries are a safe haven for our teenagers, and
25 it's also a place where adults can go to grow.

1 Investing in libraries makes financial sense. And I
2 would like to add that I'm an employee of the
3 Science, Industry and Business Library, which houses
4 the Job Search Central and the Financial Literacy
5 Center. Which are two vital programs or services
6 that keeps individuals and puts New Yorkers back on
7 their feet financially. Please secure our funding.

9 DEBORAH WYNN: Hi, my name is Deborah
10 Wynn. I work for the Queens Library. I've been an
11 assistant for 21 years. I work at the Bayside
12 Branch. We offer an array of programs and services
13 from the young to the very elderly. We have Zumba on
14 Mondays. We have Chair Yoga. We have Homework
15 Helpers Programs. We offer a lot of programs for the
16 community that we serve, and I'm here advocating for
17 the funding. My branch is one of the rare branches
18 that opens up on six days, but I'm here fighting for
19 those six days. Because if we don't get the funding
20 that we need, we may not be open for six days. So
21 that's why I'm here advocating and thank you for your
22 time.

23 DAWN ZIMMINER: I will be brief I'm sure.
24 My name is Dawn Zimminer. Thank you for attempting
25 it, Councilman Constantinides. I've been practicing

1 all day. I was promised bonus points if I got it
2 right.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: You nailed
5 it. I'm very impressed.

6 DAWN ZIMMINER: Thank you. I'm here to
7 advocate on behalf of the young adults in the public
8 library system. I work for the Wakefield Branch.
9 For those of you who don't know, we're the northern
10 most branch in the Bronx. We're at the end of the 2
11 Train. 14.3 million young people in the United
12 States take care of themselves after school, and 51%
13 of those people are in grades 9 to 12. The rate of
14 juvenile crime tripled between the times of 3:00 to
15 6:00 p.m. and these are more likely to become victims
16 of crimes in those times as well. These aren't
17 scare tactics, they're facts. And libraries create
18 and provide critical resources to these young people,
19 to these teen-agers, these in between people who are
20 searching to become the adults that they're meant to
21 be. We provide them with computer time, although not
22 much because my branch has three computers available
23 to adults and teens.

24 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES:
25 [interposing] That's a problem.

1
2 DAWN ZIMMINER: Three. We have one
3 express machine that's 15 minutes long, but we have
4 three desktop computers. That's scary to me. These
5 are teens who need access to the Internet. They
6 need--they need it not just for homework, and the
7 things that we like to think that they're doing.
8 They need it to play video games, to get themselves
9 out of a stressful situation. Home lives are not
10 always a peaceful, quiet, happy place for them. The
11 library provides a safe place for them to de-stress
12 not just from school, but from home as well. We did
13 not have a young adult librarian until I came. I'm
14 new to the system. I'm sitting next to two people
15 whose years total almost 50 in the system. I'm brand
16 new. I came in December. I was horrified when I
17 walked into the branch and saw three computers, and
18 the teens don't have their own machines. That's
19 terrifying to me. We need to refund [bell] the
20 budget. I'm going to stop talking now. [laughs]

21 SHANTEL HOUSTON: Hi. My name is Shantel
22 Houston [sic] and like Dawn I am brand new to the
23 system as well. I am one of the few who were
24 recently hired to work with the young adults in the
25 Bronx. I specifically work at Francis Martin, and

1 today I'm here for them, because they're in school
2 and they can't be here to defend themselves. So I'm
3 here. If you don't water it, it's not going to grow.
4 It's very simple. I originally hail from Las Vegas,
5 and we're having a very serious drought back there
6 and in California. And it's just as simple as that.
7 I want to tell you today about what you are investing
8 in should you give us this money. I recently this
9 past February hosted a Harlem Renaissance program for
10 my teens where I brought in three different guests
11 and artists, local, and another local writer Jason
12 Reynolds, who was very gracious. And also a local
13 patron who is also an musician, and during this
14 three-course segment we talked about the Harlem
15 Renaissance and we did these programs gave back to
16 the community. That's what it's about. We're
17 fighting for them. At the end of the day, that's
18 what we're both trying to do, and that's what we need
19 to do. We need to make it right.

21 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Thank you.

22 KATHLEEN CHI: My name is Kathleen Chi.

23 I'm an American--Chinese-American, multi-cultural
24 family. I spent 20 years working in China from the
25 end to the Mao Era to 2004 and by necessity, economic

2 necessity I went back to school, became a librarian,
3 a reason that I had studied Chinese in college back
4 in the '70s. Grateful to my local public library for
5 the resources that helped me get up to speed with
6 some of the technology and things to qualify me for
7 the career. I'm a Queens resident. I can't get to
8 my library because it's not open on Sunday, the only
9 day that I have to go to the library myself. But I
10 have a library right here, and only because there is
11 a bricks and mortar establishment behind it could I
12 have my library right here.

13 I get independent movies from the Queens
14 Borough Library. I have a card there. I am now a
15 Senior Librarian with the New York Public Library at
16 the St. George Branch, the largest one on Staten
17 Island. I've got several books on my phone. I read
18 a lot of home section, and I'm going to try to cram
19 in with the time remaining a day in the life of. As
20 a public service professional at the St. George
21 Library, a short walk from the ferry where millions
22 of people cross the water and some of them wander up
23 to see us. We are a community that serves--twist but
24 come up the hill. We serve people in transit to
25 their homes. We have a large residential area of

1 mixed economic levels, ages, what have you. We have
2 high schools in the neighborhood, and we have a lot
3 of city services.
4

5 We have a homeless shelter where we see
6 families. We have people that are homeless, regulars
7 that we know by name. One of them is studying
8 Chinese seriously, which amazes me. They come and
9 use us a waiting room to get into the shelter next
10 door. Sometimes they can't get in, and a couple who
11 come together to live in that shelter [bell]-- Are
12 you kidding me. [laughter] They told me they'll be
13 on the subway night if they don't get in there. But
14 one thing that I wanted to mention is that we're a
15 branch where we move the computers when it rains. I
16 look at that picture of Andrew Carnegie over our
17 service desk and I say, "Andrew, it's a good thing
18 you're on that wall because if you were on that one
19 over there, it's snowing today. When it melts
20 tomorrow, you're going to get wet." We need help and
21 I'm embarrassed that we really need help. Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: Okay. Thank
23 you all for all of your testimony, and for all the
24 work that you do in each and every one of the
25 branches. We hear you and the need to expand our

1 programs for teens and get that \$65 million and to
2 get the money for the staff that we desperately need.
3 And the capital funds that we desperately need to
4 ensure that those leaks aren't happening. We won't
5 have to go through that embarrassment any longer. So
6 thank you very much.

8 KATHLEEN CHI: Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: And thank you
10 all so very, very much including some former
11 colleagues in the library once again. And we have
12 one more--we have two more panels to go. Is Nina
13 Manning still here? Nina Manning or--Yes. Nellie
14 Salazar, Nellie Salazar. Yep, you're up. Do you
15 want to come--come up? There are some folks from the
16 Queens still here, right. Nuevo Arquero, Nellie
17 Salazar, Joan Young Santiago, Joan Young-Santiago.
18 We called Nina Manning and is it Ceil Khaldun. Am I
19 getting that name right? Ceil Khaldun from Queens
20 Library.

21 [background conversation]

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: All right, are
23 there any other Queens Library speakers? Ah, okay.
24 Celeste Miller, you join this family. We'll just
25 keep it all in the family together. And then we have

1 one more panel after this I believe, right? So why
2 don't we start there and then move down the table.

3
4 JOAN YOUNG-SANTIAGO: Good afternoon, and
5 thank you for your patience. You've been here as
6 long as I have, but it's all worth it at the end.
7 I'm a lifelong Bronxite. My family moved from
8 Manhattan over to the Bronx, and I am third
9 generation, my children are fourth generation, and my
10 grandchildren are fifth generation Bronxites. The
11 reason why I'm point this out is because I would like
12 \$1.1 billion to be geared on a 10-year plan for the
13 library. It is very, very important. It's not just
14 a legacy going--look backward. It's a legacy moving
15 forward. My mother used to take us by the hands and
16 we used to walk to the library. My library
17 originally was the Fordham Library, which is now
18 closed. We have a beautiful new library. I took my
19 children by the hand to the Belmont Library, and I
20 would like that to continue. It is very important.
21 It's not just for Bronxites. It's not just for
22 Queens. It is not--its for economic and all facets
23 of life age wise. It's not just for children. It's
24 for seniors. It's for everyone, which means there is
25 always something to learn at the library. This is

1 something that everyone can do and can learn for
2 free, and all you need is your library card, which I
3 never leave home without. [laughs] Thank you.

4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: I thought you
5 were going to say all your keys.

6 JOAN YOUNG-SANTIAGO: Right here.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yeah.

8 JOAN YOUNG-SANTIAGO: My library card.

9 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Nice. Thank you
10 so much.

11 FEMALE SPEAKER: I am going to proceed
12 with Spanish talking. You won't understand my
13 English. [Speaking Spanish]

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: [laughs]
15 Gracias. Larry, are you translating?

16 TRANSLATOR: [off mic] I was going to
17 translate that, but she insisted on moving on it.

18 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Fair enough. So
19 I understand so I feel like I got that, and I will
20 tell Costa what she said. [laughter] Gracias.

21 FEMALE SPEAKER: Okay, gracias.

22 CEIL KHALDUN AL SHAKIR: Very good--a
23 very good afternoon, honorable members of the City
24 Council. My name is Ceil Khaldun Al Shakir. I am
25

1 President of the Friends of Laurelton Library. I
2 would like to start off by thanking you all on behalf
3 of the residents of Springfield Gardens and
4 Laurelton. Thank you for your patience and your
5 time, and for having me here. I've come here today
6 to ask on behalf of the residents of Springfield
7 Gardens and Laurelton to restore our six-day service
8 that we've had at Laurelton Library. The last one
9 that we've had, the last Saturday of May of 2011 is
10 when we had our Saturdays, and we haven't had them
11 since. And we've kind of hobbled along, if you will,
12 as a result of that. The Library at Laurelton use--
13 The members of our community actually are everyday
14 hard-working citizens that need the library for the
15 six-day service. Many people that work from 9:00 to
16 5:00 Monday through Friday, they're lucky if they get
17 their Mondays and Thursdays by 6:30 or 7:00 p.m.
18 because they work in Midtown Manhattan. And the
19 train rides say it's 45 minutes if it's running on
20 time. And then it's about another half an hour. If
21 they're taking a bus, it's at least 25 minutes from
22 the train station Parsons and Archer to Laurelton.
23 So by the time they get to the Laurelton Library,
24 they really don't have much time. I'm also one of
25

1 the volunteers there. So I've built a rapport with
2 many of the people in the community, many of the
3 children and teens. They know me there. They know
4 Ceil, they know Ceil Khaldun. We've helped also
5 build a great rapport with the staff. The staff and
6 the management there like a Laurelton are phenomenal.
7 And we feel also for their sakes if we have our six-
8 day service back they can better serve us, and we can
9 appreciate them more for that. So, you know, I ask
10 you all, honorable members of the City Council if you
11 can please restore our six-day service. [bell] Thank
12 you.
13

14 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you. It's
15 a great library and I thank you for helping it.

16 FEMALE SPEAKER: Good afternoon. I'm
17 here to tell you two stories. You pay for one but
18 you get two. My first story is a story about the
19 users. I represent the users today. I'm the manager
20 of the Jackson Heights Library and I'm an American,
21 but in the beginning I was the immigrant. And as an
22 immigrant when I came here I didn't have anybody. So
23 I would call the library and I asked for help. I was
24 going to libraries everyday. The library was my
25 home. So even though I was in sociology and I was

1 teaching, I was so grateful for the wonderful work
2 that libraries did for me. So I made a decision to
3 change my profession and I became a librarian and
4 then I became a manager. And I am doing the same for
5 the users that come everyday and remind me of me.
6

7 The second story is the story about
8 security. You were talking today about how libraries
9 should be clean. How about talking about libraries
10 being secure? So I have two questions for you, Mr.
11 Van Bramer and Mr. Constantinidies. Do you feel safe
12 when you come to work? We all should feel safe,
13 customers and staff. At Jackson Heights Library we
14 have a problem. However, working together with the
15 management in union we've got security. We got what
16 we wanted. However, more is needed to be done, and
17 additional funds have to be allocated for that. So
18 we all feel confident when we come to work, nothing
19 bad will happen. So I thank you for your attention
20 and think about when you don't feel safe, how some
21 people feel. [bell]

22 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
23 much. Thank you for taking on librarianship and all
24 your service in Jackson Heights working with your
25 seat mates there in Jackson Heights. Senorita.

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FEMALE SPEAKER: [Speaking Spanish]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Could you bring
the--I guess just bring the mic a little closer.
Yes.

FEMALE SPEAKER: [Speaking Spanish]

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Gracias and we
agree on the importance of additional classes, and we
are grateful to everyone on the panel for staying,
and I also want to thank all the library staff who
are here and staying throughout the entire duration
of this hearing. Including future library staff. I
see in the second row there, and it's been great. So
thank you all so much for everything. And we have
one last panel. I have one last panel I believe. Is
Eleanor Cohen still here? She is. Thank you so much
for staying. Is Hulan Jack? Is Hulan Jack--is that.
There you go, Mr. Jack from Park City. Very nice,
and great. Yuki Kiendo. Oh, that's right, and Yuki
Kiendo is here as well, and that concludes-- If we
hit 3 o'clock, perhaps we'll be entering the sixth
hour of the hearing. [laughter] Why don't you go
first.

ELEANOR COHEN: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Sure.

1
2 ELEANOR COHEN: Hello everybody. My name
3 is Eleanor Cohen. I am 75 years old and legally
4 blind. I have a condition called macular
5 degeneration, which affects the central vision. It's
6 progressive. It slowly gets worse and you lose the
7 part of your vision that sees detail. So what is
8 affected is most essentially is reading, recognizing
9 faces and many other things. So you can do a lot of
10 things with peripheral vision, but there are things
11 that are quite devastating. And when I first
12 developed this condition, it was just a terrifying
13 thing because I didn't know how I was going to
14 continue to have and enjoy an adult life. And then I
15 found the Andrew Heiskell Library, which has turned
16 out to be a godsend. It's a lifeline for me and for
17 many, many other people have visual problems and
18 other physical problems. And it was at the library
19 that I learned about the wealth of audio books. So
20 even though I can't read print, I now read 30 or 40
21 books year with an incredible wealth of resources.
22 But in addition to that, there were support groups
23 and networking. So I met other people with similar
24 disabilities. I found out all the resources that
25 were available, developed some technical skills and

1 participated in vision fairs. And recently an oral
2 history project that has just started to record the
3 experiences of disabled people. And, in addition to
4 all these wonderful experiences, it brought me hope
5 and courage. And it was so gratifying that I
6 volunteered and help whenever I can mostly with
7 clerical tasks. But it was there that I saw how
8 short staffed and hard-working this dedicated staff
9 is. And I just implore you all to please, please
10 fund the libraries, the Andrew Heiskell Library, the
11 other libraries in the City. These are lifelines,
12 and restore the--what has been lost, and bring more.
13 So that these wonderful programs can continue in the
14 future.
15

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you so
17 much for [applause] for being here, and for staying
18 as long as you did. And because you mentioned that
19 you're 75, and my mother was mentioned earlier, she
20 just turned 75. So, you're terrific and I'm so
21 grateful that you are able to experience what you--
22 what you are able to experience because of this
23 particular library, and the services there. So I
24 know I want more of that, and we're just very, very
25

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1 grateful that you are here and that you stayed. Now,
2 we have Lefrak City and then Hal.

3
4 HULAN JACK: Good afternoon. My name is
5 Hulan Jack. I'm the--the Treasurer of the Friends of
6 the--of the Lefrak Library. My appeal is for seven--
7 for weekend hours. We have a lot--a lot of working
8 people who during the week no matter what type of
9 hours you have, they--well, are not serviced. With
10 the weekday hours or with the weekend hours rather we
11 can have--service many, many more people who can't
12 get service right now. All the marvelous things the
13 library does, which are absolutely fantastic. I got
14 a real education this afternoon. So thank you very
15 much.

16 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you for--
17 for coming out today and for staying, and it's been
18 great to have so many library user from all over the
19 city. And it's also great to see so many active
20 Friends groups that coming to bear, and to see so
21 many advocates. And it's sort of revitalizing, you
22 know, the fight for libraries. So we're very, very
23 you're taking on especially the role of Treasurer,
24 which is not always the easiest role. So thank you
25 so much. And Yuki, I think you're the last speaker.

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1
2 YUKI KIENDO: Yes. Learning is--you
3 cannot residents of the Jackson Heights community and
4 members of the different levels, and members
5 different on every public level in New York City,
6 Long Island. At the multiple New York Public Library
7 and the Brooklyn Library is busy library. And the
8 New York Public Library and the Brooklyn is the two
9 busiest libraries in the industry and business. Our
10 country only New York Public are open seven days a
11 week, and Bronx Library. And the library it just
12 closed with the special activities, and also
13 combining the two busiest libraries. It is not a
14 good idea. What's happened after combining these
15 libraries was closed and it's probably unfunded. No
16 one will go all the way to the Bronx just to return
17 library material. Not all the libraries and open
18 libraries. Because we must seek opportunities, and
19 it needs to be reopened. But we have to relocated
20 Brooklyn public library because there are many
21 business people that depends on the business in that.
22 And it shouldn't enforce or terminate it. Relocating
23 the business center is not a good idea because none
24 of the public stations have a really good associated
25 public stations. [bell] The Brooklyn Public Library

1 like the New York Public Library because operations
2 and all the libraries have to be--stay open.

3
4 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Yuki, do you
5 have a lot more or a little bit more?

6 YUKI KIENDO: A little more. Also, the
7 MTA bus service operating levels, which are, operated
8 which for many people it depends on the bus and
9 period levels. So the bus levels are important for
10 the community because the bus levels are for all
11 people and ethnicity. The bus levels are important
12 because some levels they cannot access that level.
13 They have a two-hour commuter access or other levels
14 have either 45 or 60 minute estimate. It's proof
15 that Brooklyn Heights and the Northern Queens
16 business level. I spend more Fort Washington level
17 just to get that, but because it's only adjacent to
18 the New York City level. [sic]

19 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you very
20 much, Yuki, and you've been before our committee many
21 times and I have seen that picture many times. And I
22 know you have very strong feelings about some of the
23 projects at the various library systems, and I'm glad
24 that you care enough about libraries that you come
25 here and testify before us, and continuously share

1 your thoughts. So I want to thank you, and I want to
2 thank all of you for testify. I want to thank
3 everybody who is here in the room still. I
4 especially want to thank the staff. We began shortly
5 before 9:00 a.m. this morning preparing for the press
6 conference. It seems like it was three weeks ago.
7 [laughs] So my fellow Chair Cost Constantinides, and
8 our staff here Tonya, Aliah [sp?] and Amita [sp?] my
9 staff and Cody who looks really energetic over there
10 in the corner. And, all of the folks who care about
11 libraries. And maybe Council Member Constantinides
12 do you want to say a few words?

14 CHAIRPERSON CONSTANTINIDES: My press
15 conference was way this morning. [laughter] No, no,
16 but in all seriousness, this has been a real
17 testament to the love that we all share for libraries
18 today. I mean you have five hours to have people
19 waiting all the way here to the end. It's been a
20 real testament to the love that we all share for
21 libraries today. I mean to have five hours to have
22 people waiting all the way here to the end, and still
23 giving us a thumbs up, [laughs] and being extremely
24 passionate, demonstrates the needs in our communities
25 to support them. The needs of the \$65 million that

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1
2 we share that we're fighting for and we need to have
3 the \$1.1 billion to the Five and the Ten-Year Capital
4 Plan. And I know we're going to be a strong
5 partnership in the for that. So thank you all for
6 being here.

7 CHAIRPERSON VAN BRAMER: Thank you all
8 very much. Have a good weekend.

9 [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, 2015