

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND ELECTIONS

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February 2, 2011
Start: 11:30am
Recess: 12:10pm

HELD AT: Council Chambers
City Hall

B E F O R E: LEROY G. COMRIE, JR.
Acting Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Elizabeth S. Crowley
Inez E. Dickens
Erik Martin Dilan
Lewis A. Fidler
Vincent J. Gentile
Robert Jackson
James Vacca
Albert Vann
Karen Koslowitz
James S. Oddo
Christine C. Quinn

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

Reverend Diane Lacey
Candidate for Re-Designation and Re-Appointment
Health and Hospitals Corporation Board of Directors

Josephine Bolus
Candidate for Re-Designation and Re-Appointment
Health and Hospitals Corporation Board of Directors

ACTING CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Good morning. Good morning.

[background conversation]

ACTING CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: My name is Leroy Comrie. I'll be chairing today the Committee on Rules, on Privileges, on Elections in the absence of our Chair, Joel Rivera. Before we begin, I'd like to introduce the other members of the Committee: Council Member Al Vann from Brooklyn, Council Member Inez Dickens from Manhattan, Jimmy Vacca from the Bronx.

COUNCIL MEMBER VACCA: Yay.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Excuse me, Council Member Liz Crowley from Queens, Minority Leader Jimmy Oddo from Staten Island, Robert Jackson from Manhattan, Erik Dilan from Brooklyn and Lew Fidler from Brooklyn.

Today we have two candidates before us for review. They are Reverend Diane Lacey; good morning, a resident of Manhattan. She is a candidate for re-designation and subsequent re-appointment by the Mayor to the Health and Hospitals Corporation Board of Directors. If re-designated and subsequently re-appointed, Reverend

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2 Lacey will serve the remainder of a five-year term
3 that will expire on March 20th, 2014. And
4 Josephine Bolus, a resident of Brooklyn; good
5 morning, is a candidate for re-designation and
6 subsequent reappointment by the Mayor to the
7 Health and Hospitals Corporation board of
8 directors. If re-designated and subsequently re-
9 appointed, Ms. Bolus will serve the remainder of a
10 five-year term that will expire on March 20th,
11 2013. The Rules Committee was scheduled to
12 consider the designation of Robert Nolan for
13 appointment to the HHC; however, due to
14 conditions, Mr. Nolan could not make it here
15 today. We will consider his designation on
16 February 16th.

17 I'll briefly describe the functions
18 of the Health and Hospitals Corporation, known as
19 the HHC. HHC is a public benefit corporation
20 charged with the duty of providing high-quality,
21 dignified and comprehensive healthcare and
22 treatment to the public, especially to those who
23 cannot afford such services. HHC's Board of
24 Directors consists of 16 members, who administer
25 HHC. Included within the board's membership in

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2 addition to five ex-official members are ten
3 appointees of the Mayor, five of whom are
4 designated by the Council for consideration by the
5 Mayor. The term of office for directors is five
6 years, with the vacancy filled under the terms of
7 original appointment. Directors are not
8 compensated, but are reimbursed for actual
9 expenses.

10 Welcome, Reverend Lacey and Ms.
11 Bolus. Could you please at this time raise your
12 right hands to be sworn in?

13 COMMITTEE CLERK: Do the two of you
14 swear or affirm that your statements that you will
15 be making are truthful to the best of your
16 knowledge?

17 JOSEPHINE BOLUS: I do.

18 DIANE LACEY: I do.

19 COMMITTEE CLERK: Thank you.

20 ACTING CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: We've
21 been joined by Council Member Koslowitz from
22 Queens and Council Member Dickens, you have an
23 opening statement I understand?

24 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you,
25 Chair Comrie for the chance to say a few words in

1 support of Reverend Diane Lacey, who has
2 continuously been a tremendous asset to the Health
3 and Hospital Corporation's Board of Directors, but
4 more importantly, she has effectively represented
5 our residents that are services by HHC facilities
6 to receive high-quality and dignified care.
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8 During her service, Reverend Lacey has chaired the
9 HHC Board's Governance Committee for Community
10 Relations Committee and the Audit Committee.

11 These positions allowed her to guide HHC's
12 response to community needs and fiscal
13 accountability. In addition, as a member of the
14 Corporation's Equal Employment Opportunity
15 Committee, Diane, if I may be so bold, has been a
16 staunch supporter of increasing diversity and
17 fairness within HHC.

18 Along with her previous service,
19 Reverend Lacey's qualifications also merit
20 mentioning. She has been a development consultant
21 and director at Hunts Point Multi-Service Health
22 Center, the community relations and development
23 coordinator at St. Barnabas Hospital and of
24 course, most recently servicing as co-pastor at
25 the Church of Gethsemane located in Brooklyn of

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2 which we will forgive her for relocating.

3 [laughter]

4 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Reverend
5 Lacey's qualifications even include being born at
6 Harlem Hospital. That's right. Say it again. In
7 an economic climate that forces our government to
8 be inventive, focused and compassionate and all
9 during the same time, we are luck to have Diane
10 Lacey as a member of the HHC Board. In these
11 difficult austere times, Reverend Lacey will
12 continue to fight for affordable healthcare for
13 all. Her years as a community activist have
14 prepared her to serve the people of New York City.
15 And I urge my colleagues to vote yes on her
16 appointment, re-appointment. Thank you.

17 ACTING CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Any
18 other member would like to comment on either of
19 the candidates? Council Member Fidler?

20 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I actually
21 have to wait for a second 'cause I want to be sure
22 that you've confirmed that you voted in last
23 year's election. I was checking on that.

24 [laughter] Actually, I've known Josephine Bolus
25 for probably about 30 years, and when we appointed

1 her in Brooklyn, the Brooklyn delegation
2 recommended her, I think it's still the case, she
3 is the first nurse to serve on the HHC Board. I
4 think that alone is—justifies her continued
5 service and just was quickly looking over the
6 information in the book. I mean her attendance is
7 better than most of ours here. And she is—
8 represents a particular expertise that I can't
9 imagine the HHC Board not having, so she's a
10 terrific lady, for those of you that don't know
11 her, you should get to know her. And if you look
12 at her resume, you can see how involved she is
13 throughout Brooklyn and as active as a member of
14 the Board. So I'm very, very pleased to finally
15 see a candidate come from the Rules Committee that
16 is actually from my district. I'm always jealous
17 of you know, when they say, "they come from
18 Councilwoman Dickens' district, and she supports..."
19 Well, this one comes from Council Member Fidler's
20 district and he enthusiastically supports her and
21 I urge you all to do the same and as long as
22 Reverend Lacey has moved her church to Brooklyn, I
23 think we should support her as well.

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25 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Council

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2 Member I'm going to ask the good Reverend to pray
3 for your soul.

4 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Oh.

5 [laughter]

6 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Somebody
7 has to.

8 [laughter]

9 ACTING CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Pray
10 for all of us—

11 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER:
12 [Interposing] Especially as we walk on the icy
13 streets to the [off mic].

14 ACTING CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Council
15 Member Jackson has a comment.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Thank you,
17 Mr. Chair. Good morning everyone. Let me just
18 first thank Diane for wanting to continue on the
19 Health and Hospitals Corp Board. Clearly, as you
20 know, being in leadership and being on boards
21 sometimes can be not very thankful, but I'm glad
22 to see that you want to continue and based on
23 everything that I know that you've done a good job
24 representing us and that's extremely important.
25 And so I appreciate the fact that you are going to

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2 be renewed and clearly, diversity is extremely
3 important in our great city of New York City, and
4 so I'm happy to see that you're advocating for
5 diversity and also that you now have the diversity
6 of growing up and living in Manhattan and now
7 living in Brooklyn, so you have the true diversity
8 of our great city as far as boroughs.

9 And as far as the other candidate
10 that's in front of us, Ms. Josephine Bolus, let
11 me thank you for also considering to be on the
12 board. And as our colleague, Lew Fidler, said I
13 believe he said you're going to be the first RN on
14 the board.

15 JOSEPHINE BOLUS: I am.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: You are.

17 And I appreciate that because I do think that the
18 Health and Hospital Corp you're dealing with
19 health and hospitals, and we need people in the
20 field that know what they're doing, and know what
21 it is to be a professional that's working in the
22 field--and I say that as a father of a daughter
23 that's an MD that works in an emergency room at
24 Children's Hospital in Washington D.C., as an
25 uncle of my niece who is a critical care nurse at

2 Harlem Hospital right now, as an uncle of my other
3 nephew who lives in L.A. He's a trauma surgeon
4 and he heads the surgery department at a hospital,
5 so I do know it's important to have people in the
6 field that know what they're doing and know what
7 it is, so that when votes come up, they can then
8 go from your personal experience by being in
9 there, so let me congratulate both of you and I
10 also urge all my colleagues to vote aye.

11 ACTING CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Any
12 other members with concerns, comments? Only two
13 items at hand. Well, then I want to thank Mr.
14 Davis and Mr. Bland for all their work for putting
15 the packages together. Oh, do we want to hear
16 from the candidates? Oh, I guess. Oh, I'm sorry.
17 I'm sorry. I am so sorry. Would the candidates
18 like to say anything about their re-appointments?
19 Since this is a love-fest, I guess you should say
20 something as well. I'm sorry. I'm forgetting my
21 protocols this morning. Would you like to say
22 anything?

23 DIANE LACEY: I'd like to thank the
24 Council Members who have spoken so glowingly. My
25 leader Council Member Inez Dickens, I thank you.

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2 I'm going to inhale those remarks and try to live
3 on those for awhile. And I thank you for saying
4 those good things about my colleague, Josephine
5 Bolus. She is an outstanding leader in her field
6 and she has brought such strength to the board.
7 It certainly has bolstered my time there.

8 These are difficult days as you
9 know and the corporation is both the first and
10 last resort for most New Yorkers and we're talking
11 life and death. And the sad this is that just
12 like the economy, our system is called on to
13 shrink often in times when there's great public
14 need. We face the HIV/Aids crisis. We faced last
15 year's flu epidemic. We're dealing with results
16 of the closings of hospitals in Brooklyn and
17 Manhattan and so there's greater pressure on the
18 system at a time when we're dealing with close to
19 a two billion dollar deficit in the corporation.
20 And the days ahead with the governor's budget and
21 the talk of taking the money out of Medicaid,
22 these are going to be the toughest times I think
23 that we've faced since I've been on the board.
24 And I really do want to be there to be the
25 advocate for the patients and for the workers and

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2 wherever we can to make sure that patient care is
3 priority and that our workforce, which is so
4 dedicated, also has an advocate. Thank you.

5 ACTING CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Please
6 state your name for the record. You made that
7 wonderful speech, but you never said your name...

8 DIANE LACEY: I'm the Reverend
9 Diane Lacey.

10 ACTING CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Thank
11 you.

12 JOSEPHINE BOLUS: I'm Josephine
13 Bolus, RN, Certified Nurse Practitioner. This is
14 my mentor sitting beside me. When I got on the
15 board, she is the first one that came over and
16 said, "Hello, how are you doing?" and sort of like
17 guided me. I do speak from a different
18 perspective because if you read my answers, you'll
19 find that I've been a lot of places that our
20 patients have been. I've been a patient myself,
21 and I still am. I've been a parent of patients
22 and I've been a provider of care, so I come from a
23 different perspective than everybody else on that
24 board. And like when you have times that nurses
25 will tell you that we're doing 20 patients to one

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2 RN and that's what they're being forced to do,
3 that's hard. You simply cannot give quality care
4 that way. We can't afford all the cuts that we're
5 going because it's reflected in our patient care
6 and we try our best, but we just simply cannot do
7 it without the funds to hire enough people,
8 qualified people to work in these areas. And
9 that's where the biggest cut shows with the care
10 that we're giving and how we're being forced to do
11 so much more with less. I don't know how to
12 restore money, I'm not that kind of person. I
13 don't know that, but I know that I can advocate
14 for our patients who are getting quality care, but
15 at the expense of the staff and I don't know how
16 much longer they will hang around with the cuts
17 that tell them they have to do more with less.

18 DIANE LACEY: Can I make one other
19 statement? I didn't want to neglect the strength
20 and the support we receive from the City Council.
21 So often when some draconian cut is before us, the
22 Council steps right up and provides money to fill
23 that gap, so it's an honor to be the designee of
24 the City Council and to be able to be independent
25 and to be able to have that back up and that

2 resource. Also present with us today is Judy
3 Wessler, the chair, the executive director of the
4 Commission on the Public's Health. And she's an
5 outstanding representative of community advocacy
6 and community organization working on behalf of
7 the public system and the public to help make sure
8 that elected bodies and other groups, communities
9 continue to support our mission. So we're really
10 grateful to have her here today.

11 JOSEPHINE BOLUS: And personally
12 I'd like to say thank you to Lew Fidler because I
13 was enjoying my retirement; I'll tell you that
14 right here and now.

15 [laughter]

16 JOSEPHINE BOLUS: I was enjoying my
17 retirement until this man convinced me to go on
18 the board and - - stop being so retired. And I
19 thank him. I really do.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Thank you.

21 ACTING CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: I want
22 to thank both of you for wanting to continue to
23 serve on HHC. I think that your presence on the
24 board of HHC has helped to make it the strongest
25 hospital system in the city. HHC is now, I know,

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2 received awards. Queens Hospital, which serves a
3 lot of my constituents and that I have all my
4 medical checkups and - - I had both my kids there
5 yesterday 'cause they were both slipping and
6 sliding in the ice yesterday, is a hospital of
7 excellence and it's due to the fact that there's
8 been a motivation and desire to see staff taken
9 care of, patients advocated for and a whole--
10 lessons of excellence permeate throughout the
11 Queens Hospital and through the HHC system. I'll
12 speak for Elmhurst Hospital as well, but Ms.
13 Bolus, you weren't retired. You were active with
14 the Lions, you were active with the precinct
15 council, you were active with other things, I
16 hear. So I see that you just want to continue
17 your service, so you're not home watching "Price
18 is Right" all day. So.

19 [laughter]

20 JOSEPHINE BOLUS: I like "Price is
21 Right."

22 ACTING CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Or
23 whatever else you may be doing, but your talent is
24 truly needed and appreciated and we will do
25 everything we can in our role to try to fight

these draconian cuts from the State.

JOSEPHINE BOLUS: Please.

ACTING CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: I'm going to try to help HHC continue to stay a prominent and actually a leader in healthcare in the city at this point, so with that, I would ask that all of the members vote aye on all the candidates. And if the clerk could call the roll, I'm proud to say that I'm honored to re-appoint both of you and I hope to learn from you as well. Thank you very much.

WILLIAM MARTIN: William Martin, Committee Clerk, roll call vote in the Committee on Rules. Council Member Comrie?

ACTING CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Aye on all.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Dilan?

COUNCIL MEMBER DILAN: Aye on both.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Fidler?

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I wasn't going to call Ms. Bolus a liar when she said she was retired, so...

[laughter]

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I'm very

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proud to vote aye on both.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Jackson?

COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Aye on
all.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Vann?

COUNCIL MEMBER VANN: Aye.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Gentile?

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Aye on
all.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Dickens?

COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS:
Congratulations to both of the candidates. Ms.
Bolus, thank you so much and you will bring a lot
to the board. You have. And of course to
Reverend Lacey, thank you for your service and
truly, it's good to see you're a strong advocate
for public healthcare.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Vacca? [pause]
Crowley?

COUNCIL MEMBER CROWLEY: Aye on
all.

WILLIAM MARTIN: Koslowitz?

COUNCIL MEMBER KOSLOWITZ: Aye on
all and I hope [off mic].

2 [laughter]

3 WILLIAM MARTIN: Oddo? [pause] By
4 vote of nine in the affirmative, zero in the
5 negative and no abstentions, both items are
6 adopted. Council Members, please sign the
7 Committee reports. Thank you.

8 ACTING CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: We're
9 going to hold the roll open. The Speaker is on
10 her way down. I know Minority Leader Oddo should
11 be on his way down and Council Member Vacca will
12 be back. Councilman Gentile, I forgot to announce
13 that you are here. I'm sorry, but Council
14 Members, Vincent Gentile..

15 [background conversation]

16 ACTING CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Now,
17 now. I love Brooklyn. I love Brooklyn. Put that
18 on record. With that, ladies thank you for being
19 here. Thank you for waiting.

20 JOSEPHINE BOLUS: Thank you.

21 ACTING CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Thank
22 you for your service. With that, the meeting is
23 closed, but the vote will be held open for the
24 Speaker and Councilman Oddo and Jimmy Vacca.

25 [gavel]

2 ACTING CHAIRPERSON COMRIE: Thank
3 you. Thank you.

4 [long pause]

5 [laughter]

6 WILLIAM MARTIN: Speaker Quinn?

7 SPEAKER QUINN: Aye on all.

8 [background conversation]

9 WILLIAM MARTIN: The vote is now
10 ten in the affirmative.

11 [long pause]

12 WILLIAM MARTIN: The final vote in
13 the Committee on Rules is now ten in the
14 affirmative, zero in the negative and no
15 abstentions. Thank you. Meeting is now
16 adjourned.

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Kimberley Uhlig certify that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. I further certify that I am not related to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the outcome of this matter.

Signature



Date

February 14, 2010