

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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April 15, 2025
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HELD AT: 250 Broadway-Committee Rm., 14th Fl.

B E F O R E: Chris Banks
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Alexa Avilés
Erik D. Botcher
Justin L. Brannan
Darlene Mealy
Chi A. Ossé
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Pierina Ana Sanchez
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A P P E A R A N C E S (CONTINUED)

Emanuel Martinez

Jocelyn Strauber
Department of Investigations Commissioner

Shin Kim
Senior Vice President of Supply Management and
Procurement at NYCHA

Lauren Gray
Senior Vice President for Quality Assurance,
Safety and Technical Programs at NYCHA

Joseph Terranova
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Christopher Leon Johnson

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Renee Keitt
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Sadie

[missing intro audio]

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: --of why it took

NYCHA so long to hold Allied Universal, the contractor, accountable for such blatant impropriety. DOI found that NYCHA and Allied Universal failed to properly implement oversight measures, allowing a pattern of infractions to continue unabated. These failures range from improper documentation of required field inspections, failure to notify those in charge when guards were found to be noncompliant and failure to implement quality control plans to verify guard performance. As such, this hearing is a valuable opportunity to explore what went wrong, what is being done to make up for these mistakes, and how NYCHA's positioned to ensure this kind of situation never happens again. This is unacceptable, NYCHA. NYCHA residents were endangered due to abandonment of responsibilities, and further for an entity marred [sic] in so many budgetary problem, it is unbelievable that NYCHA with little oversight continually paid contractors who were failing to deliver their contractual obligations. I want today's hearing to not only identify where the system failed, but to establish concrete measures to hold

1 contractors accountable for the services they are
2 paid to provide. This DOI report shows that NYCHA
3 needs to have stronger penalties for non-compliance
4 and regular verification that paid services are being
5 delivered and transparent reporting mechanisms to
6 prevent such mismanagement from occurring again. Most
7 importantly, these improvements must be accompanied
8 by cultural shift towards proactive oversight rather
9 than reactive damage control. Public housing
10 residents deserve to know when NYCHA spends money
11 they are actually receiving the services they were
12 promised. I would like to thank my staff, Michael
13 Lambert [sp?], Cal [sp?], along with Sarah, and also
14 along with the Public Housing Committee staff, Jose,
15 Charles, Jack, Reese [sp?], Sierra for all the work
16 they put into this hearing. Keeping in tradition
17 with this committee before the hearing-- before we
18 begin testimony, we get testimony from Department of
19 Investigations at NYCHA, we will first hear from a
20 panel of NYCHA resident, and we will start with Mr.
21 [inaudible]. We were joined by Councilman Botcher.
22 We will now hear testimony from Emanuel Martinez
23 [sp?].

25 EMANUEL MARTINEZ: Good morning.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Good morning.

EMANUEL MARTINEZ: Good morning and thank you for this opportunity and for putting focus on this and for inviting me. I have a testimony here I would like to provide. Living in public housing can feel like living in the embassy of a foreign country, but instead of diplomatic immunity, we are centered in political bureaucratic crosshairs. We are hunted, not helped, for the billions our presence brings into this system. That's not a punchline. It's policy and it's practice. This report by the Department of Investigations shows what we already know because we live it. The guards left. The doors fail. The cameras didn't work. Fires happen, and NYCHA said nothing, did nothing. But while it's easy and even convenient to beat up on NYCHA, let's not ignore the other failure happening right here. This report never mentions our rights, not once. It talks about contracts. It talks about staffing, but it says nothing about how residents were excluded from the process, from oversight, from partnership even though federal law requires it. Under 24CFR964135 we are supposed to be included in operations. Under 105, we're supposed to help shape policy. Under 11, we

are supposed to be equal partners in protecting the homes we live in, but NYCHA treats those rights like fine print, and DOI didn't even read them, not in the findings, not even in the recommendations. This is a failure, not just of NYCHA, but of the DOI and the City. Because this isn't the first time resident's rights were ignored. Last year, 70 people were arrested in a raid tied to NYCHA micro contracts. The report said nothing about those, how those events could have been prevented if resident's economic rights had been respected, monitored and enforced. The law says residents should have been involved in contract oversight and shaping policy and the reviewing of how money moves, and if we had been, that raid never would have happened. This isn't just a failure of security, it's a failure of recognition. We are not correctional facility inmates, but that's how NYCHA treats us. The cameras we live under, 20,000 of them aren't used to protect our rights to enforce housing policies. They're used by the NYPD. That tells you everything about how NYCHA sees us, not as neighbors, not as retirees, not as working families, but as threats, as cases to be managed, as noise to be contained. The real crisis isn't just

1 that guards left their post, it's that we were never
2 invited to stand at the post with them. If NYCHA had
3 honored our federally-mandated right to partnership,
4 this failure wouldn't have lasted five years, it
5 would have ended in five minutes. So, yes, this
6 report is a start, but it doesn't name our rights. If
7 it doesn't center resident participation, if it
8 doesn't examine how government intentionally excludes
9 the people it's required to serve, then it's just
10 paperwork with a headline. We are not guests in this
11 system. We are the backbones of it, and we will not
12 sit quietly while you audit the contracts, ignore the
13 people. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Just a couple of
16 questions, and thank you for your advocacy, Mr.
17 Martinez. Pertaining to community engagement, what
18 level of community engagement are you familiar with
19 when it comes to the security guards or the fire
20 guards, particularly as a leader of public housing?

21 EMANUEL MARTINEZ: When it comes to
22 community engagement in that regard, there's zero.
23 So, you'll have resident council officers who
24 represent the community who may say something to the
25 local management. That report then gets muffled by

1 department compartmentalization, because one
2 department has to speak to another department, has to
3 speak to another, and it get lost in the jungle. And
4 so there is no. It's obstructed right from the
5 start.

6
7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: If you were to give a
8 recommendation-- we got recommendations from DOI. If
9 you were to give a recommendation as a NYCHA leader
10 and a resident, what recommendation would you give?

11 EMANUEL MARTINEZ: First, they have to
12 make sure that every step of the process as the law
13 requires that we are included. From contracting, who
14 is being contracted with and the expectations of
15 those contracts and what is happening. They should
16 also provide summaries of what's going on to us at
17 least on a quarterly basis of what has been
18 responded. And lastly, they need to start using
19 their resources such as the 20,000 cameras to enforce
20 housing policy and to put stronger priorities on the
21 compliance of residents' rights.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When it comes to
23 local hiring as well, do you think that that's
24 something that they should engage the residents on? I
25 mean, I know that's a Section 3 requirement, and

would it make a difference if local residents were also in these positions?

EMANUEL MARTINEZ: It would make a huge difference because you have local residents who care about their communities. Currently, NYCHA has a policy in which they don't allow their own NYCHA employees who live in NYCHA working the developments they're at, and we think that that's a huge failure. That signifies a gross mistrust of the residents that they're supposed to serve and who works for them instead of them upholding compliance and securing that people doing their jobs.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Would you agree-- last year, we had a bitter fight to make sure that we preserved and protect the \$6.8 million for this particular security program and to really-- to pay these contracts or this contract. Would you agree that this is a slap in the face to the residents of public housing who came out, especially the seniors who came out-- I'll call them the younger adults who came out and said we need the security apparatus? This is a lifeline for us. Would you agree that this is a slap in the face to all of those folks who need

1 this particular service and thought that we were
2 doing the right thing?

3
4 EMANUEL MARTINEZ: Yes, but more than
5 that, it signifies the conditioning that has happened
6 in our communities, right? So our wiser population,
7 our elderly who we look up to who are constantly used
8 by NYCHA when it comes to the need for funding, but
9 then excluded when it comes to the execution of their
10 safety, security, an actual-- what is supposed to be
11 happening through it. It is a symbol that this
12 decade's long tradition, a habitual action that this
13 agency as well as the City on a larger scale has
14 taken for this particular community. it's okay for
15 us to fight for the funds, but it's not-- it's
16 overlooked when it's time to make sure that those
17 funds are used correctly.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And this is my last
19 question, and this is-- goes back to community
20 engagement. Were you ever aware of any situation
21 where NYCHA asked for feedback on contractor's work?

22 EMANUEL MARTINEZ: Never. Actually, I
23 have demanded that that very same issue to which they
24 ignored did not.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your testimony.

EMANUEL MARTINEZ: Thank you, sir.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: We will now have Commissioner Jocelyn Strauber. Thank you. You may swear her in.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Hi, good morning. If you could just raise your right hand, please? And do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth before this committee and to respond honestly to all Council Member questions?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I do.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Thanks. You may proceed when you're ready.

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Is this microphone on? Can you hear me? Okay. Good morning. Before I begin my prepared testimony, I just wanted to acknowledge what we just heard from Mr. Martinez which raises questions that as Mr. Martinez rightly notes are not the subject of this report and were not the subject of this investigation. I'm obviously not prepared to speak today on the nature of resident involvement in contracting and other issues, but we've heard you

loud and clear, and you know, I'm going to take a look at the issues that you raised and I'm happy to have further conversation with you after this if you'd like to speak to me about concerns that you have. Alright. Good morning. My name is Jocelyn Strauber. I'm the Commissioner of the Department of Investigation. Thank you, Chair Banks and other members of the Committee on Public Housing, for the opportunity to speak to you today about our recent investigation and report on the oversight of security guards at New York City Housing Authority Senior Buildings and its compliance with fire guard requirements at Senior Buildings and other NYCHA developments. DOI's investigation identified numerous failures in the security and fire guard services provided by FJC Security, doing business as Allied Universal Security Services, which I'll refer to today as Allied Universal or Allied, which had a \$155 million, five-year contract with NYCHA to provide these services. DOI determined that both NYCHA and Allied failed to consistently provide required and sufficient oversight of the Allied guards and thus failed to ensure that Allied fulfilled its obligations to NYCHA under the

contract. The absence of security guards at buildings dedicated to seniors jeopardized the safety of some of NYCHA's most vulnerable residents, and the absence of fire guards not only posed a safety risk to residents but also violated the New York City Fire Code. Furthermore, as a result of NYCHA's lack of oversight of Allied, NYCHA paid Allied for services that it did not provide and missed opportunities to pursue contractual damages to which NYCHA was entitled based on Allied's non-performance. Our investigation was prompted by March 2022 media reports the front door of NYCHA's Corsi Houses in East Harlem did not lock, allowing trespassers to enter. DOI initially focused on the functionality of the lobby doors at Corsi Houses and the quality of security guard services provided by Allied Universal at that location. In our first inspection, investigators observed that the scheduled security guard was absent and a non-resident trespasser was in the lobby of Corsi Houses, prompting a broader investigation of the security guards and infrastructure at NYCHA's Senior Buildings that continued through April 2023. DOI inspected 39 Senior Buildings and reviewed CCTV footage of 55

security guard shifts, reviewing a total of 94 individual security guard shifts as part of its investigation. We concluded that security guards frequently abandoned their posts or failed to show up for work and falsified their paper timesheets to reflect a full shift. We found that approximately 68 percent of the security guards that we surveilled through inspections and review of CCRV footage were absent for all or part of their required shift. Of the 94 shifts we reviewed, 54 guards abandoned their post for an average of approximately two hours; five were no-shows for their entire eight-hour shift; and five committed other infractions, such as remaining in an unauthorized location away from their required posts, sleeping, or consuming alcohol during shifts. Some of those absent guards also falsified their timesheets. We also found that approximately 32 percent of the 28 lobby doors that we inspected were not secure, and 70 percent of the 63 senior buildings that we looked at had CCTV cameras that were inoperable or could not be viewed remotely. In the spring and summer of 2023, DOI also investigated the fire guard services provided by Allied Universal at NYCHA buildings where, due to deficient safety

features, the NYC Fire Code requires that a fire guard be present 24/7. DOI inspected 60 Fire Watch Sites in June and July of 2023 and found that only 30 percent of the fire guards scheduled to be present were at their assigned posts for the duration of our inspection, which lasted one to two hours. Some fire guards also falsified their time sheets to indicate that they had worked a full shift. DOI made NYCHA aware of its findings while conducting the investigation, and the fire guards continued to abandon their posts thereafter, in violation of Allied's contract with NYCHA. Furthermore, DOI found that scheduled fire guards were absent during three fires that occurred in three different developments, in the Ingersoll Houses, Douglass Houses and Taft Houses, two of which resulted in minor injuries. These fires occurred in February, March and May of 2023. DOI attributed these lapses in security and fire guard services, in part, to NYCHA and Allied Universal's failure to consistently exercise required oversight of the security and fire guards that could have prevented or mitigated the guards' absences and other noncompliance. The contract, as well as NYCHA's Standard Operating Procedure manual, required

NYCHA to actively oversee security and fire guards.

At NYCHA, oversight was the responsibility of the Office of Safety and Security, OSS, a Department that did not consistently conduct field inspections of the security and fire guards and did not document the inspections that it did conduct for multiple consecutive years of the contract term. As a result of these failures, NYCHA and Allied did not identify and promptly address the guards' absences and other noncompliance. Allied Universal billed and NYCHA paid for services which NYCHA did not in fact receive. While Allied Universal is no longer providing services to NYCHA, NYCHA has committed to provide security guards at senior buildings and continues to be legally required to provide fire guards wherever necessary. Therefore DOI made 12 recommendations in its report to improve NYCHA's oversight of vendors providing these services. Those recommendations include: NYCHA contracts for security and fire guard services should include a requirement that a vendor provide a smartphone application for the guards that incorporates geofencing technology and electronic timekeeping that alerts managerial staff when guards leave the boundary of their

assigned post during their shift. NYCHA contracts for security and fire guard services should include a definition of post abandonment that specifies the minimum number of minutes that constitutes post abandonment. NYCHA should provide security guards with a designated security desk on the main floor of the building to serve as a central location for the guards. NYCHA should also post signage in the lobby with information about contacting NYCHA for emergencies or with complaints or inquiries. NYCHA should require OSS to conduct and document a minimum number of unannounced inspections each month. NYCHA should revise the Security Guard Field Inspection Report to require that inspections include a check that the lobby doors are functioning properly, to specify that deficiencies related to security infrastructure be immediately reported, and to provide an electronic method of submitting that form. NYCHA should establish a process for receipt and verification of invoices, certified payroll, electronic timekeeping, and geofencing records prior to payment. NYCHA should require the vendor to provide bi-weekly invoices to permit timely CCTV footage review and NYCHA should retain the relevant

footage until the invoice has been approved. NYCHA accepted eight of the 12 recommendations and accepted the remaining four in part. Thank you, and I'm happy to take any questions that you have.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, Commissioner, and thank you for the report and keeping the public informed as of these findings. First of all, let me start with a-- and I thank God that Allied is no longer the contractor. Were you-- are you able to share at what point during the investigation NYCHA was first alerted of the issues with Allied Universal?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, certainly with respect to the fire guards, as I mentioned, NYCHA was alerted in the course of the investigation. So that would have been some time in June or July of 2023, and I believe it's in the report. I'm going to try to find you the exact date, but we also made NYCHA aware of the issues with the security guards, you know, well before the issuance of this report. I'll find the exact-- actually, we informed-- we shared the results of the security guards inquiry with NYCHA in June of 2023. We completed that portion of the inquiry of April of 2023. So, NYCHA

was timely informed which is something that we will always try to do in a public safety related investigation like this one.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. How did NYCHA actions and responsiveness change before and after they were alerted during this investigation?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, just to be clear, our investigation is really focused on the time periods that I mentioned.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: So I'm not in a position to give sort of details that goes beyond the report--

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Okay.

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: that addresses how NYCHA responded to the information that we provided then. I can say, and the report, you know, goes into some detail about the approach that NYCHA took to the inspections and to documenting the inspections prior to and during a period of our investigation, but in terms of what NYCHA has done differently since then, I'm not able to go beyond what's in the report. I know that the recommendations have been accepted. I don't think at this point

they've all been implemented, but NYCHA can probalby give you more, more specific detail on that.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Well then, can you answer this then? What sparked the need for this investigation, and what key events led to the DOI to investigate?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Yeah. So there were-- in March, I believe, of 2022, media reports that I think had video from the lobby of the Corsi Houses that show, you know, the broken lobby doors, a trespasser, and that was really what caused us to start this investigation. It was then our own findings when we did, you know, on-the-scene inspections that led us to broaden the investigation beyond where, you know, where it started.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What is the earliest connection that DOI found between NYCHA and Allied Universal?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: The earliest connection in terms of the contract period?

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I believe the contract with Allied goes back to 2019. Again, we can certainly get you the specifics on that, but it--

1 it goes back well beyond the period that we looked at
2 and, you know, NYCHA for a number of years did not
3 conduct at least in terms of a documentation that we
4 saw. Yeah, it goes back to 2019, the commencement of
5 the contract. And the inspections, we have a chart
6 in the court that goes through this-- the
7 inspections, the field inspections to ensure that the
8 security and fire guards were present on the scene.
9 NYCHA did not begin those inspections or at least did
10 not begin to document them in a way establishes that
11 they took place until September of 2021.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What are the main
14 takeaways from the investigation regarding how both
15 parties, NYCHA and Allied, are failing-- failed on
16 conducting oversight, the proper oversight?

17 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, you know,
18 as we mentioned, this was-- obviously Allied had its
19 own responsibilities to do oversight of its guards
20 which we found that they were not fulfilling. NYCHA
21 also had its own responsibilities, both to oversee
22 the guards itself in terms of conducting its own
23 inspections and to ensure that Allied was conducting
24 the inspections it was required to conduct pursuant
25 to the contract. And for a number of years-- and the

1 chart on page 19 of the report is a useful reference
2 point because it shows there were almost no
3 inspections in 2021, more inspections-- probably not
4 enough in 2022, and then the number goes up
5 significant in 2023. So for a number of years, NYCHA
6 was not fulfilling its responsibilities. This was the
7 Office of Security Services that was required to
8 conduct these inspections, but it also through our
9 investigation-- not only was OSS not performing, but
10 there did not appear to be any supervisor or more--
11 you know, supervisor of OSS within NYCHA who
12 identified these issues until, you know, far later in
13 the contract term, so.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The report reference
16 to-- they referenced t the contract as failed. What
17 would a successful partnership between NYCHA and the
18 security guard/fire safety guard program look like?

19 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, I think
20 ultimately in a public safety context, fire safety
21 security, you know, success is-- you don't-- there's
22 no partial success. Like, you've got to have fire
23 guards on the scene 24/7. You've got to have the
24 security guards that you hire present for the period
25 that you hired them. I think what our recommendations

do here is to try to use it-- you know, use the technology that's now available, you know, geofencing, for example. There is the ability to know based on an app that can be put on a phone that a guard can be in possession of. There is the ability, you know, to actually know whether someone is where they're supposed to be when they're supposed to be there. And so our recommendation, certainly we want, you know, physical things like a podium, a desk where the security guards can actually sit and be present. That wasn't true in every lobby where they were supposed to be. We want there to be clear signage. So when residents see that there are issues, there's a number for them to call to report concerns, but we also think you should make-- you should take advantage of the technology that we now have so that you don't have to rely on hand-written time sheets and in-person inspections. And even review of CCTV footage which obviously those TVs should be operable. They should be remotely viewable. That will also help. But I think if you use some of the technology that we've recommended and that NYCHA has agreed to use with any contract going forward, you will have a more fool-proof way to ensure that

people who you hire are where they're supposed to be, that you're getting what you paid for, and also that if they're not there that you will know, right?

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Because there can be alerts that are pinged to managers when someone goes outside of the geofencing zone they're supposed to be in for the period of their shift, for example.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, of the 12 recommendations in your report, which would you say are priority items for NYCHA to avoid this kind of situation in the future?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, I would say they're all priorities. We really do try to be judicious and not make recommendations that we don't think are important, but I think the geofencing technology that we just mentioned is going to be, you know, a very significant step forward in reducing the risk of human error and reducing the risk that someone can falsify a time sheet which is difficult to, you know, to identify in real-time if you don't have that kind of technology.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, do you think we can achieve a combination of the two?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I think we can.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: NYCHA only partially accepted for the DOI's 12 recommendations. Primary declining to implement changes to current contracts. Does DOI believe that NYCHA's response adequately addresses the serious oversight issues identified in the investigation?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: So, what I'll say here is, you know, we receive-- we share our report when it's complete before issuance with the agencies so we can get their feedback so we can incorporate their responses, and we incorporate them as they provide them. Whether-- you know, one of the things that NYCHA says with respect to geofencing is that it would be overly burdensome and require substantive contract changes that would be too time consuming to achieve, to try to potentially retroactively change the terms of current contracts. You know, I'm not-- I'm not in a position at this point without doing sort of a further deep-dive to assess that. Certainly, you know, we were looking at the contract with Allied. We haven't looked at every contract that these recommendations would be affected by. So, I think the answer is that these are NYCHA's

1 responses. We're certainly, you know, very pleased
2 that they've accepted the majority of the
3 recommendations. As for the nuances of what they can
4 and can't do now, I'm really not in a position to
5 comment on those contracts, because I haven't
6 reviewed them.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, do you believe
9 that NYCHA can maintain adequate oversight if they do
10 not implement all the changes?

11 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I think it's
12 harder for the reasons that I've just said, but I
13 think, you know, providing sufficient resources so
14 that OSS can do in-person inspections which is what
15 we did to shed light on these issues will go a long
16 way if in fact the current contracts are simply not
17 amenable to change at this point.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: NYCHA cited cost and
19 time concerns as a reason for not implementing the
20 geofencing technology in the current contract-- in
21 the current contracts. Given that millions were
22 potentially wasted on unperformed services, do you
23 find this justification convincing?

24 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, again, it's
25 hard to say because the losses or waste that we found

1 relates to the Allied contract. I think the concerns
2 about implementation of the recommendations relate to
3 current contracts, and again, I don't know whether
4 there's, you know,-- I just don't know the cost of
5 reforming, revising, renegotiating the current
6 contracts. So I think we'd need to know more about
7 that to really fully evaluate that response.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What is DOI's
10 estimate of money NYCHA lost paying for these
11 services that were never rendered and how was this
12 calculated?

13 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Right. It's a
14 difficult calculation to make, unfortunately because
15 NYCHA wasn't doing the inspections that would have
16 identified guards' absence which would have given
17 rise to both, you know, liquidated damages which
18 NYCHA was entitled to under the contract or an
19 affirmative remedy they could have sought, and also
20 would have obviously enabled them not to pay Allied
21 for the work that Allied wasn't doing. We know that
22 all I can actually give you on this therefore is
23 NYCHA's calculation which was about half a million
24 dollars of liquidated damages that they calculated
25 based on the inspections they did do from October

2022 to February 2024. My understanding is at least as of the date of the issuance of the report, NYCHA had only received about \$88,700 in damages based on Allied's failure to comply with the contract term, but I can't actually give you a sort of overall picture. You know, you could take the findings that we made and extrapolate them out over the total number of guards that Allied provided. I haven't done that math. That would-- if you viewed the work that we did as a representative sample, that might give you some rough sense, but that's probably a very, you know, inaccurate way to do a calculation.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for that. When it comes to previous investigations to NYCHA's contractors, based on this most recent investigation and previous investigations into NYCHA's contractors, what are your primary takeaways?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, I mean, we-- you know, there have been sort of two major, you know, recent investigations that I'm thinking of that relate to contracting. We had the micro purchase issue which may be one of the one's you're referring to. You know, that actually posed different issues, I think, than this investigation does. I'm sort of

1
2 reluctant to speak in sweeping terms beyond the work
3 that we've done. We certainly found in connection
4 with the micro purchase investigation that resulted,
5 as you know, in the charges against 70 NYCHA
6 superintendents, that there were policy improvements
7 that in fact we had recommended a number of years
8 before that we thought would have gone a long way to
9 mitigating the risk of the kind of bribery that the
10 micro purchase process which although it has many
11 advantages has a number of down sides. We thought
12 there were recommendations that we made that in fact
13 NYCHA has now implemented that would have potentially
14 prevented some of the misconduct we saw in that case.
15 Here, this is not an issue that I'm aware that DOI
16 has addressed before, but I think fundamentally it
17 was a failure of oversight of the contract, of the
18 vendor.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Has the DOI noticed
20 any trends in the quality of service provided by
21 NYCHA contractors?

22 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: You know, I can't-
23 - again, I can't really speak to trends in general. I
24 think we certainly saw here that there was a lack of
25 oversight, and that lack of oversight may have

1 facilitated and certainly allowed to go unchecked,
2 you know, a failure to provide service at the level
3 that was contracted for, and that was legally
4 required in the case of the fire guards.
5

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, are the issues
7 you've identified in your investigation of NYCHA
8 unique to NYCHA or do you see these issues across
9 agencies?

10 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, I think it's
11 fair to say, and without suggesting that we've done
12 investigations of exactly this type across other
13 agencies, I think it's fair to say that when there is
14 a lack of oversight, there is always a risk of some
15 kind of waste, fraud, you know, misconduct, time
16 sheets being falsified, you know, conduct that is
17 allowed to go unchecked, right?

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

19 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: You know, kind of
20 perpetuates itself in that sense, and perhaps, you
21 know, comes to be accepted or acceptable. so I can
22 certainly say that I think in any situation where
23 there's a significant contract, particularly one that
24 requires or facilitates compliance with the law like
25 the fire code, when you don't have oversight of it

and you don't make sure that it's being enforced, there's a risk that we'll see just this kind, you know, of failure to comply.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Before we proceed with my further questions, we've been joined as well via Zoom by Council Member Sanchez. A lack of security guards and fire safety guards at critical NYCHA developments including senior housing and fire watch locations is incredibly dangerous for public housing residents. Is a situation as severe as the investigation being discussed comparable to investigations the DOI has conducted in the past?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Again, I think, you know, this is-- I think that's a difficult question to answer. I mean, I think this is a serious issue when you have security guards who are not present. NYCHA has made the point and they're right, they don't have a legal obligation to provide security guards, but they've chosen to do so. As you noted earlier, funding's been provided for that. Senior buildings have residents that are vulnerable in unique ways. So I think it's critically important that these kinds of services be provided and certainly obviously in the fire guard context it kind

of goes without saying, you only need a fire guard fire safety features are deficient in certain ways. So to have that guard not in fact be present is, you know, a violation of the fire code. It clearly poses a safety risk. I think these are very serious issues, and I think, you know-- as we heard, I think residents are certainly entitled to be protected from these kinds of risks. And when it's NYCHA's intention to protect them and they're spending money to protect them, then the contract should be properly overseen so that that protection is provided.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. With that, I'm going to now allow Council Member Bottcher to start-- give his questions. Council Member Bottcher?

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Thank you, Chair. Hi. Last year, 70 NYCHA employees current and former were charged with bribery and extortion, and earlier you referred to policy recommendations that the Department of Investigation had issued to NYCHA earlier, that they had not rec-- that they had not implemented, and that you said that you believe if they had implemented these recommendations, some of this fraud could have been avoided. Are there current recommendations that are outstanding that

you've issued to NYCHA on any issue that they've yet to implement, and if so, what are those recommendations that have yet to be implemented?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, on the 14 recommendations relating to the micro purchase process, those have all been implemented which is good news. As to, obviously, the current recommendations that we've made, you know, have not yet been implemented but they have been accepted. You know, I have a lengthy chart here of all the recommendations that we've made and their status, but I'm not-- actually, I think this chart is really just of the current recommendations, because there are only 12. But even if I had them all here, I'm not in a position now to speak to you about every recommendation, you know, going back in time that we've made to NYCHA and the status. It's certainly something, you know, we are engaged with all the agencies that we oversee in an ongoing process of evaluating the outstanding recommendations, their implementation status in pushing for those recommendations to be implemented, as we should be. But I'm not in a position to speak today about of sort of the history of the recommendations we've made

t NYCHA and their status. I can certainly have a further conversation with you about that, but I can't do it now.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Do you meet regularly--

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: [interposing] Just because it's not all in my head.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Understood. Do you meet regularly with NYCHA to review all these recommendations?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: We have regular meetings with NYCHA on any number of issues including outstanding recommendations, yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: And would you say that the majority of the recommendations are being implemented?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I would. I mean, the majority of our recommendations are accepted and implemented, accepted [inaudible] actually. I have a little bit information than I thought I did, although I still can't go through chapter and verse in terms of all of our recommendations. But I can tell you that as of just a couple days ago since 2022 we've issued 94 recommendations to NYCHA; 85 have been

accepted; 56 have been implemented; and three of the 85 we deem as practice is already in place.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: And the 56 of 94 implemented, are these like recent recommendations or are these years in the making?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: So, the period-- I may not have made this clear. I'm giving you stats from 2022 to the present.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Okay.

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: So, that's how far back they go.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Alright, okay. We're discussing in this hearing the use of paid security guards with services like Allied Universal. We get in the campuses that are located in my Council District, NYCHA Elliott-Chelsea and Fulton Houses, paid security detail has been hired. I don't know if it's Allied Universal or another firm, but we get really mixed results from those security firms because they, you know, as paid security detail they lack the authority to do much other than be there and serve as a deterrent and you know, ostensibly report things, but they're not a substitute for uniformed PD presence. I understand that currently it's not

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Right. Well, certainly if they're not present they're not effective. But the issue that you're raising which is obviously a different one which is the limits of the authority and enforcement capability of a

1 security detail of the type that Allied provides.
2 That is not something that as far as I know we've
3 studied, the sort of relative, but I can certainly
4 see how, you know, they serve primarily as a
5 deterrent, and my assumption is in a dangerous
6 situation they would likely require more support to
7 provide, you know-- and would reach out to law
8 enforcement if necessary.

9
10 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHE: Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, Council
12 Member Bottcher. Now, I just wanted to dive back
13 into how some of your findings when it came to the
14 [inaudible] security guards and-- is it common for
15 NYCHA to rotate the same guards across different
16 properties?

17 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: In terms of the--

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] On the
19 same day, in the same day?

20 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: The assignment of
21 the same guards, I don't know whether they rotate
22 them or they don't rotate them. I don't know exactly
23 how they're assigned to particular locations.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: well, in your
25 investigation was that-- did you look into that?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: We weren't really looking into guard rotations at all. We were looking at whether those who had been contracted to be there were present.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: But we weren't looking into rotation issues, specifically.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When we-- because I know we're talking about coverage, and if a guard is rotated and the next guard that's supposed to be on shift doesn't show up, but is also claiming that they were there, that possibly could be a scenario where a guard can falsify time sheets in a situation like that.

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: sure. I mean, these were paper time sheets. So, you know, what we saw was things like, you know, we were there in the middle of the day. A guard wasn't on-site, and the time sheet showed that the person had already worked a full day. So the kind of thing we were seeing I think could happen under kind of any circumstances, because they're just paper time sheets with no real time monitoring. But sure, I suppose if there was a rotation situation and someone, you know, was leaving

and someone else was expected to show up and didn't, that would create the kind of circumstances that we're seeing.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I mean, well, would you recommend-- I mean, outside of the recommendations that you gave-- that NYCHA observe these gaps in coverage?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, certainly there shouldn't be gaps in coverage, right? So the contract should be structured in such a way that if there's going to be-- I mean, someone may have to leave the desk for some very brief period of time, but other than that, the way-- for whatever period of coverage NYCHA intends to provide which is 24/7 for the fire guards and, you know, potentially a different schedule depending on the building for the security guards, there should be sufficient coverage for that period however that's accomplished. Could be splitting a shift among different guards. It could be somebody working a longer shift. We-- that's not an issue we really drilled down into, because we had sort of more fundamental problems with--

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Right.

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: the way this was being handled.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When it comes to working conditions for the fire guards and the security guards at NYCHA, any insight into what the working conditions were?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: You know, one of the findings-- you know, one of the recommendations we make about having a central security desk is some of these buildings didn't have a set location for a person to sit, which obviously makes it easier for someone-- first of all, it makes it more difficult potentially for them because they don't have a central, you know, location to be at, but also potentially easier for them to wander off. Beyond that, we weren't really looking into the working conditions for the guards. We certainly didn't learn anything that suggested that guards were abandoning their posts because of their working conditions were so difficult. That's not something that we learned about or heard of in the course of this investigation.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When we're talking about the possibility of a guard needed to charge

1
2 their phone, were there adequate charging stations?
3 Was there adequate bathroom facilities for them to
4 use, or any-- talking about bathroom breaks? I mean,
5 these are possibly gaps.

6 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Right. I mean,
7 the absences that we were seeing were not, given the
8 length of time, were not about somebody needed a
9 bathroom break or someone needed to go charge their
10 phone. And the definition of post abandonment is
11 intended to recognize that there's some flexibility
12 here, right?

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Right.

14 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: If you get up to
15 use the bathroom, you get up to charge a phone,
16 etcetera, that isn't-- you know, that isn't the kind
17 of problem we were observing. So, that's--

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Alright.
19 Would geofencing technology and electronic time
20 keeping worked if the guards aren't able to keep
21 their devices charged?

22 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: No, I think you
23 would need a working device that is charged in order
24 for that technology to work.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Based on the last few DOI investigations into NYCHA's contracting practices, why has there been a disconnect between NYCHA's central office and the reality of the conditions at the individual buildings?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: You know, I don't know that that's a question that I can answer. We certainly looked at the fact that there was an office that wasn't performing and the fact that the supervisors who oversaw that office did not appreciate, understand, address that issue certainly in real time as it was allowed persist. Exactly why there was a disconnect, that's-- you know, that's not something I can really-- I can answer.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, has DOI noticed any improvements in communications between residents, on-site staff, and the Administration?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Again, we weren't in this investigation really looking at resident and staff communication. I can tell you that there was not sufficient communication between OSS and its supervisors or sufficient oversight here because of the length of time that we saw when OSS was not fulfilling its responsibilities, but-- and whether

that's improved since then, I can't say at this point.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, I mean, did you agree that communicating with residents or having a relationship with residents to some degree when it comes to securing these properties, would you say that's important and it should be a part of the security apparatus?

COMMISSIONER STRAUER: Well, I just-- I want to be careful here, because as I said, I haven't studied-- you know, Mr. Martinez has raised a number of questions about the nature of resident involvement in contracting in security services. I cannot speak to the details of that and what those requirements are, although as I said, I'd like to be better educated about them and I plan to be. Certainly, I think, you know, we've proposed the kind of signage that would facilitate residents being able to say there's no security guard here. And certainly, I think communication is important in any community. So, I think the answer to that is absolutely. Exactly what kinds of communication should have taken place here, beyond what we've recommended, I would want to think more about. But I-- absolutely, I

think communication with residents and understanding their concerns and being aware that they're being placed in unsafe situations is critically important.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Does DOI conduct ongoing monitoring when it issues a report to see if the accepted recommendations are being implemented? I think you answered that [inaudible].

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: So, just to be precise about this--

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Yeah.

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: we have regular communications with all of the agencies that we oversee about the status of our recommendations. Monitoring really to me suggests we're on-site doing spot checks to ensure that the processes that we've been told have been implemented are actually implemented. We do that sometimes depending on our available resources and the nature of the issue, but it doesn't mean we are always able to sort of go back and essentially reinvestigate to see whether or not all the recommendations are implemented. We do rely on our communications with the agencies and their representations about what they're doing to determine how to allocate our resources.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So you're solely relying on a report or direct conversations with NYCHA that these--

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: [interposing] I mean, it depends. I wouldn't say solely in all cases, but I also-- I wouldn't want to suggest to you that we have the resources--

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Right.

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: to go around sort of to physically confirm implementation of everything that we recommend? We don't.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, have you in the past done it? And since NYCHA has a pattern of these types of lapses, has there been any special focus on the [inaudible] when it comes to--

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: [interposing] I mean, look, I think with NYCHA in particular we have a very strong open line of communication. For example, the 14 recommendations that came out of the micro purchase contracts, we've had regular communication with NYCHA about the implementation. There are new policies and organizational structures in place. So, you know, that's an example where I

1 think we can feel very confident that those
2 recommendations are being implemented.

3 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Based on NYCHA's
4 responses, does DOI believe that the underlining
5 cultural and systemic issues that led to the
6 oversight failures are being adequately addressed?

7 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I think NYCHA has
8 committed to address them. I mean, I think they've
9 accepted our recommendations. We talked about the
10 recommendations that have only been accepted in part,
11 but certainly in terms of making sure that OSS is
12 conducting the oversight it's supposed to. I think
13 NYCHA's fully accepted that recommendation. My
14 understanding is that's how they intend to proceed.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Do you think there
16 are any key factors of the findings that need
17 attention or the recommendations that need attention?

18 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I mean, I think
19 as I've said, I'm most interested-- I think they're
20 all important, but I'm interested in the deployment
21 of geofencing technology as a way to remove the kind
22 of human error and/or misconduct element of some of
23 the issues that we've seen. So I think-- and I'm
24 aware that those may complex to implement, and there
25

1
2 may be some cost associated with that, but I think
3 it's sort of well worth it given the value of these
4 contracts. So that's going forward one of the ones I
5 would try to focus on.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, the geofencing,
7 how would that look? How would that be implemented?
8 How would that-- if that was-- became part of the
9 security apparatus?

10 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: Well, I think the
11 concept is that there is a mechanism by which guards
12 I would imagine through their phones are kind of
13 checking in when they arrive, and then their phone is
14 sending a signal that confirms they are within a set
15 location, you know, a perimeter if you will, and if
16 they go outside that perimeter, there's both a record
17 of that and also a real-time notification to whomever
18 is handling the monitoring. And so that is, you
19 know, probably a pretty, you know, simple non-tech
20 savvy explanation--

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Right.

22 COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: of how it would
23 work.
24
25

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Would geofencing
would it-- do you think it would eliminate boots on
the ground?

COMMISSIONER STRAUBER: I'm not sure
anything eliminates boots on the ground. I mean,
there are usually, you know, as technology evolves
sometimes ways of evading what that technology is
seeking to provide can evolve. So I do-- I don't--
no, I don't think it eliminates it, but I think it
could reduce the amount of boots on the ground you
need to have effective oversight, and I think
together, you know, those are probably the most
powerful way to address, you know, what we saw happen
here.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you,
Commissioner, for your testimony, and we'll now have
NYCHA. You may swear them in.

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: Good morning
everyone. If you could each raise your right hand,
please? Do you affirm to tell the truth, the whole
truth and nothing but the truth before this committee
and to respond honestly to Council Member questions?
And if you could each state your name and your title

for the record before you begin, that would be great.
Thank you. And title.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: My name is
Shin Kim. I am the Senior Vice President of Supply
Management and Procurement at NYCHA.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Good
morning. I'm Lauren Gray. I'm the Senior Vice
President for Quality Assurance, Safety and Technical
Programs at NYCHA.

SENIOR DIRECTOR TERRANOVA: And good
morning. Joseph Terranova, Senior Director Office of
Fire Safety.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. I want to
know exactly what are the security standards for
NYCHA developments if any, and are there--

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Chair, I'm
sorry to interrupt you. [inaudible] testimony?

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Do apologize.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I'm getting into my
questioning, but you may begin your statement. I do
apologize.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I appreciate
that. Thank you so much. Chair Chris Banks, members

of the Committee on Public Housing, other distinguished members of the City Council, NYCHA residents, community advocates, and members of the public: good morning. I'm Lauren Gray, NYCHA's Senior Vice President for Quality Assurance, Safety, and Technical Programs. I'm pleased to be joined by Shin Kim, Senior Vice President of Supply Management and Procurement, and Joseph Terranova, Senior Director for the Office of Fire Safety. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss the Authority's security guard and fire guard programs, and how we are partnering with the New York City Department of Investigation to foster safer and more secure NYCHA communities. The safety and security of NYCHA families is a priority for us. To that end, NYCHA, in partnership with tenant association presidents, have proactively implemented a security guard program at our 52 buildings dedicated for seniors, even though security guard services are not required at any NYCHA developments. NYCHA is working with the City on another capital swap which will fully fund the program in City Fiscal Year 2026. Fire guard services are required at buildings where an installed fire protection system is out of service for repairs.

In accordance with the NYC Fire Code, one fire guard is assigned to patrol up to 50,000 square feet of space to watch for fires and alert emergency services and the Fire Department of New York, if necessary.

NYCHA has focused our efforts and financed an aggressive repair program that has significantly reduced the reliance on fire guards in buildings - from over 150 locations in 2023 to just over 30 in 2025. We value our partnership with the NYC Department of Investigation and appreciate their efforts to bring to our attention areas at the Authority that need improvement. NYCHA has already made significant progress with implementing several of DOI's recommendations and is accepting substantially all of the 12 recommendations, as part of our shared goal to ensure safe and secure communities for NYCHA residents. For instance, NYCHA is amending its contracts and invoicing processes for security and fire guard services to enhance oversight; providing dedicated security desks or podiums for security guards in a central location at each building; posting signage with information for residents to report emergencies or make security-related inquiries or complaints; performing

unannounced inspections, as well as spot checks of cameras, to ensure guards are present; and revising procedures related to the reporting of security infrastructure issues. While we acknowledge that there is a lot of work to do, we are grateful for the support of our partners, including DOI and the City Council, as we strive to ensure safe and secure communities at NYCHA and continue to improve residents' quality of life. Thank you for your partnership, and we're happy to answer any questions that you may have.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your testimony and your opening statement. When it comes to security standards, what are the security standards for NYCHA development if any, and are there a pre-requisite number of CCTV cameras or similar protocols?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, protocols and standards for security officers at the NYCHA developments and senior buildings is they're our first line of defense. They're supposed to be at their site, manning station, doing patrols at the lobby to check the doors to make sure that they're secure, keeping out any intruders to the buildings,

1 obviously working with our TA presidents if they have
2 any concerns, and of course, you know, if an
3 emergency does happen at the development they're to
4 call 911 and of course reach out to their company to
5 let them know than an emergency happened at the
6 development.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, how often do
9 you check the functionality of the security equipment
10 and these NYCHA developments, particularly with the
11 CCTV cameras? Can you give us the-- how often you
12 check?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Certainly.
14 That's a great question, thank you. So, it's a mix
15 of property management and the Office of Safety and
16 Security that do checks in the cameras. So when
17 people, the caretakers start cleaning the buildings
18 from rooftop to ground, if they see any vandalism
19 through the cameras, they report it to the office of
20 safety and security. Property management is supposed
21 to check the cameras and the systems every single day
22 like a quick spot-check to make sure that they're
23 working, and of course, the Office of Safety and
24 Security does random spot checks on cameras while
25

looking at footage and CCTVs all day long and make repairs to the CCTVs.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The contract that you have with Allied, was it a pre-requisite for the security guards, do they have access to those-- to the cameras?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: No, they do not.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How does NYCHA engage with other development or buildings in need of security system upgrades or repairs?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So that usually comes from capital assessment and some feedback from operations if we see that cameras are failing or that systems are failing. We work together to identify hopefully some additional funding to make repairs to the camera system.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Are there currently any developments that only have a fire guard and doesn't have a security or boots on the ground security guard in lobby?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Well, fire guards are supposed to roam the building. They're

not actually supposed to be in the lobby, but we have--

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] No, I'm asking you are there any NYCHA developments or senior developments that have a fire guard, but don't have a security guard?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes, there are 24 or 23 developments that have fire guards because there's an impairment to the system, and we're required to do that. And there's two or three buildings that have both the fire guard and a security guard because they're a senior building.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And when that happens are the residents made aware?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes, we notify property management and the TA president that either a security guard or a fire guard is going to be present at the building.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Just an anecdote, Vandalia Houses, for years-- we've gone for years or for a couple years after speaking to the tenant association president-- I think they just recently got a new tenant association president in the last year or so. But residents were saying that they were

1 under the impression that the fire guard that was
2 there was the security, and by finding that out and
3 digging deeper, we found that at Vandalia Houses
4 there was no-- they haven't had a security guards in
5 the development for the last three to four to five
6 years. Your testimony was that there was adequate
7 communication or there was communication to the
8 tenant association and to management and to the
9 residents. Why is it in that scenario there was no
10 communication given to the residents that there was
11 only-- that the fireguard wasn't a security guard?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I'm not
14 aware of the situation at Vandalia. I don't know
15 when this took place. I do know that since I've come
16 on board along with James Aprito [sp?] we've been
17 actively engaging residents about the fire
18 guard/security guard program. We've also as part of
19 the DOI findings have already posted in our lobbies
20 when a fire guard is supposed to be there and when a
21 security guard is supposed to be there. We host
22 quarterly meetings with residents and NYPD. It's
23 like a resident roundtable. We talk about safety and
24 security issues. We talk about the guards at these
25 conferences, and we also meet with our CCOP yearly to

1
2 give them updates about safety and security issues
3 and guard development.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, currently are you
5 aware there is a security guard and a fire guard at
6 Vandalia?

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: There's one
8 at 77 Vandalia.

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: As of today, how many
10 functioning CCTV cameras are installed at each
11 development?

12 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, we have
13 52 developments that do not have CCTV coverage. We
14 have over 20,000 cameras in the portfolio across 214
15 developments and 1,519 buildings.

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How's that
17 determination made as to what development receives
18 cameras and what development doesn't?

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: A lot of
20 that comes through working with the Council, working
21 with our partners at the state and federal levels in
22 terms of funding. We also work with the TA president
23 and property management once funding has been--

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] No, I'm
25 asking you how the determin-- how's that

determination made? Not from the funding aspect. Is there-- if there's a need for security at these particular developments, this type of layered security that exists in other senior developments? How is that determination made that one development should have cameras and the other one should not? Or is it solely on the advocacy of the electeds?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: A lot of it is advocacy on the elected, and I'm not necessarily involved in the actual capital and construction of that. That's our AC&M's [sic] Department who oversee the placement of CCTVs.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, cameras are not part of the regular security apparatus for these buildings?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: There's 52 developments that don't have the cameras, so no.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Are you aware of any of the crime stats or some of the security concerns or needs at all the 50 NYCHA-- 55 NYCHA sites, 51 NYCHA senior sites?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: At the 52 senior sites--

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Sorry,
52.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: The crime's
[inaudible] senior buildings, sorry. The crime is
managed and monitored by NYPD.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I said are you aware,
not who manages it. Are you aware of the security
needs or concerns?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes, of
course.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Would you
agree that most seniors would-- if you were having
conversations with them, would we request or say
there's a need for cameras in their building?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes,
absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: As of today, what
percentage front doors at NYCHA buildings are secure?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I don't have
that information available, but we will get
information about work order tickets for doors that
are broken to you.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Would you agree that having a secured front door is part of security apparatus?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Hundred percent.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When a door is breached or when it's broken, how is that then communicated to the authority so that that door can be fixed?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Through a couple of ways. One, residents can call the CCC and put in a work order ticket for the door to be repaired, but mostly boots on the ground property management should be checking the doors every single day as they're doing clean-up of the buildings and walking all over the developments, and then creating a work order ticket to get the door repaired.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You know, we had a contract with Allied for \$6.8 million. What's the relationship as far as reporting back to the Authority when the door is broken in one of these senior buildings?

1
2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: They were
3 under the 2019 contract. They weren't required to
4 broken doors to NYCHA.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Who was in charge of
6 overseeing security at the NYCHA buildings?

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Well, I'm
8 overseeing the Office of Safety and Security and we
9 have our role in terms of making sure cameras are
10 working. People have access to work on the system.
11 We work with various partners with NYPD and DHS to
12 ensure different programs happen at the development
13 to make residents more safe and more secure. But
14 property management oversees the day to day
15 operations to make sure that the doors are closing
16 properly.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What types of
18 relationships the security guards and the fire safety
19 guards expected to have with the public housing
20 residents, and what level of visibility are they
21 expected to maintain?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, with our
23 new vendors, and we also have a solicitation out
24 right now for a new guard in contract for security
25 guards and for fire guards. We are going to have

1
2 mandatory meetings with these companies to meet with
3 the residents on a quarterly basis to discuss any
4 issues that they might be having, anything we could
5 do to improve the level of service from the fire
6 guard and the security guards.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What-- and I think
8 this is a broad question. Would you agree that-- do
9 you agree to the findings in the report?

10 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes.

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And the
12 recommendations that have been made?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Can you explain why
15 NYCHA has not fully agreed to four of the 12
16 recommendations put forth by DOI then?

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Sure. I'll
18 let my Chief Procurement Officer Shin Kim answer.

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for
20 that question. So the four that we part-- that we
21 stated were partial mainly due to the fact that there
22 is currently a solicitation out there on the street
23 for fire and security guards services that
24 incorporates all of the DOI recommendations, all 12.
25 So,--

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] So, this is the procurement process, or is this the--

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: So, what I wanted to say was that there is a procurement out there currently that incorporates all of these recommendations, and these are material changes to the requirements that would be implemented post-award to the current contractors. So we really characterize it as partial in light of the fact that there was a new solicitation out there, and once the new complement of vendors are on-boarded through this process, everybody will be subject to all 12, and we will have fully accepted the recommendations.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: For the recommendations not accepted, can-- for the recommendations not accepted due to contractual obligations, can NYCHA commit to accepting them in future contracts?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Yes, certainly. Thank you for that question. And we will-- and that is exactly our plan to do so with the new [inaudible] of vendors.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Is there any easy accessible system in which public housing residents

1
2 can report the absence of security or fire safety
3 guards, and do residents have knowledge of schedule
4 hours for security and fire safety guards?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: That's a
6 great question. So, yes, we have a 24-hour hotline.
7 It's 306-8800. They can call the Office of Safety
8 and Security to report any fire guard or security
9 guard issues. we let the TA president and property
10 management staff know the times of the security
11 guards and that was agreed upon as we've done walk-
12 throughs with the TA president and property
13 management, because we wanted to give the residents
14 the hours that they wanted. So, most of the
15 residents at these senior buildings know the times
16 when a guard should be there. For fire guards, it's
17 24/7 at most buildings. So, there should be--
18 there's usually three eight-hour shifts, unless it's
19 like a community center or senior center. A guard
20 will be there when the center is open if there's a
21 fire impairment, but fire guards have to be there
22 24/7 in our residential buildings.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, how many NYCHA
24 developments or senior developments have 24-hour
25

1 security, and can you give me a breakdown of what's
2 the security apparatus of all the 50-- 52 sites?

3 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Give me one
4 second.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay, while you're
6 finding that, I think you had a-- talked of the
7 knowledge, the knowledge of the schedules. Is that
8 made public to advertise to the residents outside
9 just the walk-through that's being done? Is there
10 any type of direct communications to the senior
11 residents as to what's the shifts for security
12 coverage?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, for
14 security, again, we work with property management and
15 the TA president to no-- they notify us what--

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] I ask
17 you that-- well, are you aware of what's the direct--
18 how do they directly reach out to residents to let
19 them know what the security apparatus is or what the
20 security schedule is?

21 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Currently, I
22 don't know if they're doing that, but this is
23 something we're going to--
24
25

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] You think that's important?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Absolutely. Something we're going to implement with the new contracts shortly. To answer your question about 24-hour coverage, there's currently one building with 24-hour coverage. The remainder, either 16 or 18 hours.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Repeat that.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: The remainder of the 52 buildings are either 16 or 18-hour coverage. Eight, sorry, excuse me.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The-- how does OSS ensure that security guards show up at their scheduled post?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: That is really a good question. So, since 2022/2023 when myself and James Frito took over the Office of Safety and Security for mismanagement of the contract, you know, one of the main director resigned. The deputy director was moved. The first thing we started to do was better oversight by hiring additional staff and really changing the culture of how we managed the contract. So, during the time of 2019 through 2022

there was an average of 40 to 60 inspections happening a month between--

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] You said how many inspections?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: 40 to 60. So, in 2022 and 2023 we upped these inspections to almost 150 per month, and from 2024 until 2025 we've been doing over 250 inspections a month between the Office of Safety and security, the Fire Safety Department, and Quality Assurance Department which is also under my purview.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And that's since the termination of the contract with Allied?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: We've increased during Allied. We went from 40 to 60 all the way up to 150.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So during Allied you've been doing inspections.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Correct, 2023 through 2024. And then--

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] And you missed the fact that they were forging time sheets?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: No, we actually went after them very aggressively. We sent

multiple liquidated damages demos-- memos to Allied. We asked for a corrective action plan to try to get them to perform better. When they failed to perform better, either by not including geofencing which we asked for, additional quality assurance checks on the buildings, and giving us accurate and up-to-date time keeping, we started to pursue other vendors to get other vendors on board in 2023.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Were these failures as you found internally, were they made available to the residents?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: No, they were not.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Did you report them to the TAs or?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: No, we did not.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And why was that?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: NYCHA was--

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] You don't think that it's important for them to know that these lapse exist?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: We do, but--

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] So why didn't report it?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Because they were active-- we were actively pursuing--

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, after you got your findings, why didn't you think that was important to do?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Oversight on our part, but something we will definitely do with the next contracts?

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, you would agree that you failed there?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I think we had actually started going through a walk-through of NYCHA's Office of Safety and Security policies. How does the OSS schedule security guard shifts?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, we-- before a security guard is brought on-site, we work with both property management and the TA president to ask and identify preferred times to have the security guard there, because they live there, they know when they'll feel more vulnerable. And based on

information provided by property management and the TA president, we schedule the guards accordingly.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, the tenant association plays an active role in scheduling?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, how does OSS document and escalate misconduct by security guards such as missed shifts?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, missed shifts or being out of uniform or leaving a post early-- as I mentioned earlier, we have documented multiple memos, and this is towards Allied. We documented multiple instances when they were failure to perform, and we've gone after them for liquidated damages and unpaid-- some of the invoices.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How is that information gathered? Are there situation or scenarios where a tenant association president or the TA member or resident has reached out and made a complaint? And is there-- you said there's a hotline--

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: [interposing]
Yes. And yes--

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] And how many? Can you give us an insight as to how many times that has happened? Do you have those numbers?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I don't have those numbers with me, but we have had TA presidents complain to us about safety and security issues even with the fire guards or the security guards. We immediately jumped into the action in Office of Safety and Security. If there are cameras, we looked on the video to see if the guard actually showed up or not or stayed on their posts. We took snapshots. We provided that information to Allied. We also informed Allied that that guard is no longer allowed to work on the NYCHA campus because of their failures to our residents.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: But can you-- guys, we go to maintain some decorum. Right now it's-- thank you. The-- you said you have those documented.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, we'd love to see the numbers as to how many times you've gotten reports from this hotline or from any leadership from a tenant association leadership. What percentage of security and fire guard services are provided by

1
2 contractors versus NYCHA staff? And if these
3 services are provided by contractors, can you share
4 which contractors?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Sure. So,
6 100 percent of both guard, fire guard and security
7 guard is contracted out. The current guard companies
8 that NYCHA is working with is ISS, Wisdom and City
9 Safe.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: We're going to come
11 back to my round of questioning, and I will allow
12 Councilman Bottcher to ask questions. Thank you.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHEER: Thank you,
14 Chair. Earlier in today's hearing, the Department of
15 Investigations testified about their recommendations
16 to NYCHA and they referred to the 70 current and
17 former NYCHA employees that were charged with bribery
18 and extortion last year. Department of
19 Investigations referred to recommendations that they
20 had made earlier before that, saying that if those
21 recommendations had been implemented, then those
22 indictments, that misconduct may not have happened.
23 Since 2022 the Department of Investigations has made
24 94 recommendations to NYCHA; 56 have been implemented
25 according to their testimony today. can you explain

1
2 why only 56 of the 94 recommendations since 2022 have
3 been implemented and what's the status of the
4 outstanding recommendations?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Thank you
6 for that question, Council Member. I don't oversee
7 the DOI 56. I can tell you about the 12 related to
8 this report that we're going to-- most of which have
9 already been implemented and we're going to implement
10 over the next year. Yeah, we can give the
11 information from the compliance department.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Are there other
13 recommendations that follow under your portfolio,
14 recommendations relating to quality assurance, safety
15 and technical programs that are outstanding from the
16 Department of Investigations?

17 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: None.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Can you speak
19 to within the RAD/PACT program the ability of
20 RAD/PACT partners to hire paid NYPD security detail
21 for NYCHA campuses?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY:
23 Unfortunately, I don't oversee the RAD/PACT portfolio
24 and I'm unable to answer that question today.
25

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: So, that's-- if it's a RAD/PACT portfolio, that's not under your purview at all?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: No.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Is NYCHA able to hire paid security detail from PD?

COMMITTEE COUNSEL: DO you affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth before this committee and to respond honestly to Council Member questions?

VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Yes, I do. And I'm Brian Honan, Vice President of Intergovernmental Relations. So, Council Member we do have paid security in terms of NYCHA hiring NYPD. For many years, NYCHA pays NYPD \$70 million a year.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Right.

VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Under the de Blasio administration that money was-- NYCHA was forgiven of that and we didn't have to pay anymore. I think public housing residents shouldn't have to pay NYPD for services that you or I provided in our developments. I think that this should be a regular course of business. I think security officers are very important in senior developments, but paying

extra for NYPD service, I don't think that is something that with limited funds we should be expected to do.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: I agree. And for many years, NYCHA was paying \$70 million a year to the NYPD for NYPD coverage, and it was a good thing that they're no longer made to pay for the NYPD coverage. Anecdotally we hear about a lot less NYPD coverage since NYCHA hasn't been paying \$70 million a year. Is that true, and do you attribute that to the fact that NYCHA's not paying the NYPD?

VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: I think NYPD would be better able to answer that question. You know, I do know that things have changed, but I don't know the cause of that.

COUNCIL MEMBER BOTTCHER: Has the NYPD ever said to you that the fact that there's no longer \$70 million annual payment that that's resulted in less presence?

VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: No, they have not.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, Council Member Bottcher. I guess I'll go on to the recent DOI report, and we'll do a deeper dive into the recommendations. NYCHA contracted with Allied

1
2 Universal for \$75 million to provide security and
3 fire guard services from 2019 to 2023. NYCHA renewed
4 tis contract twice for an additional \$80 million,
5 extending services to February 2024. When did NYCHA
6 first become aware of the infractions by Allied
7 Universal with regard to this contract?

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, when I
9 came aboard and James Aprito who is the VP for Safety
10 and Security came on board it was 2022, and like I'd
11 mentioned earlier we started to work with Allied to
12 try to correct the wrongs with corrective action
13 plans, additional oversight by doing unannounced site
14 visits, waiting for them to give us the geofencing
15 technology, time keeping that was not done on paper,
16 and when we realized that the work was not improving
17 on Allied's side in 2023, we started to work with our
18 Law Department and our Procurement Department to
19 bring on additional guards and start to take away
20 some of the Allied sites, and as I mentioned, we
21 brought on Wisdom in mid-2023, ISS at the end of 23,
22 and City Safe in 2024.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, that was the
24 documented plan of action as far as the oversight of
25 NYCHA. Why did it take an outside investigation by

DOI to reveal problems that should have been caught by NYCHA's internal controls?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Well, we did. The report only came out in 2025 and we started making these changes back in 2022. Additionally, the biggest sticking point, not even the security guards, was the fire guards. So I was tasked to oversee and restructure the Fire Safety Department. I brought on a fire safety professional, Mr. Joe Terranova, and he brought on a team of folks who were not administrators but more hand to hammer kind of workers. Our tackle and our goal was to go to development that had the highest concentration of security-- fire guards, excuse me, and actually start making the repairs to the fire impairment. And with that, we were able to reduce, as I mentioned in testimony-- we went from 150 buildings with fire guards pretty much 24 hours a day, seven days a week. We're now down to 26 today. So, it's a lot easier to oversee fire guards 24/7 in 26 buildings as opposed to 150. Residents are safer. They're more secure with now fire equipment that's actually working.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The DOI report found that 70 percent of the CCTV cameras at senior

buildings were inoperable or inaccessible. What are the causes as to why the cameras were inoperable or inaccessible?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I don't know what they were at the time of the investigation, but I know we regularly check safety-- the safety and security CCTV cameras at senior developments. Not having access, some of our systems are standalone. They don't directly connect to--

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] How old are these cameras?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: It varies from development to development.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, I mean, as far as the maintenance of these cameras, can you dive into what that looks like?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, if we find out that a camera is inoperable, my team is notified. We go out within 24 to 72 hours to repair the camera as quickly as we can. If it requires extensive work, we would potentially go to an outside vendor to do the work, but we do most of the work in-house. It's just easier for us to manage and track.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How many of your cameras are working as of today?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I'm assuming all 20,000, but I don't have that number right now.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You said you're assuming all 20,000?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: would you agree that should be a number you should know that? I mean, when we're talking about securing safety of people's lives and cameras being a deterrence or possibly bringing justice, helping to bring justice, do you think it was important to have that information today?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Absolutely, but I haven't been made aware of any cameras that are not working today.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So you said you would assume that all cameras are working?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What is NYCHA doing to maintain these cameras?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, there's several things that we're doing. Again, if

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When was the last
13 time you got a report that a camera or system is down
14 and what particular development was that?

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How often are you
18 being informed as to when cameras are down?

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] I said
23 how often. How often is that?

24 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY:

25 [interposing] How often? If it's a-- well, again, I

1
2 have an entire office that oversees this. If it's
3 something that's catastrophic that they need to loop
4 me in, I get involved, but for the most part it's
5 usually one or two cameras that are off or a couple
6 cameras were off per day that they go in to fix.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: According to the DOI
8 report, NYCHA failed to conduct or document required
9 field inspections for almost two years of the Allied
10 Universal contract. Does NYCHA know how many
11 inspections actually occurred from October 2019 to
12 August 21st?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: We do not.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And that's because
15 your failure to do the inspections?

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I was not
17 responsible for overseeing the department, nor were
18 the people sitting here. The ones that were would
19 have that information. They're no longer with NYCHA.

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, if there's no
21 proper documentation, how can you be sure?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I do know
23 that in 2022 when we came on board, we started to
24 document these more frequently and recently switched
25 to an electronic format of documenting the guards

1 when they're out in the field, and that number we can
2 provide to you, the ones that we've done
3 electronically to-date.

4
5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What assurances can
6 NYCHA provide that similar oversight failures are not
7 occurring with other contractors currently working at
8 NYCHA properties?

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Well,
10 there's several measures we're putting into place.
11 We've obviously increased the amount of quality
12 assurance checks that we've done at the developments.
13 As part of the new contract we're not only including
14 geofencing, but we're also including geotabs which
15 go-- for fire guards, that goes throughout the
16 building which would have them actually make sure
17 that we know what floors are on at various times to
18 make sure they're actually patrolling the because.
19 Additionally, the geofencing technology which the
20 three vendors are currently using right now, gives us
21 updated real-time time-keeping and we're also
22 checking that against the cameras to make sure that
23 they are reporting their time appropriately and that
24 there is a guard on site.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The-- why did NYCHA wait until October 2022 to begin documenting infractions and sending liquidated damages to Allied Universal when the contract began in October of 2019?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, previous management from 2019 to 2021 did not document anything. I don't think any liquidated damages went out during that time. Again, when we started to recognize-- the new team that was brought on board started to recognize the problems within the managing of the contracts for both fire and security, we started immediately documenting and reporting to Allied their deficiencies.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Let me ask you this. In your oversight of the inspections that "were done," where in that approach by NYCHA includes speaking to the residents?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: It hasn't. That's something we would take into advisement and let the, you know, the residents know that we're doing these oversight inspections and that we'll be on-site at unannounced times.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I mean, would you agree that the communications to the residents have been-- have not been the best?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I agree with that, and we only want to get better.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The report indicated that even after NYCHA began documenting infractions, if often sent notices months after becoming aware of the problem. Is there a reason NYCHA does not send an infraction notice much sooner?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, we were waiting for Allied to provide us the time-keeping. We can't send an infraction and we can't go after them for liquidated damages if we don't have the information before us. They were very deficient in giving us proper time-keeping. So for example, if we were looking at April's-- at the end of April, they'd have two weeks to three weeks in May to give us that report, the time-keeping report. We sometimes didn't get those reports until June or July.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Is there-- in your internal investigation is there any other ways do a check or to inspect if they're not compliant with providing that information?

1 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Well, now--

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Or
3 you're solely waiting on-- were you solely just
4 waiting on them to report to you?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So,--

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Or being
7 proactive--

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: [interposing]
9 Yeah.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: as opposed to just
11 waiting on that data?

12 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, we
13 actually, as part of the corrective action plan,
14 required Allied to do geofencing, because we just
15 couldn't trust the time sheets that were coming into
16 us anymore, and there was a lot of buildings to
17 manage. Allied assured us that they were going to
18 implement geofencing. I believe this was in March of
19 2023 and by May of 2023 when we didn't see any form
20 of improvement including the geofencing and the time
21 sheets, that's when we started to work to get new
22 contractors at the sites.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The DOI report
24 mentions that NYCHA did not request proof of Allied
25

Universal's implementation of the staffing accountability plan? Can you share more about this plan and why it was never implemented?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, the corrective action plan or staffing accountability plan is what I was talking about. There were three components to that plan, the first one being that Allied was supposed to send out additional quality assurance officers like NYCHA was doing on their front, and provide us with documentation showing that they actually did quality assurance checks. They were also supposed to implement the geofencing as part of upgrading the time keeping so NYCHA was to get that in real time. And the third was to actually provide us time sheets in a regular cadence if geofencing was not available. Again, we monitored it for several months to see some form of improvement. The improvement was not there and we started to work to get rid of Allied out of NYCHA properties.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Could you share more details on how you plan to implement DOIs recommendations that were published in their report?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Certainly. So, invoicing system, again, we have geofencing

1 technology now. We're getting the invoices on a
2 regular cadence. We actually have already
3 implemented the security guard desks at I think 98
4 percent of the locations I think where we have a
5 backorder of two desks, and hopefully they'll be
6 installed this week. We actually posted the signage
7 for both security guards and fire guards throughout
8 the buildings that have it. We do unannounced site
9 visits as requested by DOI. We, again, part of this
10 even went out. We were doing 160 even before the
11 report. We're now doing 250. So we're doing about
12 3,000 unannounced inspections a year. We are going
13 to update the report as DOI requested the security
14 board to include checking of both cameras and doors.
15 That's a little bit of enhancement we have to do
16 because it's an electronic security report. One of
17 the other items that they ask is that to update our
18 manual which we are in the process of doing as well.

19
20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What is the projected
21 time for completing the implementation for these
22 recommendations?

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Probably
24 within less than a year.
25

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Outside the DOI's recommendations, what measures if any are being evaluated to take a more proactive approach to oversight of contractors?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, more active approaches, again, not only my Office of Safety and Security are doing the checks. Fire Safety Department when they go out to the field does quality assurance checks on guards, and I have also the quality assurance and cost control department under my purview. They go out and they do unannounced inspections of fire guards and security guards as well, and report back to the office of safety and security if they find any deficiencies.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When it comes to-- I think Councilman Bottcher had brought this up to some degree with the RAD/PACT converted developments. How many RAD/PACT converted developments have senior facilities-- not senior facilities-- where there are senior buildings on those particular properties?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Happy to provide that information to you after the hearing.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. The reason I want to know because I want to know what's the

1 security apparatus and how that was transferred over
2 and is that still part of the NYCHA security? Are
3 they still-- is NYCHA still providing security for
4 those particular--

5
6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Once the
7 development goes RAD/PACT, NYCHA's not required to
8 provide safety and security at the--

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: But what's the
10 oversight that's being done as far as what that
11 security apparatus looks like?

12 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: That I don't
13 know.

14 VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Council Member, so
15 once a property is converted to RAD/PACT, they are
16 required to provide a security plan to us, but when
17 it's a senior building we do require at least the
18 same level of service. Some of them have done even
19 more. We also know that these workers are members of
20 32BJ. So we have had conversations with them to make
21 sure that the membership transfers over to the new
22 properties and that folks don't lose their jobs if
23 they-- you know, if they're up to the task.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Who picks up the cost
25 for that?

VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: Picks up the to--
would be the developer.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The developer, okay.
And they're report to you as far as how that
apparatus looks and any inefficiencies that exist?
And what is your oversight in that security apparatus
for those converted developments.

VICE PRESIDENT HONAN: So, it wouldn't be
our teams here, but the real estate office in NYCHA
gets regular reports on safety and security, and
whatever plan that they-- you know, have put in place
before, you know, before closing or after closing.
It's up to them to make sure it's being maintained.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When it comes to--
let me back track. Is Allied Universal or its parent
security firm, FJC Securities, still under contract
with NYCHA in any capacity?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for
that question, Chair Banks. Allied stopped providing
services to NYCHA as of March 2024.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And what about FJC
Security?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Same. So,
it's Allied working-- I believe, Allied-- one was

bought out by the other. We initially contracted with FJC and they've been performing in capacity of Allied, and both Allied and FJC have provided-- stopped providing services.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I need you to break that down a little bit better.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Sure.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And I'm going to repeat the question to you. Alright? Is Allied Universal or its present parent security firm, FJC Securities, still under contract with NYCHA in any capacity?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for that question. No, Chair Banks, both FJC and Allied are not providing services to NYCHA as of March 2024.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. The DOI report showed that NYCHA collected only 16 percent of the liquidated damages it was entitled to. How does NYCHA plan on recouping these outstanding damages in full?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, OFS is working closely with our Law Department to pursue remedies, including liquidated damages and

1 withholding payments. We don't have a cost estimate
2 for how much we are looking to recoup at this time.

3 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Do you have numbers
4 as to-- as far as how much the damages were?

5 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I do not.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Can you get those
7 numbers to us?

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Absolutely.

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And that would
10 obviously be a breakdown as to the dollar amount?

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Does NYCHA have a
13 reason to believe that the lack of time sheets or
14 certified payrolls resulted in an undercount of
15 damages?

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: As per the
17 review of the team in the office of safety and
18 security, yes, we do, which is the reason why we
19 wrote several liquidated damage memos to Allied for
20 providing us with inaccurate time keeping of their
21 sale.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I think it would be
23 important to make sure that the residents get
24 justice. This is not only a security gap, you know,
25

1 a failure, but also these folks stole money from
2 NYCHA and the residents. How has NYCHA improved its
3 enforcement of financial penalties against the
4 underperforming contractors at NYCHA?

5
6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, in these
7 current contracts we are currently-- any time a guard
8 fails to show up or leaves its post, we immediately
9 send them a notification letting them know that we
10 are not going to be paying them for their services.
11 As part of the new contracts, and I could let Shin
12 tell you a little bit more, I think there's more in
13 terms of liquidated damages that we can go after.

14 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: yes, we have--
15 - thank you for that question. We have contractual
16 remedies including liquidated damages that are built
17 into the contract. And NYCHA also has the
18 infrastructure to discontinue relationships with a
19 vendor if deemed necessary and appropriate. It's--

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Are
21 these new actions or these have always been tool used
22 by the Authority to go after these bad actors?

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Yes, thank
24 you for the opportunity to clarify. These have
25 always been part of our terms and conditions, the

1 letting them know that they are not going to paid for
2 that shift, and that we do not want that guard back
3 on our property.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When did their
5 contract begin?

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I'm sorry?

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When did their
8 contract begin?

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: ISS
10 [inaudible] City Safe, they were in various stages.
11 I believe ISS officially started with NYCHA in
12 September of 2023, and Wisdom was November of 2023,
13 and City Safe officially started in March of 2024.

14 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So these are the
15 three new contractors--

16 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: [interposing]
17 Yes.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: that are now
19 providing-- and is there a report card on, you know,
20 them meeting their contractual obligations?

21 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I wouldn't
22 say there's a report card, but we are active--

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Or can
24 you enlight [sic] us as to how they've been behaving?
25

1
2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yeah, much
3 better. We are actively engaged with these three
4 companies. I know Anthony meets with them probably--
5 when they first came on board, we were meeting with
6 them weekly. As services improved and they got a
7 rhythm and were showing up more regularly at NYCHA
8 developments, we saw less and less of an issue.
9 There will always be an issue. You know, a guard
10 might not show up. They might be late, but for the
11 most part we're seeing a much better turnaround rate
12 and a much better performance by all three vendors.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And I have to
14 constantly mention this or ask this, what role-- how
15 are you bringin in the residents and that report card
16 or this oversight? Are you speaking to residents
17 more now than you were before?

18 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I think with
19 the quarterly meetings, I think that's a great idea.
20 It's getting their feedback about guards at their
21 sites and almost like giving them a ranking or a
22 rating and seeing where we can improve. This is
23 something we'll incorporate in the future for sure.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Can you do that-- can
25 you commit to doing that in the near future?

1 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Absolutely.

2 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: We don't want a
3 repeat of this.

4 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: No.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: When it comes to
6 general oversight of the contractors, what percentage
7 of repair work is performed by NYCHA staff versus
8 contractors? This is for CC--

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: [interposing]
10 Oh, this is for CCTV?

11 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Yes.

12 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Oh, 99
13 percent of the work that happens on CCTV cameras is
14 repaired in-house.

15 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay, and who's
16 responsible for verifying the delivery of contracted
17 services at a development?

18 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: These are
19 usually not big purchase-- they're like micro
20 purchases. It's to fix a camera that might not be
21 able to be fixed under our jurisdiction. The number
22 is not that significant in terms of the amount we use
23 for vendors to do this work.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: You can provide those numbers?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: After this hearing, absolutely.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you. NYCHA often blames budget constraints for its inability to deliver certain services. Yet, it paid millions for security services that were not delivered. How is NYCHA tracking the actual delivery of services across all contracts to ensure that NYCHA is not paying for work that has not been performed?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Is this particularly for fire contracts and security contract, or all contracts?

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Fire-- no, particularly relegated to fire and safety.

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Okay. So, again, we're constantly looking at time sheets. We are going out into the field to make sure that staff is there. We are checking cameras daily to make sure that staff is there. And again, this is a lot easier for NYCHA for manage now that we've repaired a lot of our buildings with the lack of-- or need of fire guards. So it's really important that we do as many

field visits as possible to all of these sites, as many as possible per month to ensure that the services that NYCHA residents are getting are there.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Have you visited any of these sites?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I have.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What was the last site you visited?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: It was two weeks ago I went to Bronx River.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. When you visited that site, did you get a chance to speak to the tenant association president?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: In fact, I met with the tenant association president.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Excellent. How does NYCHA keep track of contract infractions?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, for the Allied, we have been using liquidated damages memos. So every time we get a group or several issues, we're noting it. We're immediately sending-- during the Allied years we were immediately sending out the memos letting them know that they have committed an

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And how are NYCHA residents expected to submit complaints about these contractors?

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Does NYCHA keep track of resident complaints about a vendor or particular employees? And where are these records normally kept?

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Does NYCHA keep track of residents' complaints about a vendor or particular employees? Where are these records normally kept?

1
2 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: The Office
3 of Safety and Security does keep records of when
4 there is a complaint that comes in from a resident.

5 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Does NYCHA have an
6 internal requirement to maintain documentation of the
7 contractor's infractions?

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: We choose
9 to. We keep it on file for anywhere from seven to 10
10 years. I know we have Allied's information stored and
11 have no intent of getting rid of that any time soon.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. And is there
13 a-- how often do you check, you know, the proper
14 documentations being filed?

15 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I'm sorry,
16 could you repeat the question?

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I said how often do
18 you check whether proper documentation is begin
19 filed?

20 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: The time
21 keeping?

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Yes.

23 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yeah, so it
24 is checked regularly as time keeping information is
25 coming in to us, and I think it's reported daily or

1 weekly. Yeah, as we receive the invoices that come
2 in, we are checking it up against the time keeping
3 that is provided to us by the guard companies.

4 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And what is the
5 procedure when contractor's employees are found to be
6 in violation of their service agreement such as being
7 absent for a shift or consuming substances on duty?

8 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, we will
9 get that infraction sent to the guard company, and I
10 mentioned we will request that that guard is not
11 allowed to serve on NYCHA campus ever again.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And what recourse do
13 tenants have if they have issues with a particular
14 security or a fire guard?

15 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: They are
16 more than happy to reach out to the Office of Safety
17 and Security, and we will work to have that guard
18 removed from the property.

19 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: How often does NYCHA
20 go to developments to ask tenants about their
21 satisfaction with security and fire guard services?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So we have
23 quarterly meetings, community roundtable meetings.
24 We discuss a whole host of safety and security
25

1 issues. Guards happens to be one of them, and again,
2 we also meet with CCOP at least once a year to go
3 over safety and security issues. Guards are also
4 mentioned at the meeting as well, and if a TA
5 president has an issue with the fire guards and the
6 security guards, I know myself, Anthony Katarksy, or
7 James Aprito [sp?] will absolutely go out to the
8 development and have a conversation with them.

9
10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What is NYCHA's
11 policy towards vendors who are in violation of their
12 contract?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for
14 that question. So, as mentioned earlier, we do have
15 contractual remedies built in and we do have the
16 infrastructure to disqualify a vendor or continue
17 services with the vendor. As I mentioned earlier, we
18 do have the vendor disqualification standard
19 procedure as well as NYCHA's first vendor
20 responsibility procedure that lays out the factors
21 for non-responsibility.

22 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Has NYCHA identified
23 any instances of bid-splitting or other abuse of
24 micro purchase contract policies in the past year,
25 and if so, how did NYCHA respond to that?

1 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for
2 that question. As a result of the DOI
3 recommendations last year, we have moved to establish
4 what's known as the micro purchase qualification
5 list, and as properties are required to go through,
6 the micro PQL as we call it, to identify vendors. To
7 my knowledge, I have not been made aware of any bid
8 splitting in the last year.

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: What is the current
10 status of the Mayor's Action Plan they call MAP in
11 NYCHA developments, and if you can give me a dive
12 into how that works with the security apparatus? I
13 know senior buildings that are on those developments
14 that MAP program.

15 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I'm not
16 aware of any senior buildings that are part of the
17 MAP program. I'll have to get back to you on that.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Well, those senior
19 buildings that are on those-- that are a part of
20 those developments that have a MAP program.

21 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I'd have to
22 get back to you on senior developments that are a
23 part of MAP. I know a little bit about the MAP
24 program and safety and security, but I don't know
25

which developments are necessarily part of the MAP program that are senior.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Are you familiar with the MAP program?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: A little bit, yes.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Do you have a-- are you aware of the developments that there is a MAP program?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Has NYCHA identified any instances of bribery or quid pro quo in awarding contracts in the past year, and if so, how did NYCHA respond to that?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for that question. To my knowledge, I'm not aware of any instances of bribery and the like in the past year. We work very closely in close partnership with DOI and we would be-- if such information was brought to us, we would be working in close partnership with them to determine if that's--

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. How has NYCHA reformed its procurement process to ensure that

contractors with histories of poor performance are not awarded new contracts or renewed?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for that question. We've actually made several reforms to the procurement department including restructuring, developing new processes, and coming up with standard procedures that have not existed in the past. As I mentioned earlier, the vendor disqualification process as well as the vendor responsibility procedures are very robust in terms of identifying what we check in terms of vendor vetting and the actions that are taken as a result of factors that could lead to disqualification. We also had a long-standing non-responsibility and protest resolution procedure that lays out the factors for responsibility as well as responsiveness and how to resolve the protest. All of these efforts related to standard procedures are aimed at really strengthening our vendor base and to ensure that we are working with responsible vendors only. And if I may add, I'd like to also state the procurement department last year did institute NYCHA's first procurement ethics policy. We've conducted numerous training across developments as well as with our vendors which is

also a pre-requisite for getting on the micro purchase qualifications.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Quality assurance, how's that factored in? I know there's been multiple complaints by residents where contractors-- you get the same contractors and they're doing the same shabby jobs over and over. So, how are we ensuring that the quality of work is there when we're making a determination on whether or not a contractor should be doing business again with [inaudible]?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: thank you for that question. I will speak a little bit on the ability for us to take past prior performance into consideration in selection of vendors, and I will defer to my colleague to speak about quality assurance. So one of the procedures actually I failed to mention was we are in the process of finalizing vendor performance evaluation. When there's a contract, the user [sic] departments are required to do a performance evaluation of the vendor and that information is factored into our vendor responsibility vetting before we award the contract. We're also looking to implement ways in which we can factor this information when we do request for

proposals and take that into consideration as part of the evaluation criteria.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [inaudible]

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Could you elaborate on the question regarding quality assurance?

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: No, no, I was saying when it comes to-- is that factored in making determination where they-- when a vendor is selected again to do work? Are we looking at the quality of work that was done to that part of making that determination? If they-- if they get another contract?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Previously? I wouldn't--

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] And that's--

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes, yes.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I mean, I ask that question because, you know, the ground you don't see that. So, I want to kind of understand what's the disconnect. I think obviously this is also associated with the issues we had with Universal and, you know, this ongoing theft against the NYCHA

1 residents. So, I just want to know across the board
2 how are we dealing with that and making sure quality
3 assurance is factored in when you're giving another
4 contract.
5

6 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, NYCHA
7 during 2022 through 2024 filled out five-- we did
8 five performance evaluations that were submitted to
9 procurement to ensure that if we got future bids from
10 Allied that would be a factor, and documented its
11 poor performance helps us to not choose a poor-
12 performing vendor in the future.

13 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. When it comes
14 back to engaging and getting feedback from the
15 residents, in 2024 Comptroller report recommended
16 that NYCHA provide residents with a platform for
17 rating their vendors and viewing other residents'
18 reviews. At a hearing before this committee February
19 26th of 2025, NYCHA testified that it implement this
20 recommendation after future consideration. Can you
21 share the status or update us on it?

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for
23 that question. Procurement Department currently does
24 not have a mechanism to solicit formal feedback from
25 residents, but we like to note that in the case of

the current RFP that is out of [inaudible] for fire and security guard services, TA leadership input and feedback was incorporated into defining the scope and the requirement. We have engaged in conversations to start the dialogue and how it is that we can capture that performance at the point of service.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Do you think that this recommendation that was made through the Comptroller's report, do you think it's needed? Do you think it's important to get feedback from the residents?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: so, why is it that you haven't implemented this? This was actually back in February 26th, 2025. This is over a month ago, and now, seeing and speaking to residents and the fact that we're constantly hearing vendors are not doing an adequate job. why don't you think it's important to implement this feedback program so tenants can rate the work of these vendors so we can, you know-- we can bring in vendors that are going to provide quality work for the residents?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for that question. It is-- we believe it's very important and it's something that we started to

1 discuss and we will continue to-- we will take this
2 back and continue--

3 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Well,
4 how important is it, because it seems like nothing's
5 been done?
6

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: I believe
8 it's very important to get--

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] You
10 believe feedback from the residents is important?

11 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Yes, I do.

12 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Since you believe
13 that it's important, that means that you hopefully in
14 the near, near future, that you'll put in a ranking
15 system so residents can weigh in and let you know
16 the quality of work that we've received. I didn't
17 hear that--

18 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Oh, I'm
19 sorry. I thought you were making a statement.

20 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: No, I was making a
21 statement, but I'm just--

22 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Yes, I said
23 yes. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: At the 2019 hearing
25 before this committee, NYCHA spoke about data system

improvements to detect bid splitting and other policy violations. Can you say more about these changes and areas where additional changes may be needed?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: I apologize, Chair. Would you mind repeating the question?

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Can you-- well, let me-- I'll do this. Can you walk us through the changes NYCHA has made to its micro purchase contract policies over the past few years in response to the 2019 DOI investigation to Matrix Construction and recent federal bribery charges? And connected to that at a 2019 hearing before this committee, NYCHA spoke about the data system improvements to detect bid splitting and other policy violations. Can you say more about those changes and areas where additional changes may be needed?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Okay, so thank you for that question. In terms of improvements that have been made to the micro purchase process, we have established the micro purchase qualification list, known as the PQL. In order for vendors to be placed in the PQL they have to have been I-supply [sic] or registration which is NYCHA vendor registration system. Had a past court

1 filing with the City's [inaudible] system which
2 requires vendor's representation and disclosure of
3 certifications. They have to have taken anti-bribery
4 training that was conducted by our Procurement,
5 Ethics and Vendor Responsibility Department, and then
6 undergo a background check. So there is vendor
7 vetting that is required as a result of-- in order to
8 be placed on the PQL. We have also updated our micro
9 purchase solicit-- it's not a [inaudible]. It's a
10 micro purchase template where vendors are required to
11 break down their costs and overhead and profits so
12 that we can itemize and determine cost reasonableness
13 of their quotes. We've also required rotation of
14 vendors amongst the PQL vendors and there are I think
15 a host of other recommendations that were made and
16 implemented as a result of the DOI recommendations
17 including hiring of NYCHA's neighborhood contract
18 managers to oversee the micro purchase process. You
19 referred to a 2019 data. I'm sorry, I was not at
20 NYCHA and so I'm not aware of that. However, in
21 terms of detecting bid splits, we have also made
22 substantive improvements in our apex database which
23 tracks when a vendor is up for bidding. When the
24 aggregated amount of award exceed \$250,000. We work
25

1 with DOI to receive an investigative memo known as a
2 Vendor Name Check, and we've made substantial
3 improvements there to make sure the appropriate flags
4 are made in there.
5

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: At a 2021 hearing
7 before this committee, NYCHA shared that it created a
8 new purchasing and logistics department to help
9 property manager's access contracts quickly. Can you
10 say more about the department and if it's been
11 effective so far?

12 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Yes, thank
13 you for that question. That was one of the
14 restructuring that was done in 2021 with the
15 onboarding of the Chief Procurement Officer. We did
16 create a separate unit called Purchasing, Logistics
17 and Inventory, and they were to be collocated in the
18 development and support the micro purchasing and
19 other small purchasing efforts. We believe that the
20 transition has been very helpful.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: In response to the
22 2024 federal bribery charges, DOI issued 14
23 recommendations to NYCHA. At a February 2024 hearing
24 before this committee, NYCHA testified that it would
25 implement all 14 recommendations within one year.

1 Have all the recommendations been implemented as of
2 today, and if not, why?

3 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT KIM: Thank you for
4 that question. Yes, all 14 recommendations have been
5 implemented as of today.

6 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: And this is going to
7 be my last few questions and it's going to just dive
8 back into some of the work conditions of the security
9 guards and the fire guards. Is it common for NYCHA
10 [inaudible] coverage, is it common for NYCHA to
11 reinstate-- to rotate the same guards across
12 different properties in the same day?

13 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, NYCHA
14 doesn't oversee where the guards are supposed to
15 report to. That comes from the security guard and
16 fire guard company.

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Is there any
18 coordination with these that did the contracting?

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Just the
20 shifts. They are the ultimate responsibilities of
21 the contractor to provide the service and the guard
22 at the site that they're supposed to be in.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: So, what oversight is
24 being provided by NYCHA in that sense? Are you the
25

1 paying attention to that? I think this goes to the
2 fact when talk about coverage, the gaps that can
3 exist with these shift changes and making sure that
4 there's a-- you know, that there's a body that
5 proceeds the next person?
6

7 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, my
8 apologies. So, in terms of fire guard which are
9 again required 24/7--

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing]
11 Security.

12 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Well,
13 security, most of the shifts are only eight hours so
14 there is no coverage afterwards. Fire guards are
15 where--

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Well,
17 what about those developments where there's 24-hour
18 security?

19 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: So, similar
20 to fire guards, security guards, if there's a 24-hour
21 shift on site, if the vendors knows in advance that a
22 guard is going to be either late or there's a no-
23 show, the guard that is currently there is requested
24 to stay to do the additional shift, and if not, it's
25

up to the vendor to find someone to go and replace the guard at the time.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. And are you aware what the working conditions are when it comes to the fire guards and the security at these NYCHA buildings?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I haven't heard of any poor working conditions from the guard company.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: No, I said are you aware of what the conditions are?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: The conditions are the conditions. It's the-- being in the building and there doesn't seem to be any issues.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Okay. Well, I mean, I know that there was-- one of the recommendations was to provide a podium or some type of-- right?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes, and we've already implemented that.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: That would be part of conditions. It would be part of conditions, correct?

SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Sure, sure.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Or if they had a chair.

1 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Yes. Yes.

2 So to your point, yes, we've added chairs at all of
3 the security guard sites, and I feel like I'd
4 mentioned earlier they were 99 percent done with
5 putting either podium or security desk at the senior
6 developments.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Do the guards have
9 access to like a charging station, or when it comes
10 to bathroom breaks? Are those-- those are provided am
11 I correct?

12 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I'd have to
13 double-check. I don't know. Every layout is
14 different at NYCHA. I don't know if there's
15 electrical in every single building where there-- the
16 guard is supposed to on post or for the fire guards
17 who are working and patrolling the building.

18 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Would geofencing
19 technology and electronic time-keeping work if the
20 fire guard if their guards are unable to keep their
21 devices charged? We know that you need a cellphone to
22 keep-- to be able to do that type of input. Would it
23 be a-- would there be part of requirement for those
24 guards to have somewhere they could charge their
25 phones?

1 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: I'm not too
2
3 technologically savvy on the geofencing. I don't know
4 if the app can go offline if there's no power to it.
5 But we could explore these options when we meet with
6 future vendors at the NYCHA properties.

7 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Alright. Thank you
8 for your testimony.

9 SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT GRAY: Thank you.

10 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: We're going to take a
11 two-minute break and then we're going to allow the
12 public to give testimony, and we would encourage
13 NYCHA to stay behind so you can hear back from the
14 residents, people that pay your salaries. Thank you.

15 [break]

16 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: I'm going to call
17 this committee meeting back from adjournment, and now
18 we're going to move into our public testimony. Now,
19 open up the hearing for public testimony. I remind
20 members of the public that this a government
21 proceeding and that decorum shall be observed at all
22 times. As such, members of the public shall remain
23 silent at all times. The witness table is reserved
24 for people who wish to testify. No video recording
25 or photography is allowed from the witness table.

Further, members of the public may not present audio or video recordings as testimony, but may submit transcripts of such recordings to the Sergeant at Arms for inclusion into the hearing record. If you wish to speak at today's hearing, please fill out an appearance card with the Sergeant of Arms and wait to be recognized. When recognized, you will have two minutes to speak on today's hearing topic which is obviously security guards and fire guards and NYCHA's oversight of contractors. If you have a written statement or additional written testimony you wish to submit for the record, please provide a copy of that testimony to the Sergeant of Arms. You may also email written testimony to testimony@council.nyc.gov within 72 hours of this hearing. Audio and video recordings will not be accepted. [inaudible] testimony, Christopher Leon Johnson. You may [inaudible]. Yes, sir.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Hello, Chair.

Can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: We can hear you.

CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Hello. Hello, chair Banks. My name is Christopher Leon Johnson. I'm calling on-- I'm speaking on behalf-- not behalf--

1 - of myself. I used to be a member of 32BJ. I used to
2 be a shop steward for the MTE [sic] access project.
3 But I want to make this clear that, yeah, the tenants
4 have a big issue with safety in the public housing,
5 but the guards have the issues, too. Guards going
6 through a lot of things that the companies refuse to
7 even address. I know-- I now understand why the 32BJ
8 didn't come out, because of that, the fact that
9 they're scared of seeing the Speaker. They were
10 scared the Speaker coming and tell them what they
11 need to hear, but at the same time that-- look, the
12 guards get abused by the tenants. The guards get
13 abused by these tenants presidents. A lot of the
14 tenant presidents are corrupt. They play little
15 dirty games by controlling how the guards get-- do
16 their job. What people don't understand that the
17 guards who work at NYCHA works for a security
18 company. They don't work for NYCHA. They work for
19 the company. And what happens is if you're a guard
20 and you do something that the company don't want you
21 to do, you can get fired. The only thing that
22 protects these guards from like the real hell as a
23 guard is the union, 32 BJ. At the same time I'm
24 calling on the abolishment of all resident president
25

1 input when it comes to security schedules and how
2 security is operated. I'm calling on the eradication
3 of how CCOP is involved with how security is in the
4 NYCHA developments. This shouldn't be happening at
5 all. The same time that-- what happens is security
6 companies get business contracts. Whoever gives the
7 lowest bid gets the contract. So yeah, if the guard--
8 - if a company gets paid by NYCHA \$20 an hour,
9 they're going to pay the guard \$16 an hour. So if
10 you're getting paid \$16 an hour in a city where you
11 have to make \$30 an hour to have a-- be what is
12 called a livable wage, yeah, they're going do all the
13 type of stuff, sleep on the job, abandon their post,
14 walk out on their job. It's something where like
15 you, as the Chair--

17 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] Thank
18 you for your testimony.

19 CHRISTOPHER LEON JOHNSON: Alright, thank
20 you. I got to go.

21 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: The-- can we have
22 Kenisha Conrad [sp?]- Cornish [sp?], sorry about
23 that. Kezilar Cornish, please. Thank you. You may
24 begin your testimony.
25

2 KEZILAR CORNISH: Hello, Council Member
3 Banks and everyone else. So, I was listening to the
4 testimony, and so they were talking about how many of
5 the security apparatus that they have the NYCHA
6 buildings are not working, and so I was asking that--
7 will the citizens whose buildings are not working be
8 the first buildings to receive the geofencing,
9 etcetera, in order to plug the security? Because
10 obviously, if they have security at the other sites
11 that are working, then they don't need the geofencing
12 first. It should be the citizens that have no
13 security at this point because of the broken
14 apparatuses to receive that. Is that in the making
15 for them? Also, something that's fundamental that
16 they're saying that the citizens were not able to
17 identify whether or not this was the Fire Department
18 or the security guards. Something that's simple as
19 an identification badge should be able to fix that.
20 Why the people that are working there don't have
21 identification badges so that the people can clearly
22 see significantly that they are workers of this kind
23 or that kind. Simple. Okay. So, what committees or
24 voting process is to determine what buildings receive
25 the CCTV? They also said that they check every day

1
2 to see if the CCTVs is working, but not if the guards
3 are actually on post or securing the perimeters of
4 the building. she testified that, you know, every day
5 they check to see if the cameras are working and
6 that's it, as if you know, they just want to make
7 sure that the apparatuses are working but not if the
8 people that are working in those perimeters that--

9 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: [interposing] 30
10 seconds to wrap it up.

11 KEZILAR CORNISH: Thank you. So, also
12 fire and security solicitations, basically that means
13 that they're soliciting for people to take these
14 positions. Is that something that's being made known
15 to the public? Because these are jobs that are
16 available. And we'd also like to know if it's
17 possible for these people who are in the tenants
18 associations, you know, that they may be able to get
19 those jobs inside of their areas and working their
20 areas because they have a vested interest in making
21 sure that these things are secure and safety for
22 their families as well. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your
24 testimony. We will now turn to remote testimony.
25 Once your name is called, a member of our staff will

unmute you and the Sergeant at Arms will give you the go-ahead to begin. Please wait for the Sergeant to announce that you may begin before delivering your testimony. We have Renee Keitt.

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Renee, you may begin your testimony.

RENEE KEITT: Okay. I'm actually the resident association president of the Elliott-Chelsea Houses. I come today with deep concern, frustration and a call for accountability. FJC security, also known as Allied Universal, has long provided security and fire watch guards at public housing developments. Most recently they have been awarded \$76 million contract in 2019, on track that has now ballooned to \$155 million. On top of that, FJC holds a separate \$6.5 million contract with the Mayor's office. We need this to stop, and it has. This practice has gone on for years and it continues. We are back again demanding transparency, oversight and resident engagement, something mandated under HUD's 964 regulations as Mr. Martinez has stated. NYCHA has failed to enforce contractual obligation and has not demanded a return of funds where contractors have not

1 complied. Why has there been no public process for
2 recovery of money they were overcharged? Like in the
3 case of the now infamous \$700 lightbulb scandal.
4 NYCHA repeated claims it lacks funding. If that's
5 the case, they should be ensuring every dollar is
6 spent wisely. Instead, we see waste, poor oversight,
7 and decisions that erode public trust. We are tired.
8 We continue to face NYCHA's failures in its most
9 basic responsibility, to manage and protect public
10 housing and its residents. It feel intentional. It
11 feels like they are trying to destroy this prime
12 housing stock to hand it over to developers. Who is
13 ensuring that recommendations NYCHA claims have
14 accepted are actually being implemented? Is this
15 under the purview of the federal monitor? If not, it
16 should be. There must be penalties written into the
17 executive leadership contracts. If this is about
18 money and funding, then failure must come with
19 consequences. NYCHA has over 300 lawyers at a cost
20 of \$50 million. Surely someone can revise a contract
21 to hold vendors accountable. This is inexcusable.
22 This is shameful. These officials are sworn in. If
23 they lie, what is the penalty? If one exists, it
24 must be enforced. Security should not be used--
25

SERGEANT AT ARMS: [interposing] Time expired.

RENEE KEITT: [inaudible]

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: 30 seconds to wrap it up.

RENEE KEITT: we call for a moratorium of PACT, NYCHA's claim that security is now needed is no longer paid \$70 million. Sorry. That was Erik Bottcher, paid \$70 million to NYPD raising secret issues about representation. We are taxpayers. We already pay for the NYPD. To be forced to pay again for services others receive through public funding is double taxation. NYCHA needs a revolution, a revolution of advocacy, of honest resident engagement, of sustained reinvestment and continued maintenance. We need real solutions, real accountability, and respect for our communities. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you, Renee. Thank you for your testimony. We'll now move to Gail Frederick [sp?].

SERGEANT AT ARMS: Time starts now.

SADIE: It's Sadie. No worries. Thank you for this platform, Chairman Banks. There's no

transparency or accountability. As per Assemblyman Epstein's newsletter from a report submitted by Comptroller Lander, Riis received over a billion dollars in capital funds since 2019 and protected another \$600 million from 2023 to 2042, but yet it's ailed with lead, asbestos, mold, arsenic, contaminated soil, and bribery. Same contractors, i.e., three different companies, due to no or low bid, undertrained had violated OSHA regulations, water, air quality when remediating lead and other issues from my apartment and countless other residents as well. We have also incurred ailments, illnesses, and health conditions that can't be treated or untreated. As you know, Beth Israel Hospital is closed. There's over 71 and counting residents at Riis alone whose quality of life is violated. Their gross negligence has cost people their lives. Imagine the atrocities at the other developments. Unlocking funds for NYCHA should not be at the tenant's detriment. Collect the fines, investigate past poor invoices, NYCHA staff and contractors as to why gross mismanagement is afoot. Protect, inform, and comply with the 964 regs. Riis beatpack [sic] scorecard section 9, 667 to PACT [sic]

371, game over. I say this to give hope to those residents in development who are in elections and undergoing conversions. United we stand and divided we fall. Preserve public housing and save Section 9. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON BANKS: Thank you for your testimony and your advocacy-- your strong advocacy. This ends-- end of the testimony. If we have inadvertently missed anyone that has registered to testify today and has yet to be-- have been called, please the Zoom to raise your hand function if you are testifying remotely and you will be called in the order that your hand has been raised. If you are testifying in person, please come to the dais. Seeing none, I will now close this hearing. I thank you to the members of the administration and members of the public who have joined us today to discuss this very important topic. This hearing is adjourned.

[gavel]

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COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HOUSING

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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 May 18, 2025