

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

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January 20, 2011
Start: 6:01 pm
Recess: 7:55 pm

HELD AT: Adam Clayton Powell State Office
Building
163 W 125th St, Room 8ABC
New York, NY 10027

B E F O R E:

LETITIA JAMES
JUMAANE WILLIAMS
Chairperson

COUNCIL MEMBERS:
Margaret Chin
Rosie Mendez
Melissa Mark-Viverito
Gale A. Brewer
Inez E. Dickens
Robert Jackson
Daniel R. Garodnick
Ydanis Rodriguez

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

Ignazio Terranova
Department of Sanitation

Cuong Nguyen
Manhattan Borough President's Office

Maurice Jenkins
Vice President, Stations Department
Transport Workers Union Local 100

Gerry Torres
Transport Workers Union Local 100

Kenneth Harvey
Transport Workers Union Local 100

William Kitchen

D. Silver

Jennifer Silverman

Peter Schleger

Anly Almonte

Amtim Soto

Delores Richards

Willie Mae Anderson

Angela Rooks

Troy Gethers

Diane Futrell

Michelle Morrison

Leslie Wyche

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

Londell Davis

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good evening and, again, welcome to the joint hearing of the New York City Council. I am Letitia James, Chair of the Council's Committee on Sanitation and Solid Waste Management.

On December 26 and 27th, the city of New York was hit by a blizzard. In a span of less than 24 hours, the entire city was blanketed with snowfall ranging from 14 to 29 inches. The city snow removal services and infrastructure, for reasons not yet totally clear, completely failed to keep up with the storm. When most New Yorkers awoke on the morning of the 27th, a significant number of roads were untouched by plows, making normal modes of transit nearly impossible.

In conjunction with, and as a result of, that failure to remove snow from city streets, emergency response, including fire, police, and ambulances, were crippled. Mass transit, which technically continued to run through the storm was paralyzed. The result of these failures brought very real and very tragic consequences. These failures raise questions about the city's preparation for and response to

1 the storm.

2
3 Furthermore, these questions also
4 extend to our preparedness for other and greater
5 disasters. These questions should and must be
6 answered. New York City has dealt with plenty of
7 storms of similar scale, and I, like many council
8 members, have often sung the praises of
9 Commissioner Doherty and the Department of
10 Sanitation for their excellent response and hard
11 work in addressing those storms. But this time
12 the City failed to meet its own high standards or
13 even the basic needs of its citizenry, and we are
14 here today to hear from residents of Manhattan
15 about how this failure impacted your lives and
16 what you think we can do to prevent those impacts
17 in the future.

18 At a Council hearing last week,
19 Commissioner Doherty testified in a very
20 constructive and open manner about what took place
21 during the Christmas blizzard. At that hearing,
22 he focused on the larger systematic and
23 operational issues that impacted the city's
24 preparation and response to the storm. We also
25 heard Administration testimony from Deputy Mayor

1 of Operations, Stephen Goldsmith, the Commissioner
2 of the Office of Emergency Management, Joseph
3 Bruno, and Fire Commissioner Salvatore Cassano.

4 In addition, we heard from a variety of unions and
5 civic groups impacted by the storm and its
6 cleanup. I believe that most viewers and
7 participants in that hearing found it both
8 constructive and respectful.
9

10 Tonight, we are continuing the
11 second phase of hearings, which involves gathering
12 direct testimony about the storm and its aftermath
13 from the public on a borough-by-borough basis. We
14 have already held hearings at Staten Island and
15 Brooklyn and today, from Manhattan.

16 I know that many of us have endured
17 experiences that were painful and caused us real
18 harm. We want to hear about those experiences,
19 but I request that everyone strive to make
20 constructive comments to add to what we know about
21 solving what went wrong. No one knows as much
22 about what happened and during and after that
23 storm than all of you. So educate us, but please
24 keep it civil.

25 Finally, I am happy to note that we

1
2 are joined by representatives of the Department of
3 Sanitation and the Mayor's Community Affairs. A
4 representative from the Department of Sanitation
5 will make brief remarks after I have concluded my
6 remarks, and both representatives will remain at
7 tonight's hearing to listen to the testimony
8 provided by the public.

9 But let me just say, I think it is
10 totally unacceptable and outrageous that this
11 Administration who failed us during the blizzard
12 continues to fail us at these hearings. And I
13 think it's an act of disrespect, not only to the
14 residents of Staten Island and Brooklyn, but also
15 to all of you residents from Manhattan, and I
16 think it's a slap in the face to the body of the
17 City Council. And that is my message to the Mayor
18 of the City of New York--unacceptable. And you
19 cannot hide it by providing a State of the City
20 address as if it's going to go away.

21 We have two more hearings
22 scheduled--three more hearings scheduled and we
23 will continue, continue to raise the questions
24 that all of you have raised.

25 With that, at this point in time,

1
2 some of my colleagues will be joining us shortly,
3 but representing the Department of Sanitation is
4 Mr. Ignazio Terranova. Mr. Terranova?

5 [Off mic]

6 IGNAZIO TERRANOVA: Good evening,
7 Council Member. I am Iggy Terranova and I am
8 representing the Department of Sanitation on
9 behalf of Commissioner John Doherty. I am here
10 tonight to listen to the community's concerns
11 regarding the Department's response to the
12 December 26th blizzard.

13 Despite our efforts, our
14 snowplowing operations did not meet [pause]
15 department [pause] to assess the [pause] with
16 other agencies and [pause] necessary to enhance
17 interagency coordination, as well as
18 communications with the public. Some of these
19 changes were already implemented during the last
20 snowstorm.

21 We take pride in our work. We will
22 continue working hard to restore the Department
23 reputation for being the world's best snow
24 fighters. I will now listen to your comments and
25 report them all back to Commissioner Doherty.

1
2 Thank you.

3 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We're joined by
4 Council Member Margaret Chin, thank you, Council
5 Member.

6 The first speaker representing the
7 borough president of the borough of Manhattan,
8 Scott Stringer, is Mr. Nguyen, I apologize for
9 mispronouncing your name.

10 CUONG NGUYEN: Great [off mic].

11 [Off mic]

12 CUONG NGUYEN: Thank you, Chair
13 James, Council Member Chin, for the opportunity to
14 testify at tonight's important oversight hearing.

15 The City's response to the blizzard
16 of December 2010 left many New Yorkers frustrated
17 and looking for answers. For hours, many New
18 Yorkers were unable to access 311 and 911--the
19 City's information and emergency hotlines--as call
20 backlogs exceeded 1,000. Over 200 ambulances and
21 1,000 buses were reported stuck on unplowed
22 streets or blocked by abandoned cars. Overall,
23 these dangerous conditions may have contributed to
24 at least three deaths and several near-fatal
25 incidences.

1
2 We're now receiving reports that
3 another storm is expected to hit later tonight.
4 As we prepare for further potential severe snow
5 storms this season, it is crucial that we learn
6 from the experience of last month's storm and
7 avoid the multitude of mistakes that were made.
8 That analysis begins at the top.

9 With the Deputy Mayor outside of
10 the city at the time of the storm, what was the
11 chain of command? Was sufficient executive
12 management present to make the necessary
13 decisions, or were we caught off guard?

14 The decision not to call a snow
15 emergency loomed over the storm, particularly in
16 the aftermath, as we learned how such a
17 declaration could have benefited the City's
18 response. As early as 4:45 a.m. on Saturday
19 morning, OEM alerts forecasted between six and
20 eight inches of snowfall for the city and
21 hazardous travel conditions. By 4 p.m., the
22 National Weather Service issued a blizzard warning
23 for the city and forecasted at least 11 to 16
24 inches. Jerone Hauer, Emergency Management
25 Coordinator under former Mayor Giuliani, recently

1
2 stated that snow emergency declarations should be
3 considered anytime snowfall predictions are over
4 seven inches and that a blizzard warning is a no-
5 brainer.

6 With just under a day before the
7 snowfall began, we had every indication that this
8 would be a significant storm. This was the time
9 to take action. Declaring a snow emergency would
10 have allowed for clearing vehicles from the
11 streets and would have given plows the best chance
12 to move through rapidly, keeping emergency service
13 routes open and allowing the plows to move onto
14 secondary streets. It also would have clarified
15 to the public any conflicting messages heard
16 through the media.

17 During the storm, the City
18 experienced an unacceptable breakdown in public
19 communication. Backlogs at 311 and 911 call
20 centers meant thousands of New Yorkers were cut
21 off from critical services. On Monday alone,
22 nearly 50,000 emergency calls were placed.

23 As the City prepares for future
24 snow storms this season, we need a plan for
25 ensuring that New Yorkers always have access to

1
2 these services.

3 Lastly, while I'm appreciative of
4 this hearing and an opportunity to weigh in on
5 this most important issue--the care and safety of
6 our communities--this conversation needs to happen
7 much earlier and when it matters most--during the
8 budget review period in spring. When weighing the
9 costs of budgets cuts, the City must do a better
10 job of analyzing the real life impacts of public
11 safety and the necessary resources for emergency
12 responses. These are the times to take a hard
13 look at our budget priorities so that New Yorkers
14 can count on their government to be there when
15 they are needed the most.

16 Since last spring, sanitation
17 workers have been sounding the alarm that
18 reductions in staff have compromised the City's
19 ability to expeditiously respond to a major snow
20 storm. From 2008 to 2010, the City has gone from
21 having 6,473 sanitation workers to fewer than
22 5,800. As we plan for our City's budget and
23 allocate our resources, we must consider the
24 impact that such reductions in workforce will have
25 on our emergency preparedness.

1
2 As the Manhattan Borough President,
3 I recognize that, while our borough was hit hard,
4 other boroughs fared comparatively worse. When
5 certain neighborhoods fare better than others, we
6 stop being one city. It is imperative that we
7 work together to address the needs and concerns of
8 all of our city's communities and its visitors.

9 New Yorkers deserve, and have come
10 to expect, a government that is doing all it can
11 to ensure their safety. We must and can do
12 better.

13 Thank you.

14 [Off mic]

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We've been
16 joined by Council Member Rosie Mendez. At this
17 time, thank you very much--thank you very much,
18 give regards to the Manhattan Borough President.

19 We've been joined by Council Member
20 Mendez. And at this time, Council Member Chin
21 would like to make some opening remarks.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Thank you,
23 Chair James. And I wanted to thank the people in
24 the audience for coming tonight to testify, to
25 talk about your experience during this snow

1 blizzard.

2
3 And I know that we hear in the
4 media that, oh, Manhattan was well taken care of
5 and all the other boroughs were not. Let's stop
6 comparing the boroughs. Manhattan wasn't taken
7 care of, especially in a lot of our neighborhood,
8 the side streets were not taken care of.

9 And just before this hearing I got
10 a letter from a constituent, who couldn't be here
11 tonight, but she wanted me to tell you that these
12 city buses were stuck on Bowery and Houston--and
13 these are supposed to be emergency routes in Lower
14 Manhattan, and these were the emergency routes
15 after 9/11. And these bus, about seven of them,
16 were stuck going up and down on Bowery and
17 Houston, blocking the way. And there were stories
18 that we heard from seniors who couldn't get out of
19 their doors because NYCHA workers couldn't get to
20 work. So we want to make sure that this will
21 never happen again.

22 I mean, I grew up in New York City,
23 I have never seen a snow emergency like this that
24 wasn't taken care of. Our sanitation workers work
25 very hard, but they did not have the support out

1
2 there because, if the cars were in the street, we
3 saw so many cars on the side street, on Mott
4 Street, and Hesters, in parts of Chinatown, and
5 the Lower East Side, and so the plows could not
6 come through.

7 And the other question that I
8 really want to ask the Administration, who is not
9 here, and we need to ask why are they not here,
10 why aren't the deputy mayors here, or the
11 Commissioner who declared that there is no
12 emergency. Two commissioner: The Commissioner of
13 Sanitation, the Commissioner of Transportation
14 told the City Council at the hearing that they
15 decided that it wasn't necessary to call a snow
16 emergency. They should have been here to answer
17 your question, why. And this needs to not ever
18 happen again.

19 And I just wanted to thank my
20 colleagues for being here and thank you for coming
21 out, we want to make sure that whatever you
22 present at the hearing, we will put it on the
23 record to give it to the Administration. Thank
24 you.

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We've been

1
2 joined by Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito.
3 And now opening remarks from Council Member
4 Mendez.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you,
6 Madam Chair, and I want to congratulate you on the
7 incredible job you've been doing at all these
8 hearings. And I want to thank the public and I
9 await your testimony.

10 I also want to say that, like the
11 previous hearings, I understand there's no one
12 here from the Administration to answer our
13 questions. I still have questions. At the first
14 hearing, we were all allowed one question, I had
15 to leave to a meeting, never got to ask my
16 question.

17 So, Madam Chair, there's so many
18 things I want to know. Like why were all these
19 buses getting stuck on--in my district on Avenue
20 A, on 1st Avenue. Is it these new buses 'cause
21 they're low, is that the reason they're getting
22 stuck? Or is it 'cause they're low and they
23 didn't have the proper chains on them? When 1st
24 Avenue was plowed, why did they pour all the snow
25 on top of these buses, so that if at some point

1
2 you're able to get the bus out, now you have to
3 shovel the bus out as well.

4 I really don't understand it. I'm
5 a native New Yorker. In 1996 we had a blizzard
6 and I really want to understand what was the
7 difference between that one and this one, because
8 I was able to take the bus during the blizzard and
9 get to my job. Couldn't do that this time, you
10 had to walk around the bus and compete with the
11 stuck buses on the avenues.

12 I guess Avenue B, C, and D are all
13 tertiary streets 'cause they didn't get plowed.
14 That, or there's slightly more low income and
15 along Avenue D's all the housing projects, maybe
16 that's why it didn't get plowed?

17 But while New York or Manhattan may
18 have been better plowed as compared to other
19 boroughs, it was not plowed adequately. On 1st
20 Avenue there were only two lanes plowed out of the
21 five that exists--and I'm not counting the bike
22 lane, the bike lane would be a sixth lane, right?
23 So only two lanes, and then late Tuesday they
24 plowed a third lane, which was the Select Bus
25 Service lane, so it took several days for that and

1
2 it wasn't until Friday, New Year's Eve, that all
3 five lanes were plowed, and that's only 'cause it
4 was New Year's Eve and we were going to have a lot
5 of people coming into Manhattan.

6 So I'm going to make a list of
7 questions, I'm going to be listening intently to
8 what everyone here has to say, and getting those
9 questions to our Chair in the City Council 'cause
10 she can get us more answers. Thank you very much.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:

12 Thank you, Madam Chair, and just to echo what my
13 colleagues have said about the leadership that
14 you, Council Member James, the Speaker, and this
15 City Council has demonstrated, I think it has
16 really made a difference with regards to at least
17 getting some level of response, although we're
18 still waiting for others.

19 And just to echo a little bit, I
20 know we've heard a lot in the press that Manhattan
21 overall as a borough was treated better than the
22 other boroughs, but it was really of great concern
23 the lack of coordination which came out at the
24 hearing in particular.

25 I really want to understand a

1 little bit more, Deputy Mayor Goldsmith and I
2 think Commissioner Doherty from Sanitation talked
3 about the fact that there are ways of prioritizing
4 which streets get plowed first. Clearly,
5 hospitals or precincts or blocks that have
6 firehouses are supposed to be plowed first to
7 allow those responders to get to the emergencies.
8 I live on a block on 111th Street between 2nd and
9 3rd that has a firehouse and when I woke up that
10 Monday morning to be the dutiful owner and shovel
11 my sidewalk, I was amazed to see the fire truck on
12 my block stuck in the middle of the block, even
13 with the chains on because they could not get
14 through the street 'cause that street had not been
15 plowed, and the poor fireman trying to shovel in
16 front of the truck to try to get the truck out.
17 That was very alarming for me to see because if
18 those blocks that are considered priority blocks
19 were not being plowed, the level and lack of
20 coordination that was happening citywide, and as
21 we saw, was incredibly dangerous and obviously
22 lead to lives lost.

24 So the understanding of where it
25 broke down, of exactly how priorities are made

1 with regards to what gets plowed, the lack of
2 coordination that existed between agencies. When
3 we talk about the city agencies, when we talk also
4 about MTA, then when we talk also about NYCHA, New
5 York City Housing Authority is another entity
6 which needs to also answer questions and I think
7 we will be doing some sort of a hearing. I have
8 the most public housing in the city of New York
9 and I called around to our housing developments
10 and finding out exactly what was it like in your
11 development, did it get plowed. I was actually
12 pleasantly surprised to hear that a lot of the
13 housing leaders said that overall there was some
14 level of work that had been done to kind of clear
15 the pathways.

17 But I think this begs the question
18 about what happened, about how is all that
19 coordination happening between all these different
20 entities. And when I heard the testimony from the
21 OEM director, you know, really that is the agency
22 that had to have the overall coordination for
23 everything that happened, they're supposed to do
24 an assessment and an inventory of all the
25 different agencies, what equipment exists, so the

1
2 MAURICE JENKINS: Good evening,
3 Council Members. First of all, I want to thank
4 you for inviting us here and coming out to this
5 neighborhood.

6 I think it's an atrocity that those
7 who are directly responsible for these actions
8 aren't here in this neighborhood when they were in
9 others, this neighborhood has some of the richest
10 history in this city. I think we should look at
11 that.

12 And now I have a prepared statement
13 that I would like to read to you, and a personal
14 observation when I'm finished.

15 Every New Yorker knows what
16 happened on December 27--mass transit collapsed.
17 In a city where the last recourse, especially in
18 times of emergency as the subway and bus system,
19 that recourse was taken away.

20 This collapse was not a result of
21 the blizzard--it was the consequence of a willful
22 decision not to take the steps needed to prepare
23 for the storm--steps mandated by the New York
24 City's Transits went to operations procedures.
25 This disaster was man-made by people at the very

1 top of the MTA. We are here today to see that
2 this does not happen again--not to our riders and
3 not to the city that we serve.
4

5 On Friday, December 24th, the
6 National Weather Service forecast the probability
7 of snow in excess of five inches and at that
8 point, New York City Transit should have enacted
9 Plan IV in the subway system and taken comparable
10 measures in buses and subways. Under Plan IV,
11 thousands of transit workers report at special
12 times to special locations for their emergency
13 assignments. Without the personnel, there is no
14 Plan IV. In the absence of that, any subsequent
15 talk about emergency measures were meaningless.

16 New York City Transit has been
17 through repeated snows of this magnitude and even
18 more and demonstrated its ability to cope with
19 them. The amount of snow recorded on February 26
20 and 27, 2010, was slightly greater than on
21 December 26, 2011--I mean 2010. But that snowfall
22 has faded from memory because it was handled
23 effectively. That achievement in February was due
24 to the efforts of thousands of transit workers,
25 including the same operational managers on duty

1 that same day.

2 We submit that the decision to
3 abandon the rulebook could only have been taken
4 with the blessing of higher authorities--the [off
5 mic] from Transit Operations. We further submit
6 that the only conceivable motion for such a
7 decision was the imagined cost of saving MTA.
8

9 We have heard a lot of talk
10 recently about [pause] of public appointment. We
11 think that if the governor wants accountability,
12 he should start at the top. It should not be
13 possible for a highly placed employee, paid twice
14 as much as the governor of this state, to visit
15 such a disaster on us and suffer no consequences.

16 Now as a vice president in charge
17 of Station Department, I oversee the cleaners who
18 clean the stairs and remove the snow when this
19 type of situation happens. We get called out,
20 they call a snow emergency, people who are off
21 have to come in, it's mandatory. They have to
22 come in and remove the snow because we have to
23 make the city [off mic] and if that snow is there,
24 you can't get to the station. If that snow is
25 there, you can't get on your train, okay? What

1 happened was there was no subways.

2
3 To show you how conscientious
4 people were, we had a group of people went to a
5 site, there was no supervision there, they had no
6 access to keys to do their job. They stayed there
7 for three hours. Supervisor came on the scene and
8 instead of commending them for this heroic action,
9 they wrote them up and wanted to put them a day
10 suspension. This is the type of environment that
11 we work under.

12 [Off mic]

13 MAURICE JENKINS: That's a good
14 question, Ms. James, I would like to know that
15 same answer: Why, why would they do this?

16 One of my members came on duty
17 Sunday, left work Tuesday, she worked four tours.
18 Now according to our contract, if you're working
19 three tours, six hours, they have to give you
20 eight hours. They wanted her to come right back
21 to work three hours later. Why? Why such
22 atrocities?

23 They have buses stuck in the
24 street. We have collecting agents who collect
25 revenue. They sent a truck out to collect revenue

1
2 'cause they knew they wasn't going to get robbed,
3 you can't get away. But the trucks got stuck.
4 Why?

5 They're trying to be penny wise,
6 but in essence continually being pound foolish.
7 That's [off mic].

8 Thank you.

9 [Off mic]

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: --ask you a
11 question. Council Member Mendez.

12 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Thank you,
13 Mr. Jenkins, thank you for being here today. Last
14 week Mr. Pendergrass [phonetic]--is that it?

15 [Off mic]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER MENDEZ: Yeah, he
17 came to a hearing at the City Council and I told
18 him that on Sunday at about 4:30, right after the
19 football game, I think that's when everybody else
20 started working, you know, the higher-ups, who
21 knows. I took the L train from Brooklyn to
22 Manhattan, when I got to the L train a few blocks
23 from my father's house there were six, seven
24 inches of snow to get down the steps and so I put
25 all the footprints to get down there and there was

1
2 someone working, and I wondered how she would get
3 home. I asked her what time her tour finished and
4 it was going to end at 10 p.m.. When I got to
5 Manhattan, there was more snow on the Manhattan
6 side and then it was so full of snow, the next day
7 those steps collapsed, you know, the saddle was
8 torn off, they had this yellow tape, I saw that
9 yellow tape at other stations. I know that on
10 Christopher Street, where I got off one day, the
11 steps were a little bit collapsed or deteriorated
12 and the saddles were torn off.

13 He didn't know how many of the
14 stations that had happened to, and they're
15 supposed to get us that answer. Do you, as
16 workers, have any idea how much yellow tape went
17 up and how many steps got deteriorated that go to
18 the subways?

19 MAURICE JENKINS: One thing we have
20 to remember, that the MTA is a covert operation,
21 they will not tell us everything that goes on. We
22 have 468 stations; of them, I guess a third of
23 them are elevated, which has the highest priority
24 for snow removal. They don't give us those
25 records, so I wouldn't really be able to estimate

1 exactly how many stairways were collapsed or how
2 much snow needed to be removed at a certain point.
3 But I know it's considerable, with that amount of
4 snowfall and the amount of effort that they put in
5 not addressing it, so it would have to be quite a
6 bit.
7

8 Okay, I'll tell you one thing, they
9 have two sets of books. Did they ever give you a
10 answer to that?

11 [Off mic]

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.
13 The next witness is Genny or Gerry Torres
14 representing Transport Workers Union Local 100.
15 Mr. Harvey, would you like to join your colleague?

16 GERRY TORRES: Hello? Okay, my
17 name is Gerry Torres, I am the chairman of 126th
18 Street Depot, that's 24-62nd Avenue, I'm the
19 delegate for that building, the union delegate, I
20 work with TWU Local 100, or actually for TWU 100,
21 Local 100.

22 What I'd like to say today is that
23 I was really surprised at what happened over that
24 weekend during that storm. This morning, as soon
25 as I got into work at 5 a.m., I was told I had to

1
2 prepare a crew for the snowstorm tonight, which is
3 usually what happens. I have prepared--by 9
4 o'clock I had prepared a crew of approximately 12
5 people who were putting chains on buses and
6 preparing for the storm. This is something that
7 did not happen on the 24th or the 25th.

8 Something else that we had an issue
9 with on that weekend was these long buses, I think
10 someone mentioned it. These articulated buses
11 have an issue of jackknifing under snow and
12 usually what happens, even with those chains--
13 'cause they're not like real chains, I don't know
14 what they call them--even with those chains they
15 still jackknife. And what we're doing now is
16 we're using what we call the RTS bus, which is a
17 smaller bus, it's the 40 foot bus, for major
18 storms like this on the M15, the Select bus so
19 that we don't have the issue of the jackknifing.
20 So those buses under that kind of weather should
21 never have been out on 1st and 2nd Avenue and
22 that's probably why we had those issues of them
23 getting stuck on 1st and 2nd Avenue.

24 I think someone spoke about Houston
25 Street, I think it was lower than Houston Street

1 where one of the buses was stuck, literally
2 closing 1st Avenue northbound, that was one of our
3 big buses that got stuck trying to get out of that
4 bus stop that had jackknifed.
5

6 If we had these RTS buses on the
7 M15 for that particular day, this would never have
8 happened 'cause anything over six inches we have
9 an issue with these articulated buses. Even with
10 these chains on them.

11 So the other thing I wanted to
12 mention was we had over 20 operators that were
13 stuck in buses from Sunday through Monday. One of
14 the interesting things that happened is we had one
15 of our females on the M72, who went around the
16 neighborhood of 72nd between Madison and 5th
17 asking the people in the buildings there if she
18 could use their bathroom and they refused her
19 from--you know, they did not allow her to use the
20 bathroom because they said that they don't allow
21 people in the building and she literally had to
22 stay in her bus and go to the bathroom in her bus
23 because no one would let her in any of those
24 buildings on 72nd--and she had her uniform on--
25 between Madison and 5th.

1
2 We finally picked up these
3 operators Monday night at 6 p.m., we brought
4 operators that were at the depot and had just came
5 in and we replaced them, so they were on the buses
6 for, in some cases, 18 hours, and it was really a
7 horrific weekend for all of these operators.

8 If you ask me for my opinion, it
9 seems like we certainly were not prepared for that
10 weekend. And, like I said, I didn't get a call
11 even Friday or Saturday to tell me that we should
12 prepare us, like I did today, for some kind of a
13 storm.

14 [Off mic]

15 GERRY TORRES: Excuse me?

16 [Off mic]

17 KENNETH HARVEY: Good evening to
18 the Chairs. I'm a bus driver at 126th Street,
19 this is my chairman, Gerry Torres. My route was
20 the M116, which goes up and down 116th Street,
21 makes a left on Manhattan Avenue. From 106 to
22 110th Street on Manhattan Avenue there were seven
23 buses stuck. I was the sixth bus, there was
24 another bus behind me, we made seven. Then
25 another bus came behind, saw that he couldn't get

1 up there so I helped back him up on 110th Street.
2 That street, Manhattan Avenue, wasn't plowed.
3 Three sanitation trucks got stuck, the big heavy
4 one, they got stuck and there was two more that
5 got stuck, so it was about at least 15, 10 to 15
6 vehicles stuck in that one spot.
7

8 I'm from the Bronx, so that won't
9 come until tomorrow. Those streets wasn't plowed,
10 but we're now focusing on Manhattan 'cause I work
11 in Manhattan.

12 As far as the workers, talking
13 about lack of communication, a lot of the workers
14 said they called [off mic], kept calling, kept
15 calling, never got a response from them, so they
16 stuck out there. I was out there for at least a
17 good three, four hours. And at a certain time you
18 can't run these buses for so long and now you have
19 to deal with EPA 'cause now you're starting
20 polluting the air. And we was in the residential
21 neighborhood, we didn't want nobody say why these
22 buses are still running constantly. So the
23 communication was bad.

24 And to piggyback on the chairman
25 for our station, yeah, he was right, a lot of

1 them, these staircases wasn't plowed [off mic].
2
3 And it's hard to bring workers in if they can't
4 get to work 'cause they depend on mass transit, so
5 now you have a gap.

6 And on the subway, you remember
7 what happened on the A train with those people
8 stuck six to seven hours, they say, well there
9 should have been refreshments. We don't serve
10 refreshments, we don't. So imagine going back to
11 June, July, and August when it was hot, those
12 train doors do not open so you can't go from car
13 to car, no ventilation. And when it's cold, yeah,
14 you can probably jump up and down and keep the
15 body warm, but in the summertime, if that would
16 have happened in the summertime, those cars become
17 a sauna, real hot 'cause there's no ventilation
18 and the windows do not slide up and down.

19 So the breakdown in communication
20 and they left us out there, they left us out to
21 defend for our self. You get there the best way
22 you can, whoever comes and gets you, fine; if they
23 don't, we have to babysit the bus.

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We're joined by
25 Council Member Gale Brewer. We have a question

1
2 for Council Member Chin.

3 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: Mr. Torres,
4 can you just explain a little bit, like you say
5 this time around they called you this morning to
6 tell you to prepare, right? And last time that
7 didn't happen, but what about the snowstorm
8 before, like in February, how was that
9 preparation?

10 GERRY TORRES: We were called to
11 prepare for that storm, so we were prepared for
12 that one. I honestly, we're talking about break
13 of communication, something certainly happened
14 here where we were not--or the management was not
15 prepared for.

16 One of the other things I wanted to
17 mention was that our biggest problem was trying to
18 get employees in, our workers in but we had no way
19 of getting them in, and some of them are now being
20 disciplined for not coming to work, even though
21 they had no way of coming to work. So that's
22 really interesting.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I'm just
24 curious like in terms of preparation, right, if
25 they called you to get people ready, do the worker

1
2 come earlier? I mean, like they would have gotten
3 there before the snow buildup. I mean, if they
4 were called in for the emergency, they would have
5 got there way before the snow piled up, I assume,
6 right? Yeah.

7 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: So my question
8 to you is, is the proper procedure to dress the
9 buses and to get your staff ready, is that the
10 proper procedure?

11 [Off mic]

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: He said yes.
13 And the proper procedure was not carried out
14 during the blizzard, yes?

15 [Off mic]

16 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Okay. So the
17 answer to that was yes as well. My other question
18 to you is the articulated buses--and this is
19 something that we have not heard throughout the
20 other boroughs, that articulated buses if their
21 snow is above the six inches, they get stuck?

22 [Off mic]

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: One second.

24 GERRY TORRES: They have an issue
25 of jackknifing after I believe it's six inches and

1
2 what they're doing now, and I believe this is the
3 plan looking forward, is to send out our smaller
4 40 foot. We did that just the other day, RTS bus
5 on the M15. [Off mic] It's just a stop bus, a 40
6 foot bus.

7 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: And last
8 question, who is the individual who gave you
9 instructions to dress the buses and to get your
10 staff ready, and where were they during the
11 blizzard and why didn't they give you advance
12 notice that time?

13 GERRY TORRES: I got instructions
14 this morning from General Superintendent Liz Roman
15 and Assistant General Manager Mike Bro [phonetic].
16 And I can't really tell you why I didn't get the
17 calls last time.

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We're joined by
19 Council Member Inez Dickens, who represents the
20 village of Harlem and who is the majority Whip in
21 the New York City Council--

22 [Off mic]

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: --she's the
24 Deputy Majority Leader, I apologize, give her her
25 title. Okay, I got it right, I'm in Harlem. And

1
2 to my far right, Council Member Robert Jackson,
3 the Chair of Education, did I get that right?

4 [Off mic]

5 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you very
6 much. And here I am with my co-chair from
7 Brooklyn, Jumaane Williams, who is the co-chair of
8 this Council hearing and also is the Chair of
9 Investigations. At this time, Council Member
10 Dickens has some opening remarks.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: Thank you,
12 Madam Chair. I want to thank everyone who has
13 come out tonight and I want to thank the Speaker
14 and, most importantly, I want to thank my
15 colleagues, Council Member both Williams and
16 Council Member Tish James for having the foresight
17 after we had this devastating snowstorm to come
18 into every borough to find out exactly what we the
19 people have to say about what the city did and did
20 not do in the clean up after this.

21 Since the first snow cleanup
22 disaster, the Administration did a better job, but
23 also we had a lot of sunshine with the next
24 snowstorm and it wasn't so bad. So I don't know
25 if I want to give him a pat on the back for that

1
2 or not because the experience that we had with the
3 first snowstorm was devastating, particularly to
4 the boroughs of Brooklyn and for Queens. 2And, as
5 I said at the original hearing, that Harlem or the
6 Harlems of all the boroughs were being treated as
7 outer borough.

8 So I do want to thank my
9 colleagues, I want to thank all of my colleagues
10 that are here. I want to thank Council Member
11 Gale Brewer, who is also the co-chair for the
12 Manhattan delegation; the Council Member from East
13 Harlem, Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito;
14 Council Member Rosie Mendez, who is a strong
15 advocate for our public housing; Council Member
16 Margaret Chin, who is, supposedly, a freshman
17 Council Member, but I doubt it seriously; and, of
18 course, I mentioned, the chairs of tonight's
19 hearing, Tish James and Jumaane Williams, both of
20 Brooklyn, which is suspect; and, of course, Bob
21 Jackson. Thank you so much for being out tonight,
22 I wish it was a bigger crowd, in Brooklyn they had
23 over a hundred some odd, but that's okay. And
24 there's strength in numbers so we're bound
25 together to work at it.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: That's fine, I
3 know I'm in Harlem, so I'll be on my best
4 behavior. But let me just--

5 [Off mic]

6 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: --thank you
7 Gale--so let me just say this, obviously, we are
8 all outraged that the Administration did not seem
9 fit to bring someone who can answer the
10 appropriate questions. At the original hearing, a
11 number of us had questions, we were all limited in
12 the amount of time that we had to ask these
13 questions, and we thought that by having these
14 outer borough hearings we could ask questions and
15 get to the bottom of things, but the Mayor of the
16 City of New York has decided to close the chapter
17 on the blizzard. Well the City Council has not
18 and that's why we wanted to come out and hear from
19 each and every one of you so that--and when we
20 conclude the hearings from all of the boroughs,
21 then we will come up with a report and some
22 recommendations. Yesterday was Brooklyn; day
23 before that, we had it in the Staten Island;
24 tomorrow is Queens; Monday is the Bronx; and then
25 we're having a second one in South Brooklyn.

1
2 But again, the Administration has
3 decided only to send out this young man--and we're
4 not going to beat him up too much, even though
5 some of my colleagues in the other boroughs did,
6 he's only doing his job, the fault lies with the
7 man at the top--Mayor of the City of New York who
8 failed us during the blizzard and once again fails
9 us at these outer hearings.

10 And now we will hear from my co-
11 chair, Council Member Jumaane Williams.

12 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you
13 very much, my dear co-chair and my Manhattan
14 colleagues, great to be here.

15 I love Harlem also, I used to stomp
16 here, I was younger, I went to Harlem School of
17 the Arts, so got a lot of love for Harlem.

18 I'm going to be brief. As I said,
19 I'm happy to co-chair this hearing. Last week, we
20 heard from the Administration, there's still a lot
21 of questions that need to be answered, and I know
22 that the city is still pretty upset and they have
23 every right to be. People couldn't go around,
24 people [off mic] getting ambulances.

25 We heard a very heart wrenching

1 story yesterday in Brooklyn of a man who described
2 how his wife of 25 years died in front of his
3 eyes, that's just a terrible, terrible thing to
4 have to go through--and it makes it worse is
5 they're not getting the complete answers and being
6 able to ask the questions they should be able to.
7

8 And to me it's not a real secret of
9 what happened, I think we kind of got somewhat a
10 picture: There was a complete [off mic] failure
11 and breakdown; they testified there was no
12 particular point person for leadership when the
13 Mayor and the Deputy Mayor was out of town; no one
14 called a snow emergency; no one called a local
15 emergency, which is another option that they had.
16 They seemed to have not been able to understand
17 the tools that they actually had, the deputy Mayor
18 didn't seem to understand the difference between
19 his job and OEM's job. And to this date, no one
20 has been reprimanded, demoted, or fired, except
21 save an EMS chief who didn't have the power to get
22 resources, didn't have the power to call a snow
23 emergency, didn't have the power to plow streets.
24 Yet I was told he was demoted because he didn't
25 send the proper information back up and he didn't

1
2 sound the proper alarms, which seems to me that
3 all the commissioners and the Deputy Mayor didn't,
4 so I don't understand why he was fired and no one
5 else was publicly reprimanded.

6 So I just want to say thank you for
7 coming out because it's very, very important, one,
8 to give the community an opportunity to vent their
9 anger, it's very healthy; and two, for us to have
10 some ideas that we can add onto the city's ideas
11 of how we can make sure this never happens again.

12 And I too just want to, you know,
13 [off mic], I'm sorry, you're the brunt of it, but
14 it's unfortunate that you come out every day as
15 the Administration to talk to the people and not
16 with the people, I think they deserve the right,
17 if you're going to be here anyway, to ask
18 questions. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member
20 Melissa Mark-Viverito. Oh, we've been joined by
21 Council Member Dan Garodnick from Manhattan as
22 well.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: I
24 really hope we get another mic soon because this
25 is going to be a long night. You both said, Mr.

1
2 Harvey and Mr. Torres, you both said that you are
3 from the 126th Street Depot? So I represent that
4 depot, I also represent the one on 100th Street.
5 But I just wanted to personally thank you for your
6 service, you have a strong ally in me and all of
7 us here, but I do represent you all, and thank you
8 for the service.

9 And I'm sorry, again, that you had
10 to--I know you're all doing your job diligently,
11 that you had to kind of deal with the consequences
12 that you said getting stuck on Manhattan Avenue,
13 which also that part of Manhattan Avenue is my
14 district as well on the West Side. So thank you
15 all. I know Gale Brewer had a question.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: First of
17 all, I want to join in thanking you. I have the
18 west side of Manhattan from 54th to 96th Street
19 and actually we had very few problems, I'll be
20 very honest with you.

21 But my question is with the buses
22 'cause the articulated buses have gotten stuck
23 since the day they started, the very beginning,
24 and my question is are there enough buses when the
25 articulated buses don't work to be able to put

1
2 others into effect so that there are enough buses
3 to be able to carry the passengers, and are there
4 any other kinds of buses that get stuck when
5 you've got six inches or more? 'Cause I remember
6 the day the articulated buses arrived and they
7 were stuck the first snowstorm, so it's not a new
8 thing with the articulated buses. So my question
9 is, are there kinds of buses in addition to the
10 articulated that are going to get stuck or is it
11 just those that are going to get stuck? How do
12 we, or if at all, help you figure out if there's
13 some challenge with the bus situation?

14 GERRY TORRES: Well first of all I
15 think one of biggest problems we had was that you
16 shouldn't have that kind of [off mic]. We have
17 smaller buses that we could use in times like
18 this, we have enough buses, articulated buses and
19 [off mic] we have some that [off mic], we have
20 others [off mic]. I believe from my experience
21 [off mic] this bus we've always had a problem with
22 in the snow, the articulated bus, I know that we
23 could have a better [off mic] I know that there
24 [off mic] they're not effective after about six
25 inches.

1
2 But one of the other things that we
3 could have done to [off mic] so we kept [off mic]
4 that was just getting stuck [off mic] articulated
5 buses that were going to get stuck anyway so [off
6 mic] stuck and then we had the [off mic] resources
7 to go out [off mic]. And that was [off mic] it
8 was normal to pull them back or to say don't send
9 them out, that was [off mic].

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Let me just say
11 that we affirm the value of your work and it's
12 rather unfortunate that the residents, I forget
13 along the street who did not open up their doors
14 to that driver who needed to use the bathroom, the
15 facilities, and had to use the facilities on the
16 bus, that is really outrageous. What street again
17 was that?

18 GERRY TORRES: That was [off mic]
19 77 between Madison and 5th and that was the M72
20 bus.

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Well shame on
22 those residents, this was a public servant who
23 wanted to use the facilities and, clearly, she had
24 a uniform on, the bus was outside, and the fact
25 that no one opened up their doors so that she

1
2 could use the bathroom is just really--I don't
3 believe represents the best of New Yorkers and so,
4 again, shame on those people.

5 So again, I just want to thank you.
6 Does anyone else have any comments or questions?
7 Council Member Chin.

8 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: I have a
9 question 'cause a lot of my constituents takes the
10 M15 bus, they will see an express bus--when the
11 bus started moving, there were a lot of express
12 bus going in, the SBT--the Select bus going and
13 bus that just stop at like Allen and Pike and they
14 don't go down Lower Manhattan. So I think my
15 question to you is, like, in this kind of snow,
16 blizzard and snow emergency, wouldn't it be
17 better--I mean, couldn't we get the MTA to just
18 have the bus stops at every stop and pick up
19 people who are waiting? I mean, there were a lot
20 of people who were stranded and saw the bus just
21 keep on going.

22 GERRY TORRES: Here's our problem
23 with that, as you know, with the Select Bus
24 service, you pay at these machines, they're only
25 in certain stops, so the customer would not be

1
2 able to pay. If you stop, for instance, in [off
3 mic] stop, there's no machine there for the
4 customer to get one of the tickets that they get
5 in order to pay before they get on the bus. Then
6 you have these officers that, at particular stops
7 they ask people for these slips and then if you
8 don't have the slips, you get a \$100 ticket. So
9 that would have been a problem.

10 I know that on Third Avenue and
11 over to the West Side, we have those [off mic]
12 buses that they canceled the [off mic] service and
13 they were just making every stop, but with this
14 new service, this Select service, there's a
15 different way of paying. You know, you don't pay
16 on the bus, you pay outside the bus and that was
17 the problem.

18 [Off mic]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER CHIN: The MTA could
20 have just let people ride and on the day--on
21 Monday, just suspend, just pick up everybody you
22 see on the street and people were stranded and--

23 GERRY TORRES: [Interposing]

24 Honestly, we've done that before when we had the
25 blackout, we were just told to pick up people and

1 bring them from Point A to B, so, yes, we had [off
2 mic] people.
3

4 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: So in
5 preparation of tomorrow's storm, have they said
6 anything about articulated buses?

7 GERRY TORRES: They haven't, I
8 believe by the time I get back we'll have them all
9 chained and ready to roll. I think they said
10 three to four inches, but we do have RTS buses
11 prepared to do what we call [off mic] the night
12 buses--

13 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Right.

14 GERRY TORRES: --in the event that
15 it goes over the four or five or six--

16 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [Interposing]
17 And when did you go to Plan IV? At what point in
18 time during the blizzard did you go to Plan IV?

19 GERRY TORRES: When you say Plan
20 IV...?

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I mean, the
22 most serious type of response.

23 GERRY TORRES: When during the
24 storm?

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yeah.

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GERRY TORRES: Honestly--

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: You didn't.

GERRY TORRES: --we didn't.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Okay. Thank you. You have something to say, sir? Go ahead.

GERRY TORRES: Yes, dealing with the MTA, did you contact anybody from the state senate or state assembly to come down? 'Cause usually the MTA they [off mic], they don't listen to [off mic] City Council 'cause City Council usually don't [off mic] that much heat on them. If you bring somebody from the state, especially to do with the MTA or the Transportation Department, they'd probably be listening more carefully.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Well Mr. Pendergrass was at the hearing on Friday and I believe we put enough heat on him, but also in the audience was some members of the state legislature. And it's my understanding that they will be holding their own hearings. And we do provide some funds to your budget as well. So thank you, I appreciate it, thank you. Our next witness, is Kevin Harrington here yet?

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[Off mic]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Okay. So the next speaker is Mr. William Kitchen. You're on.

WILLIAM KITCHEN: Good evening.

SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Go ahead.

WILLIAM KITCHEN: Okay.

[background noise] and basically [off mic] event some sort of anger, which surely is enough all over the city, but at the same time, we also [off mic] some solutions. And one of the solutions that I believe is very strong if we would put it in that context is to create a systems task force of disaster [off mic] with the Council and then Council itself should initiate for these kinds of disasters that we've experienced a disaster plan that would be borough-wide and has within its power to coordinate with the federal and state initiatives that would help save lives that's been lost.

Two people died as a result, and even Mr. Barron went kind of seriously out on a limb to say that the Mayor should be held up for those deaths. But that's another legal issue for later on, I would imagine.

1
2 But one of the inspiring things
3 that I heard came from Ms. James, well she asked
4 where was the National Guard. Subsequently to
5 that, people were asking now where was Ray Kelly.
6 And these are pointed questions that need serious
7 interpretation and not just be left to
8 interpretation, but something be done with them.
9 I mean expediently. Because after 9/11, this is a
10 double disaster that we are unprepared to save
11 lives--because of snow? I mean, it's a no-brainer
12 that there should have been a helicopter coming
13 and get and airlift people out to the hospital, if
14 need be for the Caucasian lady and the black woman
15 in Brooklyn. It was done in Katrina. I mean, it
16 wasn't that it couldn't be done. We have
17 helicopters flying all over Harlem looking for
18 whatever they're looking for, I don't know what
19 they're looking for, but they be flying. And this
20 is a fiasco.

21 So that's some solutions, and I
22 really believe that this task force could even put
23 together an emergency kit for people to have. I
24 would like to say that I have within my
25 possession, after the streets were supposed to be

1
2 cleansed, I do have photos of unclean streets, but
3 moreover, and even better than that, I have
4 immobile garbage trucks with the plows on them,
5 immobile. And I was like, how could this be, and
6 I determined that there is a legitimate, serious,
7 legitimate slowdown unprecedented in this city. I
8 don't care how Mr. Doherty or anyone else dresses
9 it up, the streets in Harlem at that point that I
10 have pictures of were not cleaned and I have
11 stationary pictures of snow plows in their
12 warehouse. So I will at some point be giving
13 those to your committee, they're on my little
14 camera here, I was looking at them last night.

15 And this is so serious that it
16 should not ever happen again. And I believe that
17 as Mayor Paterson was going out and Mr. Cuomo was
18 going in, they too were missing in action big time
19 and it shouldn't be. It just should not be.

20 And if this Council needs more
21 subpoena power, and, moreover, even after these
22 hearings to have congressional hearings on this
23 that rises to that level, I would hope that you
24 all entertain that very seriously and get this
25 being Ground Zero where you have one of the most

1
2 powerful congressmen in the city to help do that,
3 Charlie Rangel, recently stripped, and a state
4 senator here Keith and William Perkins. With that
5 kind of power right here in this building, there
6 should be no stone left unturned to create a power
7 leverage that takes us to another level in
8 community affairs.

9 So with that, and my comments, and
10 hopefully get with Mr. Jumaane at some point
11 because there was, in the Drew Hamilton Houses, an
12 unprecedented asbestos release that I won't
13 trouble your minds with, but you need to be aware
14 of that too--

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

16 WILLIAM KITCHEN: --'cause asbestos
17 travels.

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Well the first,
19 with regards to Drew Houses and NYCHA, you should
20 also speak to Council Member Mendez, who's Chair
21 of Public Housing in the New York City Council.

22 Let me also say that we are limited
23 in our power and we are confined or defined by the
24 powers that are given to us in the New York City
25 charter, that's one issue.

1
2 Two, there are CERT teams all
3 throughout the city of New York, individuals who
4 are certified to respond to disasters and, in
5 fact, Council Member Dickens indicated to me that
6 there are some CERT members in the audience here
7 today. So I would urge you to inquire of Council
8 Member Dickens, who also is a power in her own
9 right, and you did not mention as part of that
10 [off mic], and who also represents Harlem.

11 But we also--and I was of the
12 impression again, and I stand corrected, there was
13 a misperception and again in Brooklyn and among my
14 constituents that all of Manhattan was taken care
15 of and was clean and that's a misperception. The
16 reality is that only parts of Manhattan were taken
17 care of and, specifically, Times Square. We heard
18 that over and again this evening, as well as from
19 the Council Members from the Manhattan delegation.

20 I asked the question with respect
21 to the National Guard at the initial hearing and
22 the response was that the National Guard, there
23 was a limited number of National Guards and there
24 was also a time factor within which we could
25 activate the National Guard, and so I thank you

1 for recognizing that.

2 Do any of my other colleagues have
3 any comments? Okay. Mr. Kitchen, we thank you
4 for your remarks and we will--

5 WILLIAM KITCHEN: Thank you.

6 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: --incorporate
7 your recommendations in our report.

8 WILLIAM KITCHEN: Will you be
9 trying to get my pictures?

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Sure, if you
11 can see a staff person will--

12 WILLIAM KITCHEN: [Interposing]
13 Well I thought you all was going to forget.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: No, staff
15 person--

16 [Crosstalk]

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: --right after.

18 WILLIAM KITCHEN: Okay.

19 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.

20 WILLIAM KITCHEN: All righty.

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: The next
22 witness is D. Silver.

23 D. SILVER: I personally requested
24 the media, I would like to speak to the members
25

1 without [off mic].

2 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Okay. So is it
3 possible if we could--

4 FEMALE VOICE: We could just turn--
5 [Crosstalk]

6 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yeah, turn the
7 cameras to the audience.

8 [Off mic]

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

10 [Off mic]

11 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Once the
12 camera's off.

13 [Off mic]

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: You're welcome.

15 D. SILVER: Okay. First, I want to
16 say that it probably has been said often that no
17 snow emergency being announced prohibiting traffic
18 was a mistake, I'm sure that's been repeated many
19 times.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

21 D. SILVER: I was amazed when the
22 announcement was on the evening of the storm that
23 alternate side was suspended, but metered parking
24 was in effect.

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CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

D. SILVER: That made no sense at all.

Now in my neighborhood, at \$3 an hour for a meter, there was a mad dash for remaining parking, it got pretty crazy that night as I watched people fighting for spaces as the storm was hitting and--

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [Interposing]
There's a bill that's been introduced by Council Member Recchia which would address that, that whenever you suspend alternate side of the street parking during an emergency, you would also have to suspend meters.

D. SILVER: No, that's never been done--

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: No, it has not.

D. SILVER: --in previous years, it's all for money, we know that. I mean, everything is dollars.

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: --I did.

D. SILVER: Third, if it's true that there was a layoff of--an actual proposed

1
2 layoff of sanitation workers or down--I don't know
3 what the word is--the supervisors downgrading
4 them, that probably, if it was true, probably
5 didn't help.

6 Fourth, complaints about plowing
7 the bike paths first. I might say people were
8 complaining, oh, they did the bike paths, but for
9 pedestrians crossing the street and for seniors,
10 that was actually a godsend because people could
11 get to the middle of the street easily and then
12 make it across without worrying about the cars
13 coming down.

14 And, unfortunately, the next
15 snowfall we had, the paths were last to be done, I
16 assume, in response to that criticism.

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I think the
18 media at some point in time was showing how bike
19 lanes in Manhattan, they were being cleared and
20 that--I could [off mic] for my constituents
21 angered a number of my constituents who,
22 unfortunately, were prisoners in their homes and
23 on their streets.

24 D. SILVER: Well the plows that did
25 that were not your regular plows because they were

1 not wide, they almost looked like private
2 contractors, you know. And there's nothing wrong
3 with people getting to the middle of the street.
4

5 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: No, I
6 understand that, I understand.

7 D. SILVER: Okay. A few days
8 later, the alternate side went back into effect.
9 Well we have a problem on the West Side or in the
10 city. We have 8:30 to 10 parking on my block.
11 Round about 9 o'clock, whether or not the plows in
12 this case or the garbage or the street sweepers
13 come through, people start parking on the other
14 side of the street to get to the space first.
15 What this did in this case was to block--the plows
16 didn't come through between 8:30 and 9, they came
17 through closer to 10. By that time, all the cars--
18 -and many of them are contractors, they don't want
19 to pay \$3 an hour for eight hours on the meters
20 while they're in--the plows came through and they
21 couldn't plow. So I complained to the city, I
22 complained to my precinct, and their response was
23 that we don't enforce, we do it for the neighbors,
24 that was their thing, the neighbors that we don't
25 enforce, we don't ticket these cars. Now the next

1
2 day, they did the other side of the street and
3 there was a tow truck that was there, so obviously
4 there was some response. But we've got to do
5 something about this 8:30 to 10, with the idea
6 that people rush to come back even before the
7 streets are clean, whether trash or snow.

8 And lastly, just a personal note.
9 I'm really upset with what I perceive personally
10 as a lack of pushback by, sometimes not by certain
11 Council Members who can't wait to be seen at a
12 Mayoral press conference in the background. Some
13 of us feel like our concerns aren't being met by
14 an insensitive Mayor, but people can't wait when
15 he's up on top and successful, can't wait to be in
16 on his press conferences, and there's so many
17 problems that he's insensitive to, we sort of feel
18 people want to go with the flow, but they're not
19 representing us.

20 Thank you very much.

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. I
22 believe we have--

23 [Crosstalk]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Roy, I have
25 a question. What do you suggest that we do

1 regarding the alternate side of the street
2 parking? Because even today on 88th Street, as
3 you can imagine, they were still hard to get
4 across the street because of the parking and the
5 snow and hard to get through. So what do you
6 suggest we do during this storm and the aftermath
7 and you know how our neighbors are in terms of
8 their cars. So what--

10 D. SILVER: [Interposing] Yeah,
11 part of the problem is that I find half the
12 problem is with contractors because they're the
13 first to move on the other side and they stay in
14 their cars, and it's a problem because at \$3 an
15 hour--

16 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER:
17 [Interposing] I understand, so you're saying that
18 the contractors should go to the avenue, is that
19 what you're kind of saying?

20 D. SILVER: Well I mean, I don't
21 want to be a preference to the neighbors as
22 opposed to the contractors, but it seems it's
23 always a mad dash between contractors and
24 neighbors, and then when you can find parking, it
25 gets pretty tight. But what can you do?

1
2 Certainly enforce the 8:30 to 10 until at least
3 9:30, quarter to 10, or something like that, okay?

4 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: That's
5 helpful, thank you very much.

6 D. SILVER: Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.

8 [Off mic]

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We've been
10 joined by Ydanis Rodriguez from Manhattan. The
11 next speaker is Jennifer Silverman? And, Ms.
12 Silverman, when you introduce yourself and begin
13 your testimony, could you just indicate what part
14 of Manhattan you're from?

15 [Off mic]

16 JENNIFER SILVERMAN: Hi, my name is
17 Jen Silverman, I live in Harlem in Councilman
18 Jackson's district in West Harlem. And my concern
19 has been about this sort of fallout following the
20 snowstorm in terms of garbage collection and
21 recycling collection. And I'm sort of curious,
22 last weekend, I don't think there was a snowstorm,
23 and yet there was no collection of recycling in
24 our neighborhood. And when we call 311,
25 Sanitation is not taking any complaints about

1
2 collections and I'm not sure why there's been such
3 a long fallout. And I know that this is not--this
4 is quality of life things, this is not about life-
5 and-death issues around the snowstorm itself, but
6 I don't understand. It feels like there's a
7 particular area in Manhattan that has been
8 neglected following the snowstorm.

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member
10 Jackson, do you have an answer to that question or
11 should we refer her to the Department of
12 Sanitation to look into that matter?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: Well I
14 think that--

15 [Off mic]

16 COUNCIL MEMBER JACKSON: --I guess
17 if I was the Sanitation Commissioner, I would have
18 an answer to that, but I'm not. But obviously,
19 that issue was echoed, not even by a resident of
20 West Harlem or Washington Heights and Inwood or
21 Harlem that I represent, but, as you know, I was
22 away and I arrived back in the country yesterday
23 and the immigration officer who process my
24 daughter and myself and my grandson, we were
25 discussing the snowstorm and he had said, which

1
2 later I subsequently saw myself, where he said
3 metal recycling had not been collected since the
4 snowstorm. And, in fact, near my office there is
5 so much recycling all over the place, so I don't
6 think it's only in West Harlem. But my question,
7 I guess, to the Department of Sanitation is, yes,
8 I can understand there's a blizzard and snowstorm
9 and the primary concern is to make sure that the
10 streets are clear, that the crosswalks and the
11 curb cuts and all of that, but at what point in
12 time--that occurred, I think, on December 25th and
13 today is January 20th and there are so many
14 recyclables that are sitting, waiting to be picked
15 up. And I just don't understand, I cannot
16 understand, and maybe someone can explain it to
17 me, why is it taking so long from a citywide
18 perspective that was addressed by my constituent
19 tonight and also addressed by an immigration
20 officer who lives in Queens.

21 FEMALE VOICE: Mr. Terranova [off
22 mic] answer that?

23 [Off mic]

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: So I know the
25 recyclables were collected--I can't speak for West

1
2 Harlem, I can only speak for Brooklyn, recyclables
3 were collected in my district and so, Mr.
4 Terranova, if you could just take that back to the
5 commissioner.

6 Any other Council Members have
7 problems with recyclables?

8 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: [Off mic]
9 picked up on the West Side [off mic] feel better.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: It was
11 actually all over, it was actually the--I went
12 into other districts, I went down into Council
13 Member Jessica Lappin's district, Dan Garodnick's
14 district, and to Gale Brewer's district, and into
15 Melissa Mark-Viverito, and actually it was all
16 over. The lack of garbage collection and
17 recycling was done, not just in Council Member
18 Jackson's district or Central Harlem, but
19 throughout, so that was one thing that they
20 weren't racists [off mic].

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [Off mic] Mr.
22 Terranova [off mic] borough of Manhattan, that
23 would be greatly appreciated and report back to
24 the committee, but more specifically, Council
25 Member Jackson and all the colleagues who are here

1 today, except Council Member Brewer, who's very
2 happy.
3

4 [background noise]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: --the
6 recycling yet [off mic].

7 JENNIFER SILVERMAN: I'm sorry, can
8 I just add to that?

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Sure.

10 JENNIFER SILVERMAN: And actually I
11 just want to be clear that our recycling hasn't
12 been picked up as of now, it should have been
13 picked up last Saturday and it's been, obviously,
14 a number of weeks out since the snowstorm and with
15 a compending possible snow something coming up, my
16 guess is that this Saturday it might not happen
17 again. I was on the Upper West Side earlier today
18 and they were picking up today.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: They did
20 yesterday--

21 [Crosstalk]

22 JENNIFER SILVERMAN: [Interposing]
23 Today, yeah.

24 [Off mic]

25 JENNIFER SILVERMAN: Absolutely.

2 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: --to

3 Council Member Jackson.

4 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you,
5 thank you very much. Peter Schuller, I apologize
6 if I mispronounced your name.

7 [Off mic]

8 PETER SCHLEGER: My name is Peter
9 Schleger, and I live at 200 Central Park South,
10 which is Dan Garodnick's building, and I also get
11 mail from Gale Brewer, I'm not exactly sure why.

12 [Off mic]

13 PETER SCHLEGER: After the
14 Christmas storm, I took a bus on Columbus Avenue
15 and 86th Street and noticed that it now had built-
16 in bicycle lanes, there was also a truck
17 unloading, leaving 1 1/2 lanes for all other
18 vehicles, including public transportation. Any
19 emergency vehicles at that point would have had a
20 major delay right then and there, even though the
21 streets were relatively snow free. I didn't see
22 too many citizens riding their bicycles.

23 It is well known that bus travel
24 times are taking longer and maybe we get our
25 Chinese food more quickly, maybe there's a Chinese

1
2 food lobby.

3 We have a Mayor who has guided
4 Janette Sadik-Kahn, the Department of
5 Transportation chief, to take dollars from
6 sanitation and put them to bicycles. We are not
7 living in Copenhagen.

8 The point is that the Mayor's
9 policy has added to traffic, reduced snow removal,
10 impeded emergency vehicles, and then the big snow
11 helped to kill at least two New Yorkers that we
12 were made aware of. All this while he spends 90%
13 of his weekends in Bermuda, he has blocked showing
14 of his house on Google, and blocked the air
15 traffic tracking agencies from releasing his
16 private airplane flight schedules, this was
17 somewhat confirmed at a press conference when the
18 press asked him why were you not in town and he
19 refused to answer.

20 Money lets you do this, he owns us.
21 I think it's 10 richest men in the United States
22 of America.

23 Okay. Maybe our tarnished little
24 hero can manipulate a fourth term to continue to
25 save the city and kill more of its citizens.

1
2 that I think is more important and is more far-
3 reaching, which will solve this. All right, so
4 I'm going to read from an article that I handed
5 out to the audience.

6 For the past three budget years,
7 cities all across the country have been cutting
8 their budgets in response to falling revenues in
9 the hopes that if they just tighten their belts
10 for a couple of years, the economy would recover,
11 and then rising revenues could make up for the
12 lean years. Not only is there no economic
13 recovery, the austerity of the past couple of
14 years is only leading to even more austerity. No
15 matter how much they cut, many cities find
16 themselves even larger debt--with even larger
17 deficits than they had before. Case in point,
18 Reno, Nevada. Reno city officials are preparing
19 to lay off 20 to 30 city employees in March in
20 order to save \$2 to \$3 million in expenses in the
21 current budget because property taxes and
22 franchise fees are coming in at a rate less than
23 expected. Last year, reports the Reno Gazette
24 Journal, the city laid off 126 full-time employees
25 and left another 56 positions vacant. But that

1 wasn't enough.

2
3 This is just an example, I mean,
4 it's an example of what's happening here, in other
5 places all across America. So what I'm proposing
6 is that people call their senators and have the
7 McCain-Cantwell bill, a.k.a. what happened in 1933
8 called the Glass-Steagall Act, to be passed again
9 to regulate the banking practices that are going
10 on, which is to separate commercial banking from
11 investment banking and kill the derivatives
12 casino.

13 And I think the gentleman who was
14 speaking here before me was talking about how
15 Bloomberg owns us, and my question is, why is it
16 that everything seems to be about saving the
17 monetary system as opposed to actually saving
18 human lives. I think I can end it there.

19 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir,
20 thank you for your testimony. Thank you for your
21 testimony. Next witness is Amtim Soto. Mr. and
22 Mrs. Soto.

23 [Off mic]

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: No? Soto?

25 [Off mic]

2 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Soto.

3 [Off mic]

4 AMTIM SOTO: My name is Amtim Soto,
5 I live on 125 West 109.

6 [Off mic]

7 AMTIM SOTO: My name is Amtim Soto,
8 I live on 125 West 109. I'm telling you very
9 dangerous up there, I lost [off mic] appointment
10 for my [off mic]. We can go nowhere. It's very
11 bad on the [off mic].

12 [Off mic]

13 AMTIM SOTO: Very, very, very, a
14 lot of snow. Very bad [off mic]. Too much snow.

15 [Off mic]

16 [Foreign language]

17 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: And
18 I'll ask her in Spanish and then in English.

19 [Foreign language]

20 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: So
21 I'm asking her when was the first time she saw--

22 [Crosstalk]

23 AMTIM SOTO: So many times [off
24 mic] of snow, you know, it moved to the sidewalk.

25 [Crosstalk]

2 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: So
3 they pushed it off onto the sidewalk and you
4 couldn't get through.

5 AMTIM SOTO: Especially on 125 West
6 from the building, then the maintenance cleaned
7 the door, you know, but the snow he put it in
8 that, in the sidewalk [off mic] go nowhere.

9 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: So
10 you said you missed appointments, did you have to
11 go to the doctor--

12 [Crosstalk]

13 AMTIM SOTO: I lost a [Off mic].

14 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:
15 Okay. All right, thank. [Foreign language] Thank
16 you.

17 AMTIM SOTO: Thank you.

18 [Off mic]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER DICKENS: They
20 cleared the sidewalk in front of her building.
21 What happened is, because the snow was piled up on
22 past of the sidewalk into the street, she couldn't
23 get across the streets, is what happened. So she
24 couldn't really--she was a prisoner in her home.

25 [Off mic]

1
2 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you very
3 much, gracias. Delores Richards. Delores
4 Richards.

5 [Off mic]

6 DELORES RICHARDS: Thank you.
7 That's the first thing I wanted to thank the
8 Council Members. And the other thing I want to
9 talk about is we need to begin with some better
10 planning. Because all of the Harlems of the city
11 were treated as outer boroughs in terms of snow
12 removal.

13 We need to develop some plans to
14 declare an emergency. I mean, you see that much
15 snow, you must know you have to do something.
16 They made great use of TV, radio, and computer to
17 make us aware of the storm, so just like they made
18 us aware of the storm, they could have given some
19 emergency instruction.

20 What would happen in terms of the
21 cars, what should we do about it. What would
22 happen in terms of the sanitation. What would
23 happen in terms of police and hospitals. We
24 needed some information about how to handle that.

25 And I agree with a past speaker who

1 mentioned that there should be some pressure on
2 the federal and state government to help you all
3 with resources to do something.
4

5 And other cities and states have
6 more snow than this, so I don't see why we can't
7 share some of their plans. I mean, Buffalo, right
8 upstate New York has more snow than we have here
9 in New York City and they do something every time.
10 And there are lots of places that have snow all
11 the time, they live in it and they are able to do
12 something with their streets, their avenues, and
13 they're able to do something with their garbage.

14 Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Ms.
16 Richards, thank you for your testimony. Are you
17 from the village of Harlem?

18 DELORES RICHARDS: Yes [off mic].

19 [Laughter]

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. The
21 next witness is Willie Mae Anderson. Ms.
22 Anderson? Willie Mae.

23 WILLIE MAE ANDERSON: Yes.

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Willie Mae?

25 WILLIE MAE ANDERSON: Yes.

1
2 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Oh, that's a
3 good southern name.

4 WILLIE MAE ANDERSON: Yes.

5 [Off mic]

6 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes, yes, yes.

7 WILLIE MAE ANDERSON: I thank the
8 Council Members for having this meeting.

9 First of all, we have a very smart
10 Mayor. I don't believe for one second that he
11 didn't know what was going on. The man knew,
12 somewhere they all knew. But again I say to you
13 they treated certain places different. I live on
14 the Upper West Side, my streets were cleaned, they
15 were clean. I heard the trucks, they were clean.
16 I saw out in Brooklyn where there was [off mic]
17 blocks here, it was filled with snow; down a few
18 blocks more where all the people live, it was
19 clean. What we need to not let happen again and
20 again and again, people treating people different
21 because they live in a different area. This is
22 what it is.

23 I want you to [off mic], the Mayor
24 knew. Why didn't he do it? Why did he do what he
25 did? Find out for us and let us know because the

2 Mayor knew what was going on, there's no way in
3 the world he didn't. He's a very smart man, he's
4 a rich man, he stays in tune with everything 24/7.
5 Don't believe it, he knew. I want you to find out
6 why he put us in this predicament. Thank you.

7 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

8 [Off mic]

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes, thank you,
10 Ms. Willie Mae, I'm going to look right into it,
11 yes, ma'am. That's my mother talking right there.

12 [Off mic]

13 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Angela Rooks?

14 [Off mic]

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Rooks? I'm
16 sorry if I mispronounced your name. Is it Rooks?

17 FEMALE VOICE: Rooks, [off mic].

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

19 [Off mic]

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We should have
21 had--

22 [background noise]

23 ANGELA ROOKS: Good evening
24 everyone.

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good evening.

1
2 ANGELA ROOKS: Part of my comments
3 are piggybacking off of Mrs. Anderson's comments
4 about the Mayor. I myself don't believe that he
5 didn't know anything that was going on, I think a
6 man of his intelligence had to know, I think it
7 just comes down to people not caring.

8 Another one of my comments, my mom
9 actually got sick that day and we had to rush her
10 to the hospital and it was very disheartening that
11 I couldn't get my car out of the garage because
12 they had piled up all of the snow right in front
13 of our garage, we couldn't get an EMS, so my
14 sister and myself just opted to walk. Thank God a
15 neighbor's car was parked on the street, we made
16 it to Amsterdam Avenue, at which point, he rushed
17 us to the emergency room. God is good 'cause my
18 mother is fine, other people don't have that same
19 story to tell.

20 But I think it was just a sad
21 affair that we live in a city and in an area
22 that's supposed to be so on ball with everything,
23 but yet we couldn't find a way to do anything
24 about a horrible snowstorm.

25 The alternate side of the street

1 parking, I agree with other people, it just makes
2 no sense. Perhaps there's a way that garages in
3 the neighborhoods could open up their doors and
4 allow cars to park, and parking on the street is
5 such an issue and such a problem. I think people
6 need to be more neighborly, we need to think about
7 people who are a little less fortunate than us. I
8 think we need to think about and plan better for
9 of emergencies, like I said, thank God that
10 neighbor was there. And if we just go back to
11 that old concept of if I'm eating, you're going to
12 eat then, maybe the world would just be a better
13 place. Money shouldn't rule everything, we do
14 have a god that we have the answer to, and God
15 willing, we'll all be ready when he calls our
16 name.

17
18 Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you for
20 your testimony. But I have a more important
21 question: Where'd you get those boots?

22 [Laughter]

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Where? Alaska?
24 Wow.

25 [background noise]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Hang out in Harlem more often. Troy Gethers? Come on, Troy.

[Off mic]

TROY GETHERS: Good evening, Council Members. How you doing? My name is Troy Gethers from--

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I apologize.

TROY GETHERS: --residence and business owner here in Harlem, and I am in Honorable Inez Dickens's district.

I have a towing company.

Fortunately, I was at the original hearing with Letitia James and other Council Members, and I really wanted to speak to the chairpeople for the fire department, sanitation department to give my insight on what happened during the blizzard.

During the blizzard, we had innumerable amount of calls for towing, unfortunately, we couldn't help all the people for towing because of the streets that were blocked. There were a lot of city vehicles also blocking the streets. We had one instance, myself personally, where I could have utilized my truck

1
2 to pull out an ambulance that was stuck in the
3 snow, but they stated don't pull the ambulance out
4 because they had equipment coming to do that. I
5 didn't know why.

6 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Who told you
7 [off mic]?

8 TROY GETHERS: The driver of the
9 ambulance, that's just sitting there. There was a
10 lot of blocks all over, not necessarily just the
11 Bronx. I mean, we did pick up some cars, but
12 there were some cars that was impossible to pick
13 up because the streets were blocked off too much.

14 And also I wanted to speak to you,
15 Ms. James, about the demonstrated about the chains
16 for the vehicles.

17 [Off mic]

18 TROY GETHERS: The chains for some
19 of the vehicles are not usable because once the
20 vehicle leaves the snow and then it runs on the
21 regular pavement, those chains heat up. So that's
22 what disables that vehicle because the tires
23 explode during the heat of the chain.

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Which chain,
25 the metal one or--

1
2 TROY GETHERS: [Interposing] The
3 metal chains--

4 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: The metal
5 chains.

6 TROY GETHERS: --when you use the
7 metal chains on the vehicles, once they leave the
8 snow--

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

10 TROY GETHERS: --that chain will
11 heat up and then disenable the tires, the tires
12 would explode due to the heat on the outside of
13 the chain. So that's why when they told you the
14 chains tear up the differential, brakes--

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

16 TROY GETHERS: --and body of the
17 vehicle, that's why, 'cause once the tire
18 explodes, of course, the integrity of the chain is
19 gone--

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Right.

21 TROY GETHERS: --and now it just
22 wraps around everything.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Oh, okay, thank
24 you for that. Are you contracted with the City of
25 New York to provide emergency tow service?

1
2 TROY GETHERS: Yes, I believe so,
3 but nobody called me, that was another thing.

4 [Laughter]

5 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: That's the
6 question, you weren't contracted at all.

7 TROY GETHERS: Yeah, the other
8 situation that you spoke about at the--

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yeah.

10 TROY GETHERS: --hearing was they
11 said they called people that they had on file
12 since '05--

13 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes, yes.

14 TROY GETHERS: --I couldn't
15 understand why because, especially with the
16 economy, whoever you had on file since '05, I'm
17 certain half of them are probably not in business.

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: So in the past,
19 have you done work for the City of New York?

20 TROY GETHERS: No, not yet.

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Not yet at all.

22 Have you responded to RFPs or--

23 TROY GETHERS: Oh yeah, I
24 responded--

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: You have, but--

2 [Crosstalk]

3 TROY GETHERS: --today I actually
4 responded to RFP for the MTA.

5 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: For the MTA.

6 TROY GETHERS: Yeah, I mean, I've
7 done stuff in our neighborhood--

8 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Right.

9 TROY GETHERS: --for the police
10 department to move certain vehicles and the fire
11 department, that's as a courtesy for my
12 neighborhood--

13 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: But not as a
14 whole.

15 TROY GETHERS: --but not as where
16 we're going to submit--not a contract--

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: So I should get
18 your--so you should give me your card, okay?

19 TROY GETHERS: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Are you
21 certified--

22 TROY GETHERS: Yes.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: --as a WMB?

24 TROY GETHERS: Yes, I am.

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I need your

1
2 card. Anyone else have a comment? Council Member
3 Brewer.

4 TROY GETHERS: Also about the
5 contracts real quick, they also stated that they
6 called companies and then he said he called
7 construction companies. I'm trying to figure out
8 how would a construction company assist in this
9 type of situation.

10 [Off mic]

11 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: What I want
12 to know is the [off mic] was heard and Council
13 Member James and Williams know better than I, but
14 the City, I think, never called anybody for the
15 big blizzard, they waited 'til the last minute--

16 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Right.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: --'cause we
18 always heard that the City didn't want to spend
19 any money, of course, they've got it backwards,
20 and I'll use a nice word, they did it all wrong.
21 But you never, or any of your colleagues or
22 anybody else in the industry, did anybody get any
23 calls for the big blizzard before, like two or
24 three days in advance to say we need to plan for
25 this, was--

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TROY GETHERS: No.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: --there
anything like that?

TROY GETHERS: No, there's not
really that many towing companies in the city if
you took count. We usually it's like one big
family so to speak sometimes 'cause if one towing
company can't do something, they'll call another
towing company. But from the gentleman that I
know that own towing companies that I spoke to,
nobody got a call to assist the fire department or
sanitation department or the MTA in moving the
vehicles during the snow.

COUNCIL MEMBER BREWER: Thank you
very much.

TROY GETHERS: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, I
appreciate that. Next speaker is Diane Furtell.

[Off mic]

DIANE FUTRELL: Good evening.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good evening.

DIANE FUTRELL: I want to thank you
for bringing this to Harlem.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: You're welcome.

1
2 DIANE FUTRELL: My name is Diane
3 Futrell and I am an employee of the New York City
4 Department of Environmental Protection assigned to
5 the Pennsylvania Avenue Landfill located on
6 Jamaica Bay, which is off the Belt Parkway in East
7 New York, Brooklyn. I reside in the 9th Council
8 District here in Harlem, which is represented by
9 the Honorable Inez E. Dickens.

10 On December 27th and December 28th
11 I was unable to report to work, which is 20 miles
12 away, due to the lack of public transportation
13 operating in the Carnarsie/East New York area.
14 According to the media reports there were no L
15 trains running and the other trains which are
16 located a distance away also had shut downs.

17 In addition due to the lack of
18 plowing, the connecting buses were also unable to
19 operate, therefore, it was impossible for me to
20 get to work. As a result, I have been forced to
21 use two days of vacation time to cover this
22 absence, or go without pay. This has happened to
23 many other city employees and it is absolutely
24 unfair. This city is very large and many
25 employees were not able to report to other

1 boroughs or even within their own boroughs.

2 Although the conditions in the East
3 New York area were horrendous, Harlem was not much
4 better. I reside on 132nd Street, which is the
5 home of the Honorable David Paterson, who was
6 serving as Governor on these dates. Despite a
7 Sanitation facility located only three blocks
8 away, the city barely plowed our street.

9 In addition to the Mayor refusing
10 to order the restoral of time to those employees
11 that were forced to stay home, I want to know why
12 the city unions have failed to speak out or file
13 grievances on behalf of their employees affected
14 by the shutdown of services. While the unions
15 have been quite outspoken against the Mayor in
16 general on the handling of the storm, at no time
17 have I heard them speaking up for their employees
18 that actually suffered losses as a result of this
19 storm. I want to know why they are strangely
20 silent on this issue.

21 In the future, I would recommend
22 that all city agencies set up contingency plans
23 for employees in the event of any type of weather
24 emergency, natural disaster, or terrorist event,
25

1 etc. Many employees work in other boroughs and in
2 the case of emergency where it is impossible to
3 reach other boroughs, employees should be able to
4 report to locations close to home if the city is
5 not going to close its services for that day.

6 These temporary location assignments should be in
7 place prior to any emergency. No employee should
8 ever be forced to go without pay or give up their
9 time due to no fault of their own.

10
11 Respectfully submitted.

12 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you
13 for your testimony. I just wanted to let you know
14 that I actually put a bill in to try to see if we
15 could force the city to give those days as a day
16 that you can either get paid for, not [off mic]
17 against vacation. So I think the unions were
18 trying, I'm not sure 100 %, but I would assume
19 that they were, and hopefully we can find a way to
20 make sure that there's some fairness. Because the
21 City's the one who didn't plow the streets in the
22 first place and then to double attack to try and
23 make you either lose pay or use a vacation day, so
24 I apologize for that.

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: And I also know

2 that Transport Workers Union obviously is grieving
3 a number of the complaints as a result of
4 individuals who were disciplined on that date, so
5 I know that union is responding.

6 DIANE FUTRELL: Okay. I'm an
7 administrative staff analyst and I'm part of OSA,
8 and at this point OSA, as far as I know, has not
9 filed any grievances on behalf of their employees.

10 Thank you.

11 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: And is OSA part
12 of DC 37 or is that--

13 [Crosstalk]

14 DIANE FUTRELL: No--

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: --state--

16 DIANE FUTRELL: --the first two
17 levels in a managerial level from the
18 administrative staff was taken out of the
19 managerial level and put back in the union as part
20 of OSA, Organization of Staff Analysts.

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Right.

22 DIANE FUTRELL: It represents staff
23 analyst type of series.

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. Our
25 last witness is Michelle Morrison.

1 [Off mic]

2 MICHELLE MORRISON: That's okay.

3 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: You can go
4 ahead. Council Member Williams, she left [off
5 mic] said she'd come back [off mic].

6 MICHELLE MORRISON: That's fine
7 [off mic].

8 [Off mic]

9 MICHELLE MORRISON: Okay. If we
10 are to take all the complaints here collectively,
11 it's all part, as far as I'm concerned--

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [Off mic].

13 MICHELLE MORRISON: --it's all part
14 of a big scam. I don't know if I have time to get
15 into that, but I think a lot of you here would be
16 surprised to know that there is preventative
17 technology that could have kept this snowstorm
18 from being this bad or happening at all. It was
19 applied during the second snowstorm, that's why
20 Boston got 40 inches, Connecticut got 30, New York
21 got 9, and I only measured 7 outside of my house.
22 But nobody wants to give me any attention.

23 None of the Council Members up here
24 has seen me before, except for you, Ms. Mendez,
25

1
2 and when I spoke to you, you were walking so fast,
3 trying so hard to get away from me because you had
4 to go to dinner with somebody, okay? The city has
5 ignored me for 12 years. How many of you remember
6 that the news told you there was going to be a
7 hurricane and the sun was shining? Okay, more
8 than once. I do this all the time, I do it by
9 myself, I need help, I need to get paid, the city
10 ignores me. There's a reason for this, though.

11 When you have all of the problems
12 that you've spoken about, this is all part of an
13 economic strategy to make the rich, not richer, a
14 lot richer, okay? It really bumps them up there
15 more so than without doing this. And what they
16 need to do is is they need to get rid of large
17 segments of the population and if I don't get
18 paid, there's going to be a Category 3 hurricane
19 in New York. It's overdue, I redirected three or
20 four or five of them, I can't even count anymore.
21 It's been 12 years, okay?

22 When that happens, that large
23 segment of people that needs to go, will be going.
24 There's information out there about this economic
25 strategy, there's not enough time for me to go

1 into it. I wish there was because you all really
2 need to hear about this. The average person
3 doesn't know about this, they don't understand the
4 weather, they think the weather just happens.
5 There are private, unregulated weather
6 modification companies causing this and there is
7 weather modification being done in New York City
8 that's causing this, okay? There was supposed to
9 be snow last Saturday, I worked on it, there was
10 no snow, there was sunshine, all right? The next
11 snow didn't show up on Saturday, they had them
12 planes up there--

14 SERGEANT-AT-ARMS: Keep it down,
15 please.

16 MICHELLE MORRISON: --in that sky,
17 7 o'clock Sunday morning, couldn't get up to plow
18 your snow for you, but they had them planes up
19 there, 7 o'clock Sunday morning. And every time
20 those planes fly, with 24 to 48 hours we have
21 rain, and sometime during the year we're going to
22 have tornadoes, tornadoes in New York City, it's
23 only been happening since the 1990s.

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Okay. So we
25 thank you for your comments, and we thank you for

1
2 your recommendation and, apparently, there's
3 another witness, so I was mistaken.

4 MICHELLE MORRISON: I have a few
5 seconds though.

6 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Well I think we
7 just--

8 [Crosstalk]

9 MICHELLE MORRISON: But see that's
10 another part of this strategy.

11 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: But thank you.

12 MICHELLE MORRISON: This is what--

13 [Off mic]

14 MICHELLE MORRISON: --Enron, you
15 cut the people off, talk over them so that they
16 could real question them about--

17 [Crosstalk]

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

19 Leslie Wyche?

20 [Off mic]

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: The Mayor, I
22 think you're the Mayor of Harlem?

23 LESLIE WYCHE: Yes [off mic].

24 First let me--I'll be very brief. Let me thank
25 you for this hearing here in Harlem, the village

1
2 of Harlem, and let me thank Councilwoman Inez
3 Dickens, who I have had the pleasure of working
4 for and know is on top of things.

5 My observation is that I formerly
6 used to be a district manager in Community Board
7 11 and 9 in Harlem, and my observation is that we
8 have--when we had the formulation of Community
9 Boards we used to have an emergency center in each
10 community district. I know that when I worked in
11 the Community Boards we had Metropolitan Hospital
12 in Board 11 and, I believe, in Central Harlem's
13 Board was the Harlem Hospital.

14 Now I was thinking that if no snow
15 emergency was declared and it was officially
16 declared, why not use the emergency centers, such
17 as the hospitals as a vehicle by which you can
18 communicate with the community to strategically
19 bring all of your [off mic] services to that area
20 to focus on, say, such as snow removal and
21 certainly providing emergency care services to
22 those who need it. I did not see that, and I
23 think that this is a recommendation that should be
24 communicated to the city.

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Wyche,

1
2 that's an excellent recommendation because one of
3 the issues that I have seen throughout these
4 hearings was the breakdown in communication and,
5 clearly, the breakdown in communication led to the
6 public not knowing what was going on.

7 In addition to that, a number of
8 individuals from Brooklyn, as well from Staten
9 Island, have basically put forth the
10 recommendation that it should be more locally
11 controlled and that we should go back to the days
12 where borough presidents had some power. Most of
13 our borough presidents were out there on the
14 ground, they know the conditions of their
15 boroughs, they were in direct contact with the
16 borough superintendent, the Department of
17 Sanitation. I've heard that over and over again
18 in the last three days that we should have more
19 local control, more decentralization of the
20 Department of Sanitation.

21 And last but not least, we also
22 heard during these last few days that individuals
23 who were calling 311, operators were referring
24 their calls to Community Boards. One of the
25 purposes of what you just indicated to getting

1
2 LONDELL DAVIS: As a CERT member,
3 we usually get some type of alerts whenever
4 there's a--

5 [Crosstalk]

6 LONDELL DAVIS: Oh, my name is
7 Londell Davis [phonetic]. Well as a CERT member,
8 we usually get alerts whenever there's some type
9 of disaster or emergency. I didn't even receive
10 any during the snow emergency, nothing. And I
11 thought that was kind of unusual. I didn't get
12 anything.

13 [Off mic]

14 MALE VOICE: Oh no, I didn't get
15 any, I'm a CERT member also, we didn't get any
16 call to go anywhere, do anything to help people.

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: So Council
18 Member Williams is also a CERT member and
19 yesterday at the Brooklyn hearing, it was
20 indicated that CERT members were not activated at
21 all throughout the city of New York and, again,
22 it's an illustration or an example of the fact
23 that communication [off mic] administration.

24 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: Well
25 first of all, thank you, because I know that being

1
2 a CERT member is a volunteer and you choose to do
3 that and you go through training. But what is
4 typically the line of communication between CERT
5 members, like, who do you communicate with
6 usually, what agency or how does--I mean, I'm not
7 really familiar with the structure.

8 LONDELL DAVIS: The CERT is under
9 OEM and we get all directions from OEM so usually
10 when a CERTA goes out, it comes from our CERT--
11 whoever's the leader of our CERT team, so usually
12 we'll get e-mail or a phone call or something
13 telling us what we need to do or who we need to
14 meet or we can go.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO: So
16 can you give us an example of a case where OEM did
17 communicate to you and what--maybe just the most
18 recent example, when was the...?

19 MALE VOICE: Oh, we never had an
20 emergency situation as of yet to do anything.

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: As of yet.

22 MALE VOICE: As of yet. We had
23 training, we did everything like he said, the
24 order would come down from OEM and we happen to be
25 CERT members for here, Community Board 10--

2 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Right.

3 MALE VOICE: --I would only assume
4 every Community Board has their own CERT members
5 and when it comes down, the person that is in
6 charge of our group would then call us and deploy
7 us to whatever location they want and then we deal
8 with it from there, but we haven't received that
9 as of yet.

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: So one of the
11 recommendations I know coming out as a result of
12 these hearings will be some sort of protocol will
13 be established for CERT members because clearly
14 there is no procedure and/or protocols established
15 for CERT members. And so you've been trained, you
16 have the certification and the question is, why
17 have they not activated it and what is the
18 procedure for doing so.

19 LONDELL DAVIS: Yes.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Okay?

21 LONDELL DAVIS: Yes.

22 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER MARK-VIVERITO:

24 Thank you very much.

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Is there anyone

2 else who wishes to testify at this time? Ma'am,
3 you like to testify?

4 [Off mic]

5 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Sure, come on
6 up. [Off mic] microphone, state your name, what
7 community you're from.

8 FEMALE VOICE: My name is [off
9 mic], I'm a nurse, and I'm here actually for my
10 class assignment, I'm from Queens.

11 [Off mic]

12 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah, I work, so I
13 can't make it. There's one thing I wanted to say
14 as I work three shifts that day, no relief, nobody
15 ever showed up to relieve me.

16 MALE VOICE: How old are you?

17 FEMALE VOICE: Twenty five.

18 [Off mic]

19 FEMALE VOICE: Yeah, no, 15 minutes
20 break. So as a nurse, I mean, we were trained in
21 school, you know, the patients come first, human
22 being comes first, so as a nurse if you know--I'm
23 really anxious, so I didn't plan to speak.

24 [Off mic]

25 FEMALE VOICE: When you go to work

2 and you expect a storm, usually you're told that
3 you have to be prepared, you bring the spare
4 underwear, you bring toothbrush, whatever, 'cause
5 it's the patient that matter to you so you cannot
6 leave until somebody else comes to relieve you.
7 So I think that our Mayor should think that it's
8 not always about the money, it's about people that
9 matter, so sometimes if he has to hire more
10 people, he should do that.

11 Another thing, I think we are just
12 lucky that we didn't have more deaths because in
13 my particular case I was working in a nursing home
14 at that time and I had a patient who is on
15 dialysis, we know all that that's life--they
16 depend on it to live. It's a Monday, Wednesday,
17 Friday schedule so she already missed two days.
18 On Monday, nobody ever came to pick her up to go
19 and get dialysis, so she would not get her
20 dialysis on the Wednesday which could give her a
21 heart attack, if there's no 911 to come and pick
22 her up, she will die. So I'm pretty sure that was
23 not the only case all over the city, so somebody
24 should let them know that we just were really,
25 really lucky that we didn't have more deaths than

2 what--

3 [Crosstalk]

4 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [Interposing]

5 Yesterday in Brooklyn, a gentleman, Mr. Davis,
6 testified his wife had a heart attack and the body
7 was left in the apartment for three days.

8 [Off mic]

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: So was with us
10 yesterday and that was very gripping. And then we
11 had someone else who testified that their [off
12 mic] also passed. In my district, as you know,
13 one of--well Council Member Vann's district, but
14 she happened to be a friend of mine, giving birth
15 to a child that, unfortunately, was having
16 problems and ultimately died and I assume [off
17 mic] as well. So we had a number of deaths, I
18 don't know if [off mic] ever we have an accurate
19 number on the number of deaths in the city of New
20 York, we're getting somewhat of a picture during
21 these hearings.

22 I thank you for your public
23 service, and I thank all of you for coming this
24 evening. Tomorrow is Queens; Monday is the Bronx;
25 Wednesday, South Brooklyn. It's really critically

2 important that we hear from each and every one of
3 you and that we see the face of New York City and
4 that we report back these experiences to the
5 Administration and that we come forward with some
6 recommendations. We represent you, we are the
7 people on the ground, we are here to serve you.

8 I thank each and every one of you,
9 and this hearing is now adjourned.

10 [Off mic]

C E R T I F I C A T E

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

Signature

Tammy Wittman

Date February 6, 2011