

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

of the

COMMITTEE ON SANITATION AND SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT
COMMITTEE ON FIRE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES
COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY
COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND INVESTIGATIONS

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January 18, 2011

Start: 7:30 pm

Recess: 9:55 pm

HELD AT: The Michael J. Petrides School
715 Ocean Terrace

B E F O R E:

LETITIA JAMES
JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
Chairpersons

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Letitia James
Jumaane D. Williams
Christine C. Quinn
Vincent Ignizio
James S. Oddo
Deborah Rose

A P P E A R A N C E S

James P. Molinaro
Borough President
Staten Island

Victoria Cerullo
Director
Mayor's Community Affairs Unit

Ignacio Terranova
Citywide Community Affairs Liaison
New York City Department of Sanitation

Rev. Lloyd Land
Assistant Pastor
First United Christian Church

Steve Margarella
Resident

Roseanne Friscia
Resident

Bob Olivari
Resident

Anthony Reinhardt
Representing
State Senator Andrew Lanza

Darlene Reid
Staten Island Post Office

John Tanner
Manager of Customer Service
Staten Island Post Office

James Luzzi
Oakwood Civic Association

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

Art Mazza
Resident

Mark Blaze Jeski
Mariners Harbor Civic Association

Kathy Romanelle
Mariners Harbor Civic Association

Dennis McKeon
Executive Director
Where to Turn

Frank Morano
Board Chair
Staten Island Community Board 3

Priscilla Marco
President
Van Duzer Street Civic Association

Sherry Jones
Resident

Sylvia Cunningham
Todt Hill Residents Association

Michael Arvanites
Representing
State Senator Diane Savino

Anthony J. Cosentino
First Vice Chairman
Community Board 1

Paul Lebowitz
President
Primary Care Ambulance

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

Elizabeth Andrie
Resident

Patricia Willis
Staten Island 4 Change

Frank Morano
Resident

Agnes Wilson
Resident

Charlotte Byrne
McKeown Snow Removal

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

I am joined this evening by my colleagues to my right: Council Member Ignizio from the great Borough of Staten Island, Council Member Oddo, this is his district, also from the great Borough of Staten Island, obviously. To my left: Council Member Rose, she also hails from Staten Island, and from Brooklyn, Council Member Williams.

The blizzard that struck our city in the days after Christmas had a tremendous, and at times disastrous, impact on the citizens of New York City, especially those who do not live in Manhattan. All of those who do not live in Manhattan raise your hands.

That storm, and the entirely inadequate job the city did to clean it up, knocked out most transportation systems, seriously delayed all types of emergency services, particularly ambulances, and left our city paralyzed for literally days.

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2 New York City has dealt with plenty
3 of storms of similar scale. And I, like many
4 other Council Members, have often sung the praises
5 of Commissioner Doherty and the Department of
6 Sanitation for their excellent response and hard
7 working in addressing those storms. But this
8 time, the city failed to meet its own standards,
9 or even the basic needs of its citizenry. We are
10 here today to hear from Staten Islanders about how
11 this failure impacted your lives and what you
12 think we can do to prevent those impacts in the
13 future.

14 At a Council hearing last week,
15 Commissioner Doherty testified in a very
16 constructive and open manner about what took place
17 during the Christmas blizzard. At that hearing,
18 we focused on the larger systematic and
19 operational issues that impacted the city's
20 preparation and response to the storm.

21 We also heard Administration
22 testimony from Deputy Mayor of Operations Stephen
23 Goldsmith, the Commissioner of the Office of
24 Emergency Management Joseph Bruno, and Fire
25 Commissioner Salvatore Cassano. In addition, we

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2 heard from a variety of unions and civic groups
3 impacted by the storm and its cleanup. I believe
4 that most viewers and participants in that hearing
5 found it to be both constructive and respectful.

6 If you listened or watched those
7 hearings, raise your hands. So, obviously, we
8 have to inform you of the outcomes of those
9 hearings and some of the recommendations going
10 forward.

11 At tonight's hearing, we are moving
12 on to the next phase of hearings about the storm
13 and its aftermath. Tonight, we begin the very
14 important process of hearing directly from the
15 public about what they saw and experienced as a
16 result of the storm. We are extremely pleased to
17 start that process here in Staten Island.

18 I know that many of us endured
19 experiences that were painful and caused us really
20 harm. We want to hear about those experiences.
21 But I request that everyone strive to make
22 constructive comments to add to what we know about
23 solving what went wrong. No one knows as much
24 about what happened during and after that storm
25 than you, the citizens of Staten Island. So

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2 educate us, but please keep it civil and try to
3 keep it constructive and try to keep it as brief
4 as possible. Although, I'm surrounded by the
5 Staten Island delegation and I will not cut you
6 off.

7 We have representatives this
8 evening from the Department of Sanitation and the
9 Mayor's Community Affairs Unit. From what I
10 understand, as of 5:00--let me say that--as of
11 5:00, I was informed that they will not answer any
12 questions, which I find unacceptable and an act of
13 disrespect to the citizens of Staten Island. But
14 they will listen.

15 I believe that we should engage in
16 discourse. They should be confronted by the
17 voters, by the people who put them in office, and
18 by those who pay their salaries. They should
19 answer their questions, but unfortunately that is
20 not the case this evening. I hope going forward
21 they will change their decision and revise it as
22 we move on to another borough.

23 Before we go on to opening
24 statements, I would like to turn the microphone
25 over to the great Borough President of Staten

Island, Borough President Jim Molinaro.

[Applause]

JAMES P. MOLINARO: Thank you very much to Tish James and most of you from Staten Island. I want to thank you for giving the people of Staten Island the opportunity to go into the facts that happened that day. It's a good day for when the snows gone. Maybe we can resolve and we can get some answers that we don't have at the present time. Again, I want to thank you and your committee and members of the Council for coming out here on this night. We welcome you. Let's continue and let's start the meeting.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Borough President. Thank you for your public service and all that you do for the citizens of Staten Island and for New York City.

The next opening statement is my Co-Chair Council Member Jumaane Williams.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you. Good evening. As Chair of the Committee on Oversight and Investigations, I'm very pleased to co-chair and join my colleague Tish James to discuss last month's blizzard.

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2 Last week, we heard from the
3 Administration about its decision making and the
4 actions of the city agencies before, during and
5 after the storm. Tonight, we will hear from you,
6 Staten Island. Thank you for having me. We will
7 hear about the direct impact that those same
8 Administration decisions and actions had on the
9 people of Staten Island.

10 We know that many of you were angry
11 about the city's response to the blizzard, and you
12 had every right to be; angry about the seeming
13 lack of preparation for a storm whose severity was
14 forecast. Angry about the meltdown of city
15 services and angry, too, about your Mayor, whose
16 initial responses left a lot and much to be
17 desired.

18 By now it's no secret that the
19 breakdown of city services had a profound effect
20 on New Yorkers, from streets that were still not
21 plowed three days after the last snowflake fell.
22 Even more, to New Yorkers struggling to make it to
23 the hospital for emergency care, to homebound
24 seniors having to rely on strangers for food
25 because Meals on Wheels could not make it through

1 the streets.

2 We know what went wrong. As was
3 testified, there was no real leadership to make
4 the minute-by-minute decisions that needed to be
5 made. There was confusion about the tools that
6 they already had, like calling a snow emergency,
7 or calling a local emergency. There was also an
8 inability to understand the powers that lay within
9 the Deputy Mayor or within the OEM.

10 The Administration has accepted
11 some and much of the responsibility for those
12 failures. Although, I believe the MTA hearings
13 left a lot to be desired in that category. But it
14 remains important for New Yorkers to speak out
15 about their specific experiences during and after
16 the blizzard, to voice their concerns and also
17 offer suggestions for reform.

18 The Administration is continuing to
19 evaluate its performance during weather-related
20 emergencies. We hope that the information
21 gathered at tonight's hearing will inform the
22 steps that the city takes to improve its services
23 so that the people of New York never face such
24 adversity again.

Thank you of taking the time out of your schedules to attend this hearing. I look forward to your testimony.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. We happen to be in the district of the Chair of the Republican Delegation in the City Council, who I have found to be one of the most professional individuals, someone who is very friendly, who has reached out to me from time to time and I respect him greatly. Ladies and gentlemen: Council Member Jimmy Oddo.

[Applause]

COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Thank you, Madame Chair. Let me just begin by welcoming Tish and Jumaane to Staten Island. It's really a pleasure to have you here. As the Chairlady said, we had an epic hearing last Monday, 7.5 hours worth of testimony. As a guy who's been around the City Council for a very long time, I thought it was one of our best moments as an institution. We saw officials from the Bloomberg Administration admit candidly that no one had his hand or her hand on the wheel.

The turnout tonight might be

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2 considered light by some folks. I think we all
3 know the demands of our lives and I'm sure there
4 are a lot of people who wish to be here tonight
5 who actually did not come. But whether there are
6 50 people in this room or 500, it doesn't negate
7 the fact that last week Staten Islanders were mad
8 as hell and they had a right to be.

9 So, I want those of you who are
10 here tonight to know that your stories, your
11 observations, your suggestions, and your rants are
12 really important. It's to help ensure that this
13 is not a fleeting moment in New York City's
14 history. We will get systemic changes from the
15 mistakes that were made.

16 So I just want to thank you for
17 being here and thank you for being vigilant and
18 thank you for being great Staten Islanders.

19 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: It's my
20 understanding that this is a border district and
21 this district is also chaired by my very good
22 friend Councilwoman Debi Rose.

23 [Applause]

24 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Good evening.
25 I first want to begin by thanking you for coming

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2 out tonight. You know, last week we did a survey
3 to find out how residents of Staten Island were
4 impacted by the snow storm. Over 1,700 of you
5 answered the survey and told us your personal
6 stories about how this storm impacted upon your
7 life, your ability to get to work and to go on
8 with your daily lives.

9 So, as I've said on many occasions
10 over the last three weeks, the city's performance
11 during the December blizzard was simply abysmal.
12 It's the worst since Mayor Lindsay's debacle back
13 in 1969. Streets went unplowed for days and
14 people were unable to get to work.

15 I'm not going to spend a lot of
16 time recounting the long list of the city's
17 failures during the blizzard because the purpose
18 of tonight's meeting is really to hear from you.
19 You, Staten Islanders, who had to endure not
20 having buses, being stranded in the ferry
21 terminal, not being able to get to work, or not
22 being able to get to dialysis or to a hospital,
23 whatever you had to do during that time.

24 We want to hear your stories and
25 your questions and your suggestions for dealing

1 with future storms. However, I do want to take a
2 moment to share with you what the City Council has
3 learned since we began holding hearings about the
4 blizzard two weeks ago. There is near unanimous
5 agreement that things would have been better if a
6 snow emergency had been declared.
7

8 [Applause]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: But I've yet
10 to hear a sensible explanation for why it wasn't.
11 We know that minute-to-minute responsibility for
12 coordinating the response to the blizzard lies
13 somewhere between Commissioner Bruno and Deputy
14 Mayor Goldsmith. But neither of them can tell you
15 who exactly is responsible and responsible for
16 what. And while both were more than willing to
17 accept the blame for this disaster, neither could
18 really explain why everything went so badly.

19 We also learned that the MTA made a
20 decision not to implement a level four plan, which
21 would have essentially dedicated all of its
22 resources to dealing with the snow. They didn't
23 make that call until December 26th. And by then,
24 it was too late. And in my opinion, this decision
25 was also never adequately explained.

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2 We've all heard the rumors about
3 the Sanitation Department slowdown and those
4 allegations are the subject of a federal
5 investigation. I myself don't believe it.

6 However, one thing is already clear
7 a slowdown does not explain the decision not to
8 call a snow emergency. A slowdown does not
9 explain why the Mayor and his Administration
10 didn't have accurate information about the
11 conditions in the outer boroughs, which is Staten
12 Island. And a slowdown does not explain why the
13 MTA failed to prepare the transit system for the
14 storm and why our residents were stranded in the
15 ferry terminal on the SIRT and on buses on our
16 city streets.

17 I say all of this to acknowledge
18 that you all have the right to be frustrated. The
19 city failed you, and no one has truly explained
20 why. The Administration wants to move on from
21 this story, I can understand why, without anyone
22 really being held accountable. The Administration
23 has said sorry and has promised to do better in
24 the future. But to me, that does not compensate
25 for the three days of chaos we all had to endure.

The blizzard was a force of nature but the catastrophe was manmade. You have every right to expect more competence and care from your government. We will do everything in our power to ensure that government meets those expectations.

I look forward to hearing from all of you tonight, because together we can make sure that a disaster like this never happens again. Because I want to repeat, this catastrophe was manmade. Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. Now, the last member of the trio representing Staten Island, a man who is no stranger to speaking truth to power, the very direct Council Member Vincent Ignizio.

COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Thank you very much.

[Applause]

COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Thank you. I wear that proudly, from the two chairs. Thank you very much.

You know, if you'd bear with me for a second, we'll explain why Staten Islanders are

1 upset. There was 30 inches of snow that came
2 down, and we all hear this: nothing. No plows.
3 You know, in the last two storms, you all can
4 attest to, because I've talked to many of my
5 constituents: boy, we heard a lot of plows, man we
6 heard salt trucks going down our streets. We
7 heard that too.

8 [Laughter]

9 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: But we
10 heard a lot of activity. During this storm, we
11 heard nothing, and that was Monday. In this storm
12 we heard nothing, and it was Tuesday. And now the
13 storm, we heard Wednesday, we heard nothing. And
14 Thursday, finally, towards the end of Thursday, we
15 started seeing our streets be cleared.

16 Then I got pictures sent on my
17 Facebook from Manhattan. On of my colleagues, who
18 were particularly, a couple or more in midtown
19 Manhattan, and you wouldn't have even known it
20 snowed. Not only were the streets cleared, but it
21 was taken off the side banks. There was parking.
22 It was business as usual. And the question asked
23 that everyone has here is why is any one borough
24 treated any differently from the other. We pay
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2 taxes, we work hard, and it was a failure, a
3 systemic failure from this administration.

4 The failure was in management and
5 execution and follow-up. Why did it take so long
6 for the Administration to realize they had a major
7 problem on their hands? It shouldn't have taken
8 Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Then to
9 speak about this hearing right now, this is not a
10 witch hunt. This is about getting out to the
11 public and saying: what did you experience, so we
12 can improve that in the future.

13 So an Administration who says they
14 pride themselves on accountability refuses to be
15 held accountable to the people of my borough.
16 That is a slap in the face and I'm not pleased
17 about that. You should talk to anybody here; we
18 are not pleased about that, Madame Chair.

19 I want to thank the Speaker for
20 bringing us out and I want to thank my fellow
21 chair for coming out and actually talking to the
22 people of Staten Island. I know John Doherty
23 knows how to fight a blizzard. And I know that
24 somewhere along the line, he was not given the
25 resources, the permission or the budget to do so

and to do so correctly. I hope we get to the bottom of that today. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. And now, we will hear from the Administration, Victoria Cerullo, representing the Mayor's Community Affairs Unit and Iggy Terranova, representing the Department of Sanitation, the Citywide Community Affairs Office. Are they here?

Let me just say, before you begin, that I hope that you would not accept a criticism as a personal one. The criticism is directed at the upper echelons of the Administration who thought that it's not appropriate or feasible to send a representative from the Department of Sanitation, specifically the borough superintendent and/or a representative from Office of Emergency Management to explain the 15-point plan and lastly, to answer questions. I believe that it's an affront and a lack of respect, not only to this body but the citizens of this great borough. You may begin.

[Applause]

IGNACIO TERRANOVA: Good evening.

1 I am Iggy Terranova and I am representing the
2 Department of Sanitation tonight. I would like to
3 extend the Department's apology to all New Yorkers
4 who expected timely and efficient service after
5 the December 26th blizzard. The response was not
6 acceptable. We are continuing to assess the storm
7 and our response. We will be evaluating our
8 strategies in conjunction with other agencies and
9 implement additional changes that may be necessary
10 to enhance interagency coordination as well as
11 communication with the public.
12

13 Some of those changes have already
14 been put in place during the recent snow storm.
15 We take pride in our work and our reputation for
16 being the world's best snow fighters. We will
17 work hard to regain your trust and provide the
18 timely and efficient service that we have
19 constantly provided during the past major snow
20 storms.

21 Tonight, I am hear to listen to the
22 community's concerns and I will take each one back
23 to Commissioner Doherty. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

25 [Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: You can respectfully tell Commissioner Doherty and more specifically the Mayor of the City of New York, we're not here for apologies, we're here for answers. Unfortunately, you're not in the position to provide us with any. Council Member Williams?

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Yes, I just had to speak because I hadn't joined in the chorus when people were saying that they're made because the Administration is not taking questions. My understanding was this was the extension of the public hearing and normally during the public process this doesn't happen. But I'm pissed off now that the Administration would come here and talk to the people but they can't talk with the people.

I don't understand why we are allowing them an access to speak to these people if they will not listen to them and won't take any questions. I would suggest that they just don't speak. Because that's when it becomes insulting; that's when it's a slap in the face. If you're going to be here and speak, these people deserve

to be able to ask you questions if you're going to talk to them, and this should be a dialogue.

Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Our first witness is Reverend Lloyd Land, the Assistant Pastor of the First United Christian Church. Reverend Land?

REV. LLOYD LAND: Thank the Lord, everyone. Could I ask my church members to please stand? Could you come over here for a minute? I have a church with 300 people, 300. Seventy-five percent of my church members live in an area called Park Hill. Park Hill is made up of 14 buildings where approximately 10,000 people live. Park Hill was not plowed out for five days.

Park Hill saw snowplows come through the streets but would not put the plows down on the asphalt. I think it was shameless. Shameless that they come through, driving a truck with a plow and won't put the plow on the asphalt to shovel away the snow.

The sidewalks in Park Hill, as of this moment, have not had any sort of snow

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2 removal. Up until today, that same snow turned to
3 ice. And the ice hasn't been removed. From
4 December the 26th, which was a Sunday, until now,
5 it's shameless. And they're talking about a plan?
6 I'm asking what kind of plan are they speaking of?

7 Whereas even the next Sunday after
8 the 26th for the time in five years, for the first
9 time in five years, we had less than 100 people in
10 my church. Less than 100, and when I say mind
11 boggling, it's really mind boggling. When my
12 church members wanted to buy a new building, when
13 we wanted to buy a new building, we had women lay
14 down on the floor and say, no, we will not leave
15 our church, we will not leave First United
16 Christian Church, which is located at 109 Victory
17 Boulevard. I mean they were like: Oh Reverend,
18 man, please, we can't sell this building.

19 But they couldn't get from Park
20 Hill to 109 Victory Boulevard. Less than 70
21 people, about 70 to 75 people came to church the
22 next Sunday because Park Hill could not get plowed
23 out. We have about 225 members of our church who
24 live in the Park Hill area. It's ridiculous.

25 Now, oh, but that's only a church.

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2 But it's still people. There are 10,000 people
3 that live in Park Hill, and until today, there has
4 been no snow or ice removal from that area. I
5 think it's wrong.

6 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you,
7 Pastor.

8 [Applause]

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: The next
10 witness is Steve Margarella. I apologize if I
11 mispronounced your name. Did I do okay?

12 STEVE MARGARELLA: You did that
13 well.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.

15 STEVE MARGARELLA: My name is Steve
16 Margarella and I'm alone.

17 [Laughter]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: No you're
19 not, we're with you.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Right.

21 STEVE MARGARELLA: I want to take a
22 moment and I want to thank our Borough President
23 and our Council Members Ignizio, Oddo and Debi
24 Rose for your services and dedication to your
25 constituency. Councilwoman James, I don't know

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you, but I like your style.

I was born and raised in Staten Island. I own a snow removal company. I've been doing snow for 40 years. I have worked every storm for the last four years. So I have a couple of concerns and I have a couple of questions. They're obviously not going to get answered tonight.

So, for example, I subscribe to Weather Services for my company. I have forecasters on speed dial. I get the information the same time that the networks do. I have the printouts of my early warnings. I'm guessing that the City of New York has the same information. I don't about better than mine, but I'm sure that they get at least as good as mine.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: You would think so.

STEVE MARGARELLA: I clearly don't understand why this occurred. The fact that the Mayor, I get it, I'm sorry doesn't work for me. I don't know why OEM didn't call a snow emergency. In fact, my yard is located on an artery. So my trucks had trouble getting in and out of my yard

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2 because within a two-block span, we had six buses,
3 two Sanitation vehicles and two ambulances stuck
4 on an artery, on an artery. I don't know why
5 there are no four-wheel drive ambulances. Why
6 there isn't at least three or four--

7 [Applause]

8 STEVE MARGARELLA: --in each
9 borough. My dispatchers were on the phone because
10 there were jobs that we couldn't get to. We do
11 supermarkets in Brooklyn and all over Staten
12 Island, but we wasted a total of eight hours
13 trying to get to a job in Brooklyn. We just
14 couldn't get within four blocks of it. My
15 dispatchers are on the phone with my drivers
16 saying God forbid somebody has a heart attack,
17 what are you going to do?

18 The streets were impassable. Not
19 as much because of the snow as it was because
20 there were vehicles. The best vehicles in the
21 world can't get around a bus or a tractor trailer
22 that's stuck across an intersection, unless you
23 have a helicopter. And I'm telling you, I was out
24 for 44 hours of that storm. The first 44 hours I
25 worked myself, checking on my trucks all over the

1 place.

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3 I have no ax to grind here. I
4 don't know any individuals. I do not believe that
5 there was a Sanitation slowdown. I know the
6 reality of plowing snow. We don't have the time
7 for me to explain it to you now. You put 30
8 inches of snow, of packed snow in front of a plow
9 and the plow is not going to move the snow. It's
10 not going to work.

11 Once that snow is compacted, you
12 need a machine to move it. The plows that did try
13 to move it, and we had one on Richmond Terrace in
14 Staten Island, twisted like a pretzel. It was a
15 30-ton piece of machinery. There was a breakdown.
16 I want to know why whoever is in charge of the
17 Office of Emergency Management, number one, why he
18 didn't pull the together and why he still has his
19 job.

20 [Applause]

21 STEVE MARGARELLA: I don't know who
22 the Assistant Mayor is that was in charge at the
23 time but I don't know why he still has his job. I
24 do not know the gentleman; I don't even know
25 anybody that knows the gentleman from EMS that was

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2 fired. But I sure don't know why he was fired
3 when his vehicles couldn't get through as a result
4 of--

5 [Applause]

6 STEVE MARGARELLA: This was a
7 systemic breakdown. I want to know why the
8 borough, Staten Island always gets--I'm doing this
9 a lot of years--Staten Island always gets 20 to 30
10 percent more snow than Manhattan. Central Park
11 measurements are always less than Staten Island.
12 So why can't Staten Island pull their own trigger
13 for snow removal? Why do we have to wait for
14 somebody from Manhattan from King Mike's office to
15 say that it is okay fellas, go ahead?

16 [Applause]

17 STEVE MARGARELLA: There were a
18 couple of other questions I had and I don't want
19 to take up too much time. I don't understand why--

20 MALE VOICE: [off mic]

21 STEVE MARGARELLA: You're right.
22 The last two snows, plowing dry asphalt doesn't do
23 it for me. It doesn't do it for me. The one
24 thing I'd like to do is to tell the Reverend, I'm
25 going to give you my card and give you my phone

number and I'm going to get you a couple of salt trucks for tomorrow. Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. Very powerful. Rosanne Friscia. I'm sorry? Friscia, I apologize.

ROSEANNE FRISCIA: Good evening. First of all, I would like to thank the City Council for having these public hearings. I've lived on Staten Island for over 35 years and have been through many a snow storm. What I have witnessed and experienced from the blizzard in December was both appalling and unacceptable. The city's response or lack thereof, was ridiculous. We were all prisoners.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Nick, help her please. Thank you.

[Background conversation]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Attack of the microphone.

ROSEANNE FRISCIA: The city's response or lack thereof, was ridiculous. We were all prisoners in our own homes. If this blizzard was not considered a snow emergency, then what

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2 constitutes a snow emergency? My area of
3 Castleton Corners, Manor Heights did not get
4 plowed for over three days. Where were the plows?
5 Where were the plows when there were 12 inches?
6 Where were the plows when there were 24 inches?
7 There were supposed to be 1,700 plows and over
8 2,000 Sanitation workers on call. Where were
9 they? The few plows we saw rode through other
10 areas with their plows raised. People were
11 trapped on their unplowed streets.

12 Businesses could not open. As we
13 have our own business, we could not open our
14 business for over three days. How much revenue
15 was lost and who is accountable to make that money
16 up to us? We can't afford to pay our workers, and
17 yet my husband had the decency to pay them for the
18 three days that they could not get to work. And
19 small business is overtaxed as it is. So we'll
20 never make up that money.

21 Deputy Mayor Goldsmith stated and
22 the City Council hearing that Mayor Bloomberg did
23 not have the proper facts about the condition of
24 our city, as he was out of town. Whose job is it
25 to apprise the Mayor of the horrible conditions

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CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you very much. Bob Olivari?

BOB OLIVARI: I'll be brief and nowhere near as dramatic. Not that it isn't warranted; believe me, it is. I would just like to thank all of you for being here and particularly for the Borough President, whom I'd like to give another job at the conclusion of my remarks.

One of the things that I witnessed in my neighborhood, my neighbors were quite irate about, and I live in Council Member Rose's district, right off Parks Avenue, was that for many, many hours, for days plows were going up and down Forest Avenue and Park Boulevard, a block from us and yet no plows directed to any of the blocks in between those two streets, with the exception I guess of the street that leads to Rumsey, what used to be St. Vincent's Hospital on Staten Island.

So my question to the Council Members, if you could relay this to those who refuse to be here to answer questions tonight is: why is that? Was there no direction for the

Sanitation workers? Were they forbidden to plow Great Place and the other side streets? What was the chain of command?

My recommendation is local control. Jim, I hate to give you another job, but I really believe that the borough presidents and the Council Members are best equipped to relay to whether it's the local Sanitation garage, it's the borough commissioner, to redirect the resources.

When the main streets are cleared and the streets at the hospitals are cleared, to redirect those resources in a timely fashion to where they're needed. Now, you know, the mystery for all of us, I'm sure your experiences are the same as mine in the last major snow storm less than a week ago. My street was plowed three times before dawn, between midnight and dawn. And then this morning, my street was plowed before 6:30 in the morning. Then last February, my street was plowed, in that 20 inch storm, in a timely fashion.

So my question is please find out what happened then, what didn't happen on the Christmas snow storm and what happened now. You

1 know, basically, what happened? Who was in charge
2 of redirecting resources? Why did it work those
3 other times and this last time and not that time?
4 So that all of us can have some assurance that
5 what happened on December 26th won't happen to us
6 again. Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

9 [Applause]

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member
11 Oddo?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: You made a
13 comment about local control and the flow of
14 information. There was testimony last Monday from
15 the OEM that was something to the effect that he
16 didn't know how bad it was on the ground,
17 particularly in South Brooklyn and Staten Island.
18 I made a quip about all he had to do or anyone was
19 to go on our Facebook pages and he would have
20 found out.

21 BOB OLIVARI: Right.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: And one of
23 the points that we tried to drive home is that
24 each Council Member knows his or her district
25 better than anyone. And on this issue, on snow

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2 removal, and let me be so bold as to suggest to
3 the Administration on all issues, whether they
4 agree or disagree with our perspective, they
5 should at least accept the information flow.

6 This last, I won't call it a storm,
7 I'll call it this last snow ground ball that they
8 handled very well, there was much more contact
9 from the Administration, from the Deputy Mayor
10 level to the DRS level asking Council Members how
11 is it out there. Is that the MO from this point
12 on? I hope so. Is it a fleeting moment? I hope
13 not.

14 But you're absolutely right about
15 allowing us to get the information from all of you
16 and to deliver it to them and for them to listen
17 to it. That first snow storm, they weren't
18 hearing it. They were not hearing it. I emailed
19 a deputy mayor at 4:20 on that Monday and their
20 mantra was that of the Mayor. You know, they
21 weren't hearing 30 inches of snow. Well you've
22 got a problem on your hands. So I think the point
23 is well taken. I think Deputy Mayor Goldsmith
24 acknowledged that he's going to use us more often
25 in subsequent storms.

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2 BOB OLIVARI: Thank you. One can
3 only hope.

4 [Applause]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: If I can,
6 one other point. You can sit down if you want, if
7 it's more comfortable. One other point was the
8 supervision was suspect and what we learned in the
9 hearing as well. In the interest of being green
10 and the type of administration, they dispatched
11 the supervisors of the plow workers with Priuses.
12 Now, anybody knows that the Priuses, they don't
13 weigh too much. They're great on gas economy, but
14 in the blizzard that's the last vehicle you want
15 because it doesn't weigh anything, there's nothing
16 to hold it down and it has no four-wheel drive.
17 So how are the guys that are supposed to watch the
18 people in plows able to do their job when they
19 have Priuses? And the answer is they couldn't and
20 they didn't and that continued to lead to the
21 problem.

22 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Olivari,
23 let me just say that I know that I'm in Staten
24 Island, but I did speak to my Borough President,
25 Marty Markowitz, and he is totally in support of

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2 local control. He believes in decentralization
3 and I tend to support your position as well as my
4 Borough President. I believe that it should come
5 from the Borough President's office. That is one
6 recommendation that I would like to put on the
7 floor for possible consideration.

8 The next speaker is Anthony
9 Reinhardt from the Office of Senator Andrew Lanza.
10 Mr. Reinhardt?

11 ANTHONY REINHARDT: Council Member
12 James and gathered officials: Council Member Oddo,
13 Council Member Ignizio, Borough President, thank
14 you for the time to speak this evening.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Speak up.

16 ANTHONY REINHARDT: My name is
17 Anthony Reinhardt. I'm here representing Senator
18 Andrew Lanza who is in legislative session in
19 Albany. Senator Lanza asked that I speak to you
20 today regarding his concerns related the response
21 to the December 26th blizzard that crippled New
22 York and especially affected Staten Island.

23 First, Senator Lanza would like to
24 commend the City Council for holding these
25 hearings in each borough. It is important that

1
2 our neighbors have the ability to speak out and
3 have their concerns heard. It is through this
4 type of collaborative effort that we will be able
5 to prepare for future events and emergencies. The
6 systematic failure that occurred last month must
7 be used as a learning opportunity. This type of
8 situation clearly cannot happen again.

9 After reading the preliminary
10 review of the city's response to the December 25th
11 blizzard, produced by the Mayor's office, it is
12 Senator Lanza's opinion that three key areas must
13 be addressed: snow removal, transportation and
14 emergency services.

15 On the topic of snow removal, we
16 have read various accounts of what may have gone
17 wrong. Based on discussions that Senator Lanza
18 and his staff have had with Sanitation workers, it
19 seems that the city must do a better job with
20 providing Sanitation workers with the tools and
21 training necessary to effectively discharge their
22 duties.

23 Additionally, it was noted that the
24 city did not deploy sufficient resources,
25 including equipment, in a timely fashion.

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2 Inexplicably, numerous trucks did not even have
3 snow chains on their tires. These matters need to
4 be addressed when laying out future storm
5 preparations.

6 Regarding transportation, city
7 officials were telling individuals that they
8 should go about business as usual, such as heading
9 off to plays, or that they could ride mass transit
10 to get them to and from their destinations. When
11 it became clear that the transit services could
12 not negotiate the treacherous roadways, thousands
13 of individuals became stranded. The worst aspect
14 of this was the people were left stranded at bus
15 stops, train stations and the Staten Island Ferry
16 Terminal with no way of knowing what the status of
17 the service was.

18 The following morning, some
19 individuals made it to their bus stops and boarded
20 express buses only to find out somewhere down the
21 road that key arteries such as Hylan Boulevard
22 were not passable and they would need to head
23 back.

24 We have heard that the MTA has
25 pledged a full review of the agency's shortcomings

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2 over the next several weeks and Senator Lanza
3 looks forward to reviewing the report and hopes it
4 will include explanations as to why trains that
5 operate in this weather were unable to do so in
6 this storm and what can be done to ensure that
7 buses will be able to continue to transport
8 passengers so that they do not become stranded.

9 New York cannot send mixed signals,
10 telling people that the city is open for business
11 and then leave them stranded due to lack of
12 planning.

13 And finally, on the topic of
14 emergency services, with an emergency call backlog
15 of 1,300 calls, a full review of procedures during
16 an emergency must be undertaken. Senator Lanza
17 was reading the preliminary report that such a
18 review will soon be underway.

19 Outfitting emergency vehicles with
20 the necessary equipment to free their vehicles
21 should they become stuck in the snow is one aspect
22 that must be looked at. One hundred ambulances
23 were stranded in the storm and alternative
24 solutions to help prevent this kind of situation
25 need to be addressed.

1
2 Ultimately, many issues experienced
3 were the result of inadequate communication.

4 Senator Lanza looks forward to seeing the proposed
5 section of NYC.gov for winter weather events fully
6 up and running. This site should include
7 information on school closures, MTA advisories,
8 weather updates and links for individuals who need
9 to report unplowed streets and other local issues.

10 Many promises have been made in the
11 aftermath of this storm by the city and by the
12 preliminary report to the Mayor. It is now
13 imperative that we hold the city accountable in
14 ensuring that these discussions continue to
15 advance and are ultimately implemented.

16 Again, on behalf of Senator Lanza,
17 thank you for holding the hearing and for looking
18 at what steps need to be taken to ensure that we
19 do encounter a similar situation.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Mr.
21 Reinhardt and thank Senator Lanza.

22 [Applause]

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Do you have a
24 copy of your testimony for our record? I
25 particularly want to thank Senator Lanza on the

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that?

DARLENE REID: 155,226.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Wow.

DARLENE REID: On the 28th, over 10,084 deliveries could not be made because of the unplowed streets, and on the 29th: 925.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Wow.

DARLENE REID: John, would you like to add something?

JOHN TANNER: I'd just like to take a moment--

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Could you--

[Crosstalk]

JOHN TANNER: No problem. We have letter carriers working for us here on Staten Island and the majority of the workers live on Staten Island. We received numerous callouts due to the fact that public transportation was not running. As was said, there were no buses or trains. Some people walked four or five miles to get to work, believe it or not.

But once we got the mail to the buildings, we still couldn't get out to the streets, such as Hylan Boulevard wasn't even

1
2 plowed. It's a main artery, which is really
3 unacceptable. It's a good thing that for most of
4 our customer it wasn't a check day. A lot of
5 people depend on the mail. But for the most part,
6 like I said, most of our employees live up on the
7 island and they couldn't get to work. That's
8 really the major issue we had.

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Can I ask a
11 question?

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member
13 Rose?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: What day were
15 you actually able to deliver the mail?

16 JOHN TANNER: 100 percent?

17 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Yes.

18 JOHN TANNER: 4:30 Thursday.

19 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thursday?
20 You were not able to deliver the mail primarily
21 because the streets were impassible?

22 JOHN TANNER: Correct.

23 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: What was your
24 attendance at the main post office? How many of
25 your workers were able to get to work? What was

the percentage?

JOHN TANNER: The first day it was 60 percent of the workers reporting to work, 60 percent that did report Monday and it increased as we went along. The second day actually was like 98 percent. So the second day was a lot better.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: The second day was what?

JOHN TANNER: It was like 95 percent.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: 98.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: 98, okay.

JOHN TANNER: It was a lot better. But, you know, the issue is once again, we had people that just couldn't come to work until the transit was taken care of.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: My last question, do your vehicles have chains on them?

JOHN TANNER: They're not required to. They're self-efficient. They're really not required, only for the major trucks for transportation and larger trucks.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member

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Williams?

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Thank you for the testimony. I just want to make sure I got it right. The 26th was 155,226?

DARLENE REID: Correct.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: You didn't give a number for the 27th.

DARLENE REID: I'm sorry, but that's the 27th.

JOHN TANNER: That's the first day.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: 26th or the 27th, that's the 27th?

DARLENE REID: The 27th.

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS: Is there a number that's an average number that you always make deliveries? How much--

JOHN TANNER: We do 100 percent every day.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: 100 percent. What's the absentee rate normally?

JOHN TANNER: Normally, it's like 2 percent or 3 percent.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: And the first day you said was 60?

JOHN TANNER: Yeah.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: All right, thank you. But while I'm talking, and I wanted to make a comment about something that was mentioned before that had to do with the EMS chief. I just want to make mention I hope people continue to clamor to this question because the reason I was given why he was demoted was because he didn't send the proper information back up the chain and didn't sound the proper alarm which is the exact things that the commissioners and the Deputy Mayor didn't do.

So I don't understand why this guy who didn't have the power to call a snow emergency, didn't have the power to bring resources, didn't have the power to plow the streets, is demoted, and all the people who did, still have their jobs, have not been demoted and have not been publicly reprimanded.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.
Council Member Ignizio, did you have a comment?

COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: No, I'm just simply referring to the fact that the

1 Administration was on TV on Monday, Tuesday and
2 Wednesday talking about the extremely high
3 percentage of streets that were passable. Having
4 talked to the Postal Service and they have these
5 statistics right at his fingertips that clearly it
6 wasn't. So there's a massive breakdown in
7 communication between literally the highest level
8 of government in the City of New York and the
9 postal worker who knows the street better than
10 anybody.
11

12 So clearly, there really does need
13 to be a better understanding of what the actual
14 conditions are on the ground if the Postal Service
15 knows it and the letter carrier knows it but the
16 Mayor of the City of New York doesn't. That's a
17 severe breakdown in accountability that this
18 Administration needs to deal with. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: James Luzzi?
20 Did I pronounce your name correctly? He's like a
21 tough guy. Sorry.

22 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: He's going to
23 let you know.

24 JAMES LUZZI: I'd like to thank the
25 Council Members, which I was totally engrossed by

1 watching the hearings that were conducted after
2 the storm. I witnessed a death on that day.

3 A Sanitation truck two doors away
4 from my home konked out. That was at 11:00 in the
5 morning. It's not his fault. He just bogged down
6 and he couldn't move, 11:00. The rest of the day
7 was spent, and he wasn't relieved by another truck
8 and the poor fellow was relieved there and they
9 didn't tow that Sanitation truck away until 2:00
10 the next morning. But these things happen.

11 I'm here basically because the
12 people in our location where we live here in
13 Oakwood and they are of the opinion that there was
14 no battle plan really to have the thing running
15 smoothly. This came down on everyone and you hear
16 a million stories.

17 One story is if you don't do your
18 homework, you're not getting anywhere. If you
19 don't have a battle plan, you're going to get
20 nowhere. So, it all boils down to as you're
21 hearings in the Council have gotten enough
22 evidence where the blame is, so to speak. It's
23 information and we understand that, at least I do.
24 So if you have a battle plan, that's good. If you
25

1 don't, now it's accountability.

2
3 Now, I believe, I honestly believe
4 that the person, as the Daily News had in its
5 editorial, those people who had the responsibility
6 of doing their job, they named the Department of
7 Transportation Janette Khan as to having the
8 ability to call an emergency and neglected to do
9 it. Okay, that's done.

10 But that comes to part of the
11 planning. So let's have a good battle plan the
12 next so we're prepared. I argued with people in
13 the block; don't throw the snow in the street.
14 Thank you very much.

15 [Applause]

16 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.

17 JAMES LUZZI: Thank you very much,
18 Council Members.

19 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you very
20 much. Art Mazza? Did I pronounce your name
21 right?

22 ART MAZZA: Mazza.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mazza. Mr.
24 Mazza, I want to make sure I get it right.

25 ART MAZZA: Good enough.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Okay.

ART MAZZA: First let me say that the sanitation worker has a very dangerous job. And I'm not a sanitation worker.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

ART MAZZA: But they dodge us crazies every day they work in the street. Regarding the snow storm, usually I see three or four trucks parked up the street near the bridge prior to the storm and when the storm hits, they usually do their job. This time around, I live on Weiner Street, which is between Richmond Valley train station and Target. I didn't see a truck for four days. My neighbors and I went out and cleaned the street. We cleaned our houses and three or four days later the truck came by and plowed us back in.

[Applause]

ART MAZZA: I heard a lot of words tonight but I didn't hear no solutions. A very solution, it's a breakdown in supervision.

Now, when a Sanitation truck is put out on the road and it has a plow, that plow has to be put down from the minute he leaves the

garage to the minute he gets to the location where he has to be to plow. Don't leave your plow up to go from Hylan Boulevard out to a neighborhood somewhere and all along that route you don't have your plow down. Have your plow down, do your job on the way out to your location.

When you get to your location, your foreman has to have a mileage route set down for you. If you have to do 30 miles of route that day, that's the 30 miles he wants to see on your odometer when you come home. And when you come home, if anybody sees you out there with your plow up, that individual citizen should turn around and make that phone call.

But the citizen can't make the phone call and say this is 311 and I'd like to make a complaint and not give his name. He has to be there ready to stand up and say I saw truck 386 go down the block and he had his plow up and there was snow in the street. That's the individual citizen. And you can't just walk away from that responsibility.

As far as a slowdown goes, I believe there might have been one. Guys got laid

1 off. Guys were pissed off, to put it bluntly, and
2 they might have slowed down. But you have eight-
3 hour days and in this case they put them on 12-
4 hour days. So, where you had three shifts, you've
5 got two, but they're working 12-hour days. And
6 that amount of manpower on two shifts should be
7 able to do the job if guys were laid off or not
8 laid off.

10 Now that's what has to happen here
11 in the next snowstorms. Put your chains on the
12 truck the night before because in the fire
13 department as soon as a half inch of snow fell in
14 the street, they had their chains and I'm assuming
15 the same of the police department. So these
16 things can be done, but the supervisors in and
17 around Staten Island and Queens and the rest of
18 the boroughs have to set up to do their job.

19 And when they donate a route to
20 someone, they go out there and ride that route and
21 they shouldn't need chains because that route
22 should be cleaned right to that location. So they
23 should be able to drive along that roadway that
24 designated their driver cleaned. That's the
25 bottom line, from the supervisor in borough hall

1 to the foreman in the garages to the sanitation
2 work. And I'm not picking on the sanitation
3 workers. I think they've got to do the job as
4 well as everybody else. Jimmy, you don't have to
5 take that job on. Let them do it.
6

7 [Applause]

8 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. Mr.
9 Robert Cox?

10 ROBERT COX: When I watched the
11 Council meeting, I saw the young lady pick up
12 chains.

13 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: It was just
14 one.

15 [Crosstalk]

16 ROBERT COX: --trunnions, right?

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Trunnions.

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: That's right.

19 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Those are my
20 two issues.

21 ROBERT COX: Right, the trunnion
22 plates.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

24 ROBERT COX: Can't plow.

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Could you

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explain that to everybody?

ROBERT COX: All right. A trunnion plate is what made the plows trip, which is why plows were raised up, because they couldn't get where they were going. And the chains, which you brought up, were made in China but they've been replaced. There were so many errors, so many errors.

You laid off 100 supervisors and then you want people to supervise people. It's not going to happen, it can't happen, especially during crises.

And as far as sanitation workers go, I'm not a sanitation worker. I never was, I never worked for the city. But if you talk to these guys, some of these guys walked in big rigs to barns and they were told report to your own barn. We're not going to make it to work.

So when they talked about people being out sick, right, they were forced to go home and phoning in sick otherwise they would have been penalized and lost a day's pay. Guys called up and said they were going to be late. What they were told was you can't be late, even though

trains weren't running, the buses weren't running.
I mean, come on is this any way to run a city?
Maybe it's the way to run Indiana, but it's not
the way to run New York City.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mark Blaze
Jeski?

MARK BLAZE JESKI: I'd like to
congratulate everyone here for surviving. We tend
to use a lot of hyperbole, calling this a
catastrophe I think is unfair to true catastrophes
which are out there. This was a snowstorm that
was an inconvenience. It probably could have been
handled better, but there was no way on God's
green earth that this was a catastrophe. A
calamity, an inconvenience, I'm happy to oblige by
that. That's perfectly fine. But let's not blow
it out of proportion.

This is something that happened.
It happens with some regularity. We should deal
with it a little bit better, but let's understand
that we're not here looking at a second 9/11
event. This is a simple matter of weather happens

and it's something that we have to deal with.

I'm not here so much to complain.

I think the only complaint I have is once all the snow was finally cleared away and the plows were still out on the road and not plowing anymore, they could have started picking up the garbage a little bit sooner.

The Monday after Christmas, which is probably the biggest garbage day of the year, and there were such tremendous amounts of garbage out at the curb waiting to be picked up. That particular thing, that's really my only complaint. I wish they could have gotten to the garbage sooner.

As for the noise, the silence of the day after the snow, I'm one of those few that enjoy that silence here in Staten Island every now and then when things are just you can look at the bird feeders which I filled the night before because I watched the Weather Channel. I prepared myself. And then I saw how many people should have prepared themselves. They should have had snow shovels. They should have had rock salt. They should have been ready to do some themselves.

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1
2 have been out there with a shovel clearing your
3 walkway. Everything would have been cleared up
4 eventually. But as we see today, Mother Nature
5 will take care of it and ultimately she's to
6 blame. You want to blame somebody? Drag Mother
7 Nature in here. Thank you.

8 [Applause]

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I'm sorry, Mr.
10 Jeski, my colleagues have something to say.
11 Council Member Oddo?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Let me just
13 say that I hear what you're saying and I love the
14 can-do attitude so much that I'm going to appoint
15 you as manager of the Mets because I think that's
16 something that--

17 [Crosstalk]

18 COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: I get it. I
19 love sort the personal responsibility. I think
20 that takes you to maybe Tuesday morning. I think
21 that can-do attitude: let's not complain, let's do
22 it; that takes you to maybe Tuesday at 11:00 a.m.
23 or 8:00 a.m. It's Tuesday night that is still
24 really bugging us. It's Wednesday morning. It's
25 Wednesday afternoon. It's Wednesday night. It's

Thursday morning. In some communities--

COUNCIL MEMBER WILLIAMS:

[interposing] Thursday night/Friday.

COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: --it's

Friday. So I absolutely agree that we whine and moan and complain way too often. But I think that can-do sort of runs out at some point. I think Peter Vallone, our colleague from Queens, said it best. When you take all the factors that we've all sort of bandied about and though well this contributed, this contributed, again, it takes you to maybe Tuesday. What happened later on Tuesday? What happened Tuesday night? What happened Wednesday?

So, absolutely, I appreciate the tone. I wish we had more of that across the board, not only on the snow removal, but it goes only to a certain point in time. Then beyond that, there are questions and it becomes truly unacceptable and it becomes--let's not say catastrophe, let's say an epic failure.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member

Rose?

COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: And it'll

1
2 always be easier to pick up a phone than a shove,
3 I can assure you of that.

4 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member
5 Rose?

6 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I, too, want
7 to applaud the can-do spirit and attitude. I did,
8 in fact, see that happening in many neighborhoods
9 where members got together and neighbors used
10 their snow blowers and they shoveled each other's
11 sidewalks. They did all that they could to help
12 each other.

13 But I just want to reflect on the
14 use of hyperbole. Yeah, it might be considered
15 hyperbole by some, but the reality is that maybe
16 it's about semantics. Because there were actually
17 people who this was catastrophic for. There was a
18 woman whose mother died. There were people could
19 not get to dialysis. There were people who
20 really, without going to work, they don't get
21 paid. Three days without pay is catastrophic for
22 them.

23 So I want you to just recognize
24 that yes, there's a lot of hyperbole; yes, we have
25 a strong spirit and constitution and a sense of

1 neighborliness because as was reflected in our
2 survey, people did get out and help each other.
3 However, for some people, this did affect them in
4 a catastrophic way.

5
6 We can't downplay the fact that
7 people were severely impacted by the snowstorm.
8 Yes, the problem is that it should not have
9 happened. It's catastrophic because it should not
10 have happened. We know snow. We know how to do
11 it. We know how to do it and we've been doing it
12 for years. So it should not have happened.

13 So it was catastrophic that we did
14 not communicate, that the chain of command did not
15 do or follow a protocol that they clearly have,
16 and they didn't put things in place, systems in
17 place that could have avoided what might have been
18 just an inconvenience for some and a catastrophe
19 for others.

20 MARK BLAZE JESKI: Again, planning
21 ahead is everybody, on a personal level as well as
22 on a city level. I think people do take the
23 responsibility if they needed dialysis if they had
24 made arrangements, if they made the phone calls,
25 but they didn't. Of course, they--

[Crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Not if
Access-A-Ride couldn't get to you. Access-A-Ride-

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Excuse me.

MALE VOICE: Quite please.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Excuse me. All
of us can't talk at the same time. Council Member
Williams has the floor.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you.
You can either stay or not stay, it's okay with
me. I appreciate everything you said. I just
want to make sure you remember that this is not a
hearing about you personally and your personal
views. We're trying to get--

MARK BLAZE JESKI: [interposing]
Well, you wanted to have my opinion.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Yeah, yeah,
but I don't want to aim at you.

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I think it
was good. I just don't want to aim it at you,
because there's a lot of people--

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: No, it's fine.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I don't want to aim my responses because some people think that way generally and I think there were some people in the Administration who thought that way, which is why I want to address. There was one point where the Mayor was actually saying the Council Members don't have enough to do, which is why we're complaining.

The problem I have is there were actually people who died in here and because the streets weren't plowed. There were people who got out and shoveled their own street. It is irresponsible to try to make the city not responsible for plowing the streets.

Ambulances couldn't get through. I was stuck with an ambulance and had to get the Chief of Police South to come get the patient to the hospital. That had nothing to do with my personal responsibility. That had to do with the responsibility of the city to clean up, also, the responsibility of the city to prepare.

We personally have to prepare and the city has to prepare even at a larger range.

1
2 They did not call a snow emergency; they did not
3 call a local emergency, which would then have
4 prevented people from coming out in the street.
5 So that's not the responsibility of people. They
6 listen to what they're told.

7 MARK BLAZE JESKI: I agree there
8 should have been a snow emergency.

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Right.

10 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: So those two
11 things--

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]
13 Thank you.

14 MARK BLAZE JESKI: That's not what
15 I'm saying though.

16 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Those two
17 things I'm saying, the lack of the leadership from
18 the top and the lack of calling a snow emergency
19 are the two primary things that caused this
20 problem and it had nothing to do with personal
21 responsibility. It had to do with a lack of the
22 city to live up to their responsibility.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Let me just say
24 we appreciate your perspective.

25 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Yes, very

1
2 much.

3 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Obviously, the
4 City Council, with the divergence of opinions, we
5 respect the fact that you've dissented and you've
6 given your position and we totally respect you,
7 but we have to hear from--

8 MARK BLAZE JESKI: [interposing] I
9 would suggest in the matters for the Department of
10 Sanitation that because of the bureaucratization
11 of the department where all of the complaints are
12 funneled uphill and eventually you blame the Mayor
13 I guess, as it turns out. What should actually
14 happen is that when you talked a little bit about
15 the zoning of the work crews so that they have
16 responsibility for a particular area.

17 Again, that's something that
18 happened in Manhattan because obviously if you
19 have a maintenance crew at an expensive building,
20 they're going to take care of their area and it's
21 going to be pristine in no time and it would be
22 held out to the rest of the city as the example
23 that the rest of us should follow.

24 But if the crew is responsible for
25 a finite block or as set of blocks, that zone and

1
2 its clearing was that crew's responsibility then
3 that ownership would probably play out and work
4 out to everyone's advantage because they would
5 finish the job for their area and before they move
6 on to the next, they would make sure that when the
7 report card comes back that they did as best they
8 could for that particular area.

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member
10 Ignizio?

11 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: Yes, thank
12 you Mark. We agree. We agree the can-do
13 attitude. We agree that people should be
14 accountable. We agree that people ought to do
15 their jobs. The problem here is they blew it.
16 The Department of Sanitation was supposed to do
17 their job and they blew it.

18 [Applause]

19 COUNCIL MEMBER IGNIZIO: The
20 Mayor's Office was supposed to do its job. It
21 blew it. So it wasn't the individuals. You can
22 not have individuals take away 30 inches of snow
23 from your street. Clearly we pay taxes and in
24 exchange for those taxes what do we expect? We
25 expect the garbage to be picked up from the

1
2 Department of Sanitation and our streets to be
3 cleared whenever it snows.

4 Where the accountability is handed
5 is down is to who blew it. Quite frankly, the
6 city blew it, not the individual. The individual
7 has the can-do attitude. In my district, I can
8 tell you, where people were plowing up and down
9 streets, helping their neighbors, helping
10 everybody. They had to band together.

11 But the responsibility and the
12 taxes we pay were to do this exact job. My
13 constituents did their job. They went to work.
14 They paid their taxes. And in exchange they were
15 supposed to get a clean street and free of
16 garbage. Quite frankly, the City of New York, you
17 blew it. That's the reality.

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

19 [Applause]

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: The next
21 speaker is Kathy Romanelle. Ms. Romanelle?

22 KATHY ROMANELLE: Hello. I too
23 want to thank you for taking the time to address
24 the terrible situation that we all lived through
25 three weeks ago. And my gripe is that it's been

1
2 three weeks and streets are still impassible. I
3 live in Mariners Harbor on Harbor Road where there
4 is a fire station. You have to play chicken to
5 get up to Forest Avenue if there's an oncoming
6 car.

7 I have a suggestion. Staten Island
8 has many narrow streets. How about three or four
9 days after a snowstorm we have alternate side
10 street parking so that the Sanitation crew can go
11 in and clear away the snow on one side and the
12 cars can park on the other side and then the
13 streets will be passable.

14 It's embarrassing to have to drive
15 around, you know, and now you can't get anywhere.
16 It's terrible, and it's been three weeks. Three
17 weeks of playing chicken and I'm amazed that no
18 one has been killed, because you know how it is
19 when you're in a Mexican standoff and no one is
20 going to move. It's terrible. So maybe
21 Sanitation can think about that and have alternate
22 side street parking if there's an emergency
23 situation declared.

24 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: How would
25 the cars move back over if the snow is there?

KATHY ROMANELLE: They would clear one side.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: But that pushes the snow this way.

KATHY ROMANELLE: People have driveways. On my block there are still cars totally covered, never uncovered the snow.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I really want to understand because I want to take all suggestions seriously. When you plow, it's putting on either side, so--

KATHY ROMANELLE: [interposing] No, it's not--

[Crosstalk]

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: All right.

KATHY ROMANELLE: The plow can take away the snow. Why is all the snow still there? Why isn't it taken away? Years ago, it used to be taken away and dumped in the river. Is it because of an environmental situation that you can't get rid of all the snow? It's three weeks.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I agree with you. I live in Mariners Harbor also. I know that the snow has not been removed sufficiently enough

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so that you're able to pass in both directions.

KATHY ROMANELLE: Yes.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: So, again,
this is a case where a call needs to be made to
Sanitation and we need to get them to remove it.
I in no way support alternate side of the street
parking.

[Applause]

[Crosstalk]

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I think
Staten Islanders are not--I don't believe that
that's something we want to even entertain because
of all of the other problems that come with
alternate side.

KATHY ROMANELLE: Then how are we
going to move the snow from the streets?

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: But, you know
what, a neighbor of mine made an observation.
Most of us have driveways and when it snows, we
should put our car in the driveway.

KATHY ROMANELLE: They don't. They
park--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [interposing]
That does not happen. So we could, in fact, just

1
2 have the Sanitation remove the snow that's left
3 over. I'm not supporting alternate side--

4 [Crosstalk]

5 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Because it's
6 actually an equipment issue. They had smaller
7 trucks that could do it. They have snow melting
8 machines.

9 [Crosstalk]

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: But they are
11 not utilizing that equipment.

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Let's do this.
13 Ms. Romanelle, as well as the residents from Park
14 Hill, if someone from the Mayor's Office could
15 plow these streets that were provided; I'm sure
16 you're taking notes. So that we could get these
17 streets passable, we would greatly appreciate
18 that. With respect to alternate side of the
19 street parking, I'm going to defer to the Staten
20 Island delegation at this time.

21 KATHY ROMANELLE: And I have one
22 more suggestion.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Go ahead.

24 KATHY ROMANELLE: There are cars,
25 to this day, parked on my street. I went up the

1 street today. There are 12 cars covered, never
2 moved since the 26th. There should be some kind
3 of stipulation when it's an emergency that you
4 have to uncover.
5

6 I mean, people can't back out of
7 their driveways because these cars are covered
8 with snow and now there's a three-foot ridge of
9 where the plow comes. So I mean there has to be
10 something that you have to move. It's
11 neighborhood. You have to like get your car out
12 so your neighbors can get in and out of their
13 driveways.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I don't know
15 who your Council Member is.

16 KATHY ROMANELLE: Debi.

17 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: You and
18 Council Member Rose, I would urge that you have a
19 side meeting, a sidebar.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Okay.

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you,
22 ma'am. Thank you very much for your testimony.
23 Before we go on to the next speaker, we've been
24 joined by the Speaker of the City Council. She'd
25 like to say a few words. Ladies and gentleman:

1 the Speaker of the City Council, Christine Quinn.

2
3 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very
4 much. I first want to apologize for not having
5 gotten here at the beginning. I had something set
6 up before this storm, but I wanted to make sure I
7 was here tonight and that I had at least part of
8 all of the hearings we're having in all of the
9 different boroughs across the city.

10 I want to thank Chair James and
11 Chair Williams, two of the four chairs who led our
12 very productive oversight hearing last week down
13 at City Hall. We also had another oversight
14 hearing on Friday that focused on the MTA. I want
15 to thank my colleagues for being here with us. I
16 want to thank our great Borough President for
17 being with us as well. But most importantly, I
18 want to thank all of you for coming out tonight on
19 another fairly miserable night. So thank you guys
20 all for coming.

21 We're doing this hearing and the
22 other hearings for a couple of reasons. One, we
23 want to make sure that we hear directly from New
24 Yorkers the impact that this storm had on them and
25 the impact that the unacceptable snow cleanup had

1
2 on your lives. Now, hearing from you directly is
3 the only way we can hear the nuances of how this
4 played out in different neighborhoods, different
5 blocks, different boroughs, nuances that me just
6 being here for a few minutes, I'm already picking
7 up on. So I want to thank you.

8 You shouldn't have had to endure
9 the poor cleanup that you did and you shouldn't
10 have to come out tonight and give us this
11 information because that shouldn't have happened.
12 But I want to thank you for doing it because it is
13 going to help us make sure that the
14 recommendations and changes we've proposed beyond
15 the 15-point plan the Mayor put out are not just
16 informed by what we learned from other government
17 officials but are informed by what we learned from
18 New Yorkers who had to in some cases dig them
19 selves out, dig their homebound neighbors, dig
20 their parents out and had to bear a level of
21 service that doesn't at all meet the level of
22 taxes that you pay in the City of New York.

23 So I want to thank you. I also
24 want to thank our staff who is here and our staff
25 who did a great job helping us be prepared for the

oversight hearings. Rest assured that they are taking notes on everything that you are saying.

I would just ask folks who are here tonight, whether you speak or don't speak, please sign in. Please give us your email, your address, so we can stay in touch with you. Because we may have ideas that we think hit the nail on the head of what happened in Staten Island, but we need to send those to you so you can tell us whether we hit the nail on the head or we almost got it. So you can help us as we move forward in this.

We also, you know one of the things we heard from the Bloomberg Administration at our oversight hearing was that they wanted to work more closely with the Council because they were recognizing that we were the eyes and ears of government out in the city. The only reason we're the eyes and ears is because your guys are respectful enough to come to events like this. So the more in contact we can be with all of you about when services are and are not working, the better job we can do being your voice within City Hall.

So I'm going to shut up so we can

1
2 listen to all of you, but I really do want to
3 thank you all for being and thank my colleagues
4 who have been here since 7:30 listening to folks
5 and taking notes. Thank you very much,
6 Chairwoman.

7 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you,
8 Madame Speaker. The next speaker is Dennis
9 McKeon. Mr. McKeon?

10 [Applause]

11 DENNIS MCKEON: I'd like to thank
12 you all for being here. Most of the guys from
13 Staten Island know me. I run an organization
14 called Where to Turn. We run a snow shoveling for
15 seniors program here on Staten Island.

16 What we do is we register senior
17 citizens, talking about the can-do attitude, we
18 register senior citizens all throughout the year
19 and then we recruit student volunteers from all of
20 the schools on Staten Island. We then use
21 MapQuest to match the student up with a senior
22 citizen within walking distance of their home and
23 they basically adopt the senior citizen and
24 anytime it snows, they go to shovel.

25 This year, we've been trying to

1
2 recruit more and more student volunteers. We had
3 350 kids out during the snowstorm and every one of
4 them, with the exception of two or three, shoveled
5 out their senior's home. They're the ones that
6 shoveled out the senior citizens. Unfortunately,
7 we have 2,700 senior citizens requesting the
8 services on Staten Island.

9 So I'm reaching out to the City
10 Council Members all the time. We need to get the
11 schools more actively involved in getting the kids
12 to volunteer for this type of program. We get
13 almost 50 percent of our volunteers from three
14 schools here on Staten Island: St. Petersburg,
15 Monsignor Farrell and St. Clair's. The reason for
16 that is because my kids went to St. Clair's,
17 Monsignor Farrell and St. Petersburg.

18 All we need is one teacher at the
19 school to promote the program. There are over
20 7,500 kids on Staten Island eligible for the
21 program. We start with the seventh grade and we
22 run through high school. Most of the kids that
23 sign up in the seventh grade remain with their
24 senior citizen throughout the entire years.

25 What we are also trying to do, and

I need your help with this is all of you guys have a vast amount of resources when you run for office. You have all of your volunteers all lined up to help get you elected.

What I need, because I've got over 350 calls from senior citizens who I don't have shovelers for on the day of the storm, many with emergency situations. What I want to do is I want to try to set up by election district at least five to ten on call volunteers. We may never have to call them, but at least we have them on call.

So if I get an emergency call, I can call a couple of people and say, hey somebody in your election district that's probably within walking distance of your house needs your help and coordinate sending them over there.

So I ask for your help to do that. Help us out. Like you said, Staten Island is the greatest place in the world to live. The people on Staten Island always do better things than all of the other boroughs. And I'm a Brooklyn boy, so I--

[Laughter]

DENNIS MCKEON: I've been here for

25 years and it's much better here. The only thing I have to say--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Uh-oh.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Oh boy.

[Crosstalk]

SPEAKER QUINN: I feel the need to say Manhattan is a nice place too.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I know my audience, so I'm not going to say anything.

[Laughter]

DENNIS MCKEON: The only other thing that I have to say, and a major complaint, is I actually have to sit down with the Borough President and the Mayor and Debi Rose when they came here to Staten Island, is that you cannot have a structure where we cannot still identify who is in charge during this storm. How can we be here now and not know who was in charge? There has to be some kind of pecking order where these people have to be in charge.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Right.

DENNIS MCKEON: And the other reason why we have a problem is because we have so much layer of bureaucracy in city government and

1
2 people are put into positions that have no
3 qualifications to handle the positions that
4 they're in.

5 [Applause]

6 SPEAKER QUINN: Dennis, can I ask
7 you a question? Have you been connected at all to
8 the Mayor's Volunteer office?

9 DENNIS MCKEON: We're on there--

10 SPEAKER QUINN: [interposing] Okay.

11 DENNIS MCKEON: We're linked to
12 them so that people can sign up.

13 SPEAKER QUINN: We'll definitely--
14 we'll have--is Jill still here? If you can see
15 Jill Desrosiers from our staff, she runs our
16 community outreach; we want to figure out how we
17 can get you more connected to the Department of
18 Education and whatever else we can do to hook up
19 people we might have on the Council's email list
20 to be part of what you're doing.

21 At some point, I just said to Jim,
22 I would love to get--I can't get 350--but some of
23 your student leaders to come down to City Hall so
24 we could do a little recognition, a ceremonial to
25 thank them at the end of the winter. So thank you

very much.

DENNIS MCKEON: Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Dennis, that sounds like a pilot project coming.

Congratulations in advance. The next witness is Frank Miranda, I believe, a representative of Community Board 3? Morano, I apologize. The other Frank Morano.

[Laughter]

FRANK MORANO: Thank you for this opportunity to speak. What I have here is a list of all the complaints that basically we have from the people within our district.

SPEAKER QUINN: Oh great, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Great.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

FRANK MORANO: There are a few things that I would like to add. We don't want to really condemn. What we'd like to do is make a lot of recommendations.

SPEAKER QUINN: Talk into the mike, Frank.

1
2 FRANK MORANO: A few things I would
3 like to say about this whole thing is that first
4 of all, we were like a ship without a captain. If
5 the Mayor is not around, there has to be a pecking
6 order, somebody who has to pick it up. I don't
7 think that took place. Nobody was in charge and
8 it was very obvious.

9 The second thing, and this is a
10 long-term thing, and I know this probably will
11 never take place. From old timers in city
12 government, they always told me the city worked
13 the best when the Borough President controlled the
14 services within each borough. I think we would
15 really--

16 [Applause]

17 FRANK MORANO: Other complaints,
18 what I would say personally is my wife and I did
19 have tickets to go to the theater that night.

20 [Laughter]

21 [Crosstalk]

22 FRANK MORANO: So that didn't
23 happen.

24 SPEAKER QUINN: What were you going
25 to see?

FRANK MORANO: 39 Steps. Yeah,
it's a small play. I fell asleep and my wife
enjoyed it.

[Laughter]

SPEAKER QUINN: Now she's going to
know that.

[Crosstalk]

FRANK MORANO: But anyways, you
know. Two things that really got me is the bike
lanes in many places were--

[Crosstalk]

FRANK MORANO: You know, we're
talking about things not working right, bike lanes
are plowed but the streets for emergency vehicles
are not. Another thing is I'm watching TV and I
mean we're in a budget crisis. We have a lot of
things that have to be taken care of and I see the
Parks Department giving out sleds and hot
chocolate in the parks. I mean is that what we
should be doing? Is that where our resources
going in a situation like this? So that's
something else that I'm--

[Crosstalk]

FRANK MORANO: A few things I'd

1
2 like to say along the lines of leadership. We
3 should pick the lead agency to take control and
4 hold that agency accountable. DOT's decision not
5 to execute a state of emergency led to breakdown
6 in other agencies. If motorists were discouraged
7 from using their vehicles during the storm,
8 Sanitation would be able to clear the roads in a
9 more proficient manner and in turn the Fire
10 Department's emergency vehicles would not have met
11 with the unplowed streets littered with disabled
12 vehicles.

13 We also have the community boards;
14 we would like to have recourse to ask for high
15 priority services for emergency personnel who need
16 to get to work and constituents who require
17 medical attention. 311 was totally ineffective
18 and unresponsive to the public. Callers were
19 greatly dissatisfied that 311 could not help them
20 directly and they were frequently put on hold and
21 disconnected.

22 Constituents who rely on Access-A-
23 Ride and Meals on Wheels and those who need to
24 maintain their medical treatments, for example
25 chemo and dialysis treatment, should have the top

1
2 priority. Unfortunately, 311 referred callers to
3 the Community Boards.

4 SPEAKER QUINN: Is that right?

5 FRANK MORANO: Yes. Which is not
6 something that should take place; they referred
7 calls to us. Our staff should not be receiving
8 things--

9 [Crosstalk]

10 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Is that what
11 he heard or that somebody--

12 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [interposing]
13 He is the Community Board--

14 [Crosstalk]

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Particularly
16 since your budgets were slashed.

17 SPEAKER QUINN: No, keep going.

18 FRANK MORANO: 311 should not be
19 permitted to refuse calls under any circumstances.
20 It invalidates its purpose. After the storm, 311
21 refused Sanitation complaint calls. The mission
22 of 311 is to provide the public with quick access
23 to New York City government services and
24 information to help agencies improve service by
25 allowing them to focus on their core missions and

1
2 manage their workload efficiently and to provide
3 insight into the ways to improve city government
4 through accurate consistent measurements and
5 analysis of service delivery citywide.

6 Refusing calls will not produce
7 accurate statistics or effectively evaluate where
8 improvements are needed. In the past, Sanitation,
9 more often than not, meets its goal but this time
10 improvements were needed.

11 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Right.

12 FRANK MORANO: On the morning of
13 the 27th, Sanitation had 14 to 16 vehicles stuck
14 on the road within our community board.

15 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Right.

16 FRANK MORANO: And plow operators
17 appeared to be inexperienced. Reports of plows
18 beginning to plow the road and halfway down the
19 road would stop and leave a mound in the middle of
20 the street blocking the road. Sanitation workers
21 covered fire hydrants with mounds of snow. The
22 direction of plowed snow was not always favorable
23 to motorists. So that also mattered, the way it
24 was done. Reports of inexperienced and misguided
25 contractors clearing streets, mounds of snow in

1 intersections, snow piled without regard for
2 motorists.
3

4 And in closing, let me place
5 emphasis on what we are part of New York City and
6 the outer borough, we encounter unique problems
7 and service should be based on borough to borough
8 evaluation rather than the way it is. Everything
9 seems to be very Manhattan centered.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Right,
11 exactly.

12 SPEAKER QUINN: Frank, I just want
13 to thank you for your testimony and also your
14 service with the community board. You're the
15 first person I've heard, and Jimmy said the same
16 thing, to report that 311 referred people to
17 community boards. So thank you for telling us
18 that.

19 If you could just take a card from
20 a member of our staff and also give them your
21 information because I'm very much going to want to
22 follow up on that. That's really of great concern
23 to me because really community boards weren't open
24 that day.

25 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Right.

1
2 SPEAKER QUINN: And that I had not
3 heard before. So thank you for mentioning that.
4 We were joking a little bit over here; at least
5 you know you got the calls. When we asked the
6 head of the New York Transit Authority if he knew
7 how many 311 calls he got, he didn't know if he's
8 gotten any at all. So I at least applaud you for
9 keeping better records of 311 calls.

10 FRANK MORANO: I'm not going to
11 take credit for that. I'm going to say Charlene
12 Wagner [phonetic] and our staff, they're the ones
13 that did all of that.

14 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very
15 much.

16 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you.

17 SPEAKER QUINN: So we'll just want
18 to follow up with you guys as well. Thank you.

19 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.
20 Thank you for your comment.

21 [Applause]

22 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you for
23 your comment about local control. That was
24 mentioned earlier and obviously that's something
25 that I am pursuing. Marjorie Garvin? Ms. Garvin?

[Background conversation]

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Huh?

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Have more speakers than we thought.

MARJORIE GARVIN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: You're welcome.

MARJORIE GARVIN: I live in a cul-de-sac in Park Hill Court. It was four days I spent in my house. The third day they did come and plow the street. But you've got to come in my block and see how they plowed the street because now all of the snow is in the middle of the block at the corner that blocks a sewer trap. It's snow as high as I am that blocks the sewer trap where the water is now backing up into the cul-de-sac. The water is not even going down. If you could see my street tonight, it's like an ice skating rink.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: What is your street again, ma'am?

MARJORIE GARVIN: 76 Park Hill Court.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Representatives, did you get that information?

MARJORIE GARVIN: I've already had a lot of problems with water problems, with sewer problems. And Debi Rose knows quite well.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: We're working on it, Margie.

MARJORIE GARVIN: This is the first time in my history of 65 years living in New York that I've ever been not able to go out of my house. I'm a person that goes out.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

MARJORIE GARVIN: I was caught in the house for four days in this snowstorm and I didn't like it.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We apologize that you were a prisoner in your own home and hopefully the Administration will get to it as soon as possible. The next speaker is Ken Gregory or Priscilla Moore?

PRISCILLA MARCO: Marco.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Marco. Thank you. I apologize.

PRISCILLA MARCO: Good evening.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Good evening.

PRISCILLA MARCO: My name is Priscilla Marco and I'm the president of the Van Duzer Street Area Civic Association. I reside on Hillside Avenue, which connects the neighborhoods of Grymes Hill via Howard Avenue and Stapleton. Hillside Avenue funnels into Van Duzer Street, which turns into Richmond Road and leads to the service road of the Staten Island Expressway.

Hillside Avenue is a snow emergency street, which my understanding is it's supposed to remain clear so that ambulances and fire trucks and other emergency vehicles can get up and down the hill. Every other snowstorm since I've lived there since 2001, Hillside Avenue was one of the first streets to be plowed. It's a primary street. It was not plowed on Monday. It was not plowed on Tuesday. Sometime on Wednesday, it got plowed. But the problem was that if there had been an emergency on that day, snow emergency streets are supposed to be plowed immediately. The salt should have gone down immediately. It didn't happen.

1
2 I also have a fire hydrant a few
3 feet from my house. That was not plowed. A
4 neighbor told me that when the plows did come, and
5 she tried to direct the plow driver to clear the
6 area in front of the hydrant, the plow driver did
7 not do that.

8 So again, thank God there were no
9 fires, no need for a fire truck to come down
10 Hillside Avenue or to have to use that hydrant,
11 because otherwise it would have been a tragedy.
12 We were also concerned about members reporting
13 that bus stops were not plowed.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

15 PRISCILLA MARCO: So you had people
16 waiting in the street. Van Duzer happens to be a
17 very narrow street. It was formerly like, I
18 think, a carriageway in the old days.

19 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

20 PRISCILLA MARCO: You know, and
21 it's one way. People in the streets could have
22 been hit by a car. I saw many people in the
23 streets during the snow emergency. Driving was
24 hazardous because of all the people that were in
25 the streets. And it wasn't their fault, they

1
2 couldn't walk. So we're concerned also the
3 traffic backed up tremendously on Vanderbilt
4 Avenue. People tried to get to the Expressway.
5 It was just absolutely crazy.

6 This time, we noticed that there
7 was a private plow that the city hired that plowed
8 Pleasant Valley Avenue. That's the street next to
9 my street. It's a dead end street. So that's
10 like one of the last streets to need plowed. But
11 this time, all of the sudden, low and behold,
12 there's a private plow that came and plowed the
13 street and at least we could get out.

14 Like other people have said, yes,
15 there are still piles of snow. It's still very
16 hard to get out of your backyard, even if you've
17 done your job and been a can-do person and
18 shoveled out your backyard. Still, you have to
19 hope that you don't slide on the ice and hit
20 somebody's car.

21 You know, so we have a lot of
22 elderly people that live in our neighborhood.
23 There are a lot of children. We're very concerned
24 about these people who could have been hurt, and
25 thank God, none of them were.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

Thank you for your testimony.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Sherry Jones?

Hello, Ms. Jones.

SHERRY JONES: Good evening

everybody.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good evening.

SHERRY JONES: I'm happy to be here with everyone today.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

SHERRY JONES: But I would like to let you know that I realize and recognize too that this was a systemic problem. I think by having a Council hearing such as this that this is really, really going to eliminate the problem, because everybody is going to be conscious of what's going on and who they have to please. They're going to take care of everybody. Everybody is going to be taken care of this next round. Thank you.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Ms. Jones.

[Applause]

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Sylvia
Cunningham? Pastor, are these members of your
church? No? Yes? No? Okay.

SYLVIA CUNNINGHAM: My name is
Sylvia Cunningham.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes, ma'am.

SYLVIA CUNNINGHAM: I live in a
housing development in Todt Hill Houses. My
problem in the development is that one thing for
sure, the streets were cleaned and the traffic was
running good, but they started down in our area on
LaGuardia Avenue they started about 4:00 in the
morning. The only problem that we had inside the
development but what happened was the--

SPEAKER QUINN: [interposing]
Ma'am, do you mind, I'm sorry, can I ask you a
question about that?

SYLVIA CUNNINGHAM: Yes.

SPEAKER QUINN: I'm sorry. That
came up at our oversight hearing, where Council
Member Jimmy Van Bramer, he's from Queens, he
asked what coordination was done with the Housing

1 Authority and the Mayor's Office had to admit
2 none. They didn't activate NYCHA in the snow
3 response, which is crazy. My sense is that's very
4 different than past storms. Is that correct with
5 this?
6

7 SYLVIA CUNNINGHAM: No.

8 SPEAKER QUINN: No, they're not?

9 SYLVIA CUNNINGHAM: No.

10 SPEAKER QUINN: Okay, could you
11 tell us a little bit about what happened this time
12 and what usually happens.

13 SYLVIA CUNNINGHAM: Well, I'm going
14 to tell you, this is the first time I've been in a
15 snowstorm really on Staten Island living in the
16 housing development.

17 SPEAKER QUINN: Oh, okay.

18 SYLVIA CUNNINGHAM: So I don't know
19 the procedure that they have done.

20 SPEAKER QUINN: Fair enough, okay.

21 SYLVIA CUNNINGHAM: But what
22 happened was they were trying to clean it and the
23 truck had broken down. The next day, I'm going to
24 tell you, the area was clean. We didn't have any
25 problems. But on LaGuardia, now we've got piles

1 and piles of snow where we can't park our cars and
2 we have problems getting out. Because once we get
3 out, we don't have a parking space anymore.

4 So that's the problem that we have
5 in Todt Hill. We have Housing Development guys
6 that come and clear the area, but they don't clean
7 where the snow is around where we park our cars.
8 We would just like Sanitation to come and clean
9 the area where we park.

10
11 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Could you
12 provide the address? What's the address, ma'am?

13 SYLVIA CUNNINGHAM: 20 LaGuardia.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: And that
15 condition exists today, at this moment?

16 SYLVIA CUNNINGHAM: Yes, at this
17 moment.

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

19 SYLVIA CUNNINGHAM: Thank you.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you,
21 we're going to, again, direct the Administration
22 to address that immediately.

23 SYLVIA CUNNINGHAM: Okay, thank
24 you.

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you,

ma'am.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you, ma'am.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Michael
Arvanites? Sorry.

MICHAEL ARVANITES: That's okay.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Hi, how are
you?

[Crosstalk]

MICHAEL ARVANITES: I apologize. I
was here on behalf of State Senator Diane Savino.
She's stuck in Albany. She did want me to just
read you some brief remarks and she actually
texted them to me. So excuse me while I read--

SPEAKER QUINN: [interposing] No,
no, problem. No problem.

MICHAEL ARVANITES: She said she's
stuck in Albany. The mayor there is Gerald
Jennings.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes, we know
him.

MICHAEL ARVANITES: You know the
Mayor of Albany. He does have a Bermuda tan.

SPEAKER QUINN: Always.

MICHAEL ARVANITES: But spends all

1 winter in Albany. She also mentioned to me that
2 Staten Island is not Brooklyn, it isn't Manhattan.
3 She's proud that Staten Island isn't Manhattan,
4 not that there's anything wrong with Manhattan.
5

6 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

7 MICHAEL ARVANITES: We have surface
8 buses. We have one open train. We don't have the
9 grid pattern, but we have colonial roads. In
10 fact, the first time that Staten Island was
11 mentioned on national TV, Ed Norton was playing
12 Jackie Gleason and Jackie Gleason was losing--

13 [Crosstalk]

14 MICHAEL ARVANITES: --he said the
15 reason was because the tables were from Staten
16 Island. If you make a right out of here when you
17 leave, you're 1,000 feet from the highest point on
18 the eastern seaboard. Staten Island is all hills.

19 Then she asked me to relay my
20 personal story. I live on Clove Road and I'll
21 submit for testimony my license. In front of me
22 is a snow emergency route that's five blocks from
23 Richmond University Medical Center. I was
24 standing in the middle on Tuesday night at 9:00
25 p.m. and it still hadn't been plowed even though

1
2 it's a snow emergency route. I was standing in
3 the middle of the street. Behind me is Clove
4 Lakes Park. Clove Lakes Park was plowed. It is a
5 snow route. They were handing out sleds and
6 coffee and hot chocolate.

7 [Background noise]

8 MICHAEL ARVANITES --at that
9 facility on Slosson Avenue that has the snow
10 removal equipment and Parks controls the equipment
11 at the facility.

12 So once again, it's another plug
13 for local control. I don't have a problem with
14 Jim Molinaro being in control of the catastrophe.
15 I've seen him at the ferry and standing on Yankee
16 Stadium during 9/11 helping people as they're
17 coming off the ferry. I saw him at the oil tanker
18 explosion. I saw him at the Barberi crash with
19 the ferry. I don't have a problem with Jim
20 Molinaro being in charge.

21 The last point she wanted me to
22 leave you with is she's not from Indianapolis. No
23 one could - - Mayor Goldsmith. We should have
24 somebody like Jim Molinaro or the local Council
25 Members with some modicum of control over the

local facility snow removal.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you,
Mike.

[Applause]

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Another vote
for local control. Anthony Cosentino?

ANTHONY J. COSENTINO: Good
evening.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good evening.

ANTHONY J. COSENTINO: Borough
President James Molinaro, Speaker Christine C.
Quinn, Minority Leader James Oddo, Council Member
Vincent Ignizio, Council Member Debi Rose, Council
Member James and Council Member Williams. My name
is Anthony Cosentino and I am the First Vice
Chairman of Community Board 1 from Staten Island.
It is an honor for me to be here tonight, to bring
testimony on behalf of the people of Community
Board 1.

I'm sure that everyone here tonight
will attest that in the days leading up to
December 26th, 2010, newscasters and weather
indicators across the country were predicting that

the tri-state area would be hit with a severe winter storm that could result in more than 12 inches of snow within a very short time span.

We may not always believe weather forecasters; this time they were absolutely right. Nearly on cue, it began to snow on Sunday afternoon. It all seemed very predictable.

Christmas was over. So many people were able to travel home before the storm hit. Since we had ample warning, we were able to shop for our milk, bread, eggs, as most New Yorkers do. We knew it was coming and so we were able to plan for it.

But then the unpredictable happened. Snow plows and salt spreaders that usually begin to traverse our streets before the storms hit never appeared. Hours went by and the snow continued to accumulate, without a plow or salt spreader in sight. It seemed that New York's strongest were taken by surprise.

While our Mayor and commissioners took to the podium to tell us to take in a show, the ambulances were fighting their way through three-foot drifts. Fire trucks were responding to medical emergencies while ambulances could not get

1 through. The already nonexistent MTA bus services
2 left valued commuters, who were desperately trying
3 to get to work, stranded for hours on street
4 corners. Doctors, nurses and health care
5 attendants were forced to run triple and quadruple
6 shifts with patients because relief could not get
7 there.
8

9 Anger of residents mounted as hour
10 after hour, day after day, no plow came to their
11 aid. Ultimately, a fellow board created a
12 Facebook page called unplowed in Staten Island,
13 and within 20 minutes, 200 members joined. On
14 that page, they shared information about private
15 companies that can be hired to plow streets. They
16 shared information about elderly or infirm people.
17 These people needed help. Most of all, they
18 shared information about how, no matter where they
19 lived, north shore, south, east shore or west
20 shore, they still hadn't been plowed.

21 There were murmurs all around about
22 a work slowdown, but people did not want to
23 believe it. Frankly, I still don't. It is
24 unimaginable that the Department of Sanitation
25 sons and daughters of New York City would plan and

1
2 accomplish what terrorist organizations have
3 attempted but failed to do: bring New York City to
4 its knees. It's not the intention of our report
5 to speculate, sue or pass blame. The rumors are
6 out there already and it is our sincere hope that
7 good men and women of the U.S. effectively lay
8 them to rest.

9 What we need now is a plan of
10 actions, assurances that nothing like this will
11 ever happen again. With that in mind, Community
12 Board 1 of Staten Island respectfully requests
13 that from here forward the Department of
14 Sanitation be mandated to deliver an annual snow
15 removal plan to each of the community boards
16 across the city.

17 The plan should include the number
18 of trucks assigned to each district, the
19 priorities in which the streets will be plowed and
20 the routes that the trucks will take. Community
21 Board 1 also requests that in the event of a
22 snowstorm, the borough that is the least served by
23 transportation receive the first priority. While
24 our fellow New York State who reside in Queens,
25 Manhattan, Brooklyn and the Bronx were able to hop

on the subway to get to where they had to go--

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS:

[interposing] No, we couldn't.

ANTHONY J. COSENTINO: Staten

Islanders were held prisoners in their homes while we waited for our streets to be cleaned. Not even the Staten Island Expressway, the lifeblood of our road system, was cleaned before Tuesday. Since whatever mass transportation we had no service to Staten Islanders, mass transportation was utterly useless. I thank you for your time and attention to this matter and look forward to your favorable response.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Cosentino,

do you have a copy of your testimony? Those are some really good recommendations.

SPEAKER QUINN: Yes, really good

ideas.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

Thank you, we really appreciate it.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very

much.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.

Paul Leneir? How did I pronounce it?

PAUL LEBOWITZ: I don't have a preference, but it's Lebowitz.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Lebowitz, I'm sorry. Are you 237 Woodward Avenue?

PAUL LEBOWITZ: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Okay, sorry. You may testify.

PAUL LEBOWITZ: Okay. First of all, I want to thank Borough President Molinaro and the City Council Members for having these hearings into the system failures. Just a few items--

SPEAKER QUINN: [interposing] Sir, just move your mike up a little bit. We're taping, so we don't want to miss it. That's perfect; thank you.

PAUL LEBOWITZ: Just a few items.

SPEAKER QUINN: Great.

PAUL LEBOWITZ: I'm a New York City paramedic for the past 30 years and I'm currently the president of Primary Care Ambulance. Primary Care Ambulance provides both basic life support and advanced life support paramedic services similar to EMS to county residents. I personally,

1
2 together with Primary Care Ambulances, volunteered
3 our services to EMS during the Christmas snowstorm
4 for both Staten Island and Brooklyn.

5 I personally saw with my own eyes
6 Sanitation plows in the streets of Brooklyn and
7 Staten Island going down the streets with their
8 plows up. We were unable to reach hospitals with
9 patients onboard because streets were not plowed,
10 and there were no cars blocking these side
11 streets, both in Brooklyn and Staten Island.
12 There seemed to be a conspiracy in Sanitation to
13 bring chaos onto the streets of New York City
14 which definitely led to unnecessary deaths.

15 Second, do not blame Fire
16 Department EMS Chief Peruggia. You've got to
17 blame the system in two ways. First, we must
18 change the laws in Albany. Specifically, the New
19 York State Department of Health and its divisions,
20 you must allow non-Fire Department, not with the
21 contracted ambulances which are private ambulances
22 like Primary Care Ambulance, Richmond County
23 ambulance, to respond to emergency calls called in
24 by residents of every borough without any
25 restrictions onto the borders or territories any

time of the year, besides the snow emergency.
Last year with the H1N1 virus, any time of the
year.

The city, the Department of Health
also must include private commercial non-Fire
Department contracted ambulances into the 911
system. We have over 500 ambulances, both
certified as advanced life support and patient
life support ambulances, certified by the New York
State Department of Health that could aid in the
system's response to patients in need.

I listened to the EMS radio
frequency during the snowstorm and I consistently
listen to the radio. There were basic life
support ambulances screaming, begging for
paramedic unit backups for heart attack patients
but were told by their dispatchers that none were
available. I say this was nonsense.

We at Primary Care Ambulance and
other ambulance companies throughout the city
could have been called to see if we had any
paramedic units or any other ambulances available
for the backup for these heart attack victims. A
simple quick phone call to any of the ambulance

1 companies to see if we had available units to
2 respond to the calls, yet the city called in units
3 from Princeton, New Jersey, Naples which is New
4 York Rochester, six hours away, instead of
5 utilizing local ambulances such as Primary Care
6 which were only a few moments away.
7

8 The City Council must make an
9 addendum to I think a decision you made last year
10 where you included the volunteer ambulances to be
11 part of the 911 system. I am asking the City
12 Council to allow non-FDNY contracted private
13 ambulances such as Primary Care to be entered into
14 the FDNY 911 response system in every borough. I
15 would like to discuss this further with you at any
16 time at your convenience.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER: How about now? Do
18 you know why you were never utilized? Perhaps you
19 know the understanding of the ambulance, the
20 system and the situation in place of why they
21 wouldn't call you in, didn't call in, don't want
22 to call you in? Can you enlighten us somewhat or
23 speculate on why?

24 PAUL LEBOWITZ: I have no idea. I
25 have no idea. But they called in other services

1
2 outside the state. Our ambulances are certified
3 the same. We have the same paramedics, the same
4 EMTs as they.

5 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Can I just ask
6 you a question? Were there contracts that were
7 let for emergency in terms of whenever there's an
8 emergency were there private contracts that were
9 online or for you to respond to? Are you part of
10 the index?

11 PAUL LEBOWITZ: Private ambulances
12 are licensed by the New York State Department of
13 Health.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

15 PAUL LEBOWITZ: And New York City
16 Regional Emergency Medical Service Council in both
17 basic life support and advanced life support to
18 provide the same response to emergencies and non-
19 emergency transports.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: But there was a
21 request for private ambulances. Did you respond
22 to any of those?

23 PAUL LEBOWITZ: There was a request
24 the Regional Emergency Medical Services Council.
25 It was just a request to see if we had any

1
2 available units available to volunteer the
3 service, and we did.

4 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: And you did.

5 PAUL LEBOWITZ: We provide
6 ambulance service to Staten Island and we crossed
7 the bridge into Brooklyn. We have two ambulances
8 in Brooklyn and we have ambulances in Staten
9 Island in the 911 system. So we did do what they
10 requested. The thing is, the Fire Department
11 could have easily made a phone call to see at a
12 moment's notice to see if we had available units
13 to respond to heart attacks on Staten Island.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Could you
15 provide us with your information, sir, so we can
16 continue this conversation offline? We would
17 appreciate that. If you have more to testify,
18 please continue.

19 PAUL LEBOWITZ: We feel it is
20 important to increase the availability of hundreds
21 of other New York State Department of Health
22 certified ambulances to help all the citizens of
23 New York City without any restrictive border
24 controls set up by the New York State Department
25 of Health.

Ambulance services are not, you know, two pizza parlors, you know, competing for customers. No one should have their life put in jeopardy because of archaic borders in Albany and in New York City. The failed process is not giving every resident in New York State and New York City the best chances of staying alive by allowing all ambulances who are staffed by the same educated EMTs and paramedics as applies to EMS to services residents in all boroughs without exclusion. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Mr. Lebowitz. Thank you very much. Elizabeth Andrie? Mr. Lebowitz, again, if you could, share your information with Nicole.

SPEAKER QUINN: We're going to have our Health Committee staff follow up.

ELIZABETH ANDRIE: I'm giving Sanitation a break. My anger is directed at New York City Transit, in particular Staten Island buses. They have the audacity to make a decision that impacted quite a few people, even though New York City Transit doesn't think that many people

1
2 made it into the city. They ran the buses in the
3 morning. They ran express buses.

4 They came up Father Capodanno, the
5 ones that would have gone all the way up Hyman
6 Boulevard were detoured. They all came up Father
7 Capodanno whether it was the 1, the 4, the 7, all
8 the buses were coming up, picking up people. The
9 53 was running over the bridge into Brooklyn to
10 take people to the RR. They had no problems
11 bringing people into the city, into Brooklyn to
12 get a subway to the city. That wasn't their
13 concern.

14 But then, some brilliant person
15 made this decision: well, we're not going to run
16 buses to bring these people home. No one knew
17 anything, which it didn't matter whether you knew
18 or not, this was inexcusable. There is no reason
19 why they could run the buses in the morning and in
20 the afternoon after a day of sun, make believe
21 plowing, no bus could bring us home. But no one
22 knew.

23 SPEAKER QUINN: Right.

24 ELIZABETH ANDRIE: We stood on
25 Broadway for hours. Finally, an M6, a local bus

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1 because there is no alternative at this point to
2 get to Staten Island. That's exactly what
3 happened. We come up, there's no 53. Someone who
4 worked for the MTA called and said the depots are
5 closed. So now you have to go to 92nd Street.
6 I'm standing in the road at 8:00 at night that
7 somebody would have to run me over to get by and
8 there weren't many vehicles.

9
10 You know, finally somebody came and
11 took four of us in that vehicle. Other people
12 were still waiting because other followed, the
13 only way they could, to try to get there and then
14 have to walk from there to wherever they lived. I
15 mean I got off at Bay Street. I had three-
16 quarters of a mile to walk.

17 But where is the responsibility
18 here? Who is accountable for this decision? What
19 gets me is Brooklyn and Queens, the borough
20 presidents were on NY1 News and they were
21 complaining about a lack of full service, but they
22 had service. The R train ran, whatever it was
23 running in the morning, it ran the same route at
24 night. Not one peep from any representative of
25 government on Staten Island spoke on the news and

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COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: He had none.

So I don't have any answers for you

1
2 today about why that happened but I do have for
3 you a pledge and a statement that this is very
4 high on the list of things we are going to follow
5 up on and we will get back to you with what we
6 think--

7 ELIZABETH ANDRIE: [interposing]
8 This is being investigated?

9 SPEAKER QUINN: Well, the Transit
10 Authority is not within the City Council's direct
11 control. It's under the state's control.

12 ELIZABETH ANDRIE: The state.

13 SPEAKER QUINN: But we are
14 investigating it. We are looking into this
15 because it is just from beginning to end, the job
16 that the Transit Authority made the job that the
17 city did look like an all star performance.
18 That's how terrible it was. But in particular,
19 the Staten Island situation is appalling because
20 you are the borough with the least mass transit of
21 any. So this is high on our list. Make sure we
22 have your info to get back to you.

23 ELIZABETH ANDRIE: This wouldn't
24 have been a problem if they didn't run the buses
25 in the morning.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: In the morning, right.

SPEAKER QUINN: Exactly, exactly.

[Crosstalk]

ELIZABETH ANDRIE: And what was also annoying is local buses were running in the other boroughs.

SPEAKER QUINN: I know.

ELIZABETH ANDRIE: It was only Staten Island that they made a decision to cancel everything.

SPEAKER QUINN: And not for nothing. You know how you figured that out, you opened your window blinds. That's all the MTA had to do was look out the window and they could have figured out what you just figured out, not to run the buses. I agree.

ELIZABETH ANDRIE: I want to thank Councilman Oddo because I did send him an email and his staff has been on it. I'm speaking to a woman who's a director with the New York City Transit that she--

COUNCIL MEMBER ODDO: Melissa Farley.

ELIZABETH ANDRIE: Right. She was supposed to get back to me today.

SPEAKER QUINN: Well, make sure we have your contact info, ma'am, so we can follow up too. I'd be interested to see what Ms. Farley says. Thank you very much. There might be a job for you at the TA.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you for your testimony. Thank you for that information. I, too, again, saw our colleagues here on the media. But clearly, Staten Island was disrespected and obviously ignored. The next witness is Patricia Willis. I also believe the state, I was told, might be doing hearings as well.

SPEAKER QUINN: Is that right?

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yeah.

PATRICIA WILLIS: Good evening everyone.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Ms. Willis?

PATRICIA WILLIS: Yes, my name is Patricia Willis. I'm from Staten Island 4 Change. I have two observations. One: I spent 20 years in Georgia. They prepared for one of the worst

1 events of weather: tornadoes. They had
2 preparation in schools. I was in the middle of a
3 tornado. It does sound like a freight train and
4 you see your life flash before your eyes. So I
5 know when they say possibility, however minute,
6 I'm in the basement, or holding on to something.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Get ready.

9 PATRICIA WILLIS: Okay? I've been
10 on Staten Island since 1952. I've been walking
11 since '53 or whatever. But it snows every year.
12 It also rains a lot. We've been having tornadoes
13 that I don't remember having way back when.

14 So it's kind of obvious that the
15 weather's changing but we're not changing with it.
16 We're sitting here being reactive and not
17 proactive. Teach the kids what to do. Teach the
18 grownups what to do. Teach those who infirmed
19 what to do. Teach the hospitals what to do.
20 Teach the neighborhoods what to do together.
21 Start informing people.

22 This is all well and good but it's
23 after the fact. I have a medical problem that if
24 it acted up then, I'd be dead, because no one
25 could have gotten to me and I don't have a

defibrillator. So I'm not joking, I'm serious as
a--

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: [interposing]
Heart attack, right, without a defibrillator.

PATRICIA WILLIS: Okay. But there
are people who did die. The fact that we have
hearings, this is like the BP thing. No offense,
but after the snow is melted and the temperature
rises, all of this goes away until the next little
catastrophe and then we have another one of these.
It's got to stop.

Staten Island knows what happens on
Staten Island. So if Staten Island doesn't take
responsibility for Staten Island itself, knowing
full well what happens, because I remember with my
daughter, having to carry her miles because the
buses didn't run up and down Castleton Avenue.
That happened back in 1980 something. So it
happens. We know it happens here. What do we do?

Now we have the internet. We've
got smart phones. We've got all kinds of ways to
communicate with each other and we didn't. We did
not do a thing and we had--we've got the Weather
Channel, we've got satellites all over. We know

1
2 it's coming. We knew it was coming. It comes
3 every year. It may not be on this level, but it
4 comes every year. Why were we surprised? Why are
5 we caught with our proverbial pants down? So, all
6 of this is moot.

7 Prepare now for the snowstorms that
8 are going to come in 2011, next winter in 2012.
9 Prepare for the possible tornadoes. Prepare for
10 the torrential rains and the flooding that happens
11 on Staten Island. Prepare for all of this instead
12 of every time something goes wrong, which it will
13 go wrong because we didn't prepare, we're all
14 sitting here saying it's somebody's fault. It's
15 our fault. We live on Staten Island. We know
16 this stuff happens. So there is no excuse for any
17 of us.

18 For those who we put in charge who
19 are supposed to be taking care of business who are
20 appointed, not elected but appointed, need to be
21 fired, period. If this was a corporation, that
22 means you lost money for me, you lost credibility
23 for my company, you've got to go. There is no
24 discussion about it. You didn't do your job. You
25 have to go. There is no fall guy. The Sanitation

guy got to go. The EMS guy needs to come back.
The Transit guy got to go.

[Applause]

PATRICIA WILLIS: And the Mayor is skating. The only reason why you can't really do nothing with him is because he can't get no more terms.

COUNCIL MEMBER: Don't say that--

[Crosstalk]

PATRICIA WILLIS: Anybody here going to vote for Bloomberg for a 200th term? No.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Okay, Ms. Willis.

PATRICIA WILLIS: But the point is that we have to take it upon ourselves to prepare. We have to hold those people responsible who did not do their jobs. If I'm going to get fired on my job, then they need to get fired on theirs for not doing their job. There is no excuse. There is no: well, so and so didn't plug the phone in or whatever. They're gone.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Accountability.

1
2 Thank you.

3 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

4 [Applause]

5 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: So we have
6 another Frank Morano? The second Frank Morano?

7 FRANK MORANO: That's right.

8 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Okay. You're
9 on.

10 FRANK MORANO: Thank you and good
11 evening.

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good evening.

13 FRANK MORANO: I'm not going to
14 repeat all the statements that I agree with from
15 all of the previous speakers because I know what a
16 long night you've had and what a long job you have
17 ahead of you.

18 I do want to thank the Speaker for
19 choosing Staten Island as the first venue for
20 this. I think it speaks volumes about how hard
21 Staten Island was impacted, not only by the storm
22 itself but by the lackluster response from the
23 city. I want to commend Council Member James and
24 Council Member Williams for finding it out to
25 Staten Island when no Sanitation plows were able

1
2 to do so.

3 I really do want to commend and
4 thank Council Member Ignizio and Council Member
5 Oddo and Council Member Rose. I think your
6 response during the storm, both in terms of
7 dealing with constituent complaints and trying to
8 take a proactive leadership role really
9 illustrates exactly why you're not only the
10 smartest, the hardest working and the toughest
11 City Council delegation that Staten Island has
12 ever seen. I'm proud to call each of you a friend
13 for all those reasons.

14 I think that the fact that so many
15 Staten Islanders were opposed to the proposed FDNY
16 fees for accidents was one thing, but for Staten
17 Islanders not even to be told about these proposed
18 Sanitation fees that they wouldn't plow your block
19 unless they were paid \$350, I think Staten
20 Islanders gladly would have paid the \$350 to get
21 their streets plowed. Of course, I'm being a
22 little flippant. That seems to be the only
23 reasonable explanation--

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]
25 Okay, you're getting off topic.

[Crosstalk]

FRANK MORANO: My streets in Staten Island weren't plowed.

CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I got confused.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We understand.

FRANK MORANO: Like I said, I agree with almost everything that was expressed earlier, except for the fellow that said this wasn't a catastrophe. I think every time you talk about somebody dying because of government mismanagement, that's the very definition of a catastrophe.

And for anybody to suggest that Staten Islanders and New Yorkers don't have thick skin or don't have a can-do attitude, New Yorkers and Staten Islanders are among the most generous people in the entire world. They did gladly help their neighbor, as Council Member Rose pointed out. But I wanted to come here today to offer a few suggestions in terms of prospective solutions for future storms.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Go ahead.

FRANK MORANO: And retroactively

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looking at what--

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]

Let's get to them.

FRANK MORANO: --what did occur here. I think certainly Council Member Recchia's proposal to stop parking meters as well as alternate side of the street parking during snowstorms is something that should be considered. Some of you have mentioned Council Member Gentile's proposal and the calls for borough empowerment that Bob Olivari and Senator Savino and others mentioned, allowing someone like the Borough President to have control over their borough's own destiny.

But a lot of you know that legislation isn't always enough. Council Member Oddo and Speaker Quinn, you were in the City Council in 2003 when you guys passed a 24-hour ferry service only to see it vetoed. You guys overrode the veto, only to see DOT take that to court and we still don't have the 24-hour ferry service.

So I would urge you, particularly you, Madame Speaker, to seriously consider

1
2 appointing a Charter Revision Commission
3 specifically tasked with studying borough
4 empowerment this year. I know that the Mayor can
5 supersede that with a Charter Commission of his
6 own, but I think after the response from this
7 storm, for him to say okay, we're going to
8 supersede your borough empowerment question
9 because we don't think that's enough of an issue
10 right now, he would lose all sorts of public
11 credibility, even more so than during the storm
12 itself.

13 But I so echo the statements of the
14 woman who just spoke regarding the MTA. I was on
15 the other side trying to get to Manhattan Sunday
16 night to get to work on Monday morning and it
17 really did become kind of an escape from Staten
18 Island type of adventure.

19 The thing that was even worse, and
20 I know Council Member Ignizio mentioned this
21 during the oversight hearing, is that not only was
22 the service on the part of the New York City
23 Transit Authority horrendous but the lack of
24 information, it only adds to the already
25 significant public cynicism that Staten Islanders

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I know at least one of you is a baseball fan and you remember that when a bean fell in Yankee Stadium, the person who sat in that seat when Yankee Stadium reopened back in 1988-1989, was George--

[Background noise]

FRANK MORANO: And I think the Staten Island delegation which represents a district that's in the far reaches of a lot of city bureaucrats' minds. If you were to invite the DOT commissioner or the head of the Transit Authority or the commissioner of any agency to try and make that commute with you from your districts to Manhattan the next time there's a snowstorm, I think it would be eye-opening for them.

I think their refusal to take you up on that offer would speak volumes about where they perceive Staten Island's place in the city. So I do want to thank you for the mature attitude that you've taken.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

SPEAKER QUINN: thank you.

FRANK MORANO: The proactive attitude and it differs starkly with some other

1
2 like individuals who used this as an opportunity
3 to grandstand about secret meetings and Sanitation
4 slowdowns as if that was an excuse for failures of
5 the city government.

6 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: But we thank
7 you for those recommendations.

8 FRANK MORANO: So I want to thank
9 you so much.

10 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very
11 much.

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you very
13 much.

14 [Applause]

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Agnes Wilson?

16 AGNES WILSON: Good evening.

17 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Good
18 evening.

19 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good evening.
20 Could you come a little closer to the mike?

21 AGNES WILSON: In most cases
22 especially the environment we always don't pay any
23 mind. I'm glad that you came and I'm glad you're
24 here.

25 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

1	COMMITTEE ON SANITATION	134
2	AGNES WILSON: I have a problem	
3	with my neighborhood.	
4	SPEAKER QUINN: Where do you live,	
5	ma'am?	
6	AGNES WILSON: 119 Osgood. It's a	
7	little shell street.	
8	COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: In Park	
9	Hills.	
10	AGNES WILSON: It's a very popular	
11	street and a fast one and our street at the same	
12	time, actually the snow was cleaned four times.	
13	By the time I finish, the plow would come and put	
14	it right back.	
15	But I do want to say years ago	
16	Sanitation used to take the snow away or put it in	
17	one spot. Why don't they do that now? Two: move	
18	the cars, and after they move the cars, Sanitation	
19	will come, but the same spot they're cleaning,	
20	they're not trying to get all that snow off, just	
21	the same people. The fourth time I happened to be	
22	right there. I gave him--	
23	[Background noise]	
24	[Crosstalk]	
25	AGNES WILSON: But that's the	

problem we have. You don't want us putting snow in the streets. Take the snow. [off mic] Please promise us - - .

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Ms. Wilson. We really appreciate it. Thank you. Our last witness is Charlotte Byrne.

CHARLOTTE BYRNE: I also thank you for the opportunity for us to be here.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, ma'am.

CHARLOTTE BYRNE: I happen to be one of the seniors for the shoveling program. I was one of the people who was stranded in Chicago during the storm before it got here. Then when I got here about 3:30 in the morning, I had to be at work by 8:00 in the morning.

And when I got to the bus stop, the merchants had cleared the bus stop area for the people to get on the bus. Then the plow came and blocked the thing and go in the middle of the street. But how you could prepare for something, we've never had anything like on Staten Island where they don't come to shovel. So we weren't

1 prepared and a lot of my senior friends and
2 relatives, they're sick people and they cannot go
3 out and shovel.
4

5 So if this is how we acted and how
6 we had officials and the people didn't do their
7 job, when it doesn't snow, they're still getting
8 paid. So how come all of the sudden they didn't
9 do the shoveling. This has never happened before.
10 By the time I got here from the New York airport--

11 [Crosstalk]

12 CHARLOTTE BYRNE: So this we could
13 not prepare because we never had to before. We
14 had snowstorms before but this is something new,
15 so we have to address this issue. And so I thank
16 you very much for listening. Thank you for having
17 me.

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

19 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very
20 much.

21 [Applause]

22 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. I
23 want to thank all of the witnesses. I want to
24 thank the citizens of Staten Island. I want to
25 thank the Administration. I'm glad that they took

1 notes. I want to make sure that everyone; we have
2 their telephone numbers and their emails and
3 information so that we can get back in touch with
4 them. We'll be preparing a report with some
5 recommendations and we thank all of you for
6 coming. We're going to hear some parting remarks
7 from Speaker Quinn, representing the City Council.
8

9 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very
10 much. I just want to make sure folks know we're
11 going to be doing hearings in all of the boroughs.
12 So if you can spread the word to your friends and
13 family in other boroughs to please come out as
14 well.

15 And really, my final words are
16 thank you. Thank you for coming out tonight and
17 spending time with us to help us make sure the
18 type of completely unacceptable response you got
19 never ever happens again.

20 We really wish you didn't have to
21 be so focused and have such fortitude in the face
22 of a storm. We're grateful that you did and we
23 grateful that you are not in the face of getting
24 inadequate response turned bitter or angry but
25 instead stayed the great Staten Islanders that you

1
2 are and came out tonight to help us make sure in
3 future times we do a better job. So thank you all
4 very much. We will be back in touch, so see you
5 all very soon. Thank you.

6 [Applause]

7 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member
8 Debi Rose wanted to say a comment or two.

9 SPEAKER QUINN: I just want to
10 thank the Borough President very much for joining
11 us tonight, a truly honorary member of the City
12 Council.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER ROSE: I just want
14 to thank you all for coming out and being so
15 forthright and articulate and relaying your
16 experiences and our story.

17 I want to remind you that we did do
18 a survey and that we have some copies over there
19 if you would like to see how the residents
20 responded. Over 1,700 residents responded to this
21 storm. You can call my office for a copy if
22 there's not one there. I want to thank the
23 Speaker and Letitia James.

24 SPEAKER QUINN: Yeah, Tish and
25 Jumaane.

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CHAIRPERSON JAMES: --and Jumaane Williams for facilitating a venue whereby the residents of Staten Island could share their experiences. You know, we're hale and hearty and we survived it and we'll survive again, but we have to be determined that it will never happen this way again. Thank you all for coming.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Tomorrow, the second greatest borough, Brooklyn.

SPEAKER QUINN: That's a nice plug.

[Crosstalk]

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very much.

[Crosstalk]

C E R T I F I C A T E

I, Donna Hintze 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 Donna Hintze

Date January 31, 2011