

CITY COUNCIL
CITY OF NEW YORK

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TRANSCRIPT OF THE MINUTES

Of the

CHARTING MEETING OF THE
CITY COUNCIL

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Wednesday, January 4, 2023
Start: 12:32 p.m.
Recess: 12:55 p.m.

HELD AT: COUNCIL CHAMBERS, CITY HALL

B E F O R E: Adrienne E. Adams, Speaker

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

- Speaker Adrienne Adams
- Shaun Abreu
- Joann Ariola
- Diana Ayala
- Charles Barron
- Erik Bottcher
- Justin L. Brannan
- Gale A. Brewer
- Selvena N. Brooks-Powers
- Joseph C. Borelli
- Tiffany Cabán
- David M. Carr
- Carmen De La Rosa
- Eric Dinowitz
- Amanda Farias
- Oswald Feliz
- James Gennaro
- Jennifer Gutiérrez
- Kamillah Hanks

Shahana Hanif
Robert F. Holden
Crystal Hudson
Rita Joseph
Ari Kagan
Shekar Krishnan
Linda Lee
Farah N. Louis
Christopher Marte
Darlene Mealy
Julie Menin
Francisco P. Moya
Mercedes Narcisse
Sandy Nurse
Chi A. Ossé
Vickie Paladino
Keith Powers
Lincoln Restler
Kristin Richardson Jordan
Kevin C. Riley
Carlina Rivera
Lynn Schulman
Rafael Salamanca, Jr.
Sandra Ung
Marjorie Velázquez
Inna Vernikov
Nantasha Williams
Julie Won
Kalman Yeger

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

1 CHARTER MEETING

4

2 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Test. Test. Test. This is a
3 test. Today's date is January 4, 2023. This is a
4 Charter Meeting and is being held in Chambers.

5 CLERK: Quiet on the floor please. Quiet on the
6 floor please. If you do not have council
7 identification, you have to have a seat upstairs in
8 the balcony.

9 Ladies and gentlemen, please place all electronic
10 devices, all electronic devices to vibrate.

11 Mr. Majority Leader.

12 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Good afternoon and happy
13 new year. Welcome to the charter meeting of January
14 4th, 2023. I am Majority Leader Keith Powers. I
15 would like to thank everyone here for joining us
16 today. I hope you all had good holidays and new year
17 and got some much-needed rest, and congratulations to
18 everyone in year one for surviving.

19 [APPLAUSE]

20 If you would like to follow along on today's
21 agenda, the agenda for today's meeting is posted on
22 the city council website.

23 CLERK: Please join us for the Pledge of
24 Allegiance.

25 SERGEANT AT ARMS: All rise.

2 ALL: I pledge allegiance to the flag of the
3 United States of America, and to the republic for
4 which it stands, one nation, under God, indivisible
5 with liberty and justice for all.

6 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Roll call.

7 CLERK: Abreu?

8 COUNCILMEMBER ABREU: Present.

9 CLERK: Ariola?

10 CLERK: Avilés?

11 CLERK: Ayala?

12 COUNCILMEMBER AYALA: Here.

13 CLERK: Barron?

14 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: Here.

15 CLERK: Bottcher?

16 COUNCILMEMBER BOTTCHER: Present.

17 CLERK: Brannan?

18 COUNCILMEMBER BRANNAN: Here.

19 CLERK: Brewer?

20 COUNCILMEMBER BREWER: Here.

21 CLERK: Brooks-Powers?

22 COUNCILMEMBER BROOKS-POWERS: Here.

23 CLERK: Cabán?

24 COUNCILMEMBER CABÁN: Present.

25 CLERK: Carr?

1 CHARTER MEETING

6

2 CLERK: De La Rosa?

3 COUNCILMEMBER DE LA ROSA: Here.

4 CLERK: Dinowitz?

5 COUNCILMEMBER DINOWITZ: Here.

6 CLERK: Farias?

7 COUNCILMEMBER FARIAS: Present.

8 CLERK: Feliz?

9 CLERK: Gennaro?

10 COUNCILMEMBER GENNARO: Here.

11 CLERK: Carr?

12 COUNCILMEMBER CARR: Here.

13 CLERK: Gutiérrez?

14 COUNCILMEMBER GUTIÉRREZ: Presente.

15 CLERK: Hanif?

16 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: Here.

17 CLERK: Hanks?

18 COUNCILMEMBER HANKS: Present.

19 CLERK: Holden?

20 COUNCILMEMBER HOLDEN: Here.

21 CLERK: Hudson?

22 COUNCILMEMBER HUDSON: Present.

23 CLERK: Joseph?

24 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: Present.

25 CLERK: Kagan?

1 CHARTER MEETING

7

2 COUNCILMEMBER KAGAN: Present.

3 CLERK: Krishnan?

4 COUNCILMEMBER KRISHNAN: Here.

5 CLERK: Ariola?

6 COUNCILMEMBER ARIOLA: Here.

7 CLERK: Lee?

8 COUNCILMEMBER LEE: Here.

9 CLERK: Louis?

10 COUNCILMEMBER LOUIS: Here.

11 CLERK: Marte?

12 COUNCILMEMBER MARTE: Here.

13 CLERK: Mealy?

14 COUNCILMEMBER MEALY: Here.

15 CLERK: Menin?

16 COUNCILMEMBER MENIN: Here.

17 CLERK: Moya?

18 COUNCILMEMBER MOYA: Present.

19 CLERK: Narcisse?

20 COUNCILMEMBER NARCISSE: Present.

21 CLERK: Nurse?

22 COUNCILMEMBER NURSE: Present.

23 CLERK: Ossé?

24 COUNCILMEMBER OSSÉ: Present.

25 CLERK: Paladino?

1 CHARTER MEETING

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2 CLERK: Feliz?

3 COUNCILMEMBER FELIZ: Here.

4 CLERK: Restler?

5 COUNCILMEMBER RESTLER: Here.

6 CLERK: Richardson Jordan?

7 COUNCILMEMBER RICHARDSON JORDAN: Here.

8 CLERK: Riley?

9 COUNCILMEMBER RILEY: Present.

10 CLERK: Rivera?

11 CLERK: Salamanca?

12 COUNCILMEMBER SALAMANCA: Present.

13 CLERK: Sanchez?

14 CLERK: Schulman?

15 COUNCILMEMBER SCHULMAN: Here.

16 CLERK: Stevens?

17 CLERK: Ung?

18 COUNCILMEMBER UNG: Present.

19 CLERK: Paladino?

20 COUNCILMEMBER PALADINO: Here.

21 CLERK: Velázquez?

22 COUNCILMEMBER VELÁZQUEZ: Here.

23 CLERK: Rivera?

24 COUNCILMEMBER RIVERA: Present.

25 CLERK: Vernikov?

2 COUNCILMEMBER VERNIKOV: Present.

3 CLERK: Williams?

4 COUNCILMEMBER WILLIAMS: I'm here.

5 CLERK: Won?

6 COUNCILMEMBER WON: Here.

7 CLERK: Yeger?

8 COUNCILMEMBER YEGER: Here.

9 CLERK: Borelli?

10 COUNCILMEMBER BORELLI: Here.

11 CLERK: Majority Leader Powers?

12 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Here.

13 CLERK: Speaker Adams?

14 SPEAKER ADAMS: Present.

15 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Thank you. We have a
16 quorum. And now we are going to have today's
17 invocation, which will be delivered by Rabbi Chaim
18 Steinmetz from Congregation Kehilath Jeshurun,
19 located in my district, of course, at 125 East 85th
20 Street in Manhattan. Welcome.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: All rise.

22 RABBI STEINMETZ: It is a new year and a new
23 session of the city council. But today the blessing
24 that I am praying for is not something new. Instead,
25 it is an age-old blessing. In the Bible, there is a

2 Birkat Kohanim, a priestly blessing, which has been
3 recited in the prayer service for thousands of years.
4 This concise, 15-word, blessing concludes with the
5 phrase, "v'yaseim l'cha shalom", "may God grant you
6 peace." The Talmud comments on how this is the most
7 essential blessing, because peace is a blessing that
8 contains within it all other blessings. Without
9 peace, every other gift is empty. With peace, every
10 blessing is possible. And that is the blessing I am
11 praying for today.

12 Oh mighty God, we ask you for the blessing of
13 peace. Grant us peace from violence so our citizens
14 can live in safety. Grant us peace from hatred in
15 all its forms, peace from racism, bigotry,
16 homophobia, and antisemitism, so that every New
17 Yorker can feel at home in our beloved city. Grant
18 us peace from polarization and division so that we
19 can remain one city and one nation, indivisible. We
20 do not ask for unanimity. Honest and thoughtful
21 debate is the very foundation of our country. But
22 may you grant our leaders the spirit of cooperation
23 and unity to stand together, shoulder to shoulder, in
24 service of our community. Almighty God, grant us the
25 blessing of peace, and bring the spirit of unity and

2 peace to this distinguished City Council, so that
3 they may in turn bring peace and goodness to all New
4 Yorkers. Amen.

5 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Amen. Well, thank you
6 for joining us today. I am so excited to be able to
7 welcome a rabbi from my district here, who is
8 distinguished here, being a rabbi for nearly 30
9 years, and serving in... in addition to my district,
10 Montreal and Mount Vernon as well. He has been
11 deeply engaged on community affairs here in the city,
12 including serving on the board of the directors of
13 the UJA Federation, which we all know very well for
14 their work here. His being widely published, and it
15 is a long list. Washington Post, Daily News, Toronto
16 Star Gazette, Jerusalem Post, and many other
17 newspapers, but I wanted him to thank him for the
18 service to my district and of course to the whole
19 city here, and of course no better meeting to be at
20 to have your blessing here today, than to join the
21 one where we're starting off again a New Year and a
22 new start. So I want to thank you, and thank you for
23 being with us today, and I wish you and your whole
24 congregation a very happy New Year and blessings as
25 well.

2 And with that, I would like to spread the
3 invocation on the rec... Let me do this in a formal
4 way. I would like to thank you and make a motion for
5 unanimous consent to spread the invocation in full
6 upon the record. Thanks for being here.

7 I will now have the adoption of the minutes by
8 Councilmember Francisco Moya.

9 COUNCILMEMBER MOYA: I make a motion that the
10 minutes of the stated meeting of January 4th, 2023,
11 be adopted as printed.

12 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Thank you. We'll go to
13 messages and papers from the mayor.

14 CLERK: M106 through M108, Mayoral Appointments
15 and the Landmarks Preservation Commission.

16 SPEAKER ADAMS: Rules, Privileges, and Elections.

17 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Communication from city,
18 county, and borough offices?

19 CLERK: None.

20 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Petitions and
21 communications?

22 CLERK: None.

23 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Land use call-ups?

24 CLERK: None.

2 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Thank you. We'll now
3 have communication from Speaker Adrienne Adams.

4 SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you so much, everyone. Good
5 afternoon and thank you especially to Rabbi Steinmetz
6 for that beautiful Prayer of Peace. Good afternoon,
7 everyone, and welcome to the charter meeting of 2023.
8 You made it.

9 [APPLAUSE]

10 I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and New
11 Year's celebration with your loved ones. And as we
12 begin our second year together, I'd like to take a
13 moment to reflect on our shared accomplishments,
14 especially as the first women-majority and most
15 diverse Council in our city's history. Colleagues,
16 together we advanced health, public safety,
17 affordable housing, and opportunities for New Yorkers
18 while tackling longstanding inequities that have not
19 previously been prioritized. I'm proud of the work
20 we've done together. And as we kick off 2023 I look
21 forward to continuing to deliver for all New Yorkers
22 with you.

23 The start of the new year also represents the
24 beginning of our deliberations about fiscal year 2024
25 city budget. As our city and the entire nation faces

2 economic headwinds and braces for challenges, it is
3 critical that we establish priorities for the city to
4 negotiate with the Administration in the coming weeks
5 and months.

6 Our response to the looming physical fiscal
7 challenges cannot be to simply cut essential services
8 and the safety net that New Yorkers rely on. The city
9 is already struggling with the negative impacts of
10 understaffing and under resourcing city agencies that
11 provide vital services to New Yorkers. Our city's
12 most vulnerable, including those who receive SNAP
13 benefits, rental housing vouchers, and many others
14 are not receiving the resources and support that help
15 them and our city. This is unacceptable.

16 As a Council, we must advocate for and advance a
17 different vision for our city, one that centers the
18 needs of New Yorkers to safeguard our city. City
19 government should recommit to investing in the
20 services that address the root causes of our
21 challenges, supporting the social safety net,
22 housing, education, and economic opportunities. We
23 must provide comprehensive and accessible mental
24 health services to ensure all New Yorkers can thrive
25 in their communities. We can achieve a healthier,

2 safer, and stronger New York City through a
3 commitment to maintaining essential programs and
4 services.

5 This should be and will be our focus. And I look
6 forward to working with each of you, our partners and
7 all stakeholders to secure success for our city.

8 January 9, marks exactly one year since the Twin
9 Parks Northwest building fire that claimed the lives
10 of 17 New Yorkers, including eight children, in the
11 Bronx District of councilmember Oswald Feliz, and
12 adjacent to Councilmember Pierina Sanchez's district.
13 It has been a devastating year for the families and
14 communities impacted by this tragedy, and it's
15 incumbent on all of us to continue to support them.
16 Last May, we passed a package of legislation to
17 strengthen fire safety measures in New York City in
18 hopes of preventing future deadly fires like this
19 from ever happening again. We know continued efforts
20 are necessary and will continue to fulfill our role
21 to protect New Yorkers. There will be remembrances in
22 the coming days and I want to extend my heartfelt
23 condolences to the friends and families who lost
24 loved ones during this tragic fire one year ago.

2 January 1, represents not just the first day of
3 the new year, but also Haitian Independence Day...

4 [APPLAUSE]

5 ...which commemorates Haiti's liberation from
6 colonial rule in 1804 as the world's first black-led
7 republic. This is a proud and meaningful day, during
8 which we celebrate the rich history and traditions of
9 Haitian communities across the globe. To all of our
10 members of Haitian descent, and all Haitian New
11 Yorkers, I hope you had a wonderful Haitian
12 Independence Day. Sak pase!

13 In just two days, communities across our city
14 will be celebrating Three Kings Day, a significant
15 holiday that is also known as the Feast of Epiphany.
16 It's a day of gathering with family members,
17 exchanging gifts, and sharing meals. For all New
18 Yorkers who are observing, I wish you a happy Three
19 Kings Day.

20 And on January 13, we will be celebrating Korean-
21 American Day, a time when we highlight and honor the
22 many contributions of Korean American communities.
23 I'm proud that our historically diverse Council
24 includes the first two Korean-American Council
25 members, Linda Lee and Julie Won.

1 CHARTER MEETING

17

2 [APPLAUSE]

3 We celebrate your historic representation in
4 which all New Yorkers who are celebrating a happy
5 Korean-American Day.

6 And finally, please join me in wishing a Happy
7 belated birthday to Councilmember Althea Stevens.

8 [APPLAUSE]

9 Councilmember Carlina Rivera.

10 [APPLAUSE]

11 and Councilmember Kristin Richardson Jordan.

12 [APPLAUSE]

13 And in the next few days, Councilmembers Sean
14 Abreu and Francisco Moya will also be celebrating
15 their birthdays.

16 [APPLAUSE]

17 Colleagues, I really hope that you have a great
18 celebration with your family, friends, and loved ones
19 that I thank you so much for your attention. Now, I
20 will turn it back over to our Majority Leader.

21 SERGEANT AT ARMS: Quiet on the floor please.

22 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Quiet. Thank you.

23 We're going to go to discussion of general orders.

24 CLERK: None.

25

1 CHARTER MEETING

18

2 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: We have no one signed
3 up. We're going go to the Report of Special
4 Committees.

5 CLERK: None.

6 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Report of Standing
7 Committees.

8 CLERK: None.

9 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Introduction and reading
10 of bills.

11 SPEAKER ADAMS: All bills have been referred to
12 committees as indicated on today's agenda.

13 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Thank you. We're going
14 to now move... There's no resolutions to vote on
15 today. We're now going to move into general
16 discussion. We have four folks signed up. We're
17 going to go to Councilmember Hanif to start.

18 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: Thank you so much Majority
19 Leader, and Good afternoon colleagues.

20 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Quiet please.

21 COUNCILMEMBER HANIF: Thank you. As many of you
22 know, I am a lupus survivor. Next month I turn 32,
23 making 15 years with this incurable, unpredictable
24 disease that has resulted in three hip replacement
25 surgeries, one shoulder replacement surgery,

2 countless drugs, more hospitalizations, X rays, MRIs,
3 and scans than I can count. And so much blood has
4 been drawn from me to understand what is going on in
5 my body. While I'm light-hearted and say I'm bionic
6 or a cyborg, the reality is I have a lifetime of
7 procedures and flare-ups that await me.

8 I'm fortunate to have been a city employee when I
9 did to have access to high-quality health insurance
10 when I needed it most, and even more fortunate to
11 have been elected by district that understands we
12 need impacted leaders in office to demand better and
13 guaranteed health care for all.

14 One day I will be a retired city worker, and much
15 like the hundreds of constituents I have heard from I
16 am shocked by this administration's callous attempt
17 to strip existing healthcare coverage from thousands
18 of our city's retirees and stand firmly in
19 opposition. I reject any changes to Admin Code
20 12126. The privatization of health care for our
21 city's retirees is an abject failure. I cannot in
22 good conscience support this legislation, and will
23 vote no if it moves to the floor. Thank you.

24 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Thank you. We'll now go
25 to Councilmember Ari Kagan.

2 COUNCILMEMBER KAGAN: Thank you. I would like to
3 reiterate my opposition to the proposed change of
4 Administrative Code 12126. For many decades,
5 municipal employees were promised certain pension and
6 health care benefits. And now during the time of
7 rising inflation, hundreds of thousands of municipal
8 retirees are being told to switch to Medicare
9 Advantage. But a promise was made and a promise
10 should be kept. I stand together with my Republican
11 and Democratic colleagues in New York City Council
12 who support our municipal retirees and oppose any
13 changes to their current health care insurance. I
14 urge the administration and municipal Labor Committee
15 to come back to the negotiating table and to find a
16 sensible compromise that will result in long term
17 health care savings, and evade the need to cut vital
18 benefits to either active or retired city workers.
19 Thank you.

20 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Thank you. We'll now go
21 to Councilmember Barron, and last Councilmember
22 Joseph.

23 COUNCILMEMBER BARRON: Thank you colleagues.
24 Happy New Years to everybody. And this should be our
25

2 year, the year that this becomes The People's
3 Council.

4 I wanted to remind you of the difference between
5 power and influence. Power is when you have the
6 ability to act, regardless to the opposition of
7 others. You have that actual power to act.
8 Influence is when people try to persuade people with
9 the power to act in their best interests. So the
10 mayor, as it relates to this, voting on budget and
11 laws has influence. The speaker, as it relates to
12 our body has influence, not power.

13 The power of the speaker and the power of the
14 mayor only becomes that when you yield your power to
15 them. So we have to become The People's Council. In
16 the Black Panther Party, we said "all power to the
17 people", and that's what we meant: That the people
18 elected us and the people we should empower.
19 Remember that when we come to budget time. Remember
20 that when we come to these proposed rule changes
21 coming up. Make sure they don't disempower you and
22 give more power to others. And also, remember the
23 Public Advocate's Office -- not the individual -- the
24 Office of the Public Advocate should be a partnership
25 with the City Council, not being removed from

2 consideration in a lot of areas of these new proposed
3 rules coming up.

4 So remember: All power to the people. That's
5 why we said it in the Black Panther Party. And
6 remember: You pass the budget, not the mayor. You
7 pass the laws, not the mayor. And you pass land use
8 items, not the speaker, nor the mayor. All power to
9 the people.

10 [APPLAUSE]

11 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Thank you,
12 Councilmember. We'll go now go to Councilmember
13 Joseph.

14 COUNCILMEMBER JOSEPH: Thank you Majority Leader.
15 According to the CDC, the leading cause of death
16 among young people is gun violence. In fact, in
17 2019, a young person was killed every 2 hours and 36
18 minutes.

19 Today, I rise not only as a Councilmember, but as
20 a teacher and a mother to hold space for my former
21 student, Elijah, who was yet another unfortunate
22 victim of gun violence. This is a historic Council
23 because for the first time many of us are mothers.
24 So we must do everything we can to protect our city's
25 future, which starts with ensuring our communities

2 are properly funded, so no one feels the need to pick
3 up a gun in the first place.

4 May God bless Elijah and all of those who have
5 lost to senseless gun violence. Thank you Majority.

6 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Thank you. And we have
7 one addition. We're going to call on Councilmember
8 Ariola.

9 COUNCILMEMBER ARIOLA: Thank you Majority Leader.
10 I'd like to just weigh in and say that our municipal
11 retirees dedicated their entire careers towards
12 serving the people of New York City. In return, we
13 made a promise that they would be able to enjoy their
14 golden years with high quality insurance without
15 additional out of pocket expenses.

16 I will always support our city's retirees and
17 fight to keep that promise. And as such, I stand with
18 my colleagues and call on the administration and the
19 Municipal Labor Committee to return to the
20 negotiating table and allow our retirees to keep
21 their insurance that they worked so hard to earn.
22 Thank you.

23 MAJORITY LEADER POWERS: Thank you, Council
24 Member.

1 CHARTER MEETING

24

2 Seeing no other people signed up today. I'm going
3 to now call on Speaker Adrienne Adams to close
4 today's meeting.

5 SPEAKER ADAMS: Thank you Majority Leader. The
6 charter meeting of the January 4, 2023, meeting is
7 hereby adjourned.

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C E R T I F I C A T E

World Wide Dictation certifies that the foregoing transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. We further certify that there is no relation to any of the parties to this action by blood or marriage, and that there is interest in the outcome of this matter.



Date January 6, 2023