

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 19, 2011

Start: 6:00 pm

Recess: 8:53 pm

HELD AT: Brooklyn Borough Hall
209 Joralemon Street

B E F O R E:

LETITIA JAMES
PETER F. VALLONE, JR.
JUMAANE D. WILLIAMS
Chairpersons

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Letitia James
Peter F. Vallone, Jr.
Jumaane D. Williams
Christine C. Quinn
Mathieu Eugene
Lewis A. Fidler
David G. Greenfield
Brad Lander

A P P E A R A N C E S

COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Stephen Levin

Darlene Mealy

Michael C. Nelson

Domenic M. Recchia, Jr.

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

Marty Markowitz
Borough President
Brooklyn

Ignacio Terranova
Citywide Community Affairs Officer
NYC Department of Sanitation

Hon. Annette M. Robinson
New York State Assemblywoman
56th Assembly District

Sanford Rubenstein
Attorney

Robert Davis

Debra Greif
Brooklyn Family Support Advisory Council

Anly Almonte
LaRouche Organization

Ronald J. Dillon

Blanche Louise Peltanbusch

Mamnunul Haq
Board of Directors
NY Taxi Workers Alliance

James Jaguelli

Lucy Koteen

Christine Williams

Joseph G. Garber
Director
Civil Service Merit Council

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

Daniel Goodine
First responder

Fiore Simeone
St. Marks Avenue Block Association

Bo Samajopoulos

Linda Sanders

Dutton Black

Yolanda Matthews

Yvonne Murray

Sharona Jones

Pat Senior

Nelson Stoute
Chairman
Sanitation and Environmental Protection Committee
Community Board 3

Kevin Harrington
Vice President
Transport Workers Union
Local 100

James O'Connell
First responder

Michael Marquez
President
Bensonhurst Volunteer Ambulance Service

Allen Bortnick

William Boyle

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

Elliott Abosh

Lincoln Restler
District Leader
50th Assembly District

Rev. Dr. Miran Ukaegbir
Chairperson
Sanitation and Environmental Protection Services
Community Board 16

George Murden

Marcos Masri

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We will begin in about four minutes. If you have not signed up, please sign up to testify. We will be limiting everyone's testimony to three minutes. You will be timed. Three minutes, so please adjust your testimony accordingly. We expect the Speaker of the City Council shortly, but we will begin at 6:00 promptly.

[Pause]

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

I am joined this evening by my colleagues; to my far right is Council Member Domenic Recchia. He is chair of the Finance Committee in the City Council. Then, Council Member Peter Vallone, who hails from Queens, he is Chair of Public Safety and also co-chairs this hearing as well. Then, there's Mike Nelson, from Brooklyn, who is Chair of Waterfronts. The next gentleman needs no introduction, he only has one name. What's his name everybody?

AUDIENCE: Marty.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you very much. The next individual, to my left, is Council Member Jumaane Williams, who is also a co-chair of tonight's hearing. He is Chair of Investigations. Then next to him, to the left of him is the Assistant Majority Leader of the City Council, Council Member Lew Fidler, who also hails from the great Borough of Brooklyn.

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 of us who do not live in Manhattan. 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, particular ambulances and left our city paralyzed for literally days.

New York City has dealt with plenty of storms of similar scale. And I, like many other Council Members, have often sung the praises of Commissioner John Doherty and the Department of Sanitation for their excellent response and hard

work in addressing those storms. But this time, the city failed to meet its own standards, or even the basic needs of its citizenry.

We are here today to hear from residents of Brooklyn, my borough, about how this failure impacted your lives and what you think we can do to prevent those impacts in the future.

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

We also heard Administration testimony from the Deputy Mayor of Operations Stephen Goldsmith, the Commissioner of the Office of Emergency Department Joseph Bruno and Fire Commissioner Salvatore Cassano. In addition, we heard from a variety of unions and civic groups impacted by the storm and its cleanup. I believe that most viewers and participants in the hearing found it both constructive and respectful.

Tonight, we are continuing the

1 second phase of hearings, which involve gathering
2 direct testimony about the storm and its aftermath
3 from the public on a borough by borough basis.
4 Last night, we heard from Staten Islanders.
5 Tonight, we will hold one of two Brooklyn
6 hearings. I know that many of us endured
7 experiences that were painful and caused us real
8 harm.
9

10 We would like to hear about those
11 experiences this evening. But I request that
12 everyone strive to make constructive comments to
13 add to what we know about solving what went wrong.
14 No one knows as much about what happened during
15 and after that storm than all of you from
16 Brooklyn. So, educate us please, but keep it
17 civil and keep it to three minutes.

18 Finally, I'm glad to note that we
19 are joined by representatives of the Department of
20 Sanitation and the Mayor's Community Affairs. But
21 from what I understand, these representatives will
22 make brief remarks after my colleagues have
23 concluded their opening statements and will remain
24 at tonight's hearing to listen to the testimony
25 provided by the public.

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2 Unfortunately, all of us are
3 disappointed that they cannot answer any questions
4 and they cannot respond to your questions and that
5 you cannot engage them. I believe it's an act of
6 disrespect to the great Borough of Brooklyn.

7 The person who heads this great
8 borough is our Borough President who needs no
9 introduction. Ladies and gentlemen: the Borough
10 President of Brooklyn, Mr. Marty Markowitz.

11 [Applause]

12 MARTY MARKOWITZ: Thank you. Thank
13 you very, very much, Madame Chair and my
14 colleagues in the City Council. Thank you for
15 your outstanding efforts on this important issue.

16 I must tell you that Borough Hall
17 fielded literally 400-500 telephone calls from
18 residents in every part of Brooklyn that became
19 hostage to the complete failure of New York City
20 and its departments to respond quickly, as we have
21 become accustomed to, and as we have every right
22 to expect from the various city agencies that have
23 a responsibility when major snowfalls occur.

24 I can't begin to tell you the
25 hardships, both of folks that are of ill health,

1 those that have to get to hospitals for daily or
2 weekly medical attention, for those that needed
3 heating oil delivered to their homes, and I can go
4 on and on. Including, a major funeral service
5 that provides cars and vans to funerals in
6 Brooklyn, that were not able to get those out and
7 funerals, believe it or not, were also delayed.
8 Even greater grieving for the families involved.
9 This is just a small snapshot.

11 We've heard from some of the
12 officials, but yet I'm still waiting to hear about
13 the snow emergency. Who was it that decided not
14 to call the snow emergency? Has each department
15 been fully questioned as to how that occurred? I
16 think it's also important, Councilwoman and your
17 colleagues here, and my colleagues, what happened
18 between the hours of Sunday night at around 10:00
19 p.m. through 6:00 a.m. on Monday morning? Not a
20 plow truck in sight, no salting, no nothing.

21 What happened in those crucial
22 hours that caused the entire process, the whole
23 system to be behind the curve? Something occurred
24 during those hours and I really don't believe we
25 have really gotten to the real full picture yet on

3 Here's the purpose why the Council
4 is here and why you're all here: it's not just to
5 point fingers and say you made a mistake. There
6 are people in city government that have already
7 admitted that they made a mistake. I think if we
8 look into it, there are probably more. The
9 question is: how do we prevent this in the future?
10 How do we make sure that the residents of this
11 city, and in Brooklyn in particular, get the kind
12 of Sanitation pickups in terms of snow removal
13 that we're entitled to, that we expect, that we
14 pay for and that we elect officials to make sure
15 that it happens? That's the bottom line.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you,
24 Borough President. Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Next, we will hear from the leader of the City Council, our Speaker. Ladies and gentlemen: Speaker Christine Quinn.

[Applause]

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you, first to Borough President Markowitz for being our host tonight. And also, thank you very much for sounding the alarm very, very early in the snow process and sounding the alarm that much of the Borough of Brooklyn was not getting any attention at all. So I want to thank you very, very much for that.

I want to thank Chairs James, Vallone, Williams and also Crowley, who I think is joining with us later. They are the four chairs who held our oversight hearing on the city's response to the blizzard last week. They and their staffs have been doing excellent work following up on what happened. So I just really want to thank you them, as well as Chair Vacca, the Chair of our Transportation Committee who also held a very important oversight hearing last week, looking at the job the MTA did, or more aptly, did

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2 not do, during the storm. I want to thank all of
3 my colleagues for being here.

4 We're here tonight for a couple of
5 very simple reasons. First and foremost, we're
6 here tonight because the city's response to the
7 most recent blizzard, the one in December was
8 quite simply, unacceptable. New Yorkers, and
9 appropriately so, given the level of taxes that
10 you pay, have come to expect a certain level of
11 service when it comes to snow removal. The job
12 that was done wasn't anywhere near that level of
13 service. Your expectations were not met.

14 For us in the Council, it's
15 important that we try to find out, to the best
16 degree we can, why that happened. What went wrong
17 this snowstorm that doesn't seem, in anyone's
18 memory, to have gone wrong in decades? What
19 happened? Why were there some parts of the city
20 that didn't see plows, not for 24 hours, not for
21 48 hours, not for 72 hours? That is simply, in a
22 word, unacceptable.

23 Now, we've held now, as I
24 mentioned, two close to all day hearings where
25 we've heard from government officials who've give

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2 us, as the Borough President indicated, apologies
3 and some information, a great deal of information,
4 but not necessarily all of the information about
5 what went wrong.

6 We also heard from the Bloomberg
7 Administration, a 15-point plan to make changes in
8 the snow response. I want to say I appreciated
9 the Bloomberg Administration coming to our hearing
10 prepared and with a plan. Quite different than
11 what we heard from the Transit Authority. They
12 had no prepared testimony, no specific admissions
13 of what went wrong and no plan. I'm not saying
14 the 15-point plan has all the answers, but at
15 least it was a step. The TA's performance was
16 beyond the pale.

17 We're here tonight because we can't
18 possibly figure out all that went wrong during
19 this storm only talking to other government
20 officials. We need to hear directly from New
21 Yorkers. What happened on your blocks, what
22 happened in your developments, what happened in
23 your neighborhoods? Getting the kind of direct
24 information we're going to get tonight, getting
25 the kind of direct information we got last night

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2 in Staten Island, is helping us finally get the
3 full picture of what went wrong in this storm.

4 For example, we heard last night
5 from a community board leader in Staten Island
6 that 311 referred calls to the community board.
7 We had never heard that before. That's critical
8 information to understanding just how bad the
9 response was and what we need to do to make sure
10 the breakdown is not that deep again.

11 So tonight, we'll hear some
12 statements from the Department of Sanitation. I
13 want to thank the folks from the Community
14 Assistance Unit who are here and the folks from
15 the Department of Sanitation who are here.

16 That said, I want to be clear, we
17 had hoped that the Department of Sanitation would
18 send borough representatives who would be able to
19 answer some reasonable amount of questions. It's
20 not these individuals' faults, but they have been
21 sent to read a prepared statement and not answer
22 questions, which we in the Council find
23 disappointing and a lost opportunity to get more
24 information out to the residents of Brooklyn.

25 We're really here tonight to listen

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2 to all of you, get information so we can come up
3 with further recommendations to make sure this
4 never happens again.

5 I want to ask all of you a favor,
6 whether you're going to testify tonight or not,
7 please sign in with all of your contact
8 information, also email if you have it. We're
9 going to want to send to you what our
10 recommendations are going to be to the mayor.

11 We may get it all right and we may
12 not. You may read our recommendations and say you
13 haven't quite gotten the point of what happened on
14 my block. We want to then hear back from you so
15 you can help us make sure we got it right.

16 What happened in the December storm
17 was unacceptable. But what would add insult to
18 injury is if it happens again. Tonight is making
19 sure you have your opportunity to voice what
20 happened to you help us make sure it never happens
21 again.

22 So I just want to thank all of you.
23 There's a lot of other probably more fun things
24 you could be doing tonight than being at Borough
25 Hall, though who doesn't love to see Marty. But I

want to thank you very much.

You know, some folks might have just gotten very angry and bitter after not getting service you should have gotten and said forget it. All of you care too much about Brooklyn to do that, and you're here tonight to make sure you and your neighbors are never in this position again. I just want to thank you for not getting bitter or angry at city government but redoubling your efforts to make sure we get it right. Thank you very much, Madame Chair.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.
Let's give it up for Speaker Christine Quinn.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We've been joined, to my far right, Council Member Darlene Mealy. To my left, we've been joined by Council Member Mathieu Eugene and to his right is Council Member David Greenfield.

We will now hear opening remarks from Council Member Peter Vallone, Chair of Public Safety.

CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: Thank you. I want to thank you, Marty, for hosting us in this

1 beautiful building. Let me say, Queens Borough
2 Hall has a long way to go to look like this. Not
3 that measuring up Queens Borough Hall or anything,
4 but this is beautiful. This is really beautiful
5 down here.

6
7 The Speaker stole my opening, so
8 I'm not going to give one. Because I want to
9 hear--

10 SPEAKER QUINN: [interposing] What
11 are you going to do?

12 CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: She always
13 does that. I'd rather hear from you guys about
14 some ways that we can make some improvements. We
15 know they did not plow and now we are going to
16 find out why, with your help. So I'm looking
17 forward to hearing from as many of you as I can.
18 So, thank you, Tish James, for your chairing. And
19 I guess we'll go to Jumaane Williams now.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.
21 Welcome to Brooklyn, Council Member Vallone.
22 Council Member Jumaane Williams?

23 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you,
24 Madame Chair. I want to thank the Speaker and all
25 of the co-chairs: Peter Vallone and Tish James.

I'm very happy to be here to discuss last month's blizzard. Last week, we heard from the Administration about its decision making and the actions of city agencies before, during and after the storm. Tonight, we want to hear from you about the direct impact that those same Administration decisions and actions had on the people of the fantastic Borough of Brooklyn.

We know that many of you are angry about the city's response to the blizzard, and you have every right to be. Ambulances that didn't make it, MTA that wasn't there, people who actually died, and the Mayor's initial response that was equitable to "let them eat cake."

By now, it's no secret that the breakdown of city services had a profound effect on New Yorkers: from streets that are still not plowed five and six days later, to New Yorkers struggling to make it to the hospital and homebound seniors having to rely on strangers for food.

We understand what went wrong. In the hearings, we heard there was no one person responsible for the minute-to-minute decision

1 making that needed to be made because the Mayor
2 and Deputy Mayors were out of town. There was no
3 snow emergency that was called. There was no
4 local emergency that was called. They fully
5 didn't understand the tools that were available to
6 them. There seemed to be a lack of understanding
7 of what the duties were of the Deputy Mayor and
8 OEM. All of these things snowballed into a
9 catastrophic state of events.
10

11 I'm glad that the Administration
12 admitted some of the failures and are trying to
13 move forward. There are still some things
14 lacking. The MTA hearing made them look like
15 golden boys, though. They came fully unprepared.

16 It remains important for New
17 Yorkers to speak out about their specific
18 experiences during and after the blizzard, to
19 voice their concerns and also offer suggestions
20 for reform.

21 The Administration is continuing to
22 evaluate its performance during weather-related
23 emergencies. We hope that information gathered
24 tonight during tonight's hearing will inform the
25 steps that the city takes to improve its services

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2 so that people of New York never have to face such
3 adversity again.

4 I also find it very disheartening
5 that there was an EMS chief that was demoted for
6 reasons that seems that everyone else did. I was
7 told that he didn't sound the proper alarms; he
8 didn't send the information back up the chain.
9 But it seemed to me that all of the commissioners
10 and the deputy mayors did the same thing. I think
11 it's insulting to the community that no one has
12 been publicly reprimanded in any way.

13 I'm also insulted that while the
14 Mayor has sent people to talk to the people, they
15 will not be able to talk with the people. I think
16 that's very insulting to this great borough and
17 the people of the city. Either: don't come, don't
18 speak, but don't speak and then not let people
19 speak to and make this a dialogue.

20 Thank you, again, for taking the
21 time out of your schedule to attend this hearing.
22 I look forward to your testimonies.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you,
24 thank you.

25 [Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: And now,
testimony from the Department of Sanitation, Mr.
Iggy Terranova, the Citywide Community Affairs
Officer. Mr. Terranova, there's a podium.

IGNACIO TERRANOVA: Good evening.
I am Iggy Terranova and I am representing the
Department of Sanitation on behalf of Commissioner
John Doherty. I am here tonight to listen to the
community's concerns regarding the department's
response to the December 26th blizzard.

Despite our efforts, our snow
plowing operations did not meet the standards that
New Yorkers have come to expect from the
department, which, as we have stated, is not
acceptable.

We are continuing to assess the
storm's response with other agencies and will
implement changes necessary to enhance interagency
coordination as well as communications with the
public.

Some of those changes were already
implemented during last week's snowstorm. We take
pride in our work. We will continue working hard
to restore the department's reputation for being

the world's best snow fighters.

I will now listen to your comments and report them all back to Commissioner Doherty. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Terranova, let me apologize in advance. That is unacceptable. We want answers and not an apology. It's an insult to every resident of the great Borough of Brooklyn. I would like for you to report to the Mayor of the City of New York that this chapter is not over and that these residents want their questions answered.

What I said was mild; the next speaker is going to be unrelenting. So let me apologize in advance. Ladies and gentlemen: Council Member Lew Fidler.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Thank you, Chairwoman James. Mr. Terranova, thank you for being tonight's designated piñata.

[Laughter]

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Frankly, this is an outrage and it is insulting. And while I can certainly understand why the Bloomberg Administration, and I'm not going to say the

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2 Department of Sanitation, why the Bloomberg
3 Administration would not want to play the "thank
4 you, may I have another game?" Frankly, the
5 people who are inconvenienced have a right to have
6 questions asked and questions answered that could
7 not have been asked and answered at the citywide
8 hearing.

9 I want to know, for example, what
10 my local Sanitation superintendents were telling
11 you, at Disney were telling the deputy mayors,
12 were telling the commissioners, and what they were
13 telling the mayor. Were they telling him that our
14 streets were plowed when they weren't? Were they
15 asking for more Sanitation plows? Were they
16 asking for more personnel? Were they sounding the
17 alarm? If they sounded it, how long did it take
18 for someone to hear it? How long did someone take
19 to respond to it? What were they being told?
20 What is the Administration afraid of? Are they
21 afraid that our local Sanitation superintendents
22 might tell the truth?

23 We're entitled to answers.
24 Everyone here is entitled to answers. Coming here
25 and sitting there and telling us that you're going

1
2 to tell Commissioner Doherty, who I think is a
3 pretty good commissioner on the whole, you're
4 going to go back and tell him isn't even half of
5 the job. We need answers to real questions.

6 Frankly, I'm here to hear what the
7 people have to say. It's a shame that the
8 Bloomberg Administration doesn't have the same
9 respect for the people of this borough. But,
10 frankly, Mr. Terranova, I mean in the words of the
11 great fictional Brooklynite, My Cousin Vinny, "I
12 have no further use for this witness."

13 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member
14 Greenfield?

15 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank
16 you, Madame Chair. You know, I just want to start
17 off first and recognize our great Borough
18 President, Borough President Marty Markowitz for
19 hosting us today, and really for being a voice of
20 reason throughout this snow fiasco. I'm proud
21 that we call him "Mr. Brooklyn." He represents
22 the finest of Brooklyn.

23 With his permission, I would
24 actually like to dub our Speaker, even though
25 she's from Manhattan, "Ms. Brooklyn" because she

really led the fight in City Hall for
accountability to have these investigations. So,
with the Borough President's permission--

MARTY MARKOWITZ: [Interposing] you
got it.

COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: --I
proclaim her an honorary Brooklynite. Is that
okay, Marty?

MARTY MARKOWITZ: You got it.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very
much, Council Member.

[Applause]

COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: Thank
you.

SPEAKER QUINN: I will wear that
with honor. Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: I don't
even want to address the witnesses who are here
tonight. Because I know they're actually good
people and they shouldn't take the brunt of our
frustrations.

So let me just go on the record and
just say that really what's happening here
tonight, in terms of the Administration's non-

1
2 response is a sham. It's a sham. It insults the
3 integrity of every single person in this city,
4 because we're entitled to accountability. We live
5 in a democracy.

6 In a democracy, when people make
7 mistakes, you're not entitled to sweep it under
8 the rug. You have to be held accountable. So,
9 unfortunately, I would honestly say that what
10 we're seeing tonight is a cowardly act by the
11 Administration who's not willing to come here and
12 to be held accountable for happened on the local
13 level.

14 The hearings that we had last week
15 were enlightening. They were insightful and they
16 were terrific. And of course, because of the
17 limited time, and they went on for hours and
18 hours, we focused on the big picture issues and we
19 got a lot of answers. We definitely did. But on
20 the local level, we couldn't explore.

21 As my colleague, Council Member
22 Fidler just explained, I was out there every night
23 until early hours of the morning, and I saw.
24 There were no personnel. There weren't front-end
25 loaders. We did not have the appropriate

1
2 equipment to clean the streets. We had a dozen
3 plows that were stuck, that were not being used,
4 and that were not clearing the streets. I think
5 we're all entitled to ask the very simple
6 question: why? Why? Why didn't we have the
7 personnel? Why didn't we have the front-end
8 loaders? Why weren't streets cleaned?

9 I don't think that it's
10 satisfactory for Administration to send two very
11 nice and very qualified and very hard working
12 people by the way, just for the record, because I
13 know them both, to send them down here and to say:
14 hey, you're going to make a statement. Because
15 really, what we need here tonight is we need
16 Sanitation supervisors, we need people from the
17 DOT, we need people from the NYPD. We need people
18 to tell us what happened. That's, unfortunately,
19 not happening.

20 So, to the Administration, all I
21 can say is shame on you for not holding your own
22 people accountable for the blizzard fiasco.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.
24 Council Member Eugene?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you

1
2 very much. First and foremost, let me thank the
3 Chairpersons and also all of my colleagues and
4 Speaker Quinn for this wonderful hearing. I want
5 to thank each one of you here also for coming
6 here. I want to commend you for exercising your
7 right to ask your questions, to know what's going
8 on.

9 But it is not acceptable to see
10 they don't respect your right, your right to know
11 what's going on and your right to have answers.
12 This is not possible in the great City of New
13 York. But I want to say also, this is the great
14 City of New York. We expect that our institutions
15 perform to their best. We cannot accept that in
16 New York City in 2010. The unprepared response of
17 the Sanitation could create so many damages and
18 loss of life. Just think about the people who
19 have medical emergency, medical needs, that
20 couldn't have access to the medical services. And
21 we know some of them lost their life. This is
22 under investigation. We don't know exactly.

23 But I'm saying that not coming to
24 answer to the question and to let us know exactly
25 what happened, it is not acceptable. We should

1 know what happened in order to prevent that to
2 happen again. We should know exactly what
3 happened. I think that the big question is a very
4 simple question, but that question is not answered
5 yet. Why did it happen?
6

7 I think we are going to continue to
8 fight, to work together and to question until we
9 get the answer why, until we know what happened in
10 order for us to prevent in the future the same
11 thing to happen again. Thank you.

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.
13 Council Member Nelson?

14 COUNCIL MEMBER NELSON: Thank you,
15 Madame Chair. I want to thank Marty and Speaker
16 Quinn also for holding these hearings and taking
17 this as serious as it should be taken.

18 Just for the moment, just take us
19 all back to Sunday night the 26th into Monday.
20 New York City was brought to its knees. Sometimes
21 we forget quickly. There were no plows or salters
22 working in sight as I looked around in my
23 district. Something, obviously, is not kosher and
24 of course we have to get to the bottom of this.

25 The snowstorm of 2010 was kind of

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2 available seats on this side of the aisle. The
3 first witness is Assemblywoman Annette Robinson,
4 representing the 56th Assembly District. Let me
5 also recognize in the audience, Assembly Member
6 Vito Lopez, Chair of Housing. Welcome, Assembly
7 Member Lopez. Assemblywoman?

8 HON. ANNETTE M. ROBINSON: Thank
9 you very much, Chairwoman James, and to Speaker
10 Quinn and to the other Chairpersons and my
11 colleagues in government and to all of you that
12 have assembled this evening.

13 I, too, share the comments of my
14 colleagues in government that have expressed
15 themselves in regards to what took place on
16 December 26th and beyond.

17 Good evening, Speaker Quinn,
18 Borough President Markowitz, members of the New
19 York City Council. I am Annette Robinson,
20 Assemblywoman of the 56th Assembly District,
21 representing the communities of Bedford-Stuyvesant
22 and Bushwick and Crown Heights.

23 As a native New Yorker, residing in
24 Brooklyn all of my life, I have come to express
25 the outrage, distress and helplessness experienced

1
2 by the constituents of the 56th Assembly District
3 during the aftermath of the blizzard.

4 After the snow had stopped falling,
5 I went outside to see what the conditions were,
6 only to find that the traditional operation of the
7 salt spreader had not spread any salt to begin the
8 melting down of the snow. I could not go anywhere
9 because there were mounds of snow in the middle of
10 the street two days after the snow had stopped
11 falling.

12 I called to 311, no response. I
13 left a message in the office of the chairperson of
14 the Sanitation Committee, Letitia James, of the
15 Council. And I called my Council Member Al Vann.
16 He advised me that his street had not been plowed
17 as well.

18 As an elected official, I was
19 disappointed that I was unable to provide my
20 constituents who called my home and office with a
21 timeframe for when their streets would be cleared.
22 There was no definitive word coming from the
23 Administration. It appeared that no one was in
24 charge.

25 New Yorkers are wonderful,

1
2 resilient caring people and should not be taken
3 for granted or marginalized. They were abused,
4 ignored and disrespected during the blizzard of
5 2010.

6 It is hoped that upon the
7 compilation of the expressed concerns that the New
8 York City Council will put in place a system that
9 would allow for elected officials especially to
10 directly contact the Emergency Response System to
11 ascertain updated information regarding their
12 districts.

13 Having served as a member of the
14 New York City Council as well, I worked with the
15 Sanitation Department very closely. I worked with
16 Commissioner Doherty. Commissioner Doherty has
17 been an extremely hard working public servant.
18 He's an extremely hard working public servant.
19 When called upon, he was there to facilitate and
20 do whatever needed to be done.

21 However, at this time, it seems as
22 though that I don't know what happened in the
23 intricacies of the Department of Sanitation or in
24 the intricacies of the Administration, but it
25 appears as though that no one was listening to the

1
2 cries of the people of the City of New York and
3 particularly for the communities in the outer
4 boroughs, and I'm talking about the Brooklyn
5 community. And so, I'm here today to represent
6 those communities that were not heard, that were
7 not heard and ask that we act in a way that we
8 would be able to provide the people of the City of
9 New York.

10 And particularly, as I came through
11 the city, I'm just coming in from Albany where
12 there's snow. There's plenty of snow in Albany.
13 You have to walk across. But you know what; they
14 plowed the streets in a timely manner. Also, my
15 colleague up in Buffalo, they know how to plow the
16 snow too. So apparently something was wrong here,
17 because in New York City we have been able to plow
18 snow and get it out of the way in a timely manner.

19 So I'm hoping that we are able to
20 change the paradigm the next time that we have a
21 major snowstorm so that it will not bring the city
22 to a standstill. Thank you.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

24 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you, Assembly
25 Member.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you,
Assemblywoman.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you for
the recommendation. The next speaker is Sanford
Rubenstein.

SANFORD RUBENSTEIN: I'm an
attorney here in Brooklyn. I represent the family
of Yvonne Freeman, who died of a heart attack on
December 27th, while waiting for an ambulance to
get through unplowed blizzard covered streets.

It was the failure of city
agencies, including the Sanitation Department,
Transportation Department and Fire Department and
EMS personnel that caused this tragedy. The
failure to declare a snow emergency was
inexcusable, as was the breakdown of the 911
system.

Yvonne Freeman's daughter was
unable to reach a 911 operator as her mother
gaspd for breath. All she got on the other side
of the phone line was a recorded message and a
buzzing sound that sounded like a fax machine.
Why was 911 broken? It was a life or death call

1
2 that did not get through. By the time the EMS
3 medics arrived, three hours later, it was too
4 late. Yvonne Freeman had died.

5 This family does not want the
6 tragedy they suffered to happen to any other
7 family. The City of New York needs to correct the
8 deficiencies that caused this wrongful death, but
9 it also must improve its preparedness for all
10 types of emergencies in the snow. If fire trucks
11 can get to fires in snow-filled streets, certainly
12 this city can have vehicles that can get through
13 snow-filled streets for medical emergencies as
14 well.

15 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

17 Council Member Williams?

18 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I just want
19 to say that stories like this, and I know there's
20 another gentleman here who is going to say a
21 similar story. But it is stories like this that
22 make me angry that the Administration would come
23 here to speak to and not listen. It has to be a
24 horrific thing to have someone dying and you call
25 911 and you get a tone and a fax machine. I can't

1
2 even begin to imagine what that feels like. But
3 people like that deserve to have some answers. I
4 hope if the Administration is going to come, they
5 begin to have some respect to respond and listen
6 to and answer to what some of these people are
7 saying.

8 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Let the family
9 know that our thoughts and prayers are with them.
10 The next speaker is Robert Davis.

11 ROBERT DAVIS: My name is Robert
12 Davis. My spouse died on Monday, 12/27. '

13 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Take your time.

14 SPEAKER QUINN: Sir, maybe if you
15 could take the mike out and just hold it up to
16 your mouth, because I think we're having a little
17 trouble hearing, if that's okay.

18 ROBERT DAVIS: Okay.

19 SPEAKER QUINN: If you don't mind.

20 ROBERT DAVIS: I'll just read it.

21 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

22 ROBERT DAVIS: Thank you. On
23 12/27, about 3 in the morning, I woke up to use
24 the restroom. When I came back, my spouse of 25
25 years, Clara Reed [phonetic], was watching TV. I

asked her if she was okay, and she said yes, go back to sleep. I went back to sleep. At 7:30, she was standing over me. She told me was having chest pains.

SPEAKER QUINN: It's okay.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: It's all right. You can turn the clock off for him please.

ROBERT DAVIS: So, I got up and she told me she had to use the restroom, so I took her to the restroom. We come back and I put her back in the living room, walked to the couch. She tried to lay down on her right side, but the pain was too sharp. So then I told her: try laying on your left side. So she tried that. She said it was too sharp again. So I called 911.

And when I called, I gave them my address and I told them she was having chest pains, my wife was having chest pains. They said: sir, we'll get somebody there as soon as possible. So I hang up. Then she started telling me that her legs were getting numb. She said: Robert, my legs are getting numb. She said rub them, so I started rubbing her legs. And all of the sudden, I kept rubbing for a while, and then she told me,

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2 happening again, you can best be sure under the
3 leadership of Speaker Quinn, we're going to do our
4 best so that no one else ever has to die from a
5 snowstorm. Thank you and God bless you.

6 ROBERT DAVIS: Thank you very much.

7 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very
8 much, sir. Thank you.

9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

10 [Applause]

11 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

12 Council Member Eugene?

13 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you,
14 very much. Ladies and gentlemen, you can see how
15 horrible it was, how horrible it was because of
16 the failure of the city to respond properly to the
17 blizzard. The great City of New York, in the
18 great City of New York, that shouldn't happen. It
19 is a shame because life doesn't have a price. We
20 should have done everything possible to prevent
21 such tragedy to happen.

22 The worst situation is that they
23 didn't respect, they didn't have any consideration
24 to come over here to answer questions. It's
25 happened. That could bring some comfort. That

wouldn't bring back the life of the wife of Mr. Davis, but this is disrespectful and this is not acceptable. We have to do everything possible to bring them here, or in the next hearing, they have to come to answer questions and to tell us what happened and are they going to prevent that to happen again.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Because life is too precious. Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. We have a lot of witnesses. Again, I apologize; we're going to have to limit everyone to two minutes. There are a number of people who want to testify; to two to three minutes.

The first speaker is Debra Greif, followed by Anly Almonte from the LaRouche Organization. Please Mr. Almonte or Ms. Almonte, if you could please move forward and get ready. Debra?

DEBRA GREIF: Good evening everyone. First, I want to thank the City Council for coming here. I especially want to thank my Brooklyn Borough President Marty Markowitz for

1
2 being here and for advocating, because he at least
3 made us feel that we knew someone was there
4 fighting for us.

5 I'm one of the co-chairs of
6 Marty's, the Disability Committee for Persons--I'm
7 really sorry, but this last speaker really--

8 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]
9 That's okay.

10 DEBRA GREIF: It was very
11 upsetting. I'm sorry. My co-chair is sitting
12 here in front. I live down in Community Board 15
13 in the Gravesend/Sheepshead Bay area. My
14 Councilman Domenic Recchia is here, plus also with
15 Mike Nelson and Lew Fidler. I will tell you that
16 I live on Ocean Parkway and that's a main
17 thoroughfare. In previous snowstorms and this
18 last one, but not the December one, in the middle
19 of the night we can hear snowplows going up and
20 down the streets.

21 I live on Gravesend Neck Road, and
22 you know the 61st Precinct is at Coney Island
23 Avenue and Gravesend Neck Road. They didn't close
24 my side so that the police cars can come up and
25 down for emergencies. They couldn't get through

and we were on Channel 7 Eyewitness News.

Well, the other problem we have, and we've had Mr. Tarantino come to our display committee last year. Because there's one issue we always find: none of the bus shelters are shoveled correctly. I apologize that I'm only give one set of pictures, but I will email to every Council Member.

Ocean Parkway and Neck Road Avenue, if you could see here, I have to stand in the street and I have a disability. I'm still recovering from a broken ankle. The other side is just as bad. The driver had to let me off in the middle of the street. Now, I have one for the B1 bus because I also use the B1 at Ocean Parkway and Avenue X. The driver let me off; he didn't come to the beginning of the stop, he stayed at the last part of the stop to let me off because he was afraid that if I got off, I could have slipped and he would have accidentally run over me. So that was scary.

Now, I also have to go to Bay Ridge, so in Community Board 10, you see, this is supposed to be a main thoroughfare for the B1 bus.

Both pictures you see, they're not cleared. It is very frustrating. I'm lucky I'm mobile. I can walk. But persons who use wheelchairs or walkers cannot get on and off. Access-A-Ride was letting their passengers off in the middle of the street.

This is also a corner, around the corner from where I live, Ocean Parkway on Neck Road and East 7th. Couldn't walk on there, we had to walk in the street.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Debra, ten seconds.

DEBRA GREIF: Okay. My issue is I'd like to ask you to please force the Department of Sanitation to clear the bus stops properly. Do not dump the snow on there. Because the persons with disabilities who are New Yorkers, especially Brooklynites, we cannot keep falling.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

DEBRA GREIF: Thank you.

SPEAKER QUINN: Let me just note for the record, I just want to state that we learned at Friday's hearing that it's actually the Department of Transportation who is charged with clearing the inside part of the bus stops. So I

1 just wanted everyone in the room to know, whether
2 it makes sense or not, that's not Sanitation, it's
3 Transportation. We are following up on that very
4 much out of Friday's hearing. So it's still a
5 problem, but I just wanted you to know which
6 agency we have to target on that.

8 DEBRA GREIF: Okay. We really hope
9 you get them both.

10 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

11 DEBRA GREIF: Make them both do it
12 because it's ridiculous.

13 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

14 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Anly Almonte,
16 followed by Ronald Dillon, followed by Blanche
17 Louise Peltanbusch.

18 ANLY ALMONTE: Hi, I hope everyone
19 can hear me.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Go ahead.

21 ANLY ALMONTE: My name is Anly
22 Almonte and I'm a mister.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I'm sorry. I
24 apologize.

25 ANLY ALMONTE: It's all right. I

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hope I'm doing a good job of lightening the mood.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Could you move the microphone a little closer?

SPEAKER QUINN: Yeah, move the mike up.

ANLY ALMONTE: Move the mike up?
All right, can you hear me?

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

SPEAKER QUINN: Yes, good.

ANLY ALMONTE: All right. I know I just learned this, but when I walked in I learned there was an issue of accountability and not what's happening with the economy. I feel like what happens to the economy creates the scenarios like these. I heard a similar scenario, not entirely similar, but something happened in New Jersey where they laid off cops. They laid off policemen and there were 13, 16 carjackings the same night. I think the people in New York State, in America, around the world, don't have to put up with things like this.

So the first measure that I'm proposing you have is a law called Glass-Steagall which was passed during FDR's time to save the

American economy and the American people from the depression, which I think that we're in now. The people don't have to put up with rising prices, with massive cuts in education and everything else. So I'm proposing to you--

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]
Mr. Almonte?

ANLY ALMONTE: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Could we get to the snowstorm?

ANLY ALMONTE: Yes.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Okay.

ANLY ALMONTE: I know that everyone here feels that this is unrelated to the snowstorm. What I'm saying is that this is a similar kind of scenario that happens when you don't have the right kind of people in Sanitation in places like these to actually plow the streets. You want to attack the Bloomberg Administration. My view personally is that these people care more about money and not about the people.

[Applause]

ANLY ALMONTE: So when you have that kind of ideology, you can't save anyone

1 because you don't want to save anyone. You want
2 to save yourself and your money in your pockets.

3 [Applause]

4 ANLY ALMONTE: So what I'm
5 proposing is that the first thing you do is that
6 you call your senators and your local politicians
7 to have Glass-Steagall passed. They tried it. It
8 was the McCain-Canwell bill. They tried that. So
9 if we--

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]
11 Mr. Almonte, do you have any recommendations with
12 respect to the snowstorm?

13 ANLY ALMONTE: Yes, I do. I think
14 we have to pass it so that you can hire people
15 like me to work for Sanitation because I care
16 about the people.

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.
18 Thank you.

19 ANLY ALMONTE: All right.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

21 ANLY ALMONTE: I hope that wasn't
22 completely unrelated.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. I
24 appreciate that.
25

1
2 ANLY ALMONTE: Yeah. I have 30
3 more seconds, so I'd like to say--

4 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]
5 Yes, you have 33.

6 ANLY ALMONTE: So I'm proposing
7 that you pass this so you can separate commercial
8 banking from investment banking and allow the
9 government to issue credit again towards
10 infrastructure projects and to give people jobs so
11 you can have people like me and the youth who are
12 aimless right now, so that they an actually
13 effectively rebuild the nation. Thank you.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.

15 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

16 [Applause]

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Ronald Dillon?
18 Ms. Peltanbusch, do you want to move closer?

19 RONALD J. DILLON: Good evening.
20 My name is Ronald J. Dillon. I live in New Lots.
21 I have three issues. One is the rush to judgment
22 in the beginning of the event where they were
23 accusing Sanitation people of dereliction of duty
24 and investigations. I think that given the
25 history or the events that showed since there's no

1 investigation of the mismanagement and malfeasance
2 of the senior administrators of the
3 Administration, they should not be picking on
4 Sanitation workers.
5

6 [Applause]

7 RONALD J. DILLON: Number two: I'm
8 happy to be a member of Community Board 5. I'm
9 not testifying in that role. We were told a month
10 before that the reorganization of Sanitation would
11 impact what was happening in Sanitation during the
12 winter months.

13 The second issue is the issue of
14 the CERT program. Supposedly, the city and OEM
15 gets lots of money for a CERT program. If I were
16 to tell you when I suggested using CERT, the
17 response I got, you would be appalled.

18 SPEAKER QUINN: That came up in
19 Staten Island also, so you know.

20 RONALD J. DILLON: I would suggest
21 that the City Council looks into the CERT program.
22 OEM likes to brag about their part of CERT, but
23 you need to look in how they actually utilize
24 this.

25 The third thing I have is this

1
2 proposed reorganization of civil service
3 recommendations by the City of New York. This is
4 very scary that an Administration that wants to
5 lay off people because they say they're
6 incompetent does nothing about their own
7 incompetent people.

8 It's for the City Council that if
9 no heads roll at deputy mayors and above level
10 that when the Mayor comes and wants to reorganize
11 civil service so that they can get rid of civil
12 servants who actually care, that the Council show
13 him the door. Thank you.

14 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Mr.
16 Dillon.

17 [Applause]

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Ms.
19 Peltanbusch, my favorite person.

20 BLANCHE LOUISE PELTANBUSCH: My
21 name is Blanche Louise Peltanbusch and I live in
22 Brownsville, New York. Brooklyn, New York. Well,
23 the storm did me plenty, plenty of harm. Matter
24 of fact, on the 7th of January, I fell out of this
25 chair trying to get on the 12 bus over by the 73rd

1 Precinct, which their place was not cleared for
2 wheelchairs or strollers or walkers. That wasn't
3 clear. Across the bus stop one Thomas Boyland,
4 which is across from Marcus Garvey senior citizen
5 place that was not clear. That's where I fell out
6 of this chair. If it wasn't for the clothing and
7 two young people helping me, I would never have
8 survived this fall.

10 My son took me out on the 8th and I
11 have all of these pictures to show you because
12 words can't tell you what a picture can. But I
13 would like to add to this that I called Councilman
14 Mealy's office several times. Each time I called,
15 I got a response and a beautiful response at that.
16 She sent somebody to put down salt, made my
17 complex shovel the snow so I could get out of the
18 house, on both of those snowstorms, the last one
19 and the first one.

20 I appreciate that and I want to
21 thank you, Councilman Mealy, to the extreme. You
22 did wonders for me. I was really, really
23 barricaded into the house. I could not get out if
24 it wasn't for my son and her calling and getting
25 people to come out and do their job.

1	COMMITTEE ON SANITATION	58
2	BLANCHE LOUISE PELTANBUSCH: Thank	
3	you.	
4	COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: She's the	
5	real star.	
6	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes, she is.	
7	COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: She knows	
8	what she's doing about her community.	
9	BLANCHE LOUISE PELTANBUSCH: Can I	
10	show you some of these pictures?	
11	COUNCIL MEMBER MEALY: Thank you.	
12	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.	
13	Thank you, Ms. Peltanbusch. I don't want to mess	
14	with you.	
15	BLANCHE LOUISE PELTANBUSCH: Yes,	
16	please don't.	
17	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: The next	
18	speaker, and I apologize, Mamnunul H-A-Q. You're	
19	next. After him is James J-A-G Jagrove?	
20	JAMES JAGIELLU: Jagiellu.	
21	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: You're next,	
22	and then Lucy Koteen. Go ahead.	
23	MAMNUNUL HAQ: Thank you very much.	
24	Actually, I lost my word once I hearing of the	
25	horrible incident.	

SPEAKER QUINN: Just state your name, sir, for the record.

MAMNUNUL HAQ: Yes, my name is Mamnunul Haq. Actually, I'm a committee organizer and I'm the Board of Director of New York Taxi Workers Alliance and also I work with the Health Department and NYU School of Medicine. My most concern here, I felt myself I became a hostage in America, year 2010.

Of course, it was the Christmas holiday. I wasn't home. Four days, I couldn't even get out from my home. Wednesday morning, the Sanitation truck came to my block which is Kensington, District 39. I live right on the corner of Kensington and Borough Park.

So four days, there is no Sanitation truck that came to our area. As per the knowledge which I received in email from Council Member Lander, and he mentioned all those Cobble Hill, Park Slope, Borough Park and Kensington. If you look at it, Kensington and Borough Park totally ignored. Why?

I was so worried for the people of my area. I'm living over there almost 20 years.

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2 I am a community organizer. I work with the
3 people. I work in the Health Department. I was
4 so concerned about the people's health. You know,
5 I'm a community organizer and I'm a diabetes
6 educator and I was so worried.

7 I know lots of elderly people lives
8 in my neighborhood. God forbid anything happened.
9 How come? I mean they cannot get any service,
10 because of this horrible behavior which we
11 received from the City of New York. Those are the
12 taxpayer people. They're supposed to receive the
13 services, especially elderly people, ill people.
14 I'm a young people and some other people are
15 young. I think they can service along with the
16 others, but what's going to be happening with the
17 elderly people and the disabled people?

18 Did New York City Mayor Bloomberg
19 ever thought for a second, everything he thought
20 as a business. This is not a business. People's
21 lives are totally different.

22 [Applause]

23 MAMNUNUL HAQ: I'm saying I'm so
24 pleased with you people. You are doing a
25 tremendous job for the City of New York. You're

1 holding the hearing and I really appreciate
2 Speaker Quinn and our Borough President organizing
3 this hearing so we can say something here. We
4 didn't want to see that, again, any more. Our
5 children, our grandchildren do not want to see
6 this happen in New York City again. This is 2011.
7 This is America. We don't want to see that.

8 This is my concern, if it
9 Bloomberg, if he is able to run for one more time,
10 so we're not going to see that.

11 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Mr.
12 Haq.

13 MAMNUNUL HAQ: All right, thank you
14 so much.

15 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

16 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you very
17 much.

18 [Applause]

19 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member
20 Lander should be joining us shortly.

21 JAMES JAGUELLU: I'm Jim Jaguelli.
22 I'm actually from Forest Hills, Queens. I want to
23 tell you one thing, the people of Queens, just
24 like the people of Brooklyn and the people of the
25

1
2 Bronx and Staten Island are getting sick and tired
3 of being treated like second trash citizens. I
4 think at times the attitude of the government of
5 this city, as was exhibited during this storm, was
6 hoorah for Manhattan, screw the rest of the city.
7 We're getting tired of it.

8 [Applause]

9 JAMES JAGUELLU: I would hope that
10 one day we will learn from this storm that the
11 residents of the other boroughs of this city will
12 never be treated like second class citizens. I
13 would hope that in the words of one singer who we
14 hope Marty Markowitz will bring here to Brooklyn
15 next summer, we hope that we'll get a lot more R-
16 E-S-P-E-C-T from our city. I think Marty knows
17 who that singer is. Her name is Aretha Franklin.

18 I also have a few words that I
19 should say to those people up in city government
20 who neglected to do their jobs and disrespected
21 this city. I have two words for them and they
22 are: you're fired. Just like Donald Trump would
23 say on The Apprentice: you're fired. That's what
24 I would say to them if I were their employer.

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you very much.

JAMES JAGUELLU: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

Next is Lucy Koteen, followed by Christine Williams, followed by Joseph Garber. Lucy?

LUCY KOTEEN: Hi, good evening. Thank you, all of you for coming to Brooklyn, especially those of you from other boroughs. My story is a little different. I call this a diary of a mad, crazy nonstop plowing in my neighborhood Fort Greene. I live at 138 Lafayette Avenue, the corner house on Carlton Avenue and Lafayette. I spend a lot of time by the third floor corner window, which gives me an excellent view of both Lafayette Avenue and Carlton Avenue activity. I only say criminals beware if you come to that corner.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Oh yes.

LUCY KOTEEN: My question is why were these two streets plowed repeatedly from Monday, December 27th to Tuesday, January 4th? And by repeatedly, I mean maybe 40 times each.

1
2 The snow fell Sunday the 26th and Monday morning
3 the 27th. By Monday afternoon, the 26th, both
4 Lafayette Avenue and Carlton Avenue were plowed
5 adequately and could have been left alone. They
6 were completely passable.

7 Plows continued throughout Monday
8 and Tuesday, and I thought they would stop going
9 over the same territory, but no. I tracked some
10 of these events. I won't bore you with my full
11 diary. But just a couple of examples: Tuesday
12 night between 8 and 10:00 p.m., five times on
13 Carlton Avenue in this two-hour period.
14 Wednesday, December 28th, too many times to count
15 on Carlton and Lafayette Avenue.

16 Let's see, I saw not only city
17 trucks but private plows going up Lafayette
18 Avenue, grabbing little bits of snow off the sides
19 and pushing it into the streets, generally making
20 conditions worse. One private plow must have been
21 moving at about 40 miles an hour. It looked
22 really dangerous. Wednesday night, December 29th,
23 Carlton Avenue, 9:30 and 10:30, plows up Carlton,
24 sparks are flying from the street as they try to
25 plow non-existent snow.

Wednesday, December 29th: Lafayette Avenue, 11:20 p.m., private snow plow; 11:25, that's five minutes later, a city plow; 11:33 a city plow, the same side of the street. This is at night, overtime. Can you say overtime? That is three plows in 13 minutes. How much overtime money was that?

Each time, the plow itself was set down on the street. They weren't just traveling to get to another location. I did notice, for instance, Wednesday night when I was out walking, I was walking down 6th Avenue, I noticed Bergen Street on Wednesday was not plowed between 6th Avenue and Carlton Avenue. That's a bus route, therefore a primary street. Other primary streets: Bergen Street was not plowed until Thursday, so much for the pure fiction about primary streets being plowed.

The following week, Monday, January 3rd, this is after a warm weekend when much melting had taken place, I still saw two plows Monday morning. That's January 3rd, and salters behind them, spreading its environmentally hazardous salt on a clean street.

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CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

LUCY KOTEEN: Could you give me a couple more seconds please?

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Lucy, Lucy.

LUCY KOTEEN: Anyways, they kept going through Tuesday. Garbage did not get picked up until Thursday. I have a lot more to say, but thank you.

SPEAKER QUINN: Can I just say, Lucy, if you wouldn't mind, just make when you signed in that we've gotten your phone number and email, because I have to say that level of attention seems absurd. You are the first New Yorker to report anything like this. But since it happened so close to areas that got nothing--

LUCY KOTEEN: [interposing]
Exactly.

SPEAKER QUINN: --it's really troubling. So if you can just make sure we have your phone number and email to follow up.

LUCY KOTEEN: That was really troubling. I did call my manager at CB2. I did let the councilwoman know.

SPEAKER QUINN: Great, thank you.

LUCY KOTEEN: As well as Mr.
Vallone's office.

SPEAKER QUINN: Great, thank you.

LUCY KOTEEN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Lucy, Lew
Fidler would like to say something to you.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: First of
all, the confusion is obvious. They must have
thought it was Lafayette in Manhattan.

SPEAKER QUINN: Now, now, now,
let's back off the Manhattan bashing, Lew Fidler.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: You
actually raise an issue. The first time that I've
heard this, it's actually I think very important.
We had a small, and I mean a really small snowfall
a couple of days after this fiasco. The
department and the city, you know, plowed the
blacktop off the streets.

While we all appreciate the
diligence and the desire not to repeat the same
mistake, when we're trying to keep taxes under
control, when we're trying to make sure that our
water rates don't go through the roof, we need
them to get it right. Not to be unnecessarily

1
2 defensive. I don't need salt spread when it's not
3 needed. I don't need streets plowed when there's
4 no snow. I need them not to waste the money. I
5 need them to get it right.

6 I think you've raised a very
7 important issue. I hope the department is not
8 going to take that back and say Fidler doesn't
9 want the snow plowed, because that's not what I'm
10 saying. I'm saying the appropriate measure of
11 work and labor and equipment needs to be applied
12 to the appropriate conditions on the streets and
13 it needs to be as accurate as possible.

14 LUCY KOTEEN: I would really like
15 to speak to the supervisor, I think it's Tim
16 Walsh, of CB2. I also do need to mention that the
17 Councilwoman Letitia James was on Lafayette Avenue
18 and she's Sanitation Chair. I don't know if that
19 has anything to do with it, but I'm just saying.

20 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: They don't
21 usually treat Council Members with that much
22 respect.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: No, they sure
24 don't.

25 SPEAKER QUINN: They didn't help my

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street.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Christine Williams? Before Christine comes, let me acknowledge a representative from Council Member Vann's office, Congresswoman Clarke's office and Council Member Barron's office. If there are any representatives from any other offices, please make your selves known to staff. Ms. Williams? Walter Mosley, the 57th Assembly District, my district leader and Steve Levin, Council Member Steve Levin has joined us. Ms. Williams, you're on.

CHRISTINE WILLIAMS: Hello, everybody. Good afternoon, I mean good evening. I'd like to thank everyone on the City Council panel here for having this sort of meeting. I'm not going to go into--I live in east New York. I'm not going to go into what was plowed and what wasn't plowed and all that.

I'm here for one reason. I want to know who is accountable for this fiasco and what's going to happen to them? That's all I want to know. I mean, these meetings are fine. I go to a lot of these meetings where everybody gets up and

1 vents. Oh this happened to me, you know, goodbye.
2 We all leave and that's it. People died. That
3 story with the gentleman, I was crying back there.
4 I'm speechless.
5

6 This is not a meeting where we can
7 just vent and say I didn't get to work that day, I
8 wasn't able to get out of my driveway. No, you're
9 here to get information. I applaud this panel.
10 When you get the proper answers, or lack thereof,
11 I want some accountability. Everybody in this
12 borough, in this city, wants accountability. You
13 know what accountability means. We all know what
14 it means because we all have jobs that those who
15 are left to have a job. When you don't do your
16 job at work, what happens to you?

17 AUDIENCE: Fired.

18 CHRISTINE WILLIAMS: You get fired.
19 I worked for Transit, so I don't even want to go
20 there, okay. I was there Friday. I was there at
21 that hearing.

22 SPEAKER QUINN: I showed restraint,
23 didn't I?

24 CHRISTINE WILLIAMS: You almost
25 jumped out of that chair. I thought you were

1 going to jump out of that chair. I was floored.
2 I'm tired of the "I'm sorry". This happened, but
3 I'm sorry. The Mayor was like, oh well; I'm
4 sorry, get over it. Ain't no getting over this.
5 We ain't getting over this and we're not ever
6 going to forget this, because I've never seen
7 nothing like this before. Paralyzed days after it
8 had stopped snowing. This is unacceptable.
9 Something's got to happen.

11 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Okay.

12 CHRISTINE WILLIAMS: Because if it
13 doesn't?

14 FEMALE VOICE: What?

15 CHRISTINE WILLIAMS: What? We're
16 going to take it to the streets and make these,
17 our politicians that we elect; we're going to turn
18 the heat up because I'm tired of this. We're all
19 tired of this. That's all I have to say.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: So, Ms.
21 Williams?

22 CHRISTINE WILLIAMS: Yes?

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Ms. Williams,
24 we definitely need your number and address.

25 CHRISTINE WILLIAMS: Oh yes.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I can see we need you on our side. Thank you.

CHRISTINE WILLIAMS: Oh, I'm on your side.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

CHRISTINE WILLIAMS: I applaud you again for having this meeting.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHRISTINE WILLIAMS: I'm going to be at the one in Queens.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Great.

CHRISTINE WILLIAMS: If you have another one in Brooklyn, I'm there too.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. We've been joined, I'm not sure if you heard me, Council Member Steve Levin, all the way to my far left, and to my right, Council Member Vincent Gentile. Mr. Garber?

JOSEPH G. GARBER: Good evening, Speaker Quinn, members of the Council and members

1
2 of the public. My name is Joseph Garber. I'm a
3 director of the Civil Service Merit Council. I
4 was the last acting president of the Citizens
5 Policy Academy Luminary Association and I'm a
6 resident leader in NYCHA.

7 I am here this evening to protest
8 the horrific actions or non-actions by the City of
9 New York for the period of the blizzard which
10 possibly occurred from 12/25/10 through 12/29/10.
11 It is very interesting to make an equation with
12 the bible. Last week in the synagogues, we read
13 in the Book of Exodus, the fourth reading [foreign
14 language] which means send away. So I said, from
15 the period of 12/25 to 12/29, MTA sent away its
16 buses and its trains from the customers and the
17 Department of Sanitation the strongest sent away
18 its trucks and its snowplows. This is real
19 disgraceful what happened.

20 At the outset, I feel very upset
21 and angered that Chief Peruggia of EMS was
22 reassigned and/or demoted. Over the years, I had
23 many types of affiliations with him and I found
24 him very professional.

25 I would say that we have to prove

1
2 blame and fix blame. I definitely have to say
3 that from what I know about the Department of
4 Sanitation, there is some laxity, whether it was
5 the sick out, whether it was not having enough
6 plows. We're hearing Councilman Greenfield say
7 that on the midnight people were walking around
8 without direction.

9 On 1/10/11, I was present at the
10 Emigrant Savings Bank expecting to testify, when I
11 was informed by a Council communications aide that
12 this was only for unions, which technically the
13 Civil Service Merit Council is a sort of a union,
14 and appointed officials of city agencies. But at
15 the end, I saw somebody from a neighborhood
16 association testifying. So I think the City
17 Council has to look at this, if there was some
18 problems in communication, this has to not occur
19 again. This prevented many John Q. Citizens who
20 were disenfranchised.

21 On 12/27, I was scheduled to attend
22 the Police Academy graduation at Madison Square
23 Garden. When I went over to try to get the J or
24 the M or Z, they did not go over the bridge. So I
25 patiently walked back to Lee Avenue, waiting for

1 the B44 to go to Fulton Street and take an A.
2
3 However, this never occurred. I was sitting the
4 whole day. I could not have any productive
5 workforce on my release time with the union.

6 We have a serious problem that on
7 Lee Avenue, there were no plows forthcoming.
8 Also, the Sanitation Police and Sanitation
9 Enforcement Agents that now take the second issue
10 of the pie, enforcing the law against shopkeepers
11 and homeowners. Yesterday was so bad; I couldn't
12 walk in the street. Okay, the sleet is falling
13 on.

14 Now, back in February there was a
15 big snowstorm and I called up the Housing
16 Authority and I was yelled at by Deputy General
17 Manager--

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]
19 Mr. Garber.

20 JOSEPH G. GARBER: I'll continue on
21 Monday.

22 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

23 JOSEPH G. GARBER: Excuse me,
24 tomorrow evening, God willing.

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Ms.

Garber.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you very much. Thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I believe Steve Levin would like to make some remarks. Council Member Levin?

COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: As the representative on the Council that represents Mr. Garber and his neighbors, I just do want to say that myself along with my colleagues here were there and responsive on those days, on the 27th, 28th and 29th.

I know that in your neighborhood, my cell phone had gone out to the broader community, so I started getting phone calls. There was one thing that's good about the type of direct democracy that we have here is that we have people calling me personally and said on Lee Avenue, the streets are blocked on Hayward Street and Rutledge, and that was able to assist me in getting that information over to the Sanitation garages.

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2 But I want to say that my
3 colleagues here as well, everyone was filling
4 those voids that were lacking in coordination that
5 the city agencies should have been playing. But
6 thank you, Mr. Garber.

7 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. We
8 have remarks from the Honorable Walter Mosley, the
9 district leader from the 57th Assembly District,
10 which we will have for the record. The next
11 speaker is Daniel Goodine and Fiore Simeone. I
12 also want to acknowledge Jim Vogel, representing
13 Senator Velmanette Montgomery.

14 DANIEL GOODINE: Good evening. My
15 name is Daniel Goodine and I rise as a first
16 responder. I live in Brownsville. In my area, we
17 have lost hospitals. We have senior citizens.
18 Some of them ladies that's here today in the
19 wheelchairs, those are my neighbors.

20 So when I looked out my basement
21 door to my house, the snow was here. I thought
22 about everyone that might have lived in a
23 basement. I thought about everyone in my
24 neighborhood that was struggling to go to a store,
25 every child that needed some milk.

Now, someone told me not to say this, but I'm going to say it for the record. I'm in love with Sanitation. My wife is a Sanitation worker. I have been missing her for the last 13 hours for the last two weeks, putting up numbers on the board, having people to be directed, going here and there. I can tell you in this room right now it wasn't them.

FEMALE VOICE: That's right.

DANIEL GOODINE: It was them. It was somebody up top that refused to pick up a phone, come out the sun. I'm blessed to have friends that care enough about the community that pushed snow and told some of the Sanitation workers there's bathrooms here and here. There were people out there 16 hours that didn't get sleep. So when I saw pictures of people nodding, I didn't feel no way about my wife's colleagues, because I know what she was going through and I know what I was going through.

So, I want you all to understand that I really appreciate what you are doing, but as a community, we have a responsibility to self. If you know there was a senior, you should have

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you take her card, you can send your pictures to her on our outreach staff. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: After Ms. Simeone, Bo Samajopoulos, and I know I botched that name. You live on 16th Street.

FIORE SIMEONE: Good evening.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good evening.

FIORE SIMEONE: My name is Fiore Simeone. I just want to read this letter that I have written to the Honorable Michael R. Bloomberg, regarding the failure of the Sanitation Department to remove snow from the blizzards of December 2010 and January 2011 at St. Marks Avenue and Brooklyn Avenue, between Brooklyn and Kingston Avenues by 2:30 p.m. Thursday, January 13th, 2011.

Dear Mayor Bloomberg: at 2:30 p.m. Thursday 1/13/2011, my brother Lionel Guldya [phonetic], 86 and I, 84, were in a taxi returning home from an oncologist scheduled chemotherapy appointment when our taxi jolted to a halt by an obstructing ice boulder a cubic foot in area as the taxi entered St. Marks Avenue eastbound at Brooklyn; stuck there, between mounds of frozen snow, which had not been removed through two

snowstorms, between the Brooklyn Children's Museum and the Institute for Community Living.

The driver was assisted by a uniformed museum employee who removed the boulder and guided the driver while the museum employee pushed the vehicle. This took about 10 to 15 minutes to free the vehicle.

We drove slowly over the icy road to the middle of the block where we were now on pavement. And the taxi was able to go a little faster towards Kingston Avenue, where we exited and walked over icy mounds to mail a letter and then return home across the street.

This neglect by the Sanitation Department endangered two elderly people and a hard working young taxi driver, in freezing weather. Sincerely: Fiore Simeone. Copies to: the St. Marks Avenue Block Association, which I represent; to Commissioner of NYC Sanitation Department; Marty Markowitz, Brooklyn Borough President; Karim Camara, a member of the Assembly 43rd AD; and my file.

Thank you. I'm giving this copy to Marty Markowitz because that's where I've

designated it. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Ms. Simeone,
thank you.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Bo
Samajopoulos? How do you say that?

BO SAMAJOPOULOS: Samajopoulos, a
nice Irish name.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.
Let me recognize in the audience, District Leader
from the 43rd Assembly District, Jesse Hamilton,
as well as from the 52nd Assembly District, Mr.
Lincoln Restler. You're on. Pronounce your name
again.

BO SAMAJOPOULOS: Samajopoulos.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Wow.

BO SAMAJOPOULOS: I live three
blocks from a Sanitation depot.

SPEAKER QUINN: What neighborhood?

BO SAMAJOPOULOS: Park Slope, South
Park Slope. Yet, my block wasn't plowed until six
days after the snow started.

SPEAKER QUINN: Six?

BO SAMAJOPOULOS: Six days. After that, I had paid some friends of mine to help me extract my car from the snow. The same time a Sanitation truck came up the block and stopped about five car lengths before my car. And he sat there for about 10 minutes.

After watching him with his arms folded for about 10 minutes and I walked over and asked him if there was a problem. He rolled down the window and said: you don't think I'm going to plow that do you? I said absolutely, that's what I pay taxes for. He says you're nuts if you think you're going to throw your f'ing snow into the street and expect me to plow it, and rolled up his window and sat there for 15 more minutes.

Traffic was backed up for blocks. And then finally, he saw people getting out of their car and coming at the truck. When he put it in gear, lifted the plow blade and made a beeline for my car. There was 20 feet between my car and the hydrant on the opposite side of the street. So there was no reason for him to be doing to my car unless he was going to accidentally hit it. The only reason he didn't was because he saw me

1
2 take out my camera and then he swerved and took
3 off, leaving the snow in the street.

4 On the seventh day, when we had
5 rain and it was about 60 degrees, there was no
6 snow in the street, but I have video of in excess
7 of 45 trucks coming up my block, doing nothing but
8 going around in circles for hours. They were
9 basically just piling on the tab.

10 I was later told that the city had
11 inspectors going around giving tickets to people
12 for throwing snow in the street or not plowing or
13 whatever. So is it indeed against the law to
14 throw the snow back in the street? What are we
15 supposed to do with the snow? Why do we pay to
16 have the snow removed if we're not allowed to put
17 it in the street where it's more accessible for
18 removal? What right does a civil servant truck
19 driver have to take it upon himself to A, not do
20 his job and B, try to do damage to private
21 property in retaliation for somebody telling him
22 to do his job?

23 Finally, why is it that we don't
24 have enough manpower and resources to clean the
25 streets, but we have employees of the city going

1
2 around and giving tickets to residents who are
3 distressed and trying to do what we pay the city
4 to do? We pay taxes to be served, not violated.
5 This Administration's priority is not to serve but
6 to create revenues. You can't create revenues by
7 cleaning the streets or by preventing crime or by
8 a smoother flow of traffic. So we have a
9 workforce whose priority is to give tickets.

10 The problem is that we don't pay
11 taxes to be fined for throwing snow in the street
12 or to have Sanitation inspectors going through our
13 garbage to find the one piece that doesn't belong
14 or to have a police captain tell you that he
15 doesn't care that a bullet was shot into a child's
16 room because as far as he's concerned there was no
17 crime committed.

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Can you sum up,
19 Bo?

20 BO SAMAJOPOULOS: Yes. We need to
21 straighten out our priorities in this city. We
22 don't pay taxes to agencies for them to then
23 violate us. We pay taxes for them to give us a
24 service.

25 [Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

BO SAMAJOPOULOS: Spend that time giving us the service. Give them shovels and brooms and make them go out and do their job.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.

SPEAKER QUINN: Sir, can you just make sure you give your contact information to a member of our staff, because we'd love to get copies of that film that you have.

BO SAMAJOPOULOS: Sure.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Linda Sanders? I want to recognize Kevin Peter Carroll, a district leader from the 60th Assembly District. Ms. Linda Sanders followed by Dutton Blake?

DUTTON BLACK: Black.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Black. Ms. Sanders? After Ms. Sanders is Mr. Black and after Mr. Black is Yolanda Matthews.

LINDA SANDERS: Good evening. Give praise to God for all of us.

FEMALE VOICE: Amen.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Amen.

LINDA SANDERS: I'm thankful for

1
2 being here with this committee. But what happened
3 in Brownsville, it's a shame. Just look at me and
4 imagine others. We couldn't get out. From Sunday
5 to Friday it took me to get out, and I called
6 Housing, spoke to the superintendent. What is it
7 that you want, Mother? I want to get out the
8 building. I want to get to take care of my
9 business. My phone will go off. I have no
10 emergency calls. I'll get it done.

11 I get out, it wasn't done. Where
12 did he go? To the Borough Office. I was ignored.
13 So therefore, sit in it. I had neighbors had to
14 come and try to dig me out. I didn't even get off
15 the block out of the walkway. How they left us,
16 the garbage and the snow, I couldn't even get the
17 corner. I had to ride in the street with cars
18 because there were no walkways from Blake and
19 Rockaway to Picken and Rockaway. Two people had
20 to help me on the sidewalk I shouldn't have went
21 on because my chair got stalled.

22 The other day I had to get out of
23 the chair and my aide had to get me on the corner.
24 A woman with a cane came across for me. Another
25 lady came to the aid to get my chair out of the

1 snow. No crosswalk, and that's right up from
2 Brookdale Hospital. No crosswalks; we cannot get
3 in and out. It's a shame that we have to be left
4 like this. Nobody wants to do anything. I want
5 the Mayor in the room by myself for two minutes.
6

7 [Applause]

8 LINDA SANDERS: He will be a new
9 Mayor. How dare him.

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: That's right.

11 LINDA SANDERS: To say those that
12 complain have nothing to do in their lives.

13 [Applause]

14 LINDA SANDERS: How dare him.
15 Really, I hope this gets to him. I want him for
16 two minutes.

17 SPEAKER QUINN: Ma'am, can I ask
18 you a question? One of the things that came out
19 at our oversight hearing was that the Housing
20 Authority in this storm was not activated as part
21 of the snow emergency response. Council Member
22 Van Bramer from Queens got them to admit that on
23 the record. So you told us what this storm was
24 like, which is obviously outrageous. Was the
25 response from the Housing Authority in you

development better in other storms?

LINDA SANDERS: Better?

SPEAKER QUINN: In past years, has it been better?

LINDA SANDERS: [Laughter]

SPEAKER QUINN: No? It's never been better?

LINDA SANDERS: No.

SPEAKER QUINN: Okay.

LINDA SANDERS: Never been better.

SPEAKER QUINN: So the response you got with this is as bad as it always is?

LINDA SANDERS: It's been as bad as ever.

SPEAKER QUINN: Okay. That's important for us to now. We heard the same thing last night in Staten Island and I had thought it might have been in the past when they were activated, but across the board?

LINDA SANDERS: No.

SPEAKER QUINN: Just so you know, and make sure you sign in, our Public Housing Committee is thinking of having an oversight hearing just on NYCHA snow plans. So we'll be in

touch when and if that happens.

LINDA SANDERS: Please. I would like to have a piece of them too.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

SPEAKER QUINN: We may not let you alone with any of these people. Ma'am, I just want to say that right now.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. Thank you for representing the face of New York City Housing Authority, which is often ignored. Thank you very much, Ms. Sanders.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you, ma'am.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Black?

DUTTON BLACK: Thank you for allowing me to speak. First of all, we don't need a mayor, we don't need a deputy mayor, we need leaders. We don't have any leaders here.

[Applause]

DUTTON BLACK: I'm a native New Yorkers. I've been here all my life. I've been here when the hurricane hit here. I think it was category 4. So I know. My God Mother was delivered in an ambulance during that hurricane. When I was a kid, I didn't know what a hurricane

1
2 was, and to see it in New York is amazing. But I
3 saw oak trees down. It blew my mind because I
4 didn't know what it is.

5 I've seen worse snowstorms than
6 this. I've never seen--when I went down my block,
7 I have a house in Bed-Stuy. I went down the block
8 on Decatur Street. Snow was up to the, I guess
9 the hoods of a car. I had never seen this before.
10 First of all, it's snow plowing, it's not snow
11 removal. That's the problem. When I came up, the
12 snow was removed. All they're doing is pushing it
13 from one side, like the gentleman said, you put it
14 in the street, it goes back again. It's a yo-yo
15 with no effect. You have to remove the snow, not
16 plow the snow.

17 Another thing is, everyone's
18 responsible. I haven't heard anything about the
19 Department of Transportation. They're more
20 responsible because they put these bike lanes up,
21 which is ridiculous. They cause problems because
22 you had cars in the middle of the street and then
23 you had a bike lane. Where do you put the snow?
24 There's nowhere to put the snow.

25 I think we have a surplus of about

\$3 billion. I don't know what the surplus is.

SPEAKER QUINN: No.

DUTTON BLACK: There's no surplus anymore. It went. Wow. All I know is the last eight years or so, the quality of life in this city is not what it used to be. We're going down, down, down.

[Applause]

DUTTON BLACK: We know what happened. Somebody went on a holiday. They weren't going to change their holiday plans. It was Christmas. I couldn't go to Bermuda. I couldn't go to D.C. Taxpayers are paying through their lives and their taxes for on-the-job training. These people are trying to learn their job. How come there's no New Yorkers like commissioners? You have one person, he went to California and he's coming back. We won't say who he was, but you know who he is.

So I'm just saying, this is not Boston, this is no Indiana, this is not Philly, this is New York. It's the major leagues. If you're in the minor leagues, stay in the minor leagues. You can't play in the major leagues.

[Applause]

DUTTON BLACK: As respect, how can you get a man to respect if we voted three times that we wanted term limits and he ignored it? Some of you are not responsible but some of you ignored us too because you went through and you did it anyway. You didn't listen to us and now we're paying the cost of you not listening to us. Thank you.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Mr. Black.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yolanda Matthews, followed by Yvonne Murray and then Sharona Jones.

SPEAKER QUINN: No, that's his, not yours.

YOLANDA MATTHEWS: Good night.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Ms. Matthews?

SPEAKER QUINN: Ma'am, raise the mike a little.

YOLANDA MATTHEWS: Good night, my name is Yolanda Matthews.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

YOLANDA MATTHEWS: And I'm from
Brownsville in Councilman Charles Baron's area.

[Applause]

YOLANDA MATTHEWS: What I would
like to speak on is the 26th, the 27th, the 28th,
the 29th, the 31st and let me just put it today.
Brownsville streets, on Chester Street between
Riverdale and Newport, has so much snow and ice on
it, when my Access-A-Ride come, why do I have to
walk to a corner or do the driver have to get off
the bus and carry me or either help me walk across
ice? It's ridiculous.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: As of today?

YOLANDA MATTHEWS: As of today.
You all need to come to Brownsville between
Chester Street and Riverdale and Newport. The
sidewalks, you can forget about thinking you're
going to walk across a sidewalk. They have
wheelchair ramps there. For what? Ice is there.
The bus stops, ice is there. I mean, people don't
pay taxes in Brownsville now? Then I'm do an
income tax, a big cutback.

FEMALE VOICE: There you go.

1
2 YOLANDA MATTHEWS: The Mayor should
3 be ashamed of himself. All those deputies,
4 commissioners and all of them who are in charge,
5 they need to be moved. Because if I was still
6 working and I didn't do my job when I was working
7 I would be benched. Let me tell you something, as
8 a supervisor, if my employees didn't show up, I
9 had to do their job. So Mr. Bloomberg, get a
10 shovel. Come out to Brownsville and start digging
11 up the snow.

12 [Applause]

13 YOLANDA MATTHEWS: When your
14 workers don't work, you're supposed to do the job.
15 That's on everybody's job. When there's a strike,
16 the supervisors got to work. Am I right or wrong?

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Right.

18 YOLANDA MATTHEWS: And another
19 thing, our President Reagan, remember when he told
20 the pilots to return back to work and they did and
21 what happened? They got fired. Heads better roll
22 and I do want to be at the next meeting.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

24 FEMALE VOICE: I'll be with you
25 girl.

YOLANDA MATTHEWS: People died. My tenant that lives in Marcus Garvey Village with me?

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

YOLANDA MATTHEWS: Missed dialysis that Monday, that Tuesday. That Wednesday she still couldn't get to dialysis. The lady is in her 80s and it's a shame and a disgrace. Sir, you have my deepest sympathy, because she could have lost her life too. No one deserves this.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Exactly.

YOLANDA MATTHEWS: We are not animals. We are human beings and I feel like they treat pets better than they do us.

FEMALE VOICE: Yes.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Terranova, make sure you speak to Ms. Matthews and get the address. Thank you, Ms. Matthews. Make sure he gets your address. We want that ice removed today, tonight. Ms. Murray?

YVONNE MURRAY: Good evening. I'd like to thank you all for doing this meeting here in Brooklyn, because I know myself, like so many

1
2 people in this room and across this city, are
3 outraged by what took place on December 26th. The
4 kind of service and the way we had to try to get
5 around the city.

6 I am a very good friend of Mr.
7 Davis, Robert Davis and Candy Davis. So when he
8 called me and told me what had happened to his
9 wife, I just totally fell apart, because I know
10 there are so many other people who lost their
11 lives.

12 That should have never happened
13 here. This is not South Carolina or some place
14 that doesn't have the kind of vehicles that are
15 necessary. Somebody fell asleep at the wheel and
16 they didn't make the right call. We all knew that
17 it was going to be a blizzard, why didn't no one
18 else?

19 I lead a program in Bay Ridge and I
20 serve meals to the older adults. That program had
21 to be canceled because the program that makes the
22 meals for it could not deliver the meals.

23 Where I live, I live near Flatbush
24 Avenue. There were no buses. I couldn't even get
25 to work for two days. Then when I was finally

1
2 able to get to Bay Ridge, I had to walk the rest
3 of the way because the B16 bus, which Councilman
4 Gentile knows, was not running. It didn't run for
5 five days.

6 On the block where I live, which is
7 a small street off of Flatbush Avenue, it didn't
8 get plowed for five days. I thank God that a lot
9 of my residents on my block didn't get sick;
10 otherwise, there would have been other
11 catastrophes.

12 I hope that the City Council will
13 do what the people that elected you want you to do
14 and need you do. We need accountability in New
15 York City. Please make someone answer to us.
16 Thank you.

17 [Applause]

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Ms.
19 Murray.

20 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Ms. Jones and
22 Ms. Senior?

23 SHARONA JONES: I'm Miss Jones.

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

25 SHARONA JONES: Good evening. Mr.

1
2 Davis, I would also like to tell you how sorry I
3 am for your loss. It's something that should have
4 never happened.

5 As of today, January 19th, and I am
6 nursing a broken right arm, and I am right-handed,
7 I am forced to drive in the street with trucks,
8 with taxis, with buses, because I cannot navigate
9 on the sidewalk, besides the fact that the blocks
10 are hardly clear. The curb cuts that wheelchair
11 users need are blocked. It is not enough to clear
12 a narrow path so that people can walk. We cannot
13 get to the stores. We cannot get to the doctors.
14 We cannot get to our physical therapists. We
15 cannot do anything. The curb cuts must be clear.

16 I hate to burst the Council
17 Members' bubble, but every winter it's the same
18 damn thing. I call the garage, I speak to the
19 superintendent there and they always say they're
20 going to send someone out. We've got tons of
21 people out of work. They want money. Let's find
22 a way to register these people so they can come
23 out and shovel the curb cuts and other
24 neighborhoods so people are not trapped in their
25 house like I was for five days. I could see the

store, but I could not get to it.

I reside by myself. There is no one else to go out and do errands for me. The whole point of having a motorized wheelchair is so that I can be, and other disabled people, can be independent. We cannot count on anybody else but ourselves in order to navigate. This is unacceptable.

To add insult to injury, to clear Times Square where people could go out and revel and have a hoopla and yet to talk to the other boroughs and completely ignore them is unacceptable. You can clean Times Square; you can clean the outer boroughs.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Ms. Jones, after this hearing is over, and I believe we only have about eight more witnesses, you and I need to have a conversation, so that we can clear those curb cuts in and around Clinton Hill.

SHARONA JONES: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: You're welcome.

SPEAKER QUINN: I know it's a

1
2 citywide problem, but I just want to underscore
3 what Tish said. Let's get those addresses to
4 Sanitation and get them to the Council and we will
5 minimally follow up on those particular ones and
6 then we'll try to look to look at the issue more
7 systemically as well. Thank you.

8 SHARONA JONES: As a quick
9 footnote, when I did call the garage that handles
10 my block, I was told that I was annoyed because I
11 was inconvenienced, to which I told them, you do
12 not know me. You do not know the kind of work I
13 do. Not only for myself, but other people,
14 whether they are abled or disabled, because it
15 only takes five seconds for you to go walking on
16 your feet and to land on your rear end.

17 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Ms. Jones, the
19 superintendent and I will be visiting you.

20 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

22 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: I just
23 wanted to say to the previous speaker, Ms. Murray,
24 make sure we talk also. I know Vanderveer Place
25 very well. I know you guys have got the greenest

1
2 block in Brooklyn. So I know you guys really
3 stick together. If a block like that stuck
4 together they couldn't really do anything about
5 it. I know how bad it was. I want to make sure
6 that doesn't happen again. So please talk to me
7 after.

8 [Background conversation]

9 PAT SENIOR: Write your name down,
10 man. Thank you. My name is Pat Senior. I am
11 here to testify on behalf of homeless New Yorkers
12 who have no voice at all, not in the media, not
13 with Mayor Bloomberg and his high honchos, not
14 with City Council. Ms. Brooklyn, Ms. Speaker
15 Quinn, I appreciate you being here. To the
16 Chairperson, Council Member James, and to all our
17 guests on the panel, to Honorable Peter Vallone,
18 I'm glad you're here. Thank you.

19 I'm a female of African ancestry, a
20 taxpayer, a human being and I have lived in Kings
21 County Brooklyn for over 25 years. Do you know
22 what it is like to be homeless on the streets of
23 New York City with over 34 inches of snow covering
24 the streets, the sidewalks, the subway station?

25 Do you know what it is to be

homeless with a cart that you use to carry the belongings that you may have, if you do call it bottles or other things to sell, to gain some money so you can buy food? Do you know what it was like on the weekend of December 26th to January 8th or 9th? You can't even get around in New York City. Do you know what it means?

I have been living here, as I said, for over 25 years. And the Daily News had on the 5th of January, so who was on the job on December 26th? Was Mayor Bloomberg here?

AUDIENCE: No.

PAT SENIOR: Was his honchos here to speak?

AUDIENCE: No.

PAT SENIOR: There is an article also in the Daily News, which I must recognize the Honorable David Greenfield. Incompetent, corrupt, this mayor will have your back. Mr. Greenfield, thank you for the courage to speak out.

[Applause]

PAT SENIOR: We need to speak out as City Council speakers for the wrongs that have been going on. I've been kicked out of my home.

Five years, 11 months and 22 days by Bruce Frankenberg, a marshal from Queens County. He had no valid warrant signed by a judge. I have not seen the inside of my home--

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]
Ms. Senior?

PAT SENIOR: --since January. And no one will listen. I will speak for the homeless.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you, Ms. Senior.

PAT SENIOR: How many homeless people have died? Did we count them?

FEMALE VOICE: No.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Ms. Senior, thank you. Thank you very much.

PAT SENIOR: Mr. Green, my sympathy to your family and all those whose family have died.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

PAT SENIOR: Speaker Quinn, you're now Ms. Brooklyn. I hope you will have a hearing on the issue of the homelessness that's being

1
2 called an eviction scam by the marshals and the
3 court system. It's a corrupt body. I have
4 written and all my mails have been intercepted. I
5 am now homeless. I worked.

6 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Ms.
7 Senior.

8 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

9 PAT SENIOR: I don't have an ID. I
10 don't have property.

11 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. Ms.
12 Senior, we're going to--

13 PAT SENIOR: [interposing] Who has
14 that right to steal everything I have?

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We're going to
16 ask some staff to have a conversation with you.

17 PAT SENIOR: No. I have been hear.

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Ms.
19 Senior.

20 PAT SENIOR: I spoke when the
21 governor was here. They put me to the side.

22 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

23 PAT SENIOR: I will speak for the
24 homeless because--

25 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]

1	COMMITTEE ON SANITATION	106
2	Thank you.	
3	PAT SENIOR: --no one speaks for	
4	the homeless.	
5	CHAIRPERSON VALLONE: You have.	
6	PAT SENIOR: And the shelter	
7	system.	
8	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Ms.	
9	Senior.	
10	PAT SENIOR: Which they have built.	
11	This has been coupled with the so-called storage	
12	facilities. Check it out.	
13	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Ms.	
14	Senior.	
15	SPEAKER QUINN: Ma'am, thank you.	
16	PAT SENIOR: You are my Council	
17	Member, Ms. James.	
18	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.	
19	Yes, I know.	
20	PAT SENIOR: I've been to you.	
21	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.	
22	PAT SENIOR: You did nothing.	
23	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes, yes, Ms.	
24	Senior. Thank you.	
25	SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.	

1	COMMITTEE ON SANITATION	107
2	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.	
3	PAT SENIOR: God is--I'm alive	
4	because, guess what, a higher power.	
5	SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.	
6	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Ms.	
7	Senior. Thank you.	
8	SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.	
9	PAT SENIOR: No amen here.	
10	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.	
11	PAT SENIOR: Because this is wrong.	
12	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: The next	
13	speaker is Nelson Stoute, K. Harrington	
14	representing Transport Workers Union Local 100,	
15	followed by James O'Connell.	
16	NELSON M. STOUTE: Thank you very	
17	much. Good evening.	
18	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good evening.	
19	NELSON M. STOUTE: I am Nelson M.	
20	Stoute. I am the chair of the Sanitation and	
21	Environmental Protection Committee, Infrastructure	
22	Committee on Community Board 3 in Bedford-	
23	Stuyvesant.	
24	I want to thank Councilwoman James	
25	for empanelling this hearing.	

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

NELSON M. STOUTE: And also the Honorable Christine Quinn and the other speakers from the City Council.

This has been an entire citywide failure from the top on down, starting with the imperious and aloof Mayor Bloomberg. Whether he was here or not, that's not the question. There is a chain of command that apparently was not followed by his factotum Mr. Goldsmith. Well, that gold is tarnished.

There should have been a snow emergency called. It wasn't. The Office of OEM failed. To lay this at the feet of the Sanitation Commissioner, who came up through the ranks, and we, our community board has been in contact with our supervisor, during this venue here. People took their cars out on the street and blocked the plows, at least in my community board, from advancing to plow the snow. That was not handled well.

Trains and buses that should have been off the street, if the emergency was called, was not handled properly and they also blocked

1
2 egress and exit to the thoroughfares. DOT fell
3 down on the job. Bike lanes seem to be priority
4 but not laying out information to the public as to
5 leaving your cars and not traveling.

6 Now, we still have areas, it was
7 spoken here before, that we are not plowed out
8 from; curb cuts that are still blocked. I've been
9 here through past snowstorms. Tractor trailers
10 were brought in, dump trucks to cart the stuff and
11 take it out in Manhattan. Why has that not been
12 done still to date in Brooklyn? We have high snow
13 piles out there.

14 DOT fell down, as was said here
15 before, because they did not clear out. Their
16 responsibility is the bus pads, as it were. I
17 went out during the blizzard, prior to the
18 blizzard and after the blizzard and found buses
19 cattycorner on the B44 line, Nostrand Avenue, a
20 major thoroughfare which is due for
21 reconstruction. The B26 line, the B25 line,
22 Halsey Street was supposed to be plowed out.
23 These are primary roads that were not plowed out.
24 It is not Sanitation's responsibility. The
25 responsibility lies at the Mayor's focus here, at

1 the top with the Mayor. He has to bear
2 responsibility for this and he is accountable.

3 I just want to say that I hope
4 going forward that something is done and we do not
5 revisit this. We had a storm back in, I believe,
6 February.

7
8 SPEAKER QUINN: Yes.

9 NELSON M. STOUTE: More snow. This
10 did not occur. Why now? Why now? We would like
11 answers. We would like answers.

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Stoute, it
13 would also help if Community Board 3 had their own
14 Sanitation garage.

15 NELSON M. STOUTE: [interposing] I
16 may use this forum to say, you know the Deputy
17 Mayor whose oversight, I guess he's Doherty's
18 boss, that was brought in here at the Mayor's
19 request to slash and burn. This is not
20 Indianapolis. But we don't have a Sanitation
21 garage in Board 3. We have one laying out in
22 Board 1.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

24 NELSON M. STOUTE: We need, as per
25 coterminous regulations with the Community Board,

1
2 we need to have a garage within our area and we
3 don't.

4 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Mr.
5 Stoute.

6 NELSON M. STOUTE: This is more
7 than ten years going on and we don't have this.

8 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

9 NELSON M. STOUTE: So, as you chair
10 this committee here, I would hope that we can get
11 funding. We had \$12 million for a foundation last
12 year. That is now gone. Years ago we had the
13 money needed to build a garage. It's all gone
14 now.

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

16 NELSON M. STOUTE: This is all
17 politics and a shell game.

18 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Mr.
19 Stoute.

20 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We've been
22 joined to my far right by Council Member Brad
23 Lander, representing Park Slope. Council Member
24 Levin, do you have a comment?

25 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: I just

1 wanted to point out one issue that came up that
2 Speaker Quinn actually highlighted at our first
3 hearing last Monday was that, and I think this is
4 something that is an important contribution to
5 what went wrong those first 24 hours, was that OEM
6 did not activate their Emergency Command Center
7 until 4:00 p.m. on that Sunday.
8

9 So they got the blizzard warning
10 from the National Weather Service at 4:00 p.m. on
11 Saturday. It took them a full 24 hours to
12 activate their Command Center. That came to light
13 as a result of the Speaker's questioning. But I
14 think that that was something where in the
15 coordination of all the efforts, they got behind
16 the eight ball in large part due to that decision,
17 at least that's what I believe. But I just want
18 to kind of point that out, that that's a major
19 contribution in my opinion to what went wrong.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

21 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you. Go
22 ahead, sir.

23 KEVIN HARRINGTON: Good evening,
24 City Council Members, Speaker Christine Quinn and
25 the assembled people here. My name is Kevin

1 Harrington. I'm a vice president from the
2 Transport Workers Union, the people who work in
3 the subways and buses.
4

5 I have worked in the subways for
6 over 30 years. I've been through every kind of
7 storm, every kind of disaster. I was at Fulton
8 Street at 9/11. I was in the subways during the
9 blackout.

10 We all know what happened on
11 December 27th. The Transit Authority stopped.
12 Why did it stop? The Transit Authority stopped
13 because, as we know, the people who worked for it,
14 they didn't want to spend any money on you, the
15 people. They wanted to allow a disaster to happen
16 to this city.

17 This collapse was caused by Jay
18 Walder, the president of the New York City Transit
19 Authority. On Friday, the day before Christmas,
20 there was a warning of five inches of snow. The
21 Transit Authority should have went to its best
22 plan, Plan 4. A plan that would have sent trains
23 out to sweep the tracks, a plan that would have
24 sent deicers out to keep the third rails free of
25 ice, a plan that would have set of rescue trains

1
2 to keep people from getting stuck out in Queens
3 for seven hours. All of this was not done.

4 This was not done because the
5 Transit Authority's President told his managers
6 not to do it. We stayed at Plan 1 which is
7 essentially doing nothing.

8 New York City has been through
9 repeated snowstorms. We all know about February
10 of 2010 storm, there was more snow. Nothing
11 happened. Why? Because that plan was carried
12 out: that Plan 4. The same managers, the same
13 workers who carried the city through that storm
14 were in place on Christmas Day and Christmas
15 weekend. They were not brought to work because
16 the Transit Authority wanted to save money.

17 The Transit Authority, to be quite
18 frank, is a bull in a tea shop. They do what they
19 want. They're an authority. They don't listen to
20 the Council. They don't come here to speak to the
21 people. They don't submit papers on what they did
22 and Jay Walder hides behind his desk trying to
23 blame the people underneath him.

24 [Applause]

25 KEVIN HARRINGTON: This guy, at

1
2 this point, is guilty of criminally negligent
3 homicide. When he decided, and he decided,
4 because the buses and the trains did exactly the
5 same thing and that rarely happens. When he
6 decided on Friday to save money, he closed the
7 city down for five days. He made sure that the
8 EMTs, the doctors who work in emergency room, the
9 firemen, the police would not get to work. That
10 the people who clean your streets would not get to
11 work. He essentially decided, nobody elected him,
12 to close the city down.

13 So we have to have people who have
14 control over our lives, such as Jay Walder, we
15 have to have a person who cares more about people
16 than money. We have to send a message. The
17 governor keeps talking about accountability; we
18 want accountability at the top. Transit workers
19 can't work unless they're ordered to work.
20 Transit workers can't keep the system working
21 unless they're ordered to work. The fault lies
22 with Jay Walder and after today it lies with the
23 governor for not getting rid of him. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

25 Thank you, Mr. Harrington.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: James

O'Connell?

JAMES O'CONNELL: Good evening. My name is James O'Connell. I'm a U.S. Army combat veteran, first responder and 9/11 survivor.

[Applause]

JAMES O'CONNELL: I'm here tonight not to point fingers at any agency or department but I'm here to shed light on even a bigger picture that I think everyone is failing to address, looking back at this snowstorm.

In January of 2010, a magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck Haiti. And as we all know, many lives were lost as a result of inadequate and non-existent government, lack of emergency response. Almost a year later, 20 inches of snow incapacitated this city. I think the bigger picture here is the lack of response by the Fire Department, not lack of response, the inability of the Fire Department, Police Department and Emergency Services to respond in 20 inches of snow.

During that time, I think we all

1 know, and if you don't, New York City was on a
2 higher state of alert as a result of non-specific
3 threats, but threats of terrorism to the transit
4 system and to the city in general. If the city
5 cannot respond to 20 inches of snow, how can it
6 respond to an act of terrorism?
7

8 [Applause]

9 JAMES O'CONNELL: How can they
10 respond to a true emergency? I think it's
11 important for this city to begin to address
12 interoperable agency management where agencies can
13 function together and respond to these type of
14 emergencies. It's critical to the survival of
15 this city and to its residents.

16 This city needs to prepare itself
17 for any circumstances. If it can't handle 20
18 inches of snow, what is it going to do on the next
19 September 11th? How do we respond to a real
20 crisis?

21 There are many volunteers in this
22 city, numerous volunteers, Bensonhurst, East
23 Midwood, Flatlands, 4,000 trained volunteers in
24 this city. My question is why doesn't the City of
25 New York utilize those volunteers? Why did this

gentleman's wife have to die because an ambulance couldn't reach them while Hatzoloh members desperately struggled to pick up the slack for the 911 service while Bensonhurst volunteer members went out and could not move their ambulances because they could not get Sanitation to plow the front of their base so they could move their emergency vehicles?

The city needs to have a wakeup call. It really does. I'm speaking from experience. I hold numerous certifications in emergency management, in domestic preparedness. I've been there, I've done it and I've seen it. Seven months in Haiti, I've seen firsthand what having no critical infrastructure and a lack of emergency services will do in a crisis.

We really need to address this. We really need to use this as a wakeup call. This was not just 20 inches of snow. This was not just a street not getting plowed. It wasn't just a bus not running. There's a bigger picture here. We have to look at the sincere bigger picture of what's going on here in New York City and the inability for agencies to cooperate with each

other and function as a whole.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. I really appreciate that.

JAMES O'CONNELL: Thank you.

[Applause]

SPEAKER QUINN: I just wanted to say last night in Staten Island we heard a similar point about the overall issue of emergency preparedness that this kind of highlights. But also at Staten Island we heard the very same issue of there being volunteers who want to help and were incredibly frustrated because there wasn't a way for them to be part of the system. So I just wanted to note that that's a little bit of a theme we're hearing now and it's something we're going to follow up on overall. So folks who are either are volunteers or folks like yourself who are trained, make sure you've noted that when you've signed in because we would want to particular follow up with you about that.

JAMES O'CONNELL: If I can add, I know my time is up, from experience, the New York City Fire Department has had an inability to work with many of the volunteers in New York.

SPEAKER QUINN: We're hearing that, right?

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yeah.

JAMES O'CONNELL: This is incredible. It's going to happen again. It's just a matter of time.

SPEAKER QUINN: Do me a favor, just make sure you see Jill in the back.

JAMES O'CONNELL: Absolutely.

SPEAKER QUINN: She's going to wave to you, and make sure we can follow up. Thank you.

JAMES O'CONNELL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Hold on, Mr. O'Connell. Lew Fidler?

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: It's actually kind of ironic because I think it was about a year and a half or two years ago that the Fire Department chose to take our volunteer ambulance services off the 911 system.

JAMES O'CONNELL: Absolutely, it was January of last year.

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I do believe that at a Council hearing, at the

1
2 insistence of the Council, it was Chief Peruggia
3 who reversed that decision. And yet, we find him
4 as the token sacrifice in all of this. I think
5 that is a very sad irony. I think it reflects a
6 general disrespect that the city has for our
7 volunteer ambulance companies, including the fact
8 that we're now actually charging them for fire
9 inspections as well.

10 JAMES O'CONNELL: I can add one
11 thing please. During the steam pipe explosion, I
12 was two blocks away from that explosion. I'm a
13 certified responder, emergency medical technician.
14 I responded. I helped numerous people.

15 I received a letter from the New
16 York City Fire Department basically in essence
17 telling me I had no right to be there, I shouldn't
18 have been there, my actions were uncalled for and
19 unjust and I impeded upon their rescue efforts. I
20 personally took care of 14 people.

21 So I think they need to reevaluate
22 the many volunteers, including Hatzoloh who was
23 out with four-wheel drive vehicles all through
24 that snowstorm. They really need to start
25 utilizing these members of the service.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Don't go
anywhere, sir. Council Member Lander?

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: Thanks very
much for your testimony and your service. I just
want to underline in particular what you said
about Hatzoloh. I know there were many volunteers
and many organizations out there. But what
Hatzoloh was able to do during the storm was truly
remarkable. We had one of the folks who died, a
quite likely preventable death--

JAMES O'CONNELL: [interposing]
Queens.

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: --was in my
district in Kensington. The gentleman had started
calling 911 at about noon. The screams started
coming from his apartment at about 6:00. 911 had
been called for many hours.

Finally, one of the folks in the
building knew to call Hatzoloh directly. They
were able to get there in about ten minutes. They
could only get about two blocks away. So they got
out with the stretches. They ran through the

1 street. Unfortunately, by the time they get here,
2 Mr. Grossman had passed. But many other people
3 were both enormously helped by them.
4

5 I think the point that you raise
6 now, unfortunately, in this case, it was the fact
7 that they had a separate line that enabled someone
8 to reach them. They need to be connected to the
9 911 system. You're absolutely right that we need
10 to do a better job of incorporating people like
11 you and we look forward to--

12 JAMES O'CONNELL: [interposing] One
13 of the major problems with the 911 system in New
14 York is there are many volunteers, certified
15 volunteers. A lot of them actually work for the
16 911 system. There is no radio communication
17 system in place between the volunteers and the
18 Fire Department until an emergency takes place.
19 How do you expect in 20 inches of snow volunteers
20 to locate radios to be able to operate on the 911
21 system and save this gentleman's wife? These
22 radios should be in place. Implementation, these
23 radios, this system should be implemented and in
24 place before an emergency. You can't act after
25 the fact; you have to act before the fact.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Hold on.

JAMES O'CONNELL: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Two more
comments: Council Member Levin and Council Member
Greenfield, briefly.

COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD:
Greenfield has the mike, so it will be brief.
First of all, I just want to thank you for your
service for all the work that you've done. I want
to thank all the volunteer groups including
Hatzoloh and East Midwood and many organizations
that really came together during this crisis.

I just want to quick respond. Some
folks were asking what happened, or we may know
what happened December 26th or 27th but we don't
know what happened December 28th, 29th, 30th or
31st. That's why it's shameful that nobody was
here to tell us what actually happened.

Specifically to your point, as far
as who was working, I can tell you that every
single person on this panel, I can vouch for them,
was working 24/7 during the snowstorm to do the
best that they can on your behalf. And I think

1
2 that's really what the City Council under the
3 Speaker's leadership does best is we give a voice
4 to the voiceless. I promise you, we're going to
5 keep on pushing and we're going to keep on holding
6 the Administration accountable for these failures.
7 Thank you.

8 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member
9 Levin.

10 COUNCIL MEMBER LEVIN: Thank you.
11 I just want to also commend you and recognize your
12 work and all the work of volunteers during this
13 storm. I just want to say, for the record, that
14 the Hatzoloh out of Williamsburg, which is in the
15 Council district that I represent, their street,
16 they plowed out their block themselves on Monday.
17 A plow did not come down their street until 4:00
18 in the afternoon on Tuesday. I know because I was
19 standing right there when it came down. So there
20 clearly needs to be better coordination. We have
21 an ambulance corps that their entire street was
22 not plowed until 48 hours after the snowstorm.

23 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

24 JAMES O'CONNELL: New York City
25 brought in ambulances from New Jersey.

SPEAKER QUINN: Right.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

JAMES O'CONNELL: While they had resources available right here in New York, which they did not utilize. This is why people died.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

JAMES O'CONNELL: Thank you.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you for your service.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: The next speaker is Michael Marquez, Bensonhurst Ambulance, followed by Aileen Bortnick from Bay Ridge followed by William Boyle, in that order. Allen, excuse me. Allen Bortnick, excuse me, followed by William Boyle.

MICHAEL MARQUEZ: Good evening. My name is Michael Marquez. I'm the president of Bensonhurst Volunteer Ambulance Service. I would like to thank the New York City Council for the opportunity to speak this evening and to talk about the events of the winter storm.

There are a number of things that I

1 would like to bring to your attention. I'd
2 particularly like to thank Councilman Gentile and
3 Councilman Recchia. Our ambulance corps is
4 located within your districts and we really
5 appreciate the support that you've given to us in
6 the past.
7

8 The winter storm that occurred on
9 December 26th and 27th had a severe impact on the
10 ability of Bensonhurst Volunteer Ambulance to
11 respond to medical emergencies within our
12 community. This winter storm deposited in excess
13 of 20 inches of snow over the South Brooklyn area
14 and prevented us from responding emergency calls
15 within Bensonhurst.

16 There were a number of problems
17 that developed during the course of this storm and
18 the course of our course that need to be
19 rectified. We're requesting that the New York
20 City Council address these issues.

21 The first issue that I would like
22 to point out is that the New York City Office of
23 Emergency Management, the Fire Department of the
24 City of New York and the Regional Emergency
25 Medical Services Council of New York City did not

1
2 send out an alert to volunteer EMS and fire
3 agencies about the storm until 12:21 a.m. on
4 December 27th, after the storm already began.

5 In terms of the response from the
6 New York City Department of Sanitation: the
7 Department of Sanitation did not clear the street
8 next to our headquarters, which is located o 84th
9 Street and 17th Avenue. Our ambulance was stuck
10 in the snow and could not respond to emergency
11 calls. Our only option was to try to remove the
12 snow by hand. We did not have any plows. We did
13 not have any tools or equipment. We had to remove
14 it by hand in order to get our ambulances up and
15 running.

16 The next issue that I would like to
17 point out is that the New York City Department of
18 Transportation did not declare a snow emergency.
19 This allowed personal vehicles, private cars and
20 other vehicles, delivery trucks, to drive on the
21 streets, even though those vehicles were not
22 properly equipped. As a result of that, those
23 vehicles blocked access to emergency roads that
24 our ambulance could have used to respond to
25 medical calls.

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much.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member Gentile?

COUNCIL MEMBER GENTILE: Just to underscore how difficult the situation was in your area, right on 16th Avenue and 80th Street, we had someone who died, a 50-year-old woman who was in the house with her family. The ambulance, I believe it was an FDNY ambulance, could not find them to begin with and then could not get down the block on 80th Street, down the block from the high school. She passed away in the house and then it was another 16 hours before the coroner could come, almost the same situation here.

So it just underscores what you just testified to.

WILLIAM BOYLE: Well, the situation that you're describing, Councilman, when we responded to calls, because our ambulances were snowed and we weren't able to move, we had to respond by foot and carry the patients out by hand.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

1
2 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very
3 much.

4 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.
5 Next is Mr. Bortnick, followed by William Boyle.

6 ALLEN BORTNICK: You're forgiven
7 for your mistake. I didn't write the form out.
8 Somebody took care of it for me. As I get older,
9 I become a bit more intemperate. I'm about to
10 level some of you people up here. First and
11 foremost, agencies that start with a D in this
12 city don't even rate that high a grade.

13 The Mayor has chosen to put people
14 in who have no knowledge of what their agency is
15 supposed to do. They're paper pushers.

16 [Applause]

17 ALLEN BORTNICK: Everybody is
18 looking to duck and run for cover. Unfortunately,
19 I'm going to take you to task. You've been in
20 office now how many years, nine years? You run
21 the City Council. There is no oversight. There
22 is no accountability. There is no leadership on
23 your part to go out and get your committees to
24 turn in legislation that will have an effect and
25 improve this city, period.

I'll go one step further than that.

I am totally disgusted with what goes on. I remember as a kid, people out in the streets with shovels and brooms shoveling the snow down the sewers. Maybe they didn't all work very hard. It doesn't exist anymore. You've got volunteers ready to do things. One phone call to ten people means 100 people within three minutes have been alerted.

The phone systems work and you can set up a simple system to contact people if you want to take the time to do it. Nobody in the City Council bothers to do it. You're there for a paycheck. You get your money, you go home, you give yourselves raises, which you shouldn't, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

If I had to say what I wanted to, this place would become a garage. I am only interested right now in reminding you that as head of the Council, it's about time you decided to be a leader rather than a listener. You can organize committees; you can bring legislation to bear. You can get things accomplished if you'll only wake up and do it. If you want to run for mayor,

1
2 it's not going to be on the strength of what
3 you've done for these nine years. Trust me on
4 that.

5 If I sound mean and intemperate, as
6 I said, as I get older I've become this way. My
7 Councilman is sitting here and he tried to shut me
8 up a few times before. I respect him very much.
9 He's one of the hardest people I know.

10 SPEAKER QUINN: Sir, can I just say
11 I'm the Speaker. Tish is the chair of the
12 Sanitation Committee. I heard everything you said
13 directed at me, but I just want to make sure you
14 understand that she's the chair of the Sanitation
15 Committee. I'm the Speaker. So your anger is at
16 me, not Tish.

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: It's okay.
18 It's fine.

19 ALLEN BORTNICK: You can share it
20 if you'd like. I've got plenty to go around.

21 SPEAKER QUINN: No, no, no. The
22 buck stops with me. I just didn't want you to
23 think when you left the room you were angry at
24 her. You're angry at me.

25 ALLEN BORTNICK: No, I'm not angry

1 just at her.

2
3 SPEAKER QUINN: No, I think you're
4 angry at me.

5 ALLEN BORTNICK: I am angry at the
6 failure.

7 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: But Mr--

8 ALLEN BORTNICK: [interposing] I am
9 angry at failure.

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: But Mr.
11 Bortnick--

12 ALLEN BORTNICK: Accountability and
13 oversight.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: But you should
15 know where to point the anger. I am the
16 chairperson. I'm not the Speaker. Thank you for
17 elevating me.

18 SPEAKER QUINN: That's all my
19 point. That's all I wanted you to know.

20 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.

21 ALLEN BORTNICK: But what I'm
22 saying is you people have the power to put
23 legislation in. One other thing I will add: the
24 city, it's people living here are just as
25 responsible because nobody has put in penalties so

that if you goof up and you do things wrong you pay. Just putting tickets out to raise money because somebody owns a car and you can penalize them is not the answer.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Bortnick,
none of us are perfect, including you. Thank you
for--

ALLEN BORTNICK: [interposing] I admit to that.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

ALLEN BORTNICK: But the thing is I
try. You people don't.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

SPEAKER QUINN: Well, I would disagree.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. Mr. William Boyle. Council Member Fidler?

COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I don't know, Mr. Bortnick, I find it kind of ironic that you're here at an oversight hearing complaining about a lack of oversight. I haven't seen you around at any of my hearings at Youth or any of the other committees I'm at. It's so easy to sit

back and take a potshot. No, you can stay seated, sir, it's all right.

I want to point out to you that if it wasn't for this Speaker and this Council, the firehouse that you're complaining about might be closed. There has been plenty of leadership in this Council. You need to read the Charter of the City of New York because you just voted on some amendments, I assume you voted in the last election. This Charter is executive-centric. This Council is exercising power to the extent that it is granted by the people and by the Charter and by the State Legislature in this state.

For you to come up here and grandstand in that fashion, age is absolutely no excuse for being "intemperate" and irresponsible. Frankly, I'm offended. I read the New York Post every day, so it's very difficult to offend me as a Council Member, all right. But for you to come up here and grandstand in that fashion, what purpose? He's not telling the truth.

ALLEN BORTNICK: I'm sorry. I don't know your name, sir.

1	COMMITTEE ON SANITATION	138
2	COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: The fact of	
3	the matter is--	
4	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing]	
5	Excuse me--	
6	COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: The fact of	
7	the matter is you're entitled to your opinion, Mr.	
8	Bortnick, but you're not entitled to your own	
9	facts.	
10	ALLEN BORTNICK: I want results	
11	from you.	
12	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Mr.	
13	Bortnick. Thank you, Council Member Fidler. The	
14	next speaker is William Boyle. Thank you, sir.	
15	SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.	
16	ALLEN BORTNICK: May I take ten	
17	seconds to respond?	
18	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: No, sir. Thank	
19	you.	
20	SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.	
21	ALLEN BORTNICK: Unfortunately,	
22	Councilman Fidler, what I'm speaking of is not	
23	failure, intemperance and hatred, it's the idea	
24	that you sit in the position of power and I would	
25	like to know what you have done to try to bring in	

rules and regulations to help improve this city.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Let's have a conversation.

ALLEN BORTNICK: Other than sit there and give me hell. I can take it, my friend, better than you can.

SPEAKER QUINN: We have a lot of other people tonight, so what I don't want to have is this become a back and forth between Council Member Fidler and Mr. Bortnick, with all due respect to both, I think that we were in Staten Island for a long time last night, here tonight, other boroughs every night this week, it speaks volumes, but ultimately the proof will be in the pudding in what legislation and the reforms we propose when we are done. So thank you and let's move on to the next witness.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. Next is William Boyle, followed by Elliot Abogh, followed by Lincoln Restler. Mr. Boyle?

WILLIAM BOYLE: Good evening ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for being here. My name is William Boyle. Although we could probably point a lot of fingers here and there, although

1 the Bloomberg Administration, I feel like I'm
2 standing in front of Batista in Cuba.

3 I did something in my block that
4 wasn't the most ethical and it was a little
5 renegade at best. I opened up a Johnny pop. I
6 soaked down my entire block. There were no stuck
7 vehicles. The vehicles broke their selves free.
8 I think a solution along those lines would have
9 probably been most appropriate.

10 They have technology today. We
11 have pressure washers. They have things like that
12 in extreme conditions like this. Pressure washers
13 with heating elements to boil the water, to spray
14 it out, at least it'll break vehicles free. Then
15 afterwards, the heat from the vehicles going back
16 and forth will keep the snow soft. Rock salt
17 being dropped afterwards would solve the rest of
18 the problem. I spent four hours that night
19 shoveling my block. By the time I came back, I
20 was soaking wet. I was drenched. But you know
21 what, every stuck car moved off my block.

22 That's it ladies and gentlemen,
23 have a wonderful evening.

24 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very
25

much.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.

[Applause]

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Elliott A-B-O-G-H.

ELLIOTT ABOSH: A-B-O-S-H.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Sorry.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.
He's followed by Lincoln Restler.

ELLIOTT ABOSH: I live in Brighton Beach. I had a difficult time getting out and shopping, among other things, even for physical therapy. I'm not saying that was not the worst problem, but I will say I fell in the snow a few times. Thanks to a few people, they helped pick me up.

But what I want to say is this; first I have a question for Speaker Quinn. What I'd like to know is there is an emergency fund in the city budget. What is that and how much would be allocated for Brooklyn?

SPEAKER QUINN: The budget doesn't have an emergency fund in it.

ELLIOTT ABOSH: It does not have an emergency fund?

SPEAKER QUINN: No. There is the budget for the Department of Sanitation, for the Office of Emergency Management, for the Police Department, for the Fire, for the different entities. We could get back to you with the total for each.

ELLIOTT ABOSH: Well you wouldn't be able to answer how much for Sanitation and how much would be allocated--

SPEAKER QUINN: [interposing] No, not off the top of my head I can't.

ELLIOTT ABOSH: Because Brooklyn--

SPEAKER QUINN: [interposing] We'll get back to you though if you make sure we have your contact.

ELLIOTT ABOSH: Brooklyn has 2.5 million people. It is on its own to be the fourth largest city in the country.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

ELLIOTT ABOSH: But it's a borough of New York City.

SPEAKER QUINN: Right.

ELLIOTT ABOSH: Now the point is this: New York City has about 8.3 million people. It's in the constitution that death, resignation or inability of the president, the vice president will take over and then there will be a new president. If the governor is out of town, it will be the lieutenant governor. Then if he's out of town too, it'll be the majority leader of the state senate and the president pro tempore.

Now, New York City has a population of 50 percent more than the other states. Now, why can't this be done? The show must go on with or without the Mayor. Thank you very much.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very much.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, sir.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Lincoln Restler, followed by Reverend Dr. Miran Ukaegbir? U-K-E-G-B-I-R? Okay, you're next, ma'am. Lincoln?

LINCOLN RESTLER: Thank you, Chairwoman James, Speaker Quinn, distinguished members of the Brooklyn delegation. I appreciate

1
2 you giving all of us this opportunity to share our
3 stories, to share our ideas, but most of all to
4 vent. Our anger remains strong to this very day.

5 I'm a Brooklyn boy all my life and
6 never have I seen a failure so dramatic to a
7 natural disaster. We know what happened. The
8 Mayor, the Administration figured the Upper East
9 Side is in the Caribbean, the schools are closed,
10 we don't need to hustle. We don't need to rush.
11 And lives were lost.

12 Now I am sure each member of the
13 City Council received thousands of individual
14 calls and emails from your constituents. As a
15 district leader, I received over 100. People
16 calling me, emailing me, Facebook messages,
17 anything they could to get help.

18 Now there are many ideas that have
19 been put forward tonight, and I know that you are
20 each working hard to think about how we can reform
21 this process and ensure that this never ever
22 happens again. I think that empowering our
23 district offices of the Sanitation Department is
24 important and right. I think improving the
25 technology in our Sanitation trucks so that we

1 have better information about what is going on at
2 City Hall and at borough-wide offices is right.

3 I also think that we need to be
4 doing more with crowd sourcing, and including
5 information online that allows people to give
6 updates about what is going on at specific
7 locations and making 311 fully online. That needs
8 to be happening. Because for those who tried to
9 call 311 during this snowstorm, you know just like
10 me--

11
12 FEMALE VOICE: [interposing] You
13 couldn't get through.

14 LINCOLN RESTLER: --couldn't get
15 through.

16 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: That's right.

17 SPEAKER QUINN: Right.

18 LINCOLN RESTLER: Couldn't get
19 through. That would not be happening on the
20 internet, and that should be happening.

21 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

22 LINCOLN RESTLER: You've heard this
23 one, you've heard this all 1,000 times. I
24 appreciate you giving us the opportunity to be
25 here. But we can never, ever let this kind of

disaster happen in our streets again.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you,
Lincoln.

[Applause]

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you. Sir,
the issue you raised about districts and their own
ability to make decisions was something we heard
very much last night in Staten Island. So I just
want to let folks know that that, too, is
something that's a bit of a theme, so to speak.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

REV. DR. MIRAN UKAEGBIR: Good
evening.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Good evening.

REV. DR. MIRAN UKAEGBIR: I am
Miran Ukaegbir, Reverend Dr. Ukaegbir, from
Community Board 16. I'm the chairperson for the
Sanitation and Environmental Protection Services.

I will not go over what everybody
else is saying here. I have two important things
that I wanted to highlight here tonight. We're
asking why, why this whole session is based on
finding out why? There were reports about
predictions for this snow ahead of time. There

1 was no run through, no team practice or routine
2 provision prior to the snow. So it's not a
3 question of why. We all know why. What was not
4 done before such predictions, that's usually the
5 preparedness required. All the plows are usually
6 counted and act standby, everything before the
7 snow. This time, it did not happen. So there was
8 a breakdown in the administration itself.
9

10 Even if we did understand from some
11 of the workers, that there were some workers that
12 there was a problem with the union and Mayor
13 Bloomberg and the Sanitation Department. A lot of
14 members, a lot of Sanitation workers were really
15 having a problem and then were almost down too.
16 So I don't know if you're going to investigate
17 into that.

18 I think when anything happens of
19 this kind of magnitude, there is definitely a
20 staffing problem involved. That's one.

21 The other aspect of it is the fact
22 that with the January storm, the same thing,
23 although it was upgraded and actions taken and
24 standby done, or declared. And every preparedness
25 was done. However, as we speak, there are some of

1 the streets in Brownsville that are still not
2 plowed. There are some of the streets with the
3 icy snow yesterday that are still that way. I
4 personally had to go out to help a couple of
5 people in the community. I don't think this is
6 right.
7

8 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: No, not at all.

9 REV. DR. MIRAN UKAEGBIR: Before
10 the ice, before the snow, there should be salt on
11 the ground.

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Right.

13 REV. DR. MIRAN UKAEGBIR: It was
14 not done. We residents know that in the house you
15 have to put the salt to avoid it becoming icy.
16 Why can't the city Sanitation do that for the
17 streets? It's very, very dangerous in some areas
18 in Brownsville, as we speak. So this is one of
19 the things that we should really look into.
20 Politics and human lives are not the same.

21 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

22 REV. DR. MIRAN UKAEGBIR: We cannot
23 do that. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Pastor, if you
25 can give those streets to Mr. Terranova, we would

greatly appreciate it.

SPEAKER QUINN: The gentleman right here, ma'am.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: He's right here.

REV. DR. MIRAN UKAEGBIR: Okay.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Again, I value the work of the Sanitation workers. Again, I don't know whether or not there was a slowdown. That is the jurisdiction of law enforcement. We just wanted to hear from the residents here today.

REV. DR. MIRAN UKAEGBIR: Actually, as we speak now, we do not have a superintendent in Community Board 16. He has been reallocated somewhere else. That's part of what I'm talking about staffing.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: So we should look to--

SPEAKER QUINN: [interposing] When did that happen, ma'am?

REV. DR. MIRAN UKAEGBIR: It happened before the snow.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: There's an issue with respect to staffing from one garage to

the next. That's something that we really want to look at.

REV. DR. MIRAN UKAEGBIR: Exactly.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: We thank you for bringing this to our attention.

REV. DR. MIRAN UKAEGBIR: Okay, thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Please speak to Mr. Terranova.

SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Our last speaker is Mr. George Murden. So while Mr. Murden is approaching the podium, tomorrow, our hearing is in Manhattan at 6:00 at the state office building on 125th Street.

GEORGE MURDEN: Good evening. My name is George Murden. I'm not coming here to point my finger at members of the City Council. No, I'm not going to do that. Because I understand that the Mayor was out of town. And correct me if I'm wrong, when the Mayor is out of town, I think the City Comptroller is in charge?

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: No, not necessarily.

GEORGE MURDEN: Well, then who?

SPEAKER QUINN: It's the First Deputy Mayor and then if it steps out of the Mayor's Office, then it's the Public Advocate. But there are deputy mayors first.

GEORGE MURDEN: All right, but let me finish. You see, I'm pointing the finger at the top. See I'm not going to be like you all. You understand? First of all, here, my daughter who works for Transit had to walk 40 blocks to get to work. You understand? This was 5:00 a.m. in the morning. Anything could have happened to my child. If something would have happened to her, we all would have been sorry. I'm going to be honest with you.

Second of all, I look at the situation because I was afraid in the house, being imprisoned, because that was very dangerous, y'all. See, I'm a veteran and also I read a lot. When the snowplows came through, when they did come through some of the areas, some of us could have been missing. See you all don't realize what went down. That was very, very dangerous. I was really alarmed. I don't take it very lightly that

1
2 people died and their sisters couldn't come to
3 them. So that person has to be charged, who's in
4 charge. He should be charged.

5 [Applause]

6 GEORGE MURDEN: In fact, he should
7 get out of office. All right? I want to thank
8 you, Letitia James, for having this panel here
9 tonight.

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.
11 Thank you, Mr. Murden.

12 GEORGE MURDEN: I want to thank all
13 of you. You know I know politics.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes, you do.

15 GEORGE MURDEN: I want to thank all
16 of you all for being here. I'm going to tell you
17 something, you better tell the Mayor, because I'm
18 coming to City Hall.

19 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Okay.

20 GEORGE MURDEN: You understand?
21 Because don't be telling me and others that we can
22 go to a damn play and there ain't no buses or
23 trains running. I resent the arrogance of this
24 mayor. Now we had it once when I first met him.
25 I met Bloomberg face to face. I had no ideas I

1 was having an affair and I met him. I resent what
2 is going on. The Speaker, I think you remember
3 me. If you don't, I'll refresh your memory, okay,
4 because I was with the late Sonny Carson. So he
5 ain't here, now it's my turn. The guys that were
6 supposed to pick up the gauntlet didn't do it. So
7 I gave them six years, now I'm stepping out.

8
9 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

10 GEORGE MURDEN: And I'm not going
11 to be polite.

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you, Mr.
13 Murden.

14 GEORGE MURDEN: Peace.

15 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very
16 much.

17 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: You know, in
18 our district, we lost a baby and we lost a senior
19 citizen, so we had some deaths as well. I thank
20 you for all that you do.

21 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you for your
22 time.

23 GEORGE MURDEN: I want to say one
24 thing quick because the day you had the hearing on
25 City Hall.

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COMMITTEE ON SANITATION 154

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes, sir.

GEORGE MURDEN: I text a City Council Member. I ain't going to say who he is. Letting him know, Council Member James, that our block, St. James, South Elliott Street, where the cars were supposed to move and the cleaning that was supposed to come through never showed up, or a plow or any damn thing, on the day of your hearing.

SPEAKER QUINN: Oh really?

GEORGE MURDEN: Yes, yes.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

SPEAKER QUINN: When did it come, sir?

GEORGE MURDEN: It came the next week.

SPEAKER QUINN: The next week?

GEORGE MURDEN: Yes. That block is still kind of messed up. Right?

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Yes.

SPEAKER QUINN: Restate the name of the block so the Department of Sanitation--

GEORGE MURDEN: South Elliot between Hansen Place.

1	COMMITTEE ON SANITATION	155
2	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: And Fulton.	
3	GEORGE MURDEN: And Fulton.	
4	SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.	
5	GEORGE MURDEN: By the way, you	
6	all, Hansen Place is historical, because John	
7	Hansen was the first African American to be the	
8	president of the United States. Peace.	
9	SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you.	
10	CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you. I'm	
11	sorry. I thought Mr. Murden was the last speaker.	
12	Apparently, it's Marcos Masri from 75 Wilson	
13	Street. Let me remind everyone, tomororow,	
14	Manhattan, Thursday, January 20th, 6:00, Adam	
15	Clayton Powell State Office Building, 163 West	
16	125th Street. On Friday: Queens at 12:00 at	
17	Queens Borough Hall. Bronx is Monday, January	
18	24th at Hostos Community College. And South	
19	Brooklyn is January 26th, 6:00 at Marine Park	
20	Intermediate School 278. Marcos?	
21	MARCOS MASRI: Yes, thanks to the	
22	City Council for giving us--	
23	SPEAKER QUINN: [interposing] Could	
24	you speak up a little, sir?	
25	MARCOS MASRI: Thanks to the City	

Council to step up and--

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: [interposing] A little louder, Marcos. Come on, I know how loud you can speak.

MARCOS MASRI: Giving for the New Yorkers to voice their concerns and frustration which happens to be in the 26th throughout the entire week. As a resident, I don't know, the first time I didn't see any leaders or any mayor taking anything, do anything. I thought that Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, I'm in Alaska somewhere.

I thought the Mayor, somehow he lost the bid for the Olympics for summer, he wants to have the winter Olympics over here. So I don't know where he's been, but I've been in about, I don't know, maybe he quit to run for president, but let me tell you, the road ahead is icy for him. He will slip through that. He is stuck with two feet of snow to know that change your mind.

But anyways, I have to give thanks for the members, which did very incredible job which no one--I didn't think that they were able to do, but they were very helpful to take over

1 jobs that has to be made by the city employees.

2 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: thank you.

3 MARCOS MASRI: Which I want to
4 point out that if we can do something to local
5 volunteers which came up to me. They're ready to
6 do. Give me just a target; we will do the job.
7 Just anything, I don't know what the concern is,
8 what the situation that is going on. There should
9 be something, a plan b. People in New York won't
10 let down the city again. They are ready to take
11 the job if something happens. In the local
12 district, it should be the community board, it
13 should be something that we should be connected
14 with them and local volunteers. We should be
15 ready for the next major disaster which we don't
16 know how this mayor will handle it.

17 He said he wasn't communicated but
18 I don't know which service had. Apparently there
19 wasn't any communication between the top leaders.
20 He said he wants to take over the job three times
21 because he knows how to respond for disasters.
22 But I don't see anything happen. For me, if you
23 want to take the job, do it, do the right thing,
24 do what you said. For me, it's like Derek Jeter
25

1 tell me the playoffs when he isn't he even going
2 to the playoffs, he wants to take a vacation.
3 Privacy, said for the mayor no privacy when you
4 are responsible to take this job up and you took
5 it.
6

7 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you,
8 Marcus.

9 MARCOS MASRI: Thanks for
10 everything.

11 SPEAKER QUINN: Thank you very
12 much.

13 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

14 [Applause]

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: I want to thank
16 all of you for coming. This clearly, as someone
17 said, was a wakeup call for all of us. Clearly, a
18 number of you talked about accountability, talked
19 about the failure to declare a snow emergency,
20 talked about how we need to marshal private
21 resources, deployment and communication. I just
22 really want to thank each and every one of you.
23 Now, for parting words, I'm going to turn it over
24 to the Speaker of the City Council, Speaker
25 Christine Quinn and then to my other colleagues.

1
2 SPEAKER QUINN: I just want to
3 reiterate Chair James' thanks to everyone for
4 coming out tonight. We were, as I said, in Staten
5 Island last night. We heard some of the same
6 things tonight, but some different things. We
7 heard things both last night and tonight that we
8 could not have heard just from talking to over
9 government officials. So I really want to thank
10 people for taking the time. The information
11 you're giving us is going to help us do a better
12 job of following up on what did and didn't happen
13 in the storm and proposing legislation and other
14 policy changes to make sure something like that
15 doesn't happen again. So I really, really want to
16 thank you.

17 I want to apologize that you had to
18 go through all of this, but again, thank you for
19 coming out tonight. Because the information
20 input, the specifics and the advice you've given
21 us has really been invaluable and you will see it
22 when you see our proposals and ideas that we may
23 very well need your help pushing to get
24 implemented.

25 So thank you very much. For all of

1
2 you who had personal impacts, and you, sir, who
3 lost your wife, I just want to tell you how deeply
4 sorry we are. You have our deepest sympathies and
5 our thoughts and prayers. Thank you very much.

6 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.
7 Council Member Williams?

8 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: Thank you.
9 I just want to thank everybody as well. I'm sorry
10 to keep repeating this, but I couldn't get your
11 story off of my head throughout the whole time.
12 So I apologize as well. I just want to say that
13 this man deserves more than sorry.

14 SPEAKER QUINN: Right.

15 CHAIRPERSON WILLIAMS: That doesn't
16 cut it. He deserves to ask somebody what happened
17 to the street. If you could bring that message,
18 if anything, his story back up as an example of
19 why someone should be here to show some respect to
20 this man and the memory of his wife that should
21 have had a chance, but because of screw-ups of the
22 Administration didn't. Please show a little bit
23 of respect to that. Thank you.

24 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.
25 Council Member? Yes, sir, quickly. Do you want

to come to the mike?

SPEAKER QUINN: Sir, why don't you
go--

[Background noise]

ROBERT DAVIS: I just want to add,
put on record, that I live on 19th Street. My
wife, she was 63-years-old. There's a firehouse
about six blocks up on Cortelyou and I think
Rugby. I think Cortelyou and Rugby there's a
firehouse, there's a fire station. They only had
to go straight down the street from Rugby and
Cortelyou to East 19th and Cortelyou, around about
six blocks away. It took them, like I said, over
an hour just to get that far.

SPEAKER QUINN: That's helpful for
us to know. Thank you.

CHAIRPERSON JAMES: It is totally
outrageous. They failed us at the storm and they
failed us today. Hopefully they won't fail us in
the future. Council Member Lander? No remarks?
Briefly, you don't have to if you don't want to.
That's okay.

COUNCIL MEMBER LANDER: I'll just
echo the thanks to everyone that came out tonight,

1 and to our chairs and to our speaker. We put
2 together, in my office, for folks who live in the
3 neighborhoods of Park Slope, Kensington, some of
4 Borough Park, Cobble Hill, Carol Gardens a report
5 that we got hundreds of feedback and we put that
6 up in advance of tonight. And a few people
7 emailed me subsequently and raised issues with
8 Access-A-Ride, as well as all the things that were
9 raised here tonight.

11 So as the Speaker said, the
12 feedback is invaluable to enable us to do the job
13 that you've elected us to and to make sure that we
14 keep this from happening again. Thank you.

15 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Council Member
16 Fidler, then Greenfield and Levin. Briefly.

17 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: I also want
18 to thank everyone for coming out. I certainly
19 understand the anger that people feel. What's
20 frustrating, sitting up here is, for those of you
21 who were at the hearing that we held Monday at
22 City Hall, the questions were substantive. They
23 were on-point. They were probative and they were
24 important. But hearing from our local Sanitation
25 superintendents, people that, frankly, every

1 member has some relationship with and spoke to
2 during the storm, to have them come forward, that
3 would have told the other half of the story.

4 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: That's right.

5 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: Not hearing
6 it is what is extraordinarily frustrating and
7 angering to at least myself and I'm sure to my
8 colleagues up here. Mr. Terranova, I have the
9 greatest respect for you. We've had a good
10 relationship over the years. I feel bad that they
11 sent you here to take the spanking.

12 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: That's right.

13 COUNCIL MEMBER FIDLER: The fact of
14 the matter is the Administration needed to be here
15 and needed to be sending the people who provide
16 online service to us to answer those questions so
17 that we could make sure that this doesn't happen
18 again.

19 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.

20 Greenfield?

21 COUNCIL MEMBER GREENFIELD: You
22 know, first I want to thank all of you for coming
23 out here. It's actually very valuable. All of us
24 had our different experiences. I think it's very
25

1 helpful to hear from you what your experiences
2 were.
3

4 I just want you to know that every
5 person at this table, I know for a fact nobody
6 here has a private jet at this table. We're
7 regular folks. We work hard. We drive simple
8 cars. I rent an apartment. I have small kids.
9 We were stuck at home. We did our part. I went
10 shopping 24 hours before the blizzard came because
11 I knew I needed some food and I needed some milk
12 for my one year old baby. So, believe me, we
13 share your frustration. We share your anger. We
14 share your outrage.

15 To you, Mr. Davis, for my part, I'm
16 sorry. I'm sorry what happened to you. It was
17 unacceptable. I have to tell you as an attorney,
18 as a member of the City Council, I sincerely hope
19 that you sue the pants off of the City of New York
20 and that you hold them legally accountable for
21 their negligence because there's no excuse as to
22 what happened. You absolutely have my support.
23 You have all of our sympathy. We're very
24 grateful. I just want all of you to know that
25 this is what we do. We're your voice. Don't feel

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2 York.

3 I want to thank also Speaker Quinn,
4 she's working tirelessly and she's going around to
5 all the boroughs and finding out what happened
6 throughout the City of New York. Also, I'd like
7 to give a shout out to the 84th Precinct, who has
8 been represented in full force tonight. Thank you
9 guys very much.

10 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Thank you.
11 Council Member Mathieu Eugene?

12 COUNCIL MEMBER EUGENE: Thank you
13 very much. I just want to thank Speaker Quinn and
14 also the chairperson and all of my colleagues. I
15 want also to thank all of you here today. This is
16 very important. This hearing is very important
17 because it is by coming together and working
18 together, members from the community and elected
19 officials, by working together we'll better the
20 city. We'll have a better community, and also we
21 will take the necessary step and measures to
22 prevent that to happen again.

23 To Mr. Davis and to all of you who
24 lost a loved one, my thought and my condolence to
25 you. I want to tell you that your loved one

1
2 should not die in vain. We have to take these
3 situations and do everything possible to prevent
4 that to happen again. We City Council members, we
5 work very hard. We represent you. We know that
6 it is our responsibility to do everything in our
7 power to protect you and also to better the city
8 where all we love to live.

9 Mr. Davis, I believe that you are
10 in my district. I will contact you. I will talk
11 to you after the hearing and to see what I can do
12 and what the City Council, all of us, we can do
13 for you and your family. Thank you very much.

14 CHAIRPERSON JAMES: Mr. Davis,
15 she's in heaven resting where there is no snow and
16 she'll never be disappointed. This hearing is
17 adjourned.

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 

Date February 7, 2011